

Continuity Plan

Purpose

This plan has been developed to reflect the principles detailed in our Continuity Plan and the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Funding Rules. This plan is designed to prepare Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd and provide assurance that the company have considered a wide range of risks that could impact a students' ability to successfully undertake or complete their programmes and that there are contingency plans in place to eliminate, mitigate or manage these risks. The plan considers those incidents that will have a significant impact on the operation of Apprenticeship provision following a major crisis or disaster or an event and which creates the need for short-term closure or suspension of activity.

Policy Aim

The Apprenticeship Continuity Plan applies to all apprenticeship training that is provided by Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd. Most training is delivered at Toll Bar Road, Marston, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG32 2HT with site visits or online delivery as required. Student records are held and managed by Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd at all times in line with the current policies in place. The scope includes all stakeholders, directors, tutors, assessors and students.

Continuity of learning is the continuation of education in the event of a prolonged company closure. It is a critical component of emergency management, as it promotes the continuation of teaching and learning despite circumstances that interrupt normal attendance for one or more students.

All Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd training staff and apprentices are asked to ensure that they read and understand the contents of this plan and that they remain aware of its contents in order to act and respond accordingly.

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd maintains a register of issue of Company policies to all staff and acknowledgment by staff that the policy has been received including updates resulting from any policy review. Company policies and procedures forms a key part of all new staff inductions with relevant policies issued.

Programme Structure

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd offers a range of approaches to the delivery of apprenticeship training programmes, in order to best address the unique needs of each employer and their students. Most programmes will be delivered at Toll Bar Road, Marston, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG32 2HT but some components can be delivered online, at employer's locations or at alternate premises. For this reason, these continuity plans consider a wide range of arrangements that may be drawn on to address the needs of individual employers and their students, should contingency arrangements need to be implemented.

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In turn, Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd acknowledges that individual students will be affected in different ways if any of the risks detailed in this plan materialise. For this reason, the Apprenticeships team will communicate directly with students and their employers where additional support, advice or guidance is required and will work with any students who have approved reasonable adjustments or identified additional needs to ensure actions and options meet their individual requirements.

Continuity of study

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruptions to students' studies by:

- Re-scheduling any affected components of study in agreement with students and employers
- Delivering a modified version of the same course or access to the same course via a different mode of study if required and an appropriate solution to the disruption (e.g. distance learning)
- Providing assistance to affected students to move to a new training location for sessions that would have been on the Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd site or relocating sessions to employers' premises when appropriate
- Where training sessions were scheduled to be onsite at the employer's premises, arranging to move tutors to alternate locations provided by the employer

Tools to support continuity of learning

Our apprenticeship training is delivered through a block timetable with a blended approach and this provides a level of flexibility and a number of options to ensure the relevant training continue to be delivered to our students.

The main methods of training include face to face delivery, directed and supervised learning activities, work-based learning assignments and work-based assessments. Virtual, webinars, online-coaching, telephone coaching, set reading and feedback will also be used where appropriate.

The following list also includes a range of tools and methods for facilitating distance learning, including those with no, some, or great levels of technological sophistication.

- Instructional Packs - In the event of a prolonged closure absence, tutors and assessors can prepare hard copy instructional packs that students may use at home to continue their learning. Hard copy packs may include worksheets; calendars or schedules of work to be completed; directions for homework, projects, or written assignments; excerpts from textbooks or other reading materials; and sample assessments.

Two different approaches are used when developing packs:

- Generic packs that can be used at any point that promote learning according to level and subject-specific standards, or
- Unit-specific packs that are based on the planned curriculum and integrate with the students' current learning at their workplace or off the job training.
- Tutor and assessor Check-ins and Tutorials - A variety of technologies (telephone, email, web conferencing, M-Files) can be used to facilitate one-to-one, or teacher-and class interaction or lesson delivery between students and tutors/assessors.
- Telephone and Video Calling - Tutors and assessors can hold group and individual discussions, or teach lessons, with learners in a secure and private setting.
- Email - Use existing email service provider to send, receive, and track messages. In the event this service provider is not operating, response teams can use other online systems that all provide quick distribution of multimedia content to a mass audience. There are a variety of free email services providers on the web, including Google, Yahoo, and Hotmail, most of which support document sharing, scheduling and web chats.
- Web Conferencing - A variety of web conferencing services are available on the internet e.g. Microsoft Teams.

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will consider setting up further accounts for use in cases of emergency, when distance learning methods are needed and may want to conduct workshops or learning sessions using one of these services for ease of use in the event of an emergency.

- Social Media - Many students, parents, and staff use social media on a daily basis, but it can also serve as a vehicle to send announcements about lessons, staff absences and other information related to continuity of learning. Social media can be useful during both short and long-term closures, particularly because they are easy to access on different devices, including mobile phones, tablets and computers.
- Access to resources and portfolios - All our apprenticeship programmes and corresponding learner work and portfolios are accessible via the Virtual Learning Environment which remains available to learners via several media forms.
- Ensuring Accessibility - Not all students may have access to the internet, phone lines, TV or radio at the same time or at all, during a prolonged closure or absence. Therefore it is important to offer a variety of methods of distance learning. Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will abide by the Disability Act and ensure materials will be provided in alternative formats, when necessary.

Travel

Students are required to make their own arrangements to attend their place of work and study.

Where a change of location of study is required for contingency reasons, Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd would seek to provide an alternate location that is as close as practicable to the original place of study. Where alternate arrangements have to be made that could not easily be accessed by the usual forms of transport, Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will work with the employer to consider the nature and impact of alternate transport arrangements on individual students and agree an appropriate solution.

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd recognise the primary source of transportation for its remote staff is via car. A fleet of company pool vehicles including cars and vans are available to book if required. If none are available expenses are paid to contribute towards the cost of fuel and general upkeep of the vehicle to enable staff to maintain this source of transport from Toll Bar Road, Marston, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG32 2HT to the teaching / assessment site. Staff, students, partners and suppliers use the Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd parking facilities as necessary, plenty of space is available. As an alternative, Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd suggests the use of public transport such as buses or trains, and private transport such as taxis or car sharing where appropriate.

All staff are issued with portable IT equipment to enable them to work remotely, negating the need to travel in the event of an emergency. Remote visits can be completed using mobile phone, email and software such as Microsoft Teams.

Redundancy

In line with ESFA Apprenticeship Funding rules 'Redundancy' 251.1, there may be circumstances where, if a student is made redundant, Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd must make reasonable efforts to find the student a new employer. Our Human Resources department is at hand to assist students with identifying career opportunities as well as preparing them to apply for positions.

Risks of continuity of study

If Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd ceases to operate:

Where viable, Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will implement contingency plans which will allow existing learners to continue to complete their current programmes of study. The measures Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd has in place to manage this risk in its' main business means the likelihood of an imminent closure of Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd is very low. Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd manages this risk by having in place:

- Financial reserves that would allow us to continue to operate for a suitable duration



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- Business risk assessments and continuity plans that are reviewed by our Senior Management team
- Annual external auditing of finances that provides independent assurance of our business's performance and forecasts
- Engagement of legal and financial advisors

Where viable, Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will maintain key academic and administrative staff to allow current students to complete their programmes of study via the enrolled mode and timeframe. Where necessary, following consultation with employers and their students, students may be transferred to a Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd run distance learning mode of study for the same programme, with Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd drawing on its staff existing experience and expertise in delivering our programmes via a distance learning mode of study.

Failure to secure or maintain Registered Training Provider status

In the event of termination of agreement with the ESFA as a result of Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd being removed from the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) and therefore becoming unable to continue the delivery of apprenticeship programme. Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will engage with the ESFA to make arrangements for effective exit to minimise the disruption to both students and employers.

The detail of all apprentices, their apprenticeship programme and progress made, registration with awarding organisations and evidence that is required to contribute towards successful completion of their end point assessment would be made readily available.

The primary goal of Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd is to see every apprentice through to successful completion of their apprenticeship standard and every effort would be made under such circumstances to enable this to happen.

Withdrawal of programmes or modules

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd might make a strategic decision to withdraw a programme or module of study if it has been superseded by a new programme or module if it cannot be resourced, the content is no longer fit for purpose or current, or if insufficient numbers can be achieved.

The ongoing viability of programmes is monitored via the annual monitoring and quality assurance processes of Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd. As programme closure is a strategic, planned event with the process defined in operational policies, the risk is considered low.

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Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd manages this risk by having in place:

- Withdrawal of Programme and Module policy where every effort must be made to ensure that stakeholders are consulted, not disadvantaged in any way, have every opportunity to complete any programmes or modules they have been registered for or that suitable arrangements are made where the withdrawal of a programme or module is required.
- A process of consultation with those affected including employers and students and with delivery staff on the potential impact of withdrawal of programmes and modules.
- A tested ability to successfully manage a programme teach-out process.

The withdrawal of programmes or modules is reviewed to ensure the impact of any proposal is assessed and managed and that key stakeholders are consulted as a core part of the process.

Where viable a teach-out process will be proposed where current students would be given the opportunity to complete their current programme of study. The timing of the implementation of any proposed withdrawal would also consider prospective students and their place in the recruitment cycle.

All proposals would be considered by Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd Senior Management team and could not be implemented without their oversight and approval of the teach-out and impact management proposal.

Subcontracting

All subcontract arrangements are considered carefully so that in the event of a subcontractor being unable to fulfil their full obligations under the terms of the contract:

- The apprenticeship arrangements can be modified to encompass delivery directly in company, initially on a short-term basis and then possibly into the future. Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd has a range of associate assessors which could be utilised or the base broadened quickly.
- Alternative organisations that may be approached that have already been through the initial desk-based quality checks, for example through OFSTED report analysis and local reputation checks.

An analysis would be conducted to ensure an on-boarding process that will ensure a non-stop process flow, so not to disadvantage the student and employer.

Unable to recruit or retain suitably qualified delivery staff

The impact of an inability to recruit suitably qualified staff is low given the initial apprentice numbers the Technical Trainer who has in-depth experience of leading teaching, assessing and quality assurance to engineering apprentices. Harlaxton will utilise the Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd highly skilled workforce to assist in delivery of niche subjects along with suitably qualified contracted assessors/ quality assurance staff. As the provision grows, Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will seek to employ and develop within their current staff a specialist delivery team and network of experienced associate staff to draw on for temporary cover while permanent replacement staff are secured.

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd manages this risk by having in place:

- A Talent Management Strategy and Succession planning.
- A Remuneration and Nominations Committee who regularly reviews pay and benefit packages to ensure that Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd is positioned well to recruit and retain suitably skilled staff.
- Regular systems of appraisal and career development opportunities.
- Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will seek to fill gaps in staffing as quickly as possible by initially drawing on suitably skilled and experienced temporary staff.
- Where necessary, Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will draw on the network of associates who have worked for Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd in recent years to undertake contract roles until permanent members of staff can be recruited.

IT infrastructure

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd has an in-house team to maintain its IT infrastructure and has in place processes and protocols for the ongoing monitoring and management of risks to our systems such as malicious attacks or hacking but remains as vulnerable to these and new threats as other organisations.

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd manages these risks to business-critical systems and the back-up and restoration of data by having in place:

- Full database and system replication.
- Firewall protection and a skilled and up-to-date team of IT specialists who monitor system risks and maintenance.
- Regular Business Continuity testing to ensure business systems can be supported from our site and remotely.

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Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd will implement its business continuity plans to reinstate IT services as soon as possible. Remote classes or workshops that were scheduled during a system outage will be rescheduled and recordings and/or additional support material provided for students who were unable to attend sessions due to a Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd IT system issue.

System enabled contingencies daily back-up of our business-critical systems (Shadow Protect) ensures restoration of data can be achieved.

Communication

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd hold both the work and personal contact details of students on our secure information systems and have their calling tree contingencies. In addition, we hold contact details for the student's employer organisations including the teams responsible for overseeing apprenticeship programmes and the line managers of students who can enact their internal emergency contact procedures.

Through our training systems and available communication channels we have the following options to communicate with Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd Training staff and our students: our VLE, email, by telephone and by our designated social media groups. We also have the employer contact details for each student involved in our apprenticeship programmes. We use 'M-Files' for internal, organisational collaboration and storing of relevant programme data which is also backed up every 24-hours and can be accessed remotely as well as on-site.

Roles and responsibilities

Key emergency contacts and functional responsibilities (these include staff responsible for managing any crisis between the centre and the learner. The ESFA will be informed of any break in learning.

Emergency contacts

In case of a significant incident emergency, various contact details are available in the programme handbook for each apprenticeship cohort and on the Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd website:

www.harlaxton.com

These include:

Harlaxton Engineering Services Ltd main desk: 0844 335 8897 (24 hours)

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Info@harlaxton.com

ESFA Service desk contact information

Telephone: 0370 267 0001

Email: SDE.servicedesk@education.gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules-for-training-providers/contact-us>

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