

EVALUATION OF THE LEARNERSHIP ACADEMY MODEL

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Importance of the services sector

Services have been the fastest growing component of world trade over the past 15 years and currently account for over 25% of cross-border trade. The recent growth in the global trade in services indicated that it outstripped growth in the trade in goods. In South Africa in 2001 the services sector accounted for almost two-thirds of formal employment and close to three-quarters of informal employment. On the one hand, part of this sector is known for its low-wage, low-skilled workers in the household and cleaning sub-sectors who will require training to enhance their skills and productivity. On the other hand, the services sector, especially the producer services sub-sector which includes six of the chambers of the Services SETA (i.e. General Business Services, Project Management, Labour Recruitment, Marketing Services, Property Services, Hiring Services and Postal Services), is growing faster than other sectors, which suggests that it will also be more labour absorbing in the future. New entrants will require appropriate training and accreditation. The services sector is, therefore, the environment where skills development can really make a difference. The Services SETA plays a very important role as the agent overseeing skills development and training in this important sector of the economy. Global and national trends in the services sector will have a profound influence on the training needs of Services SETA's members over the next five to ten years. In particular, the following issues are likely to loom large:

Restructuring at the enterprise level will be required to enhance productivity and competitiveness as barriers to trade are dismantled, which will lead to increasing exposure to international competition. . This will require programmes to enhance the skills of employees in this sector to bring them in line with international norms.

If low-wage, low-productivity sectors such as household and cleaning services are to provide any prospect of advancement for employees, training will be required to enhance the skills and productivity of employees in these sectors.

The fact that the services sector is growing faster than other sectors suggests that it will also be more labour absorbing in the future. New entrants into this sector will require appropriate training and accreditation. In the same vein, improvements in the earning potential of those employed in the informal segment of the services sector is dependent on the attainment of skills and accreditation as a prerequisite for higher productivity.

Taking training and skills development to a new level through learnerships

In April 2003, the Cabinet agreed that as from no later than March 2005, all work-based education and training programmes that result in a qualification on the National Qualifications Framework would be learnerships. Learnerships are distinctive because the emphasis of the programme is on its outcomes, the process combines both theory and practice, assessment is continuously done, it is intended to help meet the skills shortages that our country faces and it provides a launch pad for further learning. There

are two broad categories of learnerships: those that are provided for existing employees as part of the overall staff development of a company (18.1), and those that are provided for unemployed people (18.2).

National targets were set: Government wanted, by March 2005, a minimum of 80 000 people under the age of 30 to have entered learnerships, and 50% of those who had undertaken learnerships to be employed in full-time study, further training or in a social development programme within six months of completion.

The Services SETA has over 54 registered learnerships – 23 000 learners in learnerships as at July 2005. The Services SETA was alerted to problems that were identified with the current roll-out of learnerships.. Research was therefore conducted into this matter to try and improve the delivery process and to ensure the most important outcomes of the learnership: placement, and the enhancement of productivity. Outlearning (Pty) Ltd and The Portfolio Consulting Group consequently developed and introduced a Best Practice Learnership Model, which they labelled the Learnership Academy Model, as opposed to the current Workplace Learning Model. The National Productivity Institute also demonstrated their intention of assisting the Services SETA to enhance the productivity of potential workers in this important sector of the economy by taking part in this initiative.

The Learnership Academy Model was implemented, and the Services SETA expressed the need to evaluate this model. The Human Sciences Research Council was requested to look into this matter, as it had recently conducted a study entitled: *The development of methodology for measuring the impact of skills development in the services sector*. This study led to the development of a process and measurement tools and instruments which are highly applicable to an evaluation of the Learnership Academy Model. The intellectual property of the tools belongs to the HSRC and the Services SETA (50:50). The Services SETA also expressed the view that the experience and knowledge of the HSRC with regard to the services sector, as well as the process evaluation of skills development and labour market policies, make it suitable to conduct a study of this nature.

OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this project was to evaluate the new Learnership Academy Model. Two major desired outcomes are embedded in the overall objective: successful placement of learners after completion of their learnerships and enhanced productivity in the workplace. The entire programme, however, involves processes, products, and people or direct beneficiaries. The specific objectives therefore are to evaluate:

The process

This entailed the evaluation of the trajectories of the model. It included the recruitment and selection of learners, the process of formal training, workplace training, and the final outcome, namely placement.

The products

This refers to the evaluation of the overall training intervention in order to determine its effectiveness in providing learners with the appropriate skills to perform their duties in the workplace. It included evaluation of the following:

- Training providers
- Training material
- Training facilitators
- Training co-ordinators
- Workplace coaches.

Direct beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries are learners and employers. The following indicators are relevant:

- Level of learners' satisfaction with the mode of training
- Ratio of learners declared competent after assessment
- Level of application of the skills acquired
- Level of productivity after completion of training and absorption into the workplace (NPI)
- Ratio of learners placed in sustainable job opportunities after completion of the 12-month learnership (will be monitored by the Services SETA)

METHODOLOGY

The methodology comprised an evaluation of the process, the product and the beneficiaries. The diagram in Figure 1 below shows which methods were used to evaluate each component of the learnership model. The diagram is marked with red diamonds and shows where the following tools were used:

- A = analysis of documentation
- Q = questionnaire and the letter indicates which questionnaire
- I = interview

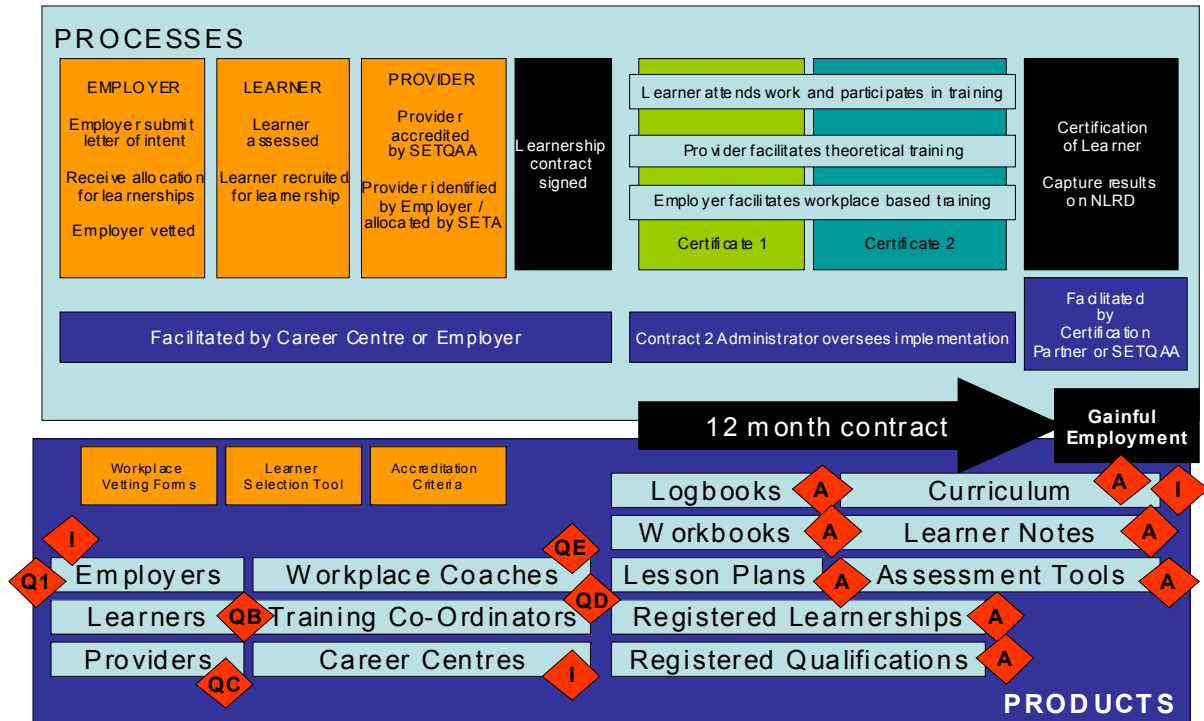


Figure 1: Implementation of Learnerships – Research Methodology

Q1 (see Annexure A)

QB (see Annexure B)

QC (see Annexure C)

QD (see Annexure D)

QE (see Annexure E)

Process evaluation

This involved evaluation of the entire programme from recruitment and selection, to initial formal training interventions and assessments, to the workplace training phase, through to final placement of the learner.

Product evaluation

This involved a review and evaluation of the overall training delivery in order to determine its effectiveness in providing learners with the appropriate skills to perform their duties. It included *inter alia* the evaluation of the selection of training providers, the quality assurance of the applicable training material, the different types of training interventions, the role of the training facilitators and co-ordinators, and the role of the workplace coaches.

The selection of appropriate training providers was investigated using a list of criteria established through the study of accreditation criteria used by the Services SETA (see

Annexure F), and criteria determined by the employer (either host or lead employer). The outcome of the SETQA accreditation process was also used to inform the final outcome of this component of the research. Workplace coaches at the employers and facilitators at the providers were interviewed on the process(es) used to prepare for the delivery of the learnerships.

Training material was evaluated to determine whether the requirements of the learnership (as detailed in the learnership registration documentation and SAQA-registered qualification) had been met.

The evaluation included a study of the formative assessments used by the provider to assist in demonstrating competence against the outcomes included in the qualification for the learnership. Tools and instruments designed by the provider were evaluated against the requirements of the final summative assessment for each learnership.

A list of criteria was used to perform the evaluation and included the integration of Bloom's taxonomy, NQF level descriptors and the requirements detailed in the unit standards making up the qualification.

Continuity and consistency between learning occurring in the classroom and at the workplace is facilitated by the facilitator (classroom), the workplace coach and the training material. A questionnaire was designed to determine suitability of the training interventions used for the learnership delivery and was completed by facilitators and workplace coaches. Four different questionnaires were used, namely:

- Questionnaire B1: Facilitators (Internal)
- Questionnaire B2: Facilitators (Streams)
- Questionnaire B3: Facilitators (External)
- Questionnaire E: Workplace Coaches

Constant reference was made to existing curricula or documentation describing the outcomes of the learnership. The budget determined the sample size and scope of the questionnaire.

Informal interviews were also held with the curriculum design team and the learnership management team.

The success of the implementation is determined by the way in which the learning process is co-ordinated and managed. Facilitators, workplace coaches and learners were assisted to complete questionnaires eliciting information regarding different aspects of this function of learnership implementation.

A focus group was held during which learnership co-ordinators were required to complete a questionnaire.

Evaluation of beneficiaries

This involved a survey of learners with a view to evaluating certain relevant aspects of the two processes as well as to determine the benefits and impact of the different modes of learnership delivery. Aspects such as the following were evaluated:

- Learner satisfaction with the different training modes
- Outcome of assessment after completion of training with regard to competency
- The application of learners' skills acquired during training.

The NPI conducted a few case studies in order to determine the benefits of the training model for employers.

Measuring final indicators

This task involves the measuring of the final indicators of success: Placement of learners in sustainable employment after completion of the learnership. This task has not been completed yet, because the learners are tracked for six months after completion of their learnership.

OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

The rest of this report discusses the **recruitment and selection process** (Chapter 2), the **training process** (Chapter 3), including Certificates One and Two, learners' perceptions of the classroom-based experience, training facilitators who give the training for Certificates One and Two, workplace training and the role of workplace coaches, logbooks, learners' experiences of workplace training, and the role of the training co-ordinators, and the **training products** (Chapter 4) including the curricula, assessment, moderation and certification. Chapter 5 provides general **conclusions and recommendations** for the different parts of the learnership implementation.

CHAPTER 2: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

The procurement of learners for the pilot study was initially conducted and managed by the Career Centres of the Services SETA. This process entailed recruitment through various modes and selection through the use of certain assessment procedures. After Learning Point had gained experience with these selected learners, it became evident that some of the recruitment and selection procedures and instruments needed to be reviewed.

RECRUITMENT MODES

A few different recruitment modes were applied. The Career Centres initially ran an advertisement in a few newspapers to recruit learners in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Two problems were encountered with this method. The first was that no time limits were specified in the advertisement despite the fact that Learning Point had specific time schedules to adhere to. As a result, many applications still came through after the planned cut-off date. The second problem was that the advertisement contained generic information about the Services SETA and did not convey enough details about learnerships and the project as such. It was later found that potential learners did not understand what learnerships were and the advertisements did not explain this.

After this, Learning Point broadcast radio talks in Mpumalanga and Polokwane. The broadcasts were on local radio stations, and a representative from the Services SETA explained the role of the SETA and provided information on learnerships and the project. The initiative in Mpumalanga was evaluated as successful as there was overwhelming reaction, whereas the effort in Polokwane did not yield the same results. Two reasons were given for the difference in success: time of day and popularity of the radio station. The Polokwane talk was broadcast in the early morning, and it was also evident that the radio station in Mpumalanga was more popular with local listeners than the one selected in Polokwane.

After the unsuccessful recruitment attempt in Polokwane, Learning Point contacted the local office of the Department of Labour who provided them with a database of unemployed people in the area. The only problem was that the database was not up to date, so Learning Point staff had to phone all the potential candidates on the list to verify their employment status.

Learners were asked how they found out about the learnership. More than three-quarters (79%) of the learners indicated that they heard about the learnership project by word of mouth and only 6% said that they were made aware of the project through an advertisement in the newspaper.

SELECTION PROCESS OF RECRUITED CANDIDATES

Once the recruitment process had been completed, the Career Centres conducted literacy and numeracy tests in order to select the final candidates for the learnerships. One of the constraints of this selection procedure was the fact that the Services SETA only pays for three assessments – i.e. one candidate out of three must be selected. This practice caused some problems. It resulted in the selection of candidates who did not meet the minimum requirements. At the one extreme learners were selected who were under-qualified and under-prepared for the NQF Level 4 curriculum in terms of communication and literacy, while at the other extreme there were learners who were over-qualified and who as a result found the first phase of training – fundamental and core aspects of the curriculum - repetitive and uninteresting. Learning Point reacted to this challenge by interviewing the learners in order to establish a complete profile and accordingly adjusted the curriculum to accommodate the diversity of learners' needs.

It was also noted that there was a discrepancy between the processes of the different Career Centres. The procedures, instructions and tools that they use are not standardised (see following section on assessment).

In view of the above-mentioned problem, Learning Point revised the learner recruitment and selection strategy. The following strategy was applied afterwards:

Phase 1:

This phase entailed identifying an appropriate pool of prospective learners in a specified geographic region through various sources (e.g. data bases of the Department of Labour's Regional Labour Centres, or the regional Services SETA offices). This was augmented with targeted advertising campaigns using local newspapers or radio stations. All applicants were then screen on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Grade 12 certificate
- Completed some tertiary training (e.g. short skills programme or course, incomplete degree or diploma
- Unemployed
- SA ID document
- 18-35 years old.

Phase 2:

Screened and selected applicants underwent a series of assessments to determine the following (assessment instruments and results are discussed in the following section on assessment):

- The functional literacy and numeracy levels of candidates
- Learning potential as measured by the LPCAT

- If needed, certain in-basket assessments to determine specific workplace-related skills.

The demographic requirements for proposed learnerships such as age, citizenship, qualifications and previous work experience were also re-checked.

Phase 3:

During phase three the Learning Point recruitment team conducted a structured one-on-one behavioural interview. The purpose of the interview was to gain insight into and understanding of the candidate's personality and attitude towards learning. The interview was also used to determine their motivation for wanting to pursue the learnership. Lastly, specific competencies that could lead to successful completion of the learnership were assessed.

Phase 4:

Only after completion of Phase 3 were candidates referred to the prospective lead and/or host employer where they were interviewed again and directed through the learnership contracting process. Unsuccessful candidates were placed on a database for future reference or other opportunities.

ASSESSMENT FOR SELECTION

As indicated in the previous section, learners were assessed for their functional literacy and numeracy levels, their potential, as well as their competency in specific work-related tasks.

The Career Centres' assessments

The Career Centres' assessments included literacy and numeracy tests as well as in-baskets assessments. Results of the literacy and numeracy assessments had to be adjusted due to the high failure rate of candidates.

The main area of concern was that the results of the Career Centre selection assessments and procedures could not provide learners who met the entry-level requirements of the learnership. A number of factors appeared to contribute to this:

- Overload – the huge demand to complete a set number of assessments in a short period of time
- Lack of moderation procedures
- Business imperative to sign on as many learners as possible, or to meet allocation targets set by the Services SETA as quickly as possible

Learning Point assessments

Owing to the problems with assessment through the Career Centres, Learning Point introduced additional instruments and procedures. It was decided to conduct the standardised ELSA Intermediate ABET Assessment tool in Polokwane in order to determine the literacy and numeracy skills performance of learners. The QED (SpEEEx) was also used in other regions. The LPCAT was also introduced to determine the learning potential of learners.

ELSA is an acronym for English Literacy Skills Assessment. It is a norms-based, group-measuring instrument that quantifies and diagnoses. ELSA quantifies a respondent's English language (and numeracy) skills performance, equating the competency input performance level to that of a South African English mother-tongue speaker. Its diagnostic value is that it shows up an individual's strengths and weaknesses in an English-language work/training environment. It assesses the language competency input levels of respondents with educational levels above Grade 10/NQF 2. The results of the Polokwane assessment pointed out some areas of concern. Of the 40 learners assessed, less than 5% showed a functional English literacy level equal to NQF Level 2 (Grade 10) and less than 10% a functional numeracy level of ABET 4. Learning Point investigated these results and found that most learners experienced problems with solving mathematical questions related to the calculation of percentages, fractions and converting decimals into fractions and vice versa. With regard to English literacy efficiency, it seems that one of the biggest problems is an inadequate vocabulary at an adult level (NQF4).

The SpEEEX was conducted in Johannesburg. Due to the tight deadlines which Learning Point had to recruit learners for the Satellite Academies, they were unable to adequately apply QED assessments without disrupting the recruitment process. In addition, resource limitations such as call centre capacity prevented them from drawing the learners into this process. As a result, the overall number of learners assessed with the QED was far lower than initially agreed upon.

The LPCAT is a standardised South African psychometric instrument that measures learning potential. The decision to implement this tool was made by Learning Point after it was discovered that the employers rejected some of the learners. The instrument was applied to ensure that the selected learners had the potential to engage with learning material at an NQF Level 4. However, the results were not used in the end due to the time it took to receive feedback from the consultants.

SELECTION OF A LEARNERSHIP BY LEARNERS

The majority of learners showed a low level of career awareness. Most of them did not possess enough information about the world of work to allow them to select a field or learnership that would suit their vocational interests and aptitudes. No career guidance was offered in this regard. The learners who were not successful were sent away without any career guidance intervention.

More than a quarter (28%) of the learners indicated that they had not selected a learnership themselves. Most of the learners who indicated that they had selected the

learnerships for which they were registered said that their choices were based on their interests and self-perceived abilities.

CHALLENGES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

The following challenges were identified for the recruitment and selection process:

- The Career Centres could not supply the level of learners that was needed for the learnership project.
- The ratio of learners selected through the Career Centres was one out of three candidates. This was due to financial constraints. The Services SETA only pays for three assessments per one selection. It was found that a ratio of one out of five ensured a better selection of final candidates in terms of holding applicable qualifications and meeting other requirements such as age, being unemployed, and being South African citizens.
- The lack of standardised assessment procedures and tools across the Career Centres.
- The lack of a customised and standardised database used by the different Career Centres.
- Disbursement for only three assessments by the Services SETA.
- Lack of career guidance - the learners who are not successful leave the system with no career guidance or re-routing.
- Employers do not give feedback as to why candidates are unsuccessful in the selection process.
- Since the induction session is not standardised it is difficult to assess its efficacy – learners at some centres may receive better information than at others.
- The in-basket assessment is only applicable to people who already have work experience. All the applicants are unemployed and most of them have never had a job up to now.

STRENGTHS OF THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

The following strengths of the recruitment and selection process were identified:

- The recruitment process in the second phase of the project was more effective when the additional recruitment and selection practices were introduced. It allowed Learning Point to reach their target and select more suitable learners for the learnerships, especially with respect to attitude, qualifications, interests and needs.
- Through the radio broadcast methodology, learners received better information about the learnerships and the process. It was also noted that the learners in the second phase had a very good attitude and a high level of motivation that could have been the result of an improved recruitment and selection process.
- Co-operation between the Career Centres of the Services SETA and Learning Point, as well as between the regional Labour Centres of the Department of Labour and Learning Point was good and good working relationships were established.
- Most of the learners in the satellite areas were aware of and appreciated the opportunity given to them by the Services SETA to receive training and enhance their possibility of entering the labour market.
- The Johannesburg Career Centre finds the in-basket the most valuable assessment tool. It is a two-hour activity and the experience is that if a learner cannot finish the task, it will be difficult for him or her to complete the learnership successfully.

CHAPTER 3: TRAINING PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Delivery of learnerships is complicated by the difficulty of integrating workplace-based learning with classroom-based learning. Successful delivery therefore requires the creation of an optimal learning environment by the accredited provider and the employer. This can only be achieved through careful preparation (by provider and employer), development of suitable training material (including formative assessments), design of suitable training interventions – high-quality delivery in the classroom and careful coaching in the workplace - and the careful co-ordination and management of the learning process.

The Services SETA has used two models for the implementation of learnerships:

- **Learnership Academy Model:** 14 learnerships have been integrated and are delivered in three different phases: fundamental learning, core learning and elective learning. Learning Point acts as the umbrella provider and contracts other accredited providers or facilitators to present the learning content.
- **Workplace learning model:** An accredited provider delivers a learnership. The provider is dedicated to the delivery of one type of learnership.

The following section gives an overview of Learnership Academy Model implementation and the different role-players involved in delivery.

LEARNERSHIP IMPLEMENTATION

The learnership model requires that an employer be awarded an allocation for learners undergoing specific learnerships and must submit a letter of intent. The employer is then vetted by the Services SETA and recruitment of learners can commence. Learners are assessed and qualify to enrol in the various Services SETA learnerships through the Career Centres. Employers can either accept learners recruited in this way from the Career Centres, or recruit their own learners at their own expense and simply ask the Career Centres to take the learners through the assessment process.

The Career Centres then assist the employers, through an induction process, to identify suitable accredited providers for the learnerships in which they are to be involved. Once the provider has been identified, the four-party contract can be signed by learner, employer, provider and the Services SETA. This signals the start of the learnership. Learning is facilitated using the logbook at the workplace and the accredited training materials of the accredited learnership provider.

In an attempt to standardise the delivery of learnerships, the Services SETA has designed the learnership curriculum and a logbook that facilitates the formative assessments of learners in the learnerships.

Providers are accredited against the stringent criteria determined by the ETQA division of the Services SETA.

Formative assessments are done throughout the implementation of the learnership and are facilitated by the provider. The Services SETA also appoints a Contract II administrator who is responsible for seeing that implementation runs smoothly. This Contract II administrator is required to provide the Services SETA with three reports detailing progress of the learnership and giving an indication that all parties are complying with the requirements of the learnership as stipulated in the contract. Should this not be so, then the Contract II administrator is expected to propose remediation or take appropriate action.

Remediation can affect any of the following areas of responsibility within the learnership:

- Remediation of learners' numeracy and literacy based on the formative assessments of learners.
- Remediation of providing because providers have not fulfilled the requirements of the learnership curriculum.
- Remediation at the workplace because learners are not being exposed to appropriate or sufficient workplace experience in line with the learnership curriculum.
- Transfer of learners to a different workplace.
- Termination of a learnership due to misbehaviour of the learner.
- Correction of payments by the employer due to unauthorised deductions being made from learners' stipends.

Once the workplace-based training and classroom-based training have been completed, the provider must generate a report on the outcome of the formative assessments of each learner in the learnership. These formative results are moderated or verified by the SETQAA, and learners who are deemed competent at this level qualify to participate in the final summative assessment. The latter assessment is either facilitated by a certification partner (appointed by the chamber under which the learnership falls) or by the SETQAA if a certification partner has not been identified.

The final summative assessment is an integrated assessment designed to assess the learner's competence against the exit level outcomes of the qualification on which the learnership is based.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

Figure 2 below shows the relationship between the Services SETA, the learner, the provider and the employer.

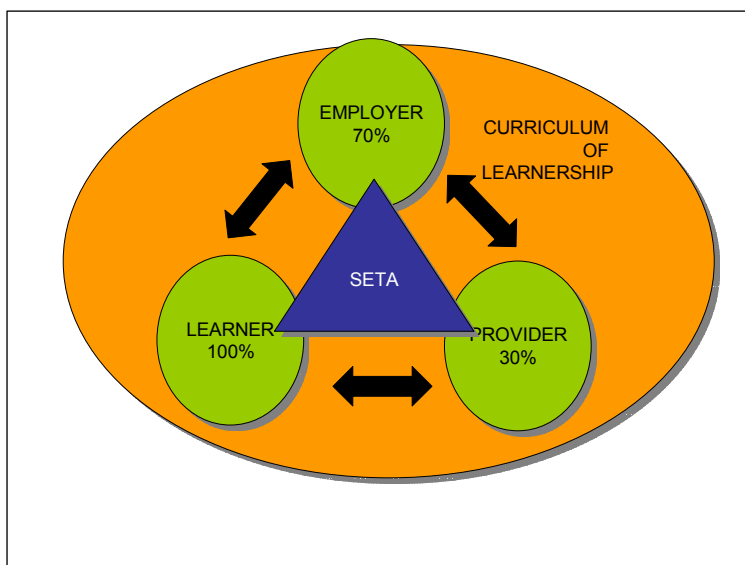


Figure 2: Relationship between the stakeholders

The roles and responsibilities of the different role-players are stipulated in the Learnership Agreement and are as follows:

Employers (including mentors and coaches)

Rights:

- require the learner to perform duties
- require the learner to comply with the rules.

Responsibilities:

- comply with its duties in terms of SDL and all other related legislation
- provide the learner with appropriate training in the work environment
- provide appropriate facilities to train the learner
- provide the learner with adequate supervision at work
- release the learner during normal working hours to attend off-the-job education and training
- pay the learner the agreed learning allowance
- conduct on-the-job assessment or cause it to be conducted

- keep up-to-date records of learning
- advise the learner of the terms and conditions of his/her employment
- advise the learner of workplace policies and procedures
- apply the same disciplinary, grievance and dispute resolution procedures to the learner as to other employees.

Learners

Rights:

- be educated and trained
- have access to required resources
- have performance assessed and have access to results
- receive certificate
- raise grievances in writing.

Responsibilities:

- must work for employer as part of the learning process
- be available for and participate in all learning and work experience
- comply with workplace policies and procedures
- complete any timesheets or any written assessment tools supplied by the employer and attend all study periods and theoretical learning sessions.

Providers

Rights:

- have access to the learner's books, learning material and workplace.

Responsibilities:

- provide education and training in terms of the learnership
- provide the learner with support as required by the learnership
- record, monitor and retain details of training provided
- conduct off-the-job assessment
- provide reports to the employer on the learner's performance.

Services SETA (includes Career Centres, certification partners and Contract II)

Rights:

- withhold registration of learnership agreement
- de-register the learnership agreement
- terminate or withhold approval
- grant or refuse requests for preventing a learner from attending training
- grant or refuse requests for financial assistance
- enforce the rights and obligations of any party to the agreement.

Responsibilities:

- monitor performance quality of the training provider (accredit)
- keep a record of the registered learnership agreement
- keep records of qualification or credit attainment
- create a link between the learner and the DoL's section on counselling and career advice
- assist with the uninterrupted running of the Learnership
- oversee the implementation of the learnership (contract II)
- issue certificates to the successful learners (certification partner)
- attempt to reconcile any disputes
- monitor and enforce applicable labour legislation.

Coaches vs. mentors

Coaches should:

- Have daily contact
- Be experienced managers who guide the actions of less experienced managers
- Provide rapid feedback on performance and learning by doing

- Perpetuate the status quo.

Mentors should:

- Have monthly contact
- Stretch and challenge
- Provide vision and motivation.

TRAINING DELIVERY THROUGH THE LEARNERSHIP ACADEMY MODEL

This part examines the training delivery process as applied by Learning Point, which includes Certificates One and Two, learners' perceptions of the classroom-based experience, training facilitators delivering the training for Certificates One and Two, workplace training and the role of workplace coaches, logbooks, learners' experiences of workplace training, and the role of the training co-ordinators.

Training presented in the Learning Point project is offered by various accredited providers of the 14 learnerships. Outlearning is the leading provider appointed by the Services SETA to oversee the implementation and quality assurance of the project. The company has training venues in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban. Satellite sites have also been opened in East London, Port Elizabeth, Nelspruit and Polokwane.

The training delivery is divided into two components, namely Certificate One and Certificate Two. Certificate One includes all fundamental and core learning across the 14 learnerships. Certificate Two includes the elective learning for each of the 14 specialities.

Certificate One

The training for Certificate One is offered by Outlearning as the accredited provider. This teaching is supported by learner notes and workbooks. These documents are discussed in the section 5.1 below.

While Outlearning provides most of the core and fundamental training for Certificate One, specialist external providers are contracted to offer the six streams of learning identified by the Learning Point curriculum development team. These streams include:

- Business and Personal Communication
- Computer Skills
- Personal Life Skills
- Numeracy and Financial Skills

- Workplace Administration Skills
- The World of Work Skills
- Service and Customer Relations Skills.

Critical to the success of this component of the model is that all the fundamental unit standards of the learnerships should be included. The curriculum of this component is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

The name of this phase suggests that learners should receive a certificate of achievement at the end of the phase. However, this is not so as no summative assessments are performed. During the course of this research, the name Certificate One was consequently changed to Phase One.

Certificate Two

The elective training components are provided by accredited elective providers for each learnership. The training material and logbooks or workbooks are developed by each training provider and are currently not standardised.

Table 1: Providers for Elective Training

Elective Learnership	Elective Provider
Marketing and Sales	Birdcalls
Marketing Communication	Birdcalls
Field Market Research	Birdcalls
Recruitment	Laser Recruitment
Venture Creation	Laser Recruitment
Contact Centre	Customer Centric Solutions
Project Management	BRP Project Management
Secretarial Administration	Training and Management
Supervisor	Training and Management
Property	College for Real Estate
Payroll	VIP Payroll
Fundraising	Not offered
Funeral Services	Not offered

Elective Learnership	Elective Provider
Hiring	Not offered

Quality assurance is carried out by Learning Point through regular evaluations of the training materials and the facilitators. Unfortunately, reports on these evaluations were not available at the time of the research project.

A brief study of the available contracts with the elective providers for this component of the learnership offering revealed that the number of unit standards that are included in this component differ for each elective learning component. This meant that some elective providers took three days of training for their component, whereas others took 25 days to complete the elective training.

Table 2: Unit Standards for Elective Training (Phase Two)

Learnerships	Unit Standards for Elective Training
Field Market Research	10021 / 10016 / 10020 / 10026 / 10023 / 10019 / 10015 / 10014 / 10018 / 10014 / 10025 / 10027 / 10012 / 10013 / 10011 / 10017 / 10022 / 10028 / 10029 / 10030 / 10031
Marketing and Sales	10021 / 10016 / 10020 / 10026 / 10023 / 10019 / 10015 / 10014 / 10018 / 10014 / 10025 / 10027 / 10012 / 10013 / 10011 / 10017 / 10022 / 10037 / 10038
Marketing Communications	10021 / 10016 / 10020 / 10026 / 10023 / 10019 / 10015 / 10014 / 10018 / 10014 / 10025 / 10027 / 10012 / 10013 / 10011 / 10017 / 10037 / 10038
Funeral Services	Not available
Hiring	Not presented
Fundraising	Not presented
Contact Centres	10047 / 10313 / 10321 / 10322 / 10323 / 10324 / 10326 / 10327 / 10328 / 10329 / 10331 / 10330
Team Leader	Not available
Project Management	10131 & 10132 / 10133; 1034 & 10143 / 10140/10141/10142 / 10135 / 10145 / 10136 / 10137 / 10139 / 10144 / 10150 / 10146 / 10147 / 10148 / 10149
Secretarial and	9244 / 12929 / 8607 / 10026

Learnerships	Unit Standards for Elective Training
Administration	
Payroll Administrator	Not available
Recruitment Consultant	10978 or 10170 (SO 1 -9) / 10980 (SO 10 - 11)
Residential Property Practice	Not available
Venture Creation	Not available
Supervisor	Not available

When this discrepancy was discussed with the elective providers, some confusion seems to have arisen because the learners had not yet undergone any summative assessments. This meant that learners might still not have mastered core or fundamental competencies, but were expected to proceed to the elective training.

Elective providers also expressed unhappiness that although the scope of the providers differed, they were paid the same rates for their work. This made it not viable for some providers to offer elective training.

Knowledge of OBE and its practical application should be a consideration when appointing facilitators and external providers. The research revealed that some of the terminology was not fully understood or mastered by the facilitators, and included:

- Criterion-reference assessment
- Critical cross-field outcomes
- Certification
- Norm-reference assessment
- Outcomes-based education.

Facilitators must be completely conversant with OBE to be able to facilitate outcomes-based training and, specifically, to change their paradigms in order to apply fair and reliable outcomes-based assessment practices.

Learners' perceptions of classroom-based training

The third intake of learners in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town were asked to reflect on their classroom-based experiences. About three-quarters (73%) of the 390 learners indicated that their experience of this part of the learnership was satisfactory, 21% said it was somewhat satisfactory and only 6% viewed it as unsatisfactory. Three-quarters (75%) reported that the orientation and induction programme prepared them for the learnership.

Almost all the learners (97%) were very satisfied with their facilitators and the style of lecturing. The majority (85%) indicated that most of the facilitators knew their names. Most (98%) of the learners said that the facilities were comfortable and that the training material was easy to use (94%), easy to understand (92%), and that it was written in such a way that it encouraged them to interact with the content (93%). About a third (31%) indicated that they experienced problems gaining access to resources such as computers and libraries.

The teaching styles that were mostly used by facilitators were group discussions and interactive classes. Assessment included a range of methodologies such as presentations, homework, and group, individual, written and oral assignments. They further indicated that formative assessments and feedback were done mostly on a daily basis. However, approximately half (48%) of the learners reported that they did not know what to expect during the summative assessments. Most of them were also not sure when the summative assessment would occur – 50% said at the end of the completed programme, 20% at the end of each module, 14% at the end of the assignments, and 4% at the end of a semester.

Learners were asked to indicate to what degree they understood certain learnership concepts. The results also show that the concepts related to *assessment*, i.e. formative assessment, summative assessment, norm-referenced assessment and criterion-referenced assessment, were difficult for them to understand. Other concepts that they struggled with were *accredited training provider*, *registered assessor*, *unit standard* and *moderation*.

Training facilitators delivering training for Certificates One and Two

Interviews with facilitators (internal and external providers) were conducted after learners had received classroom training (Certificates One and Two). Some of the major challenges that they highlighted were the following:

- Learners who were over-qualified and might therefore have been frustrated by the slower pace of teaching and/or learning in the classroom.
- Learners who had never worked and had no idea of the expectations or challenges in the workplace.
- Learners who were not screened properly and therefore had different expectations of the content of the learnerships or type of work that the learnership would require.
- Workplaces that did not offer appropriate workplace experience, so that learners could not apply their theory in the workplace.
- Balancing of individual needs of learners against the group's needs in the classroom.
- Insufficient time was available for teaching. Learners were therefore forced to learn at a specific pace.
- Learners' high expectations from the learnership and sometimes their lack of responsibility towards learning.

- Large classes – although most indicated that the classes usually consisted of 25 learners.
- Workplaces were not always aware of what a learnership was and what was required by coaches at the workplace.

The facilitators also reported that more information needed to be given to them regarding learnerships as a whole and the curriculum of this project in particular – especially with regard to the elective learning. This affected the ability of the facilitators to assist learners who had never worked before to transfer knowledge and skills to the workplace.

Workplace-based training

The learnership is offered according to a schedule. Initially the schedule was as follows:

Week 1 – 2:	Classroom-based training
Week 3 - 6:	Workplace-based training
Week 5 – 6:	Workplace-based training
Week 7 – 12:	Classroom-based training
Week 13:	Workplace-based training
Week 14 – 15:	Classroom-based training
Week 16 – 18:	Elective training
Week 18 – 36	Classroom-based training
Week 37:	Workplace-based training
Week 38 – 39:	Assessment
Week 40 – 49	Workplace-based training
Week 50:	Closure

However, the tremendous organisational resources required resulted in the schedule being adjusted as follows:

Week 1 – 4:	Classroom-based training
Week 5 – 12:	Workplace-based training

Week 13:	Classroom-based training
Week 14 – 16:	Elective training
Week 17 – 29:	Workplace-based training
Week 30:	Classroom-based training
Week 31 – 32:	Assessment
Week 33 – 39:	Workplace-based training
Week 40:	Closure

The latter schedule allowed learners an initial period of orientation and training based on the content of Phase one. This allowed learners to learn fundamental skills required in the workplace (week 1 – 4). It also gave Outlearning the time to find suitable workplaces for learners.

Learners were then exposed to the workplace where they could be orientated and inducted (week 5 – 12). The week back in the classroom allowed learners to be debriefed by Outlearning and time for formative assessments (week 13). The elective training was then started (week 14 – 16).

Learner profiles were developed for the first phase of the learnership. These were generic profiles of what learners should know and do, and their preferred attitudes towards executing specific tasks. Information sheets were also generated to assist employers to understand the type of experiential training and exposure required by learners for each of the different learnerships. See Addendum G for these information sheets.

Learners' perceptions of workplace-based training

Learners who were part of the third intake in Cape Town were asked about their experience in the workplace. Almost all (92%) of the 120 learners reported that they thought that their jobs were appropriate to the learnerships in which they were participating.

The questions regarding their coaches revealed that approximately a quarter (23%) did not know who their coaches were. Half of the learners who had access to coaches reported that they spent more than 10 hours a week with them. Twenty percent indicated that they spent less than 10 hours a week with coaches, while the rest (20%) said that they had had less than five hours a week with a workplace coach. More than three-quarters (82%) expressed the view that their coaches knew what they were supposed to do at the workplace. Learners felt that the main reason for coaches who did not know what was expected of them was that the coaches were not well informed.

Almost three-quarters (72%) reported that the jobs they were involved in at the time assisted them to achieve the outcomes of the learnership. This group felt that the

workplace experience was applicable and covered the practical part of the learnership and that they did in fact gain relevant experience and develop skills. Some of the learners who indicated that their current jobs did not assist them to achieve the learnership outcomes (28%) felt that this was due to the fact that coaches were not available and that they did not have access to all the activities at work that could provide them with the necessary experience.

It seems that there were some learners who experienced difficulties regarding workplace training and assessment. Almost a quarter (23%) indicated that they did not keep their logbooks up to date at the workplace. This mostly related to problems experienced with the workplace coaches. It seems that there was not consistency in the checking of the logbooks – 41% reported that their coaches did not check their logbooks at all. This agrees with the reports of the workplace coaches. They indicated that the training by the workplace coaches did not include working through the logbooks, or reference to the curriculum of the learnership. This meant that the coaches were not aware of the purpose or use of the logbooks.

In summary, learners highlighted a few issues that caused them problems in the workplace. These were *inter alia*: placement of learners in jobs that did not match the learnerships that they were registered for, coaches who were not well informed, a lack of sufficient computer training, and poor communication between learners and Learning Point.

Logbooks

Workplace-based training is facilitated through the logbooks. However, a study of which logbooks were available to Learning Point learners revealed that not all the logbooks were available from the Services SETA. Documents that were available at Outlearning were also not comprehensive or complete. Table 3 below indicates the availability of the logbooks:

Table 3: Availability of logbooks

LEARNERSHIPS	LOGBOOKS USED	LOGBOOKS AVAILABLE	COMMENT
Field Market Research	NO	YES	
Marketing and Sales	YES	YES	Not complete
Marketing Communications	NO	YES	
Funeral Services	NO	NO	Not registered
Hiring	NO	NO	Not registered
Fundraising	NO	NO	
Contact centres	YES	YES	Only customer centre
Team Leader	YES	YES	
Project Management	YES	YES	Only workshop component
Secretarial and Administration	YES	YES	Only 4 of 11
Payroll Administrator	YES	YES	Whole logbook and record of competence
Recruitment Consultant	YES	YES	Whole logbook
Residential Property Practice	NO	NO	
Venture Creation	NO	YES	
Supervisor	YES	YES	Only final assessment

Two of the learnerships are not registered, and logbooks have therefore not been developed by the Services SETA.

The logbooks are not standardised, as Services SETA had not standardised the format across the different learnerships.

A logbook is used to record workplace experience and to collect evidence of competence against the unit standards included in the learnership. Lack of

standardisation meant that there were great differences in the content and format of the logbooks that are used by Outlearning, namely:

- The logbooks were prescriptive and included activities for each unit standard.
- The logbooks were very generic and offered little guidance to learners regarding the type of evidence that was valid, reliable, authentic, current and sufficient.
- Some of the logbooks included examples of summative assessments.
- Some of the logbooks required mentors or coaches to sign off the work completed by learners, and other logbooks did not make this provision.
- Some logbooks included the unit standards and their assessment criteria, and others did not. This meant that the learner did not have a readily available source to check sufficiency and validity of the evidence collected in the logbook. It also offered no guidance to mentors or coaches in this regard.

Workplace coaches

Training of workplace coaches did not include working through the logbooks, or reference to the curriculum of the learnership. This meant that the coaches were not aware of the purpose or use of the logbooks. Some commented that although they signed off logbooks, this was done without proper study of the content and was done hastily.

The material supporting learning in the workplace included:

- learner notes for phase one
- logbooks
- learner profiles
- KASH¹ profile

Workplace coaches indicated that they were not aware of all of these documents and therefore had to decide for themselves how to determine what workplace experience the learner would be exposed to.

The content of the workplace coach training included general coaching skills, lateral thinking and an indication of brain profiles.

One training session was held at the beginning of the project in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. It was found that the actual workplace coaches did not attend this training, but that it was attended by the managers or owners of the companies at which the learners were placed.

¹ KASH refers to Knowledge, Attitude, Skills and Habits of learners.

The second training session held in the third quarter of the project (end of 2004) was more practical and made reference to a learning plan as well as to the curriculum of the learnerships. However, the training was not specific to each learnership. Examples of the content of the training are shown in Figure 3 below.

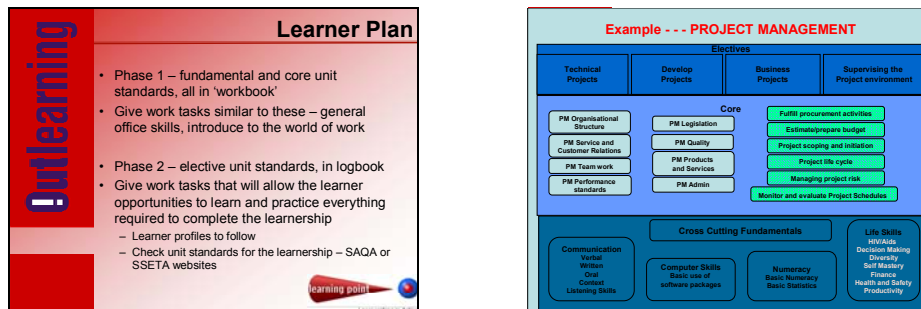


Figure 3: Slides used in the second coach training session

This session was of more assistance to the workplace coaches, but was not very well attended in Johannesburg and was not presented in all the regions.

During the briefing of employers, however, reference was made to the different components of the learnership, including the logbooks. Once again the information given during these sessions was not communicated to the workplace coaches.

This is rather alarming as 70% of the learnership is dependant on workplace-based training. Lack of structure in the workplace and lack of training of workplace coaches according to the curriculum of the learnership make the workplace-based training inefficient and ineffective.

The logbooks are an integral component of the formative assessments. Some providers used their own logbooks to facilitate the collection of workplace-based evidence. However, this is not true for all the providers.

Training co-ordinators

Training co-ordinators were appointed to facilitate the transition from classroom to workplace. The co-ordinators reported that some of the most important factors that led to the unsuccessful adaptation of learners in the workplace were language barriers, restrictions set on activities by the employers, high expectations of learners, and incompetence of learners to execute tasks.

Training co-ordinators indicated that some of their greatest challenges when working with learners were the following:

- Managing learners who have unrealistic expectations of the learnership and the workplace.
- Handling disciplinary issues.

- Motivating learners who are not committed to a chosen learnership, and who do not understand what the learnership is about.
- Dealing with learners' feelings of rejection and low self-esteem when they are not placed.

They also pointed out that they experienced many challenges with regard to their contact with and management of the workplaces where learners were placed. Some of the major challenges were:

- Insufficient time available due to high learner:co-ordinator ratios.
- Convincing employers to attend coaching sessions.
- Making workplace coaches understand their role and responsibilities in respect of accommodating learners in the workplace.
- Employers giving learners irrelevant duties.
- Employers exploiting learners – using them as cheap labour.
- Explaining to the employers the macro picture with regard to the development of skills for the labour market.

The co-ordinators recommended that a good administration and management process should be put in place. This should include training of co-ordinators, methods to enhance good teamwork between the co-ordinator, learner and workplace coach, and guidelines with regard to overseeing logbooks, assignments for learners and workplace reports on learners.

The following recommendations were made with regard to the management of the different relationships:

- A good administration and management process should be put in place. This should include training of co-ordinators, methods to enhance good teamwork between the co-ordinator, learner and workplace coach, and guidelines for overseeing logbooks, assignments for learners and workplace reports on learners.
- Employers should be made aware of the macro picture of skills development in the workplace.
- An agreement should be signed with the employer before the learner is placed which states the commitment of the employer to identify a workplace coach and the training of such a coach.
- The training co-ordinators should be responsible for the training of the workplace coach, mentor and other HR staff who are involved in training.

- Closer relationships between the training facilitators and co-ordinators should be fostered. Regular feedback sessions should be scheduled, not only during assessment time.

All the training co-ordinators who took part in the focus group indicated that they were not sufficiently equipped to perform their duties. Amongst the greatest constraints were the lack of sufficient and continuous training and the big learner:training co-ordinator ratios. They argued that a measurement such as a standardised guideline and reporting system would have supported them in their tasks.

The training co-ordinators summarised their major problems as follows:

- Finding suitable workplaces for the learners.
- Companies that are willing to take learners, but which are not registered with the Services SETA.
- Handling undisciplined learners.
- Workplaces that are not motivated – many employers are only interested in the tax rebates.
- Getting both employers and learners to commit themselves to the full learnership programme.
- High expectations of employers of learners, and high expectations of learners.
- Establishing a system and process for ongoing communication with employers.

The following recommendations were offered by the training co-ordinators to solve some of these problems:

- The Services SETA should sign a MoU with other SETAs so that learners can be placed with companies not registered with the Services SETA.
- Employers should first be properly briefed on the skills development strategy in general, and then specifically on what the outcome of the learnerships should be.
- A better learner:training co-ordinator ratio is needed to establish weekly contact and communication with employers.

Contract II administrators

Contract II administrators were initially not appointed for the Learning Point project. Contract II administrators are independent service providers appointed by the Services SETA to oversee the implementation of a learnership and to ensure that all the parties to the contract are fulfilling their responsibilities.

Contract 2 administrators could have assisted Outlearning to identify problems and support them in correcting these problems. They could also have assisted Outlearning

to provide and collate the results of the formative assessments. Communication could have been enhanced between the different parties with such a party involved.

CHAPTER 4: TRAINING PRODUCTS

The training products refer to the curricula, provider accreditation, assessment - both formative and summative - moderation and certification.

LEARNERSHIP CURRICULA

A curriculum can be defined as a set of planned learning experiences used in formal education to transmit information, cultural knowledge, values and attitudes (Genis, 1997: 22).

The curriculum of the academy for the purpose of this research project therefore includes every document supporting the implementation of the planned learning experiences. These include the following documents that are available for Certificate One and compiled by Learning Point:

- Registered qualifications
- Registered learnerships
- Lesson plans
- Learner notes
- Learner workbook.

Certificate Two, or the elective learning component, is offered by accredited specialist providers. Providers are required to present their own training material and workbooks. Where possible, standardised SETA logbooks are used.

The 14 learnerships included in the Learning Point Project are all registered at NQF level 4. They include:

- Field Market Research
- Marketing and Sales
- Marketing Communications
- Funeral Services
- Hiring
- Fund raising
- Contact Centres
- Team Leader

- Project Management
- Secretarial and Administration
- Payroll Administrator
- Recruitment Consultant
- Residential Property Practice
- Venture Creation.

However, two of the learnerships, namely Hiring and Fund Raising, are not registered with the Department of Labour and were therefore not offered in the project.

All these learnerships are based on registered qualifications. However, not all the learnerships were registered. This had certain implications, namely:

- The Services SETA had not yet developed curricula or learnership implementation documents (such as logbooks) for these learnerships.
- Providers could not yet apply for accreditation or offer these learnerships.

The qualifications on which each of these learnerships are based is presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4: List of Learnerships in the Learning Point Project

Name of Learnership	DoL Reg. Number	Qualification	NLRD Number
Field Market Research	23Q23000 121 120 4	National Certificate in Market Research	20894
Marketing and Sales	23Q23001 721 134 4	National Certificate in Customer Management	20907 / 20899
Marketing Communications	23Q23001 524 134 4	National Certificate in Marketing communications	20903
Funeral Services	23Q230019 17 121 4	National Certificate in Funeral Services Practice	23775
Hiring	Not registered	Further Education and Training Certificate: Hiring Operations	48889
Fund Raising	Not registered	Further Education and Training Certificate: Fund Raising	48854
Contact Centres	23Q23002214 145 4	National Certificate in Contact Centre Operations	21791

Name of Learnership	DoL Reg. Number	Qualification	NLRD Number
Supervisor	23Q230028 56 140 4	National Certificate: Generic Management	23656
Project Management	23Q230008 20 120 4	National Certificate: Generic Project Management	21160
Secretarial and Administration	23Q230032 54 140 4	National Certificate: Business Administration Services	35928
Payroll Administrator	23Q23003126 153 4	National Certificate: Payroll Administration Services	35927
Recruitment Consultant	23Q2300624 120 4	National Certificate: Labour Recruitment Consultancy	21728
Residential Property Practice	23Q23003530 145 4	National Certificate: Property Practice	20187
Venture Creation	23Q23001327 142 4	National Certificate: Venture Creation	23953

The presentation of these learnerships is offered in two phases (initially referred to as Certificate One and Certificate Two):

- Phase One includes the fundamental and core learning common to all 14 learnerships.
- Phase Two includes the elective learning for each learnership.

Phase One comprises two components, namely the fundamental learning components and the six streams of learning.

Phase One

Phase one comprises the fundamental learning and core learning common to all 14 learnerships integrated into the project. As all the learnerships are registered at NQF Level 4, fundamental standards are similar and the necessary learning is aligned to these standards (Gilmour, 2005).

Table 5 below offers a summary of all the fundamental unit standards included in each of the learnerships:

Table 5: Fundamental Unit Standards

Unit Standard No.	Unit Standard Title	Learnership												
		Contact Centre	Field Market	Marketing Comm	Marketing & Sales	Recruitment	Supervisor	New Venture	Payroll	Sec Admin	Project Man	Funeral	Fund raising	Hiring
12153	Use the writing process to compose texts required in the business environment													
12417	Measure, estimate and calculate physical quantities and explore, critique and prove geometrical relationships in 2- and 3-dimensional space in the life and workplace of adult with increasing responsibilities													
14947	Describe data communications													
7465	Collect and use data to establish complex statistical and probability models and solve related problems													
7468	Use mathematics to investigate and monitor the financial aspects of personal, business, national and international issues													

Unit Standard No.	Unit Standard Title	Learnership												
		Contact Centre	Field Market	Marketing Comm	Marketing & Sales	Recruitment	Supervisor	New Venture	Payroll	Sec Admin	Project Man	Funeral	Fund raising	Hiring
7470	Work with a wide range of patterns and inverses of functions and solve related problems													
7483	Solve problems involving sequences and series in real and simulated situations													
7485	Demonstrate understanding of real and complex number systems													
7568	Demonstrate knowledge of and produce word processing documents using basic functions													
8968	Accommodate audience and context needs in oral communication													
8969	Interpret and use information from texts													
8970	Write texts for a range of communication contexts													
8972	Interpret a variety of literary texts													
8973	Use language and communication in occupational learning programmes													
8974	Engage in sustained oral communication and evaluate spoken texts													

Unit Standard No.	Unit Standard Title	Learnership												
		Contact Centre	Field Market	Marketing Comm	Marketing & Sales	Recruitment	Supervisor	New Venture	Payroll	Sec Admin	Project Man	Funeral	Fund raising	Hiring
8975	Read, analyse and respond to a variety of texts													
8976	Write for a wide range of contexts													
8977	Evaluate literary texts													
8979	Use language and communication in occupational learning programmes													
9015	Apply knowledge of statistics and probability to critically interrogate and effectively communicate findings on life-related problems													
9016	Represent, analyse and calculate shape and motion in 2- and 3-dimensional space in different contexts													
9224	Implement policies regarding HIV/AIDS in the workplace													
9303	Communicate verbally with clients in a financial environment													
9302	Access information in order to respond to client enquiries in a financial services environment													

From this table one is able to see that many of the fundamental unit standards are shared by the learnerships. However, learning material designed and developed by Outlearning does not indicate which unit standards are included in the alignment. This made the reporting of the results of formative assessments very difficult, and it needed to be addressed towards the end of the learnerships for learners involved in the first group or tranche.

The curriculum for phase one of the training is depicted in the diagram below.

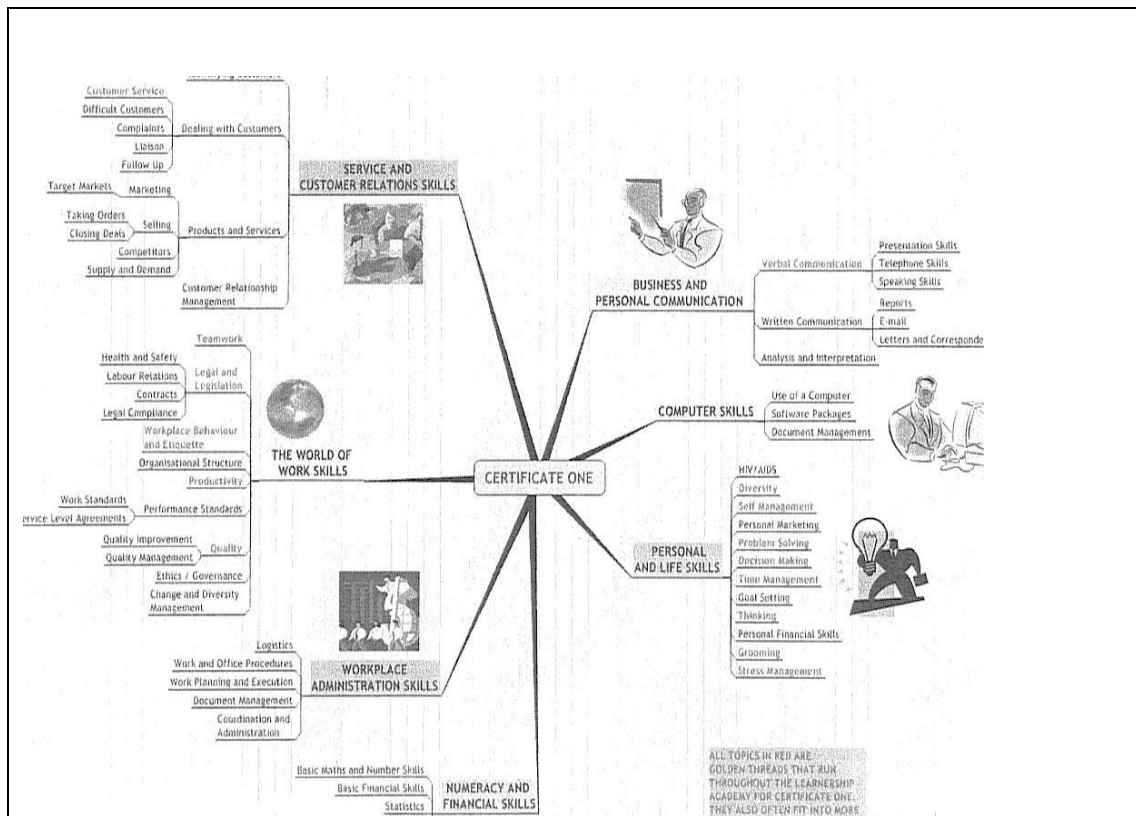


Figure 4: Curriculum for Phase One of the Learning Point Project

Source: Learning Point, 2004: Learner Workbook, p14

The content includes:

- Business and Personal Communication
- Computer Skills
- Personal Life Skills
- Numeracy and Financial Skills

- Workplace Administration Skills
- The World of Work Skills
- Service and Customer Relations Skills.

This content is presented over a period of five weeks (25 contact days). Learners are required to complete the learner workbook in order to log their workplace experience. Learners are also presented with a full set of Learner Notes. An analysis of the workbook and notes are included under the section on Training Materials.

Streams of learning

One of the components of phase one is referred to as “Streams”. They are:

- Business and Personal Communication
- Computer Skills
- Personal Life Skills
- Numeracy and Financial Skills
- Workplace Administration Skills
- Service and Customer Relations Skills.

This theory is presented on Day 13 to Day 18 of the initial part of the Academy training.

A summary of what is contained in each of these streams is provided in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Summary of Content Included in Six Streams

Stream	The learner will be able to:	Unit standards
Business and Personal Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write reports, e-mails, letters and other correspondence using business language • Write appropriately for the audience for which the communication is intended • Communicate in writing, with confidence in a business environment • Interpret and use information from txt • Read, analyse and respond to a variety of texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication studies and language • Accommodate audience and context needs in oral communication • Interpret and use information from texts • Write texts for a range of communicative contexts • Engage in sustained oral communication and evaluate spoken texts • Engage in sustained oral communication and evaluate spoken texts • Read, analyse and respond to a variety of texts • Write for a wide range of contexts • Use the writing process to compose texts required in a business environment • Accommodate audience and context needs in oral communication
Computer Skills	Not available	
Personal Life Skills	Not available	

Stream	The learner will be able to:	Unit standards
Numeracy and financial skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate ways of managing financial risks in one's own life Describe the basic principles of personal income tax Use mathematics to investigate and monitor the financial aspects of personal, business and national issues Collect and use data Retrieve and correlate statistical data Produce and use spreadsheets Use basic mathematic and numeric skills Be aware of some of the macro economic issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and use spreadsheets for business Measure, estimate and calculate physical quantities and explore, critique and prove geometrical relationships in 2- and 3-dimensional space in the life and workplace of the adult with increasing responsibilities Retrieve and correlate statistical data applicable to Contact Centres Demonstrate understanding of real and complex number systems
Workplace administration skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate an understanding of the business environment worked in Co-ordinate and maintain effective office procedures and processes Conduct documentation management to support office process Implement administration processes according to requirements Manage administration records Maintain administration manuals prioritise use of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics Co-ordinate and maintain effective office procedures and processes Implement an action plan for business operations Work planning and execution Document management Implement administration processes according to requirements Maintain and control admin and logistics manage admin records maintain admin manual Demonstrate knowledge

Stream	The learner will be able to:	Unit standards
		<p>and understanding of the Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1991</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate basic understanding of the primary labour legislation that impacts on business • Contracts • Legal compliance • Workplace behaviour and etiquette • Ethics and governance
Service and customer relations skills	Not available	

Unfortunately the curriculum for each of these streams was not available. It is also apparent from Table 6 that the unit standards used in aligning the course content have not been included. During the investigation documentation regarding the alignment was not available.

PROVIDER SELECTION AND ACCREDITATION

Although Outlearning is an accredited training provider for the Services SETA, it outsourced much of its training to specialist accredited providers for the six streams in the core learning and the elective learning components of the training.

An application form was designed by Outlearning to check whether these accredited providers met all the necessary requirements. The form is attached as Annexure F.

According to the Services SETA accreditation policy (Services SETA, 2002: 6 and 7), “in order to be accredited as a provider of education and training a provider must include in its application for accreditation the following:

- Proof of registration as a provider in terms of the applicable legislation at the time of the application for accreditation. In the case of a provider not being registered but is found to be in compliance with the specified criteria for accreditation, provisional accreditation for a period of six months may be granted in which registration must be sought and obtained.

- Evidence of a quality management system which includes policies, procedures and review mechanisms to ensure that the degree of excellence specified for provision and assessment of education and training is achieved.
- Proof of an ability to develop, deliver and evaluate learning programmes which culminate in specified registered standards or qualifications.
- Proof of necessary financial, administrative and physical resources to implement and sustain education and training.
- Proof of policies and practices for staff selection, appraisal and development.
- Proof of policies and practices for learner entry, guidance and support systems.
- Proof of policies and practices for the management of off-site practical or work-site components.
- Proof of policies and practices for the management of assessment.
- Proof of a system and the facilities for maintaining and updating detailed information about past, present and potential learners.
- Proof of reporting procedures to the ETQA of the Services SETA.
- Proof of a policy and procedural guidelines that ensures learners have access to appeal assessments outcomes (refer to SETA policy on Procedural Guidelines for Appeals)."

Providers wishing to participate in the Learning Point project were required to attend an orientation workshop during which the curriculum for the project was presented. They then had to complete a letter of intent and submit it for approval to the Learning Point Management Team. This is attached as Annexure G.

Criteria for selection of these external specialist providers set by Learning Point included:

- BEE
- Work with available fees, roll-out and schedule
- Willingness and ability to provide learning in an integrated way
- National reach
- Networking mentality
- Established training record
- Accredited with a SETA or in the process of being accredited
- Ability to handle a large number of learners

- We research the right to request or endorse a particular facilitator
- References must be available.

(Learning Point, 2004a)

The status of providers used by Outlearning was checked on the Services SETA website, and Table 7 below summarises the status of these providers:

Table 7: Accreditation Status of Providers

Provider	Accreditation Status*	Learnerships
Outlearning	Not on website	
Birdcalls (now Agon Marketing)	Institutional	Direct Marketing (not applicable here)
Laser Recruitment	Not on website	
Customer Centric Solutions	Institutional	Contact Centre
BRP Project Management	Institutional	Project Man
Training and Management	Not on website	
College for Real Estate	Not on website	
VIP Payroll	Not on website	
Fundraiser	Not on website	
Funeral Services	Not on website	

**According to the Services SETA website accessed on 25 April 2005*

All the information was not available on the website and the accreditation status of these providers could therefore not be confirmed. It is therefore not clear how Outlearning confirmed the accreditation status of the providers. This will have to be ratified by the SETQAA.

Contracts were signed with most of these providers which detailed the standards that had to be used when developing the content. The research showed that some providers were given more credits to cover than others, although the amount of contact days allowed for the sessions were the same. This is apparent from the comparison in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Unit Standards for Elective Training (Phase Two)

Learnerships	Unit Standards for Elective Training
Field Market Research	10021 / 10016 / 10020 / 10026 / 10023 / 10019 / 10015 / 10014 / 10018 / 10014 / 10025 / 10027 / 10012 / 10013 / 10011 / 10017 / 10022 / 10028 / 10029 / 10030 / 10031
Marketing and Sales	10021 / 10016 / 10020 / 10026 / 10023 / 10019 / 10015 / 10014 / 10018 / 10014 / 10025 / 10027 / 10012 / 10013 / 10011 / 10017 / 10022 / 10037 / 10038
Marketing Communications	10021 / 10016 / 10020 / 10026 / 10023 / 10019 / 10015 / 10014 / 10018 / 10014 / 10025 / 10027 / 10012 / 10013 / 10011 / 10017 / 10037 / 10038
Funeral Services	Not available
Hiring	Not presented
Fund Raising	Not presented
Contact Centres	10047 / 10313 / 10321 / 10322 / 10323 / 10324 / 10326 / 10327 / 10328 / 10329 / 10331 / 10330
Team Leader	Not available
Project Management	10131 & 10132 / 10133; 1034&10143 / 10140/10141/10142 / 10135 / 10145 / 10136 / 10137 / 10139 / 10144 / 10150 / 10146 / 10147 / 10148 / 10149
Secretarial and Administration	9244 / 12929 / 8607 / 10026
Payroll Administrator	Not available
Recruitment Consultant	10978 or 10170 (SO 1 -9) / 10980 (SO 10 - 11)
Residential Property Practice	Not available
Venture Creation	Not available
Supervisor	Not available

Some elective providers only needed to cover the content of three unit standards, e.g. Recruitment Consultant learnership, whereas others had to cover the core and elective unit standards of the learnership, e.g. Marketing and Sales learnership.

Feedback from the elective providers indicated that they felt that they had not been given a clear indication of what had already been covered in phase one of the learnership. They were also not clear about precisely what had to be covered in each of their components. For some providers this implied that it was not viable to offer the programme to learners for the elective component as they were paid per learner and not for each contact day. Providers also had to cover their travel and accommodation costs.

FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

The qualifications on which the learnerships are based are all unit standard-based qualifications. To this end learners have to be assessed at two levels: at unit standard level and at exit level outcome for the qualification. The first should be assessed and captured by the providers of the training and the latter by the SETQAA or the certification partner as appointed by SETQAA.

Formative assessments

In the Learning Point project formative assessments were initially not performed by Outlearning. However, during the course of the research project, formative assessments were introduced, and an example is attached as Annexure I.

The research also revealed that none of the formative assessments done during phase one were relayed back to the related unit standards or captured and forwarded to the SETQAA (Rudd, 2004b).

Training providers were interviewed and asked about the formative assessments that were performed at various stages of the learnerships.

The QALA document, providing the SETQAA policy on learner achievements, indicates that learner's achievements can only be recorded by SETQAA if:

- The provider is accredited.
- The formative results are captured on the SETQAA off-line system.
- The learners are on the SETQAA system.

Once SETQAA verifies the formative results, learners are able to participate in the final summative assessment.

Formative assessment tools

The certification policy of the SETQAA requires that tools used by the accredited providers are either moderated by the SETQAA or by the certification partners. This ensures that the tools are aligned to the requirements of the learnerships and that learners are assessed in appropriate ways that fulfil good assessment practices (SETQAA, 2004).

A method adopted by the SETQAA to standardise the assessments was the design and use of logbooks for each of the learnerships. Learning Point also designed their own logbook for the fundamental learning that they facilitate.

Table 9 presents a list of the formative assessment tools used in the Learning Point project to facilitate these assessments.

Table 9: Formative Assessment Tools

Name of Learnership	Phase One: Fundamental and Core Learning	Phase Two: Elective Learning
Field Market Research	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	Formative tools moderated by certification partner (MFSA)
Marketing and Sales	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	Formative tools moderated by certification partner (MFSA)
Marketing Communications	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	Formative tools moderated by certification partner (MFSA)
Funeral Services	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	Unknown
Hiring	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	Unknown
Fund Raising	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	Unknown
Contact Centres	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	SSETA logbook
Supervisor	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	
Project Management	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	Unknown
Secretarial and Administration	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	SSETA logbook
Payroll Administrator	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	Unknown
Recruitment Consultant	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	SSETA logbook
Residential Property Practice	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	Unknown
Venture Creation	Learning Point Learner's Workbooks	SSETA logbook

Summative assessments

Final summative assessments are performed by the SETQAA or the certification partners appointed by a chamber. Table 10 presents the learnerships and the allocated certification party responsible for the summative assessment of learners on the learnerships.

Table 10: Certification Partners for the Learnerships

Name of learnership	Name of certification partner	Status of certification partner
Field Market Research	MFSA	A
Marketing and Sales	MFSA	A
Marketing Communications	MFSA	A
Funeral Services	Unknown	
Hiring	Not presented	
Fund Raising	Not presented	
Contact Centres	CCISA	C
Supervisor	Unknown	
Project Management	Unknown – possibly Excellence in Training	
Secretarial and Administration	Learnsys	C
Payroll Administrator	Unknown	
Recruitment Consultant	Unknown – possibly Prodigy	
Residential Property Practice	Unknown	
Venture Creation	Performance Enhancement Consultants	A

* Status of certification is A = appointed; C = being contracted; N = not applicable

Certification partners

The certification model that has been implemented by the SETQAA is presented in Figure 5 below. This model infers that the certification partner is contracted by the SETQAA, after being identified by the chamber. The certification partner then moderates the formative assessment tools of the accredited provider for their learnerships. The certification partner is also responsible for facilitating the external moderation of the formative assessments performed by these providers.

After completion of the learnership, the provider reports the learners' moderated results to the SETQAA. The certification partner then proceeds with the final summative assessment and presents the moderated results for verification by the SETQAA. It is important to note that the SETQAA only accepts assessments and moderations performed by registered constituent assessors and moderators (SETQAA, 2004a).

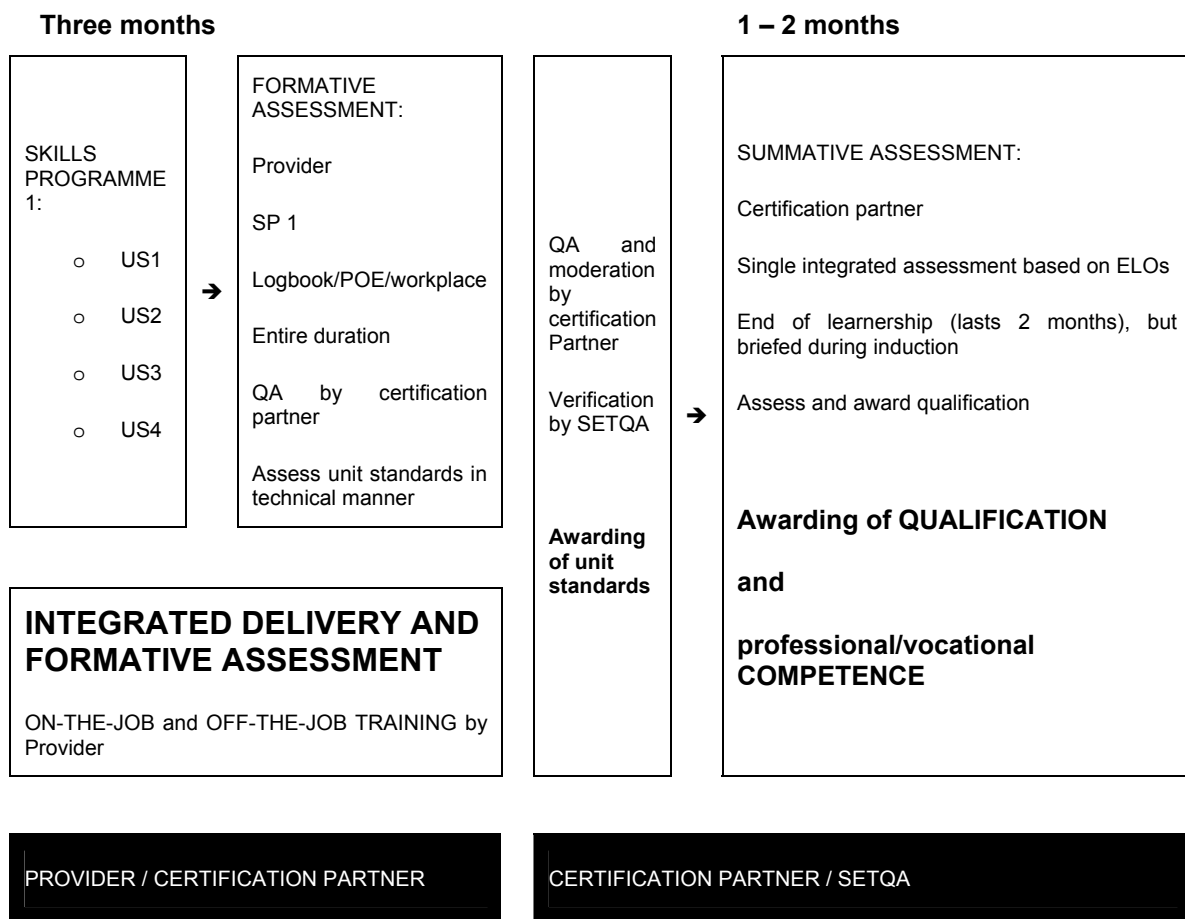


Figure 5: Certification Model of the SETQAA

The following section discusses the certification process being followed by each of the certification partners or SETQAA, as presented in Table 10.

Marketing Federation of Southern Africa (MFSA)

The MFSA Quality Management Unit has been contracted by the Services SETA to manage the certification function for all the marketing learnerships offered by the Services SETA. This includes the learnerships in Marketing and Sales, Marketing Communication and Marketing Research.

The MFSA Quality Management Unit has been involved in standards setting through the SGB Marketing, the design of the marketing learnerships and the development of the marketing logbooks used by the SETA in the implementation of the learnerships. The certification model used by the SETQAA was also introduced for the first time by this unit.

Call Centre Institute of South Africa (CCISA)

The Call Centre Institute of South Africa was established within the Services SETA to facilitate the certification and Phase 2 administration of all Contact Centre learnerships of the Services SETA.

This unit has a similar history to that of the MFSA and has also participated in standards generation, learnership design and development of logbooks used to facilitate the formative assessment of all the Contact Centre learnerships.

Learnsys

Learnsys is currently negotiating their status as certification partner for Secretarial Administration with the Business Administration Chamber of the Services SETA.

Performance Enhancement Consultants (PEC)

PEC has been appointed as the certification partner responsible for assessment of learners on the New Venture Creation and Small Business Services learnerships.

MODERATION

Three types of moderation are involved in the formative and summative assessment of learners on learnerships:

- Assessment tools are moderated by the SETQAA or by the certification partner.
- Formative and summative assessments are moderated internally after assessment by providers and/or certification partners.
- Formative and summative assessments are moderated externally if internal moderation has not yet been carried out. Should this be the case, then the SETQAA will verify results of assessments performed by the provider or certification partner.

CERTIFICATION

The issuing of the certificates for learners on learnerships remains the responsibility of the SETQAA. These certificates include a SAQA hologram and are kept under secure conditions at SETQAA.

Learners can only be certified once SETQAA has checked that:

- The provider is accredited.
- All formative results are captured on the off-line MIS system.
- All formative results have been externally moderated.
- The final summative assessment has been performed, moderated and verified (where necessary).
- The final summative assessment results are captured on the off-line MIS system.

INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARKING

The implementation of the skills development legislation has been benchmarked against the work completed in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and various countries in Europe. However, a very close working relationship has been forged between the Australian Qualifications Authority and the Services SETA.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

As a pilot, the Learning Point project has been a great learning ground. Throughout the project every effort was made to correct mistakes and to ensure improvement in the communication between the parties involved in the implementation. In view of this, the project can be regarded as a success.

Interviews with facilitators revealed that they need more information on learnerships as a whole and the curriculum of this project in particular – especially with regard to elective learning. The lack of this information affected the ability of the facilitators to assist learners who had never worked before to transfer their knowledge and skills to the workplace.

Learners were generally well informed and well looked after where the employer took full responsibility as required by the learnership contract. However, this was not so where the employer was not aware of what the specific learnership required or did not fully understand the learnership requirements. At these sites learners were not getting enough exposure to the workplace-based training required of each learnership.

However, selection of the learners needs to be refined. Feedback from the facilitators indicated that the learners were not all at NQF Level 4 in terms of their linguistic and numerical competence. Some of the learners were graduates and found the pace of learning slow, which was a problem for facilitators who had to work at the pace of the slowest learners.

Some learners struggled to converse and study in English, which made it difficult for them to learn. Elective learning providers commented that these problems should have been addressed in the first phase of training, and therefore learners who were not yet competent would have been prevented from proceeding with the final phase of training.

Initially employers were not involved in the recruitment of their learners. This meant that although a learner may have the necessary skills and knowledge to do the job, he or she may not fit into the organisational culture of the employer. This lack of involvement was later corrected and resulted in employers being far more involved and taking much greater responsibility for the successful implementation of specific learnerships.

Training of workplace coaches is the foundation for the successful implementation of a learnership at a host site, which was a shortcoming of this project. However, the lack of training was compensated for by the constant contact by the learnership co-ordinators and managers. Employers who were interested to know what needs to be done received coaching on each learnership over the period of the year. Employers who showed little interest did not receive coaching. The onus to comply with the requirements of the learnership in such cases fell on the learners themselves.

A developmental approach was applied to the curriculum. As new information was received, workbooks and notes were refined. Formative assessments were

implemented by Outlearning as the need for feedback grew. The complexity of implementing 12 different curricula across hundreds of employers and hundreds of learners exacerbated the impact of changes that were implemented and increased the workload of employers and facilitators alike. The generic nature of the first phase of training, as well as the lack of summative assessments before commencement of the second phase of training resulted in the elective trainers having to cope with learners who were not yet competent at the fundamental and core level of each learnership. It also resulted in a lack of standardisation in the approach to providing of the different learnerships by the providers.

The size of the pilot project (800 learners) actually makes it a fully implemented model. It has been implemented across the country at three different sites and recently three satellite campuses were opened. The recommendations based on the research should be carefully considered if this model is to be used by the Services SETA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Learning Point project was piloted in 2004. It focused on the first intake of 800 learners. The size of this so-called pilot impacted hugely on implementation, especially since the implementation was across four provinces in South Africa. This pilot project should have been implemented with fewer learners (perhaps 100) across fewer regions (only Gauteng) and across fewer learnerships. This would have made the management of the project easier and would have decreased the impact of mistakes that are inevitable during a pilot. The lessons learnt from the pilot could then have been applied in the roll-out. These were the circumstances under which Outlearning had to work to make the project viable. This report indicates that good work was done by this capable team. Neither should the fact be overlooked that the piloting of the Learnership Academy Model was a first for the Services SETA and among the first for learnership implementation in South Africa.

The recommendations based on the research done during this project are made for each component of learnership implementation in the section below.

Planning

More than 100 workplaces were included in the pilot of this learnership model. It was therefore not possible to manage the implementation using a project management team which included workplaces, learners and providers. The diversity of the learnerships offered, and therefore the types of workplaces that were involved, made it difficult to elect a representative committee to oversee the planning and implementation of the project.

Planning was made difficult because of the developmental nature of the learnerships that were included in the project. Two learnerships were never registered. Logbooks and curricula were therefore never designed for those learnerships.

The size of the pilot project resulted in the management team underestimating the resources required for its implementation. Although the facilities were well equipped, the human resources required to maintain contact with the learners was initially

underestimated. This has, however, been corrected and contact with learners is maintained telephonically and via e-mail.

Recruitment and selection

The following recommendations are proposed with regard to the recruitment and selection process:

Media research

The process would benefit from proper media research to determine which radio station is the most popular and what time of day is the most appropriate for broadcasting in a specific area. The content of the broadcast should include background to learnerships in general, as well as details of the specific project. Time should also be allocated for answering questions from listeners. The demographics of the region should also be assessed to ensure that a sufficient pool of candidates can be recruited.

Department of Labour as a source

The Department of Labour should be involved as a source of unemployed people in the different regions where recruitment and selection are to take place. The advantage is that these people have already gone through a process of registration. Information on them is therefore available, and they also have expectations about finding employment with the help of government.

Standardised selection processes and tools

The discrepancies in the assessment results should be investigated. Standardised assessment and selection tools should be used.

Assessment for selection

It is recommended that the learners should receive some remedial ABET training during the first days of the Learning Point Academy process. Attention also needs to be given to the discrepancies between the results of various ABET level assessment tools – i.e. the different instruments used by the Career Centres, the ELSA, and the SpEEEx.

Opportunities for disadvantaged learners (learners who hold a qualification less than Grade 12 and middle-aged women entering the labour market)

The learnership opportunities were aimed at learners leaving school with Grade 12. It would greatly assist the development of skills in the country if learners who have not passed Grade 12 and older black women who want access to the labour market could also be drawn into such a learnership process.

Alignment of declaring learners eligible and suitable by Career Centres and employers

The Career Centres are responsible only for the eligibility of learners, while the employers are responsible for deciding which learners are suitable. These processes should be done in conjunction and not be fragmented as occurred in this project where

learners were declared eligible and trained, but had not yet been assigned to employers. This led to the situation where not all learners could find opportunities in the workplace. The process should be such that learners must be declared eligible and suitable before they start with training.

Curriculum

A generic foundation and core and elective component was designed across 14 learnerships. As indicated in Section 5.1, this is possible for the foundation component of the learnerships because these qualifications generally share the fundamental unit standards. However, the qualifications do not share core unit standards, which makes training and assessment too generic and too vague. This resulted in some of the facilitators of the elective training having to retrain learners in the core components of the qualifications.

It is therefore recommended that there should be three phases to the training, with summative assessments facilitating the transition from one phase to the next. This will simplify the hand-over of work from one provider to the next. It will also ensure that learners are competent in one component before proceeding to the following component.

It also needs to be said that some of the curricula are better suited than others for implementation as learnerships. This is true for the Contact Centre learnership. However, feedback from facilitators indicated that it was harder to find suitable employment for learners wanting to enrol in the project management and payroll learnerships.

The curriculum would consist of the following:

Phase One: Fundamental Training

Use unit standards that are common to most of the learnerships and fulfil SAQA's requirements regarding fundamental credits at NQF Level 4. For example:

Table 11: Unit standards

Unit Standard No.	Unit Standard Title
12153	Use the writing process to compose texts required in the business environment.
12417	Measure, estimate and calculate physical quantities and explore, critique and prove geometrical relationships in 2- and 3-dimensional space in the life and workplace of the adult with increasing responsibilities.
7468	Use mathematics to investigate and monitor the financial aspects of personal, business, national and international issues.

7485	Demonstrate understanding of real and complex number systems.
8968	Accommodate audience and context needs in oral communication.
8969	Interpret and use information from texts.
8970	Write texts for a range of communicative contexts.
8974	Engage in sustained oral communication and evaluate spoken texts.
8975	Read, analyse and respond to a variety of texts.
8976	Write for a wide range of contexts.
9015	Apply knowledge of statistics and probability to critically interrogate and effectively communicate findings on life-related problems.

Phase Two: Core Training

Here some of the training would need to be contextualised. If the content of the core learning is analysed, similar learnerships could be clustered together.

When examining the different core unit standards common to the 14 learnerships, it is very difficult to find themes that are common to all the learnerships. Some of the themes, however, are common in every workplace and are relevant to every learnership. This could be offered as a reason for the curriculum used in the first phase of training in the Learning Point project. However, it makes it very difficult to manage the formative assessments of learners against the unit standards making up the qualification.

Training could therefore be offered using different models. For instance:

- Training according to clusters of unit standards shared by learnerships could lead to a summative assessment of learners against these standards and progression to the next phase of training; or
- Training according to common themes in learnerships. Once again, learners could be summatively assessed against relevant unit standards; and
- Design and deliver training for each unit standard. Learners could then schedule their training according to the training for their relevant unit standards. This method would be very involved and complicate the training of learners.

Another option would be to appoint an elective provider to give training in the core and elective unit standards for each learnership. This would allow better control over learners in the workplace and simple assessment of the learners against the unit standard. It would also allow the provider to become more involved in assisting the learners to transfer their classroom knowledge to the workplace.

Logbooks must to be developed for this component of the training. The completion of the logbooks and assessment of the evidence must be carefully monitored.

Phase Three: Elective Training

This would apply only to the elective standards for each learnership in the Learnership Academy Model. It would simplify hand-over and would ensure that the providers' offerings are specific and standardised.

It is also recommended that logbooks be developed for this component of the learnership and that the standard Services SETA logbooks not be used. Workplace coaches will have to be trained in the content of each logbook and will have to know what their role is in providing workplace training and how to collect evidence of learners' competence.

Training Material

The curriculum development team for this project produced an excellent workbook for the first phase of the project. However, none of the material indicates the unit standards to which the content is mapped. This makes it almost impossible for learners to track their progress against the unit standards contained in the learnership. It also makes it difficult for the learners to ensure that valid, authentic, reliable, current and sufficient evidence is collected against each unit standard.

The training material needs to be standardised for each learnership academy. This is part of the offering and its importance cannot be overemphasized. Learners have to know against which unit standard they are being trained and assessed. They also need to know that the material is complete and of high quality. The lack of standardisation resulted in some material being written in a very academic manner whilst other material was more light hearted and lacked substance.

Customisation of the logbooks will enable learners and their coaches to carefully record the classroom and workplace-based training. It will also facilitate the collection of evidence of competence, which will make it easier for an assessor and moderator to assess the learner's ability. It will also make it easier to remediate and accelerate the learning, and easier to assess and implement.

Learners

Learners must be carefully selected for the learnership academy. They must be properly briefed on the different learnerships available, and it must also be carefully explained to them what type of knowledge, skills and profile are required for the learnerships in which they are interested.

Learners must also be recruited with the input and assistance from the host employer. Lack of involvement in this process leads to the host employer not taking full responsibility for the outcome of the learnership. Learnerships are about job creation. If employers are not recruiting learners whom they can potentially employ, then the objective of the skills development legislation is not being followed.

A measure should be included in the selection process that will reduce the number of learners trying to get into learnerships only for the monthly stipend.

Employers

Training of workplace coaches will need to be addressed in the roll-out of the Learnership Academy Model. Coaches must be made aware of the workplace-based training requirements for the learnership in which they are involved so that they will be able to create training opportunities for their learners. This will also facilitate the completion of logbooks and the collection of workplace-based evidence.

Employers need regular feedback on the progress of their learners. They must also be made aware of the curriculum of the learnership so that their expectations of their learners can be adjusted accordingly. For instance, learners who have completed computer training in the classroom can be expected to use their computer skills in the workplace.

Providers – Internal and External

The training facilitators recommended that there should be a hand-over process to the providers from Outlearning on the training in Phase One at the Academy, and that facilitators should be trained on the whole learnership process to make them aware of the challenges that the learners face. Facilitators should also work as a team in order to meet the challenges and design solutions when offering training to the learners.

Interviews with facilitators further revealed that insufficient time was allowed for training. It would therefore be more appropriate if learners spent approximately 30% of their classroom-based learning time focusing on fundamental training. The remainder of the classroom time should be spent on the contextualised core and elective training. This would allow sufficient time for learners to master the content and so that they are able to apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes in their workplaces.

The facilitators who presented the six streams mentioned that they were not involved in the formative assessment of learners. As success can only be measured through formal assessments, the assessments must be done by every facilitator so that remediation can be applied where necessary.

Assessment

It has already been mentioned that summative assessments before the subsequent phase of training commences will allow a far more defined hand-over process. Learners would know whether they are competent or not and facilitators would be able to work with a fairly homogenous group of learners. This would raise the effectiveness of the training and would produce far better equipped learners.

Assessments need to be designed before any learnership is implemented – this was not the case in this project and resulted in much remediation having been done to allow the learners' progress to be reported. It also meant that the learners progressed to the elective training without having mastering the fundamental and core components of the training.

Assessment also gives the curriculum developers a clear indication of whether all the content has been covered in the curriculum. It also gives the team an indication of which content is superfluous. This was not the case in the Learning Point project and resulted in the first phase of the training being too vague and too generic. Learners were trained in content that was not necessary to achieving the qualifications on which the learnerships were based.

Quality Assurance

Consistency of the quality of training delivery must be carefully monitored. The size of the project makes this essential for its successful implementation and the successful training of learners. A carefully managed system must be implemented to ensure that all the facilitators' work is quality assured. This will raise the quality of provision, and will also contribute to the success of each learner in his or her learnership.

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