



Staff Training & Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Policy

Author/Owner	Gemma Kennedy
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Policy Purpose

The WEC Group is committed to developing its staff including its apprentices to the highest standard possible in order to maintain the highest quality of products that we manufacture and the highest standards of professional services to our clients. Through professional development and training of our staff we will continue to maintain our competitive edge and to ensure and safeguard the future of the skills within our sector by developing the next generation of welders and engineers.

Policy Scope

Our people remain our greatest asset and this policy sets out our vision and guidance for training and development for all of our staff, across all of our divisions, including our apprentices. Employees at all levels will receive robust inductions into their role following recruitment and selection and will receive mentoring and training (formal and informal) as necessary and appropriate to the job role. All entry level roles will be developed through our commitment to apprenticeships, via our Engineering Academy's based in Blackburn and Rotherham. The WEC Group strongly supports recruitment of young people and those seeking job roles in engineering and welding; as such we have made a significant investment in our new facilities for training and developing our own apprentices.

Our Principles and Values

The WEC Group places staff training and continuous professional development (CPD) at the centre of its HR Strategy, which is critical for the achievement of our organisational objectives and very much in line with our company values, which are;

- 1) **INTEGRITY**- We will operate ethically, reliably and honestly.
- 2) **EXCELLENCE**- We will exceed expectations and strive to be the best we can.
- 3) **POSITIVITY**- We will bring energy and enthusiasm to both our work and learning whilst being supportive of others, our processes, our customers and the Company.
- 4) **TEAMWORK**- We will work together to be more efficient and productive, resulting in increased innovation, higher morale and improved retention.
- 5) **SAFETY**- We will promote a safety culture within the workplace which is fundamental to our operational excellence.

An essential part of management responsibility is to recognise the importance of staff motivation and career development for the achievement of corporate objectives and progression. As well as to develop talent pipelines that replace our ageing workforce, that enhance our digital capability, that diversify our workforce and that help to innovate our products and processes through learning. This policy outlines practices that will enhance our knowledge, expertise, professionalism and opportunities for growth that will be pivotal to future-proofing skills for our business.

Key Objectives

Through this policy, the WEC Group will:

1. Ensure that all employees including apprentices are provided a robust induction and training programme when joining the WEC Group.
2. Provide continuous support of development of all staff, including apprentices through coaching and mentoring.

3. Provide equal opportunities to training and development opportunities by standardising processes and procedures for requesting, accessing and undertaking learning flexibly
4. Provide opportunities to participate in career development activities that extend, enhance and advance employees' capabilities and capacity within the organisation
5. Continue to provide access to the WEC Group for entry level roles with opportunities to progress through our Engineering Academy for apprentices

WEC Group believes that a programme of CPD improves standards, raises morale, and assists with recruitment, retention, and succession planning.

Roles and Responsibilities

Line Managers/ Instructors

Line Managers, Instructors and Supervisors will be supported by the HR Department to identify opportunities for learning and development post-induction whether statutory or otherwise that help employees including apprentices to develop their capability and capacity. Through regular one-to-ones and performance appraisals, managers will identify training needs and offer training solutions that are either available through the company wide learning (online and face-to-face) or via a training request made on a case by case basis. All records of education and training will be completed by staff and reviewed for completion by line managers; all statutory training must be completed by the deadlines provided and monitored by HR.

Career development will also be discussed during regular one to ones and performance appraisals, developing our employees including our apprentices is key as demonstrated in our career footprint located on the Progression section on the Academy section of our website.

Employees including our Apprentices

Employees including our apprentices are responsible for completing all training as agreed through needs identification and/or discussions with line managers, by the deadlines agreed followed by reviews around application of learning within the workplace. Employees, including apprentices are actively encouraged to access training and development materials as made available by Professional Bodies (Appendix A) of whom they are members, in order to maintain professional licenses and certifications, via the minimum CPD hours required. All employees, including apprentices, must maintain detailed records of off-the-job and on-the-job training completed in order to evaluate impact of the training and return on investment from learning- this will be recorded on our Learner Management system (LMS) Aptem.

Employee mentors from across the business are assigned to Apprentices in all Divisions. These employee mentors are responsible for effective coaching and mentoring of our apprentices on a daily basis.

Apprentice Engineering Academy Staff

Our apprenticeship training and delivery team have specific and additional responsibilities to:

- Ensure that apprentices maintain and reflect upon their individual learning plans and update their portfolio evidence as part of the progress and achievement monitoring.

- Ensure that staff remain up to date and/or exceed the knowledge, skills, standards, behaviours and experience required within the sector to teach and support the development of our apprentices.
- Ensure the trainers identify ways to develop and enhance their own teaching knowledge and skills levels for the benefit of apprentices and as part of our quality assurance programme of activities for delivering high class apprenticeships.
- Ensure that line managers have access to the appropriate training, coaching and mentoring development opportunities to enable them to support our apprentices.
- Ensure that all apprentices receive up to date and relevant careers advice throughout their apprenticeship and beyond. This is achieved by explaining the WEC career development path from the recruitment process all the way through their apprenticeship journey and duration of their employment with the WEC Group.
- Ensure that apprentices have regular interaction and share success stories with other apprentices across the business in different year groups and also those employees who have now completed their apprenticeships and who have become skilled within the Group.
- Ensure that all apprentices joining the Engineering Academy learn about and be inspired by the journey of our Managing Director, Steve Hartley. This is to be embedded in the induction and also in the 'classroom' sessions. Steve began his career as an apprentice and through his learning, commitment and achievements, he is now the Managing Director of a multi-million-pound company.

Governance Team

Our Governance team monitor and review staff training and CPD across the Group for all Employees including Apprentices. The team ensure the training being delivered meets WEC Group's high expectations. The governance team meet on a quarterly basis to review all training and CPD (please refer to the review and reporting section below for more information around this). For Apprentices these high expectations are communicated to the Apprentice Engineering Academy team during their quarterly reviews where feedback from Management, co-workers, reporting staff, colleagues and apprentices is discussed as part of their 360 review.

Implementation our Policy

All requests for training and development can be submitted using the 'Employee Training Request Form' (Appendix B) located on the WEC Group staff intranet under 'HR'. Employees may also request a copy of the form from supervisors or Human Resources in hard copy format if/where necessary. All requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case and return on investment basis and where agreed, all signed off training must be completed by the staff member, followed by reflection with line managers and a thorough analysis of how and where to apply the new knowledge within the workplace. Impact from all training will be monitored and discussed at Governance Board level.

For the avoidance of doubt, the WEC Group will assess eligibility on a case-by-case basis commensurate to the role and based on factors for example, including:

1. The need to the business and potential benefits of the training.
2. The programme of study, design, accreditation, institution and cost-benefit analysis.
3. Employee attendance, commitment, attitude towards learning and behaviour.
4. Additional educational assistance requirements, as necessary for inclusive learning.
5. Potential disruption to the business; back-filling posts and associated costs and/or an assessment of existing commitments

Training Facilities

The WEC Group strive for excellence and want to ensure that we are offering the best training we possibly can. We have recently invested £3.2 million into a new Training facility in Blackburn which will enable us to offer a more advanced welding engineering courses by accommodating a range of state-of-the-art equipment, new classrooms and much more room for practical training. Both of our Academy's, which are based in Blackburn & Rotherham, allows WEC to deliver training to all our employees, including to our apprentices. The 25,000 sq.ft. facility in Blackburn not only enables shop floor training, but also has two full size classrooms for all our theoretical training needs, including access to computer systems for e-learning/ online training courses, which are managed, monitored and maintained by our corporate IT department.

Skills Competitions

Part of our commitment to our apprentice's development includes entering them into various skills competitions. The extremely high standards of our training programme have been proven already at the prestigious World Skills UK competitions where a number of our apprentices have been selected to represent the UK at the international World skills competitions. We believe this is a great opportunity for our apprentices, not only for their learning and development but also for access to new experiences, connections and networks, competitions like this have to offer.

Recognition of Training and Development

Our employees, including our apprentices, are the heart of our business and when training or further development is achieved, we aspire to recognise it. Annual ceremonies are held at our Engineering Academy's in Blackburn and Rotherham as celebratory events. The events are organised by the Apprentice Engineering Academy staff alongside our Marketing department. Upon completion of an apprenticeship, the Training Manager and Apprentice Coordinator along with the Line Manager evaluate all learners against their record of achievement and their learning journey. They are invited to an awards ceremony where they receive recognition for their hard work and commitment throughout their apprenticeship.

Reporting and Recording of Training and Development

Upon completion of any Training and Development, all relevant documentation relating to the training received and qualifications obtained is sent directly to the HR department by the Line Manager. The HR department stores this information securely and electronically, against the individual's personnel file. All training is also uploaded to the Group Training Database and the learning needs analysis updated accordingly. These records allow the HR department (together with the Line Manager) to assess and monitor the employee's development against the skills and competencies which have been identified for their given job role. The Training database will also allow Line Manager's to identify any further gaps in learning and address these appropriately.

Quality Monitoring and Training Evaluation

At the end of every training program, an evaluation is carried out through the use of forms, surveys and/or face to face discussion. The effectiveness of the training is measured on the basis of skills, knowledge and competency gained from the program and how is the employee expecting to implement the new skills whilst at work. Training activities are evaluated to determine whether the objectives and the expectation, on which the training modules are based, have been met.

Re-payment schedule (NOT APPLICABLE TO APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROGRAMMES)

For all non-mandatory courses, employees are required to sign and agree to a repayment schedule with the WEC Group. In the event an employee voluntarily leaves WEC they agree to the following repayment:

- During the program and within 24 months of completion- 100% of WEC's contribution must be repaid.
- Between 24 – 36 months of completion- 50% of WEC's contribution must be repaid.
- Between 36 – 48 months of completion- 25% of WEC's contribution must be repaid.

Review and Continuous Improvement

All WEC Group employees including apprentices share responsibility for the continuous improvement of the quality of training and development delivered across the Group. Continuous improvement of our Training programmes and the development of staff leads to higher operational and financial performance which impacts the profit share bonus available for all employees including our apprentices. Ongoing review of our Training and Development programme ensures we are able to strive for excellence and manufacture the best products we can for our customers.

Apprentice Engineering Academy Staff

For those directly involved in the provision of training and development there is a shared responsibility for ensuring that delivery and assessment practices are customised to all our employees needs and provide the best value to our apprentices.

Line Managers

For those in a Line Management/ Supervisor and Team leader role there is an equal responsibility to ensure that the training and development provided directly to our apprentices via their apprenticeship are the most responsive and highest quality possible.

Governance Team

The Governance team ensures a systematic approach to the continuous improvement through the monthly review of internal processes and the quality of training and development delivered through the apprenticeship programme.

Continuous improvement strategies include:

- a. The learner journey will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that modules are relevant to the Level 3 plate Welder apprenticeship. They will be reviewed against the regulatory and funding body's requirements, as necessary.
- b. Sampling of the training offered by the at the WEC Group will undergo an internal audit against regulatory and funding body's requirements annually.
- c. Feedback including the below will be gathered and analysed:
 - a. Employee/ apprentice questionnaire's
 - b. 360 reviews
 - c. Manager feedback in relation to the delivery Team
 - d. Delivery team feedback

e. Employee/Apprentice forum feedback

Any high-risk areas which are identified will be placed at the top on the agenda for the weekly Service Centre Management meetings.

Development of the WEC Group Training and Development team

Undertaking an ongoing thorough review and continuously striving for improvement will help advance the knowledge, skills and expertise of our Training and Development team.

To ensure our Training and Development Team are able to continuously offer excellent Training to develop our next generation here at the WEC Group we take pride on ensuring they attend all relevant and up to date training courses available to themselves. We encourage an environment of continuous development and that starts with our delivery team.

Reporting areas of improvement

Any issue or opportunity for improvement identified must be brought to the attention of the Training Manager.

This Training and Continuous Professional Development Policy is reviewed annually - additional reviews may be needed and amendments will be made and communicated where necessary.

NEXT REVIEW DATE: 26/11/2025

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

Steve Hartley, Managing Director

Key Contact Details:

WEC Group Managing Director: Steve Hartley
WEC Group Apprentice Training Academy staff: Kris Mercer, Training Manager Gemma Kennedy Phil Hosey Alex Medlock Edd Belshaw Jason Bradder
Human Resources: Gemma Kennedy, Group HR Manager Naomi Coates, MTL HR Manager
Health and Safety Officer: Mark Horton Lisa Sancho
IT Department: Ian Bray, Group IT Manager

WEC Group Designated Safeguarding/ Prevent Lead: Edd Belshaw
WEC Group Safeguarding/ Prevent officers: Gemma Kennedy Kris Mercer Alex Medlock Naomi Coates Jason Bradder Phil Hosey
WEC Group Engineering Academy Governing Team: Steve Hartley- Chair of Governors Gemma Kennedy- Governor Jamie Sharp Neil Burrows Derrick Connelly Chris Dickinson

Appendix A – Professional Bodies Affiliated with the WEC GROUP LTD

Fab/weld apprentices; SEG/Lincoln Electric. TWI (The welding institute)

Fab and weld employees; TWI (The welding Institute for engineering technician). IOSH.

Machinist apprentices; Pearson BTEC, City and Guilds, EAL (Ema awards Ltd)
Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) for Engineering Technician (EngTech)
Institute of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) for Engineering Technician (EngTech)

Appendix B- Employee Training Request Form

EMPLOYEE TRAINING REQUEST FORM

Full name of employee:	
Location/Site:	Division:
Manager's name:	
Outline the training need that has been identified and why it is required:	
Can the training/qualification be gained through an apprenticeship, if deemed appropriate after a training needs analysis?	
Is the employee or line manager aware of any particular training course that will meet the need? If so, please give details:	
The course will be funded by: (<i>circle below</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship Levy • Division • Employee • Other (please specify) 	
Expected cost of the course:	
Signed by Manager:	
Date:	
Signed by Director/ Head of Department:	
Date:	
Signed by Managing Director:	
Date:	