



BIS | Department for Business
Innovation & Skills

**THE NEW RIGHT TO REQUEST
TIME TO TRAIN**



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Investing in the skills of your employees is an investment in the future of your business. A better skilled workforce is more productive, more adaptable, more innovative and better motivated – better able to help you take your business to the next level.

To make skills a hot topic of discussion in the workplace, we are introducing a new right for employees to request time to train.

This leaflet summarises how the new right will work, and explains how you can make it work for your business.

WHAT IS THE RIGHT TO REQUEST TIME TO TRAIN?

From the 6th April 2010, 11 million employees in Great Britain will have a new right to request time to train.

The new right will work by giving employees a legal right to ask you to give them time away from their normal duties to undertake training that they believe will improve their performance and that of your business.

You will then be expected to seriously consider their requests and respond in a reasonable time period. You will be able to turn down requests where you have a sound business reason to do so.

The new right will closely follow the legal model of the existing right to request flexible working, making it easier for you to accommodate the new right in your business.

WHO WILL HAVE THE NEW RIGHT?

From April 2010, employees in businesses who employ 250 or more people will have the right to request time to train.

Only employees who have worked for you for 26 weeks will be eligible to make a request under the new right.

The right will be extended to cover employees in businesses of all sizes in April 2011.

WHAT SORT OF TRAINING CAN EMPLOYEES REQUEST?

Under the new right employees will be able to make requests for time to undertake any training that they think will help them to be more productive and effective at work, and that will help you improve the productivity and performance of your business.

That could mean employees making a request to undertake training that leads to the award of a nationally recognised vocational qualification, an NVQ (or SVQ in Scotland), or a Foundation Degree. Or it could be to undertake unaccredited and perhaps shorter training that will help them develop particular skills like how to use a new piece of software or equipment.

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO DO WHEN I RECEIVE REQUESTS FOR TIME TO TRAIN?

You will be expected to seriously consider all of the valid requests you receive, using processes similar to those you should already have in place to consider requests for flexible working.

As with the existing right to request flexible working, you will be able to decline requests where you have a sound business reason to do so. You will also be able to turn down requests where you do not believe that the training your employee has requested will help you improve the performance of your business.

The new right has been carefully designed to go with the grain of existing best practice. If you already invest in the skills of your employees and systematically review their training needs, you will be well placed to meet the requirements of the new right without making significant changes to your working practices.

The new right does not require that, where you agree to an employee's request, you should necessarily pay for the training – though you may well choose to do so, recognising the value of the investment.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Employer guidance on the new right will be published in January 2010 on the Business Link websites: **www.businesslink.gov.uk** for England, **www.business-support-wales.gov.uk** for Wales and **www.bgateway.com** for Scotland.



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Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. www.bis.gov.uk
First published November 2009. Crown Copyright. BIS/4k/11/09/NP. URN 09/1469