



PLAN FOR CONTINUITY OF APPRENTICESHIPS

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1. Introduction

The policy is designed to preserve the continuation and quality of study for all current and potential apprentices at AccXel if a risk to their continued study crystallises.

AccXel is committed to ensuring its ability to plan for and subsequently respond to both major incidents and periods of disruption thus safeguarding the continuation of business-critical operations including its apprenticeship delivery.

AccXel's apprenticeship continuity arrangements are underpinned by the following core aims:

- To protect people from harm
- To protect critical infrastructure and facilities
- To resume teaching and key services in an appropriate timeframe, with minimum disruption

2. Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for business continuity in the organisation is held by Nicola Bird, Managing Director.

If a major disaster occurs, then the Crisis Management Group ('CMG') will be mobilised by the Managing Director. The members of the group are Senior Management Team.

The CMG has ultimate responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of the continuity plan. As soon as possible after a major incident the Managing Director will assess the situation to determine if the Continuity Plan needs to be put into effect. If the Managing Director is no longer able to undertake the duties of the post, or is unavailable at the time of the incident, Natalie Bell, Growth & Partnerships

Director will 'deputise' as Crisis Manager until such time as the Managing Director returns.

Key responsibilities in relation to apprenticeships:

Knowledge sharing

- Identify all staff and learners involved
- Monitor progress of recovery
- Effective & timely communications with the learners, employers and teaching staff
- Identify programmes affected
- Identify alternative teaching space within/outside the company
- Reschedule teaching to alternative locations

Operations

- Identify areas affected
- Identify alternative space within/outside the company
- Establish alternative space and relocate staff and equipment
- Maintain core operating systems (HR, Finance, MIS etc)

Recovery

- Plan specialist recovery/repair works
- Plan re-establishment of normal operations
- Plan re-establishment of IT & communications systems
- Conservation and prevention of future damage

Media

- Provide accurate and regular updates on the website

3. Risk Assessment

Institutional

The risk that AccXel as a whole is unable to operate has been assessed as low based on the relatively low numbers of students and the administration team being interchangeable. Institutional failure will be monitored through risk management in accordance with regulatory bodies and instance of this will be managed in accordance with institutional policies.

Site Closure/Infrastructure

AccXel is currently located at Whimsey Industrial Estate, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire, United Kingdom, GL14 3JA. AccXel may be disrupted due to events outside of its control, which will necessitate closure of its site for part of a day or more. Such events include: power failure; water failure; failure of heating services; severe snow or other hazardous weather conditions; lockdown; serious security risk; and other unforeseen events.

During these times, most staff and apprentices will be asked to attend class at an alternative location, sent home or requested to stay at home until further notice. If such a circumstance arises and cannot be reasonably quickly resolved, AccXel will typically consider remedies such as: relocation to an alternative location, revising timetables, and delivering provision via other modes i.e., distance and online learning through our Learner Management System.

For implementation see "travel" section below.

Staff/Operational

The risk that AccXel would no longer be able to deliver elements of the apprenticeship programme due to staff or operational issues is low.

To mitigate the low risk to AccXel's ability to deliver its apprenticeship programme, the Head of Education will continue to foster a positive working environment for staff, to maintain staff retention. Should there be a loss of key teaching staff the robust recruitment strategy and procedure will be implemented to swiftly replace those members of staff.

There will be immediate cover for classes in the event of staff absence or resignation. In the event of this being long term, temporary staff will be engaged to cover the period between return to work or engagement of new staff. The recruitment strategy and procedures are annually reviewed.

Widespread Environmental

In order to minimise the possibility of a major incident occurring, the Senior Management Team shall ensure as far as is practicable, that any perceived risks have been determined, assessed and recorded. There are also separate disaster recovery plans for key areas and separate policies; for example, 'lock-down' procedures which will be updated (and tested) on an annual basis. Currently, in the event of lockdown theory classes would be delivered through our Learner Management System. Tutorials and progress reviews will be conducted through Team/Zoom calls and practical skills developed on site monitored through communications with workplace mentors.

4. Preventive Measures

The following measures are in place to minimise the risks:

- Regular Health & Safety assessments
- Regular Fire Risk Assessments
- Annual reviews of the policies
- Effective data management of the staff information (contact details, next of kin)
- Multi-skill training of the staff, cross training of skills
- A possibility of remote working for some key members of staff
- The contact details of the staff and suppliers are stored externally

Communication

The Crisis Management Group will ensure staff and students are kept informed and updated via appropriate tools, e.g., email, telephone, website and intranet.

The emergency contact numbers for AccXel are:

- Main line 01594 801009
- Managing Director: 07971 846630
- Head of Education: 07971 271367

- ESFA (Education Skills Funding Agency) 0800 0150 600.

Travel

Learners are required to make their own arrangements to attend their place of work and study.

Where a change of location of study is required for contingency reasons, AccXel will seek to provide an alternate location that is as close as practicable to the original place of study. Where alternate arrangements have to be made that could not easily be accessed by the usual forms of transport, AccXel will work with the employer to consider the nature and impact of alternate transport arrangements on individual learners and agree an appropriate solution.

AccXel recognises the primary source of transportation for its remote staff is via car. As such, expenses are paid to contribute towards the cost of fuel and general upkeep of the vehicle to enable staff to maintain this source of transport. Staff, learners, partners and suppliers use the AccXel parking facilities as necessary, however should this become unavailable, there is alternative parking facilities offsite directly next to the building. As an alternative, AccXel recommends the use of public transport such as buses or trains, and private transport such as taxis or car sharing where appropriate. AccXel has a minibus available to transport students, staff and visitors to and from local transport hubs. This will be used to accommodate travel to main site, or any emergency site as required

All staff are issued with portable IT equipment to enable them to work remotely, negating the need to travel in the event of an emergency. Remote visits can be completed using mobile phone, email and software such as Skype.

All staff are required to have appropriate insurance and breakdown cover, which is monitored annually, to ensure that in the event of an incident, suitable support is available.

5. Risks of continuity of study

AccXel ceases to operate:

Where viable, AccXel will implement contingency plans which will allow existing learners to continue to complete their current programmes of study. The measures AccXel have in place to manage this risk means the likelihood of an imminent closure of AccXel is low. AccXel manages this risk by having in place:

- Financial reserves that would allow us to continue to operate for a suitable duration.
- Business plans that are reviewed by our Parent Company, Managing Director and Senior Management Team.
- Annual external auditing of finances that provides independent assurance of our business's performance and forecasts.
- Engagement of legal and financial advisors.

Where viable, AccXel will maintain key academic and administrative staff to allow current learners to complete their programmes of study via the enrolled mode and timeframe. Where necessary, following consultation with employers and their learners, learners may be transferred to an AccXel-run distance learning mode of study for the same programme, with AccXel drawing on its existing experience and expertise in delivering our programmes via a distance learning mode of study.

Failure to secure or maintain Registered Training Provider status

In the event of termination of agreement with the ESFA as a result of AccXel being removed from the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) and therefore becoming unable to continue the delivery of apprenticeship programme, AccXel will engage with the ESFA to make arrangements for effective exit to minimise the disruption to both learners and employers.

The detail of all apprentices, their apprenticeship programme, progress made, registration with awarding organisations and evidence that is required to contribute towards successful completion of their end point assessment would be made readily available, including the transfer/access of portfolios, resources and completed work and assessments.

The primary goal of AccXel is to see every apprentice through to successful completion of their apprenticeship and every effort would be made under such circumstances to enable this to happen.

Withdrawal of programmes or modules

AccXel might make a strategic decision to withdraw a programme or module of study if it has been superseded by a new programme or module, if it cannot be resourced, the content is no longer fit for purpose or current, or if insufficient numbers can be achieved.

The ongoing viability of programmes is monitored via the annual monitoring and quality assurance processes of AccXel. As programme closure is a strategic, planned event, the risk is considered low.

AccXel manages this risk by ensuring every effort is made to ensure that stakeholders are consulted, not disadvantaged in any way, have every opportunity to complete any programmes or modules they have been registered for or that suitable arrangements are made where the withdrawal of a programme or module is required.

AccXel also has a process of consultation with those affected, including employers and learners and with delivery staff on the potential impact of withdrawal of programmes and modules.

Where viable, a teach-out process will be proposed where current learners would be given the opportunity to complete their current programme of study. The timing of the implementation of any proposed withdrawal would also consider prospective learners and where in the recruitment cycle they were. All proposals would be considered by AccXel's Senior Management Team and could not be implemented without Senior Management Team oversight and approval of the teach-out and impact management proposal.

Back-up Business Critical Systems and Data

AccXel's outsourced IT supplier has backup and contingency arrangements in place. Backups of critical systems cover system files, software files and data files, for both the running systems and the default system. A combination of backup technology is used to ensure the most efficient backup and recovery of operation services.

This plan has been agreed by the AccXel Senior Management Team and agreed. It will be reviewed every two years or after significant changes to AccXel's business, funding partners or staff.

Signed 

Date 06/01/2024