

Open University training offered to SMEs

Open University in Scotland has launched a new programme in which small to medium-sized businesses can have up to £5,000 of online training.

The training is intended to boost productivity and growth in response to the pandemic and is available from the £1 million committed to The Open University in Scotland from the Scottish Funding Council. It is the first university in Scotland to offer training from the Flexible Workforce Development Fund.

The training reflects existing Scottish skills gaps including leadership and business, digital and IT, health & social care and the green economy.

It will be delivered online through a range of short courses and modules, many of which are industry accredited and contribute to undergraduate or postgraduate credit.

Marie Hendry, Depute Director, External Engagement and Partnerships, at The Open University in Scotland, said: "This funding provides a great opportunity for those small and medium sized companies that are the lifeblood of the Scottish economy to develop their existing workforce as they respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing vital training as they adapt to new ways of working.

"Operating across Scotland and delivering high quality online training, The Open University is uniquely placed to help

industry address national and regional skills gaps and support employers to develop in an ever-changing world of work.

“We know that Scotland’s SMEs have been particularly affected by the impacts of the COVID pandemic and these businesses and their people will play a crucial role in Scotland’s recovery. Our tailored training plans will help SME companies to upskill and retrain their existing workforce to maximise the opportunities to restart and recover.”

Suzanne McQuade, Business Relationships Manager, said: “We offer a highly flexible approach working with companies to understand their business challenges and shaping training and development to suit them. Staff can access our innovative online training in the workplace or from home at a time to suit while accommodating ongoing business operations.

“We’d encourage any company across the private, public and third sectors to get in touch to discuss the delivery of a development programme that is tailored to the needs of your organisation.”

Companies with less than 250 employees can apply. The training contract will be agreed by July and delivered by March 2022.

More information on the OU support for SMEs under the Flexible Workforce Development Fund [here](#)