



# A Guide to YOUR COURSE

Helpful information to assist you throughout  
your training with SS&L



SOMERSET SKILLS & LEARNING

Changing Lives through learning



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**Digital Book  
& downloadable**

## Welcome to SS&L

We're delighted to welcome you to your training course.

Over the coming months our knowledgeable team will help you to achieve your qualification and support you during your time with us.

This guide is designed to provide you with all the information you need to undertake your course so please read it carefully and keep all your relevant information in this document folder.

We are always available to answer your queries, allay your concerns and provide support to help you succeed. You'll find useful contact numbers contained in this booklet if you have any questions.

Wishing you the very best of luck with your course.



**Susie Simon-Norris**

Chief Executive



2017



#lovessl

# THE LEARNING JOURNEY

For those undertaking qualification courses or an Apprenticeship, we offer information, advice and guidance about further education, career options or other next steps. We're also very happy to signpost you to other education providers or employers who might be able to help where we can't. Speak to anyone at SS&L and we'll be happy to support you and assist where we can.

## Getting to Know You

You will be invited to have a chat with either a Team Leader or a Tutor who will give you information & advice about courses. Don't worry - this is an informal chat with a friendly person who just wants to learn about your existing skills and qualifications so we can advise on the best courses for you.

## Additional Support

If you need additional support and help with any aspect of your course your Tutor can provide you with information about learning support.

## On-going Support

If something is bothering you about your course or our teaching, then we're happy to hear about it; you can feedback any issues to us and we will deal with it as quickly as possible.

## Exams

If your course does have an exam, you may find them stressful, but we'll help you by ensuring you are well prepared. We will also get your results and certificates to you as soon as possible.

## Welcome! Your Enquiry & Application

Our dedicated Customer Advice Team will help you with all your enquiries about our courses and are happy to assist you through the application process so we can welcome you to SS&L.

## Getting you on the right course

After your conversation with an SS&L Tutor you will be asked to complete an initial assessment to ensure that you are on the right course for you. You will receive an induction at the beginning of your course.

## You've Started!

Once you begin your course, you'll get regular feedback about your progress from your Tutor as well as sector specific information and careers guidance if you need it. We want you to feel confident about your achievements and are always willing to talk to you if you have concerns.

## Listening to you

Getting feedback helps us improve our offer so you'll be asked occasionally to complete surveys so we understand what we're doing well and what we need to improve.

## Next Steps

We're always pleased to see our students achieve their goals but we also want to help with your next steps - either into further education or into careers. This is why we're happy to give advice & guidance over the phone once you've completed your course to help you on your journey.



# Who's Who

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## **TUTOR**

This person is your main learning contact and will teach you your coursework. They may also be your assessor.

## **ASSESSOR**

Depending on your course, this person may assess your work, knowledge and practice.

## **SECTOR TEAM LEADER**

This person oversees the course and manages the staff.

## **SAFEGUARDING OFFICER\***

This is the person you contact if you have any safeguarding or welfare concerns for yourself or others while on your course.

**Name** Justin Speirs

**Phone** 01749 677786 or 07766 085920

**Email** jspeirs@sslcc.co.uk

## **HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER\***

This person is your contact for health and safety concerns while you are on SS&L premises.

**Name** Andy Hobbs

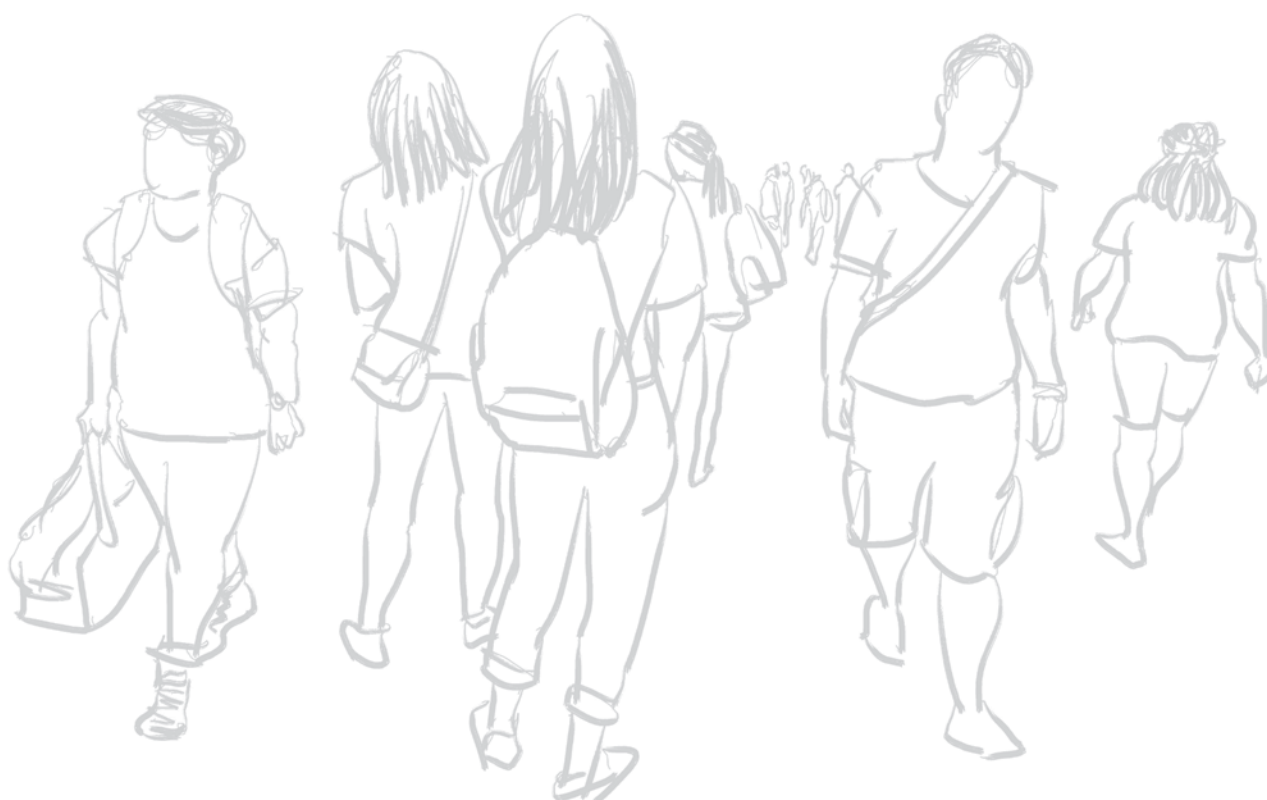
**Phone** 01823 663000 or 07970 835592

**Email** ahobbs@sslcc.co.uk

(\*Please contact Susie Simon - Norris or Kathryn Baker on 0330 332 7997 if you are unable to reach the Safeguarding or Health & Safety officer.)

## **INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER**

This person ensures course work complies with the awarding body's requirements.



# Your Qualification Explained

**As a training provider, SS&L make sure that the qualification you achieve is of the highest quality and meets all the requirements of the regulatory bodies.**

You can expect a full level of professionalism from us. We undertake an assessment of your individual needs, a full induction including details of the person who will be responsible for your learning journey, the development of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and regular formal reviews.

All of this will be undertaken in an Equal Opportunities environment where we ensure you have access to all your learning materials and experienced, qualified staff.

We also have expectations of you including your commitment and keeping to agreed set targets.

## **Initial Assessment**

When we first meet with you we undertake an initial assessment which establishes your interests and career aspirations; functional skills levels; and support requirements you may have to successfully complete your course.

The initial assessment involves online assessments in English, Maths and ICT, a learning styles questionnaire and a discussion with a member of our team.

## **Vocational Qualifications**

These are qualifications based on national industry standards. They consist of learning outcomes and assessment criteria and will be based on your understanding and ability to do the job.

## **Functional Skills**

Functional Skills are the fundamental English, maths and ICT skills that all adults and young people need to have for their working and personal lives. The qualifications let people study in practical ways, applying core skills to real-life situations so that the things they learn come in useful day after day, at work or home. Functional Skills are available at different levels from entry level to level 2.

## **GCSEs**

A General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is a qualification normally taken by most UK students at the end of compulsory education. As well as giving you useful skills and knowledge in themselves, GCSEs are an important stepping stone if you want to get a job or continue studying.

## **Personal Development**

Some sessions will include input to support your personal and social development. These could include: Employment Rights & Responsibilities; Personal Finance; Equality & Diversity; Health & Safety; and Career Planning.



# 95%

of our students  
said they were  
very satisfied with  
the teaching they  
received with SS&L.

Source ESFA Learner Satisfaction Survey 2016 - 2017



# Starting & Continuing Your Course

## Initial Assessment

The purpose of an initial assessment is to ensure that you are on the right programme and to establish:

- ▲ Your vocational interests and career aspirations
- ▲ Maths and English levels
- ▲ Any support requirements you may have to successfully complete your training

The initial assessment will include online assessment for maths and English and other appropriate assessment where required.

## Induction

Your induction will take place on or before your first session. This may be on an individual basis or in small groups. It will help you to understand the programme and what support is available. Your induction will cover:

- ▲ An overview of SS&L
- ▲ Programme content, delivery and assessment arrangements
- ▲ Equality and Diversity
- ▲ Health and Safety
- ▲ Disciplinary, appeal and grievance procedures
- ▲ ESF Match Funding

## Through Your Course

### Monitoring of attendance

We are required to maintain a record of your attendance. Full attendance is required at all sessions. Commitment to attendance affects your progress and ultimately, achieving your qualification. If you have not attended your course for four weeks or more, you will be withdrawn.

### Withdrawal from the programme

If you wish to withdraw from your course, please discuss this with your Tutor or Assessor. We may withdraw you from your course if you breached disciplinary, attendance or conduct guidelines.

## Confidentiality

You must remember that, whilst in training with SS&L, any duties undertaken of a confidential nature must not be divulged anywhere outside of the organisation.

## Individual Support

If you require any support to enable you to achieve your qualification your Tutor will explain what is available. This can be learning or social support and will be planned according to your needs. We can also provide support if you have disabilities, please ask your Tutor for further information. Remember if you have any support needs you must let us know as soon as possible so we can put a plan in place.

## Breaks in Your Learning

If you need to take a break from learning due to ill health, pregnancy, caring responsibilities or similar situations, it is essential that it is pre-planned wherever possible and approved with your Tutor or Assessor. Each request for a break from your studies will be taken on a case by case basis and a formal procedure will be followed.

If you don't request a break from your course with your Tutor or Assessor and simply fail to turn up to your classes, then this will be treated as an attendance issue and prolonged periods of absence may lead you to be withdrawn from your course.

Formal breaks in learning are usually between 8 weeks to around 12 months in length and need to be assessed and approved by senior managers within SS&L.

**Always speak with your Tutor or Assessor if you think you need time out from your studies for any period of time. The length of your course and number of sessions are carefully planned so we can deliver all the information required for you to successfully complete your qualification. Missing sessions may have a serious impact on your achievements.**



# Monitoring Your Achievements

The Learner Progress File is where documents which record your learning goals, progress and achievements are held. These are 'live' documents which you and your tutor or assessor will refer to and keep up to date to ensure you achieve your qualifications.

## Portfolio

This is a file of structured and catalogued information which provides supporting evidence for your qualification. Your Tutor/ Assessor guide you to complete it, but the Portfolio is ultimately your responsibility. Please make sure you keep all your work safe.

## Assessment

There are a variety of ways we assess your progress and these include online exams, assignments, observations and coursework.

The assessment methods will be discussed with you at the start of your course.

## Reviews

Progress will be reviewed regularly and your Tutor will discuss this process with you at the start of your course.

If you don't feel you have progressed or that you are falling behind, then ensure you have ideas for your own improvement and discuss these with your Tutor. Make an action plan and stick to it.

All feedback is useful. Use it to improve your performance and do not see it as criticism. Feedback is to be used constructively and is given to help you plan how to reach your goals and targets and ultimately succeed.

## Maths & English

Your tutor will monitor your progress throughout the course using a variety of strategies. These include giving you verbal and written feedback, setting you targets, assessments, online activities and regular tutorials.

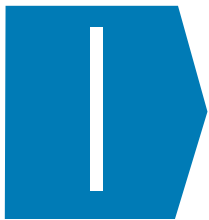




# Guidance for Effective Studying

**Once you know what works best, your study or preparation for exams will become more effective.**

Try these 3 easy steps



## Have the right attitude

Think positively, you are gaining knowledge, experience and qualifications in a subject you have chosen.

- ▲ Break up your study time, plan breaks and different tasks
- ▲ We are all different, don't compare yourself to others
- ▲ Remember what you can do not what you can't

*You can achieve!*



## Find the right space

When you begin studying it is important to find the right location.

- ▲ If you will be writing notes or reading from books, make sure you are at a suitable desk or table.
- ▲ Get everything you will need to study ready before you begin so you don't have interruptions. Effective study requires you to be able to read, write, and sometimes recite.
- ▲ You cannot do these things well if you are surrounded by distractions.

*Choose your study place well!*



## Make a plan

- ▲ When is a good time to study for you?
- ▲ Are you a morning person, or do you work best in the evening?
- ▲ What other things do you have going on in your life?

When deciding on a TIME to study, you have to make sure you will have no interruptions, no distractions, and that there will be enough time to prepare for a test or exam.

- ▲ For major tests or exams you will need more than one day to study. Make sure you plan ahead enough days to accomplish your study needs.
- ▲ Find the right times and days to study well in advance.
- ▲ Leaving things to the end is never a plan, it is avoiding reality.

*Make your plan and stick to it!*

# Your rights

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## You have a right to:

- ▲ An initial assessment of your training needs to ensure you are on the right course / programme
- ▲ An induction at the start of your programme
- ▲ A named Tutor who will be responsible for your training and development throughout your programme
- ▲ An individual learning plan which sets out the content of your training programme and what needs to be done to achieve your goals
- ▲ Regular monitoring of your progress
- ▲ A safe and healthy training environment
- ▲ Equality of Opportunity in the assistance and support provided to help you achieve
- ▲ Experienced and qualified staff to provide assistance and support to help you to achieve your goals
- ▲ Access to resources and learning materials to help you complete your programme / course.

# Our expectations

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## We expect you to:

- ▲ Attend regularly and on time
- ▲ Complete any work set by agreed times
- ▲ Agree to use safe working practices and not to endanger yourself or others
- ▲ Dress appropriately and to use any health and safety clothing and equipment provided (if necessary)
- ▲ Meet the agreed targets set for you to achieve your programme
- ▲ Be polite and respectful of others.



Ask us about Advanced  
Learner Loans to complete  
your qualifications.



# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## Insurance

We provide the necessary cover at our training centres. It's important to note we do not cover personal accident or personal items like mobile phones or wallets.

## Disciplinary Procedure

SS&L have codes of conduct which we expect you to adhere to. Failing to adhere may result in disciplinary procedures or even dismissal depending on the gravity of the situation.

## Health & Safety

At SS&L we follow the Safe Learner concept and believe you are entitled to work and study in a healthy and safe environment.

SS&L will always endeavour to ensure your health and safety but you also have a responsibility for your own health and safety by ensuring you comply with rules and regulations and conduct yourself in a way which minimises risk to yourself or others around you.

## Funding & Your Personal Data

SS&L is primarily funded by the Education & Skills Funding Agency, the Department for Education and the European Social Fund.

The personal information you provide is passed to the Education & Skills Funding Agency, and when required, the Department for Education. They use this information to create a ULN (Unique Learning Number) for you to keep track of your educational qualifications.

The information you provide may be shared with other parties but only for the purpose of education and training. You can review our **Privacy Notice** <https://sslcourses.co.uk/about-ssl/privacy-notice> at any time.

You can get full details about funding and your data by searching for the **Education & Skills Funding Agency** <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency> online.

## Safeguarding

We want to ensure your personal wellbeing and protect you and those around you from potentially harmful situations. Therefore we take **Safeguarding** <https://sslcourses.co.uk/downloads/policies/Safeguarding-Policy.pdf> very seriously and encourage you to speak to someone at SS&L if you feel vulnerable, pressured, threatened, victimised or unsafe. We encourage you to look out for those around you too and if you notice situations you feel could be harmful or threatening then speak out.

## OFSTED

Like all education providers, SS&L is subject to OFSTED inspections which ensure the quality of our service to you. In 2017, OFSTED rated SS&L as a 'Good' provider, with several areas rated as Outstanding.

(During your time with SS&L, you may be asked to participate in an OFSTED inspection by completing an evaluation survey.)

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## APPEALS PROCEDURE

### Appeals Procedure (Assessment Centre)

Learners may only appeal on the grounds that they do not agree with the assessment decision made by the Assessor or that the assessment procedures have not been carried out properly if:

- ▲ During the assessment process, the learner feels that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of gender, marital status, social class, colour, race, ethnic origin, creed, disability, HIV status or disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance
- ▲ The interpretation of the unit assessment criteria had not been discussed and documented by the learner and the Assessor before the assessment
- ▲ The Assessor asked for information not required for meeting the qualification during the assessment process
- ▲ Arrangements to meet the learner's individual needs, as agreed, were not met
- ▲ Feedback is not given according to the assessment agreement
- ▲ In the event of being deemed 'not yet competent' the learner is not informed, verbally or in writing, of the further evidence required.

### Appeals Procedure (Vocational Qualifications)

If a learner considers that they have grounds for appeal they should:

- ▲ Contact their Assessor expressing their concerns and the reasons why they wish to appeal. The learner is entitled to be accompanied by a supporter at this meeting.
- ▲ If the concerns cannot be resolved at this meeting and the learner still considers they have a legitimate case for appeal, the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) must be notified in writing enclosing a copy of the minutes of the meeting
- ▲ The IQA shall organise a meeting with the learner and Assessor within 14 days of receiving the notification of appeal.  
The Lead IQA/Centre Co-ordinator shall inform the Quality Assurance Co-ordinator that they are dealing with an appeal. If the appeal cannot be resolved at this meeting, the Lead IQA/ Centre Co-ordinator shall refer the case to the Quality Assurance Co-ordinator.
- ▲ The Quality Assurance Co-ordinator shall organise a meeting within 21 days of receiving the notification of appeal. The appeal will be considered after receiving written/verbal evidence from the learner and IQA.

### If the appeal is upheld:

- ▲ The Assessor shall be invited to reconsider the original assessment process
- ▲ Provision shall be made for the learner to be assessed again by another Assessor

If, once the Assessment Appeals procedure has been completed, the learner continues to be dissatisfied, they have the right to contact the Awarding Body directly.

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## Our commitment to you:

We will use any complaints received to help us improve our services, wherever possible. Complaints will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.

- ▲ We aim to settle most complaints quickly and informally either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation.
- ▲ We will tell you what we are doing to put things right.
- ▲ We aim to provide a full response to complaints within 10 working days.

For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction which is not immediately resolved. You should commence our complaints procedure if you are unhappy with:

- ▲ the standard of service you received from us
- ▲ our response to a request for service
- ▲ our actions
- ▲ the behaviour of a member of staff
- ▲ the way you have been treated i.e. incidents of bullying, harassment or unfair treatment
- ▲ allegations of fraud or financial irregularity.

**We follow a three stage complaints procedure that tries to resolve problems as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of everyone involved.**

**STAGE 1** Your complaint will be passed to the person who can best deal directly with it, and is responsible for providing the service. Unless there are sound reasons for not doing so, a full response will be sent within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. We aim to resolve most complaints at this stage.

**STAGE 2** If you are unhappy with the outcome at stage one, you can contact us again to take the matter further. We will forward your complaint to a member of the Senior Management Team who will carry out an investigation into the concern raised. Unless there are sound reasons for not doing so, the Senior Manager will reply within 10 days of the complaint being referred to him/her. If this is not possible, an explanation and a new date for reply will be sent.

**STAGE 3** If you remain unhappy with the outcome our Chief Executive, who has overall responsibility for dealing with complaints, will review the way your complaint has been investigated and the outcome on your behalf. Unless there are sound reasons for not doing so, the Chief Executive will reply within 10 days of the complaint being referred to him/her. If this is not possible, an explanation and a new date will be sent. When all the above avenues have been exhausted and a complaint remains unresolved, the complainant may use the following link to access the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Procedure \*for dealing with complaints about providers of education and training.

(\*Note: This process may only be used for complaints about courses that the SFA fund and those courses funded by an Advanced Learning loan)

**Please look at our complete Complaints Policy for further information.**