

## **Apprenticeship Continuity Plan**

### **Purpose and Summary**

This Plan is supplementary to our main Business Continuity Plan and is to consider those incidents that will have a significant impact on our apprenticeship provision following a major crisis, disaster, or an event that may lead to suspension of activity related to apprenticeship provision. Since the COVID pandemic, The Vocational Academy has made significant changes to its operations with amendments to this continuity plan to ensure learning can continue despite a variety of incidents, external or otherwise. TVA now operates across multiple centres, covering much of England. Senior staff are located at each centre in cases where the director is absent/unable to manage an emergency situation.

Continuity of learning is the continuation of education in the event of a prolonged company closure.

Continuation of education is our primary focus. As a result, we have taken the following steps to ensure continuation of learning:

- Our delivery model by nature is a blended learning approach. This means that all learning resources are provided upon commencement of studies. This also means that continued study can continue virtually uninterrupted during any time of temporary suspension of activity. Our online platforms have been upgraded to contain additional video recorded lectures, advanced real-time assessment and learning checks and full integration with live, or recorded classroom sessions for those learners who are unable to attend any classroom learning for a variety of reasons.
- Our close working relationships with employers ensure that ongoing mentoring and learning within the workplace can continue as a result of our online and blended learning delivery, with learner mentors in place at the place of employment where possible to ensure continuity of learning.
- We work closely with other training providers and partners, meaning that in circumstances where suspension of activity will begin to affect the studies of an apprentice, delivery will continue through one of our partners.
- The ESFA will be notified immediately of any suspension of activity, with full explanation as to why, with a full solution outlined for approval.
- All relevant staff, including management are trained and fully prepared to fit in to their respective, delegated roles should any suspension occur. Individual staff and roles are outlined below.

These steps are a critical component of emergency management, as it promotes the continuation of teaching and learning despite circumstances that interrupt normal attendance for one or more apprentices. One essential way to ensure continuity of learning for TVA and/or its partners is to ensure all apprentice and employer information, such as enrolment, induction, delivery and assessment evidence, progress tracking, up to date ILR data is always available to permitted persons in the event of TVA being unable to continue its apprenticeship provision, either in the short-term or the long-term. Enabling a smoother transition should apprentices have to be transferred to another provider. The learner is at the heart of everything we do.



**Key Staff Roles and responsibilities in such circumstances:**

**Key emergency contacts and functional responsibilities (these include staff responsible for managing any crisis between the centre and the apprentice. The ESFA will be informed of any break in learning.)**

Michael Rickards:

Director/Employer Engagement/Business Development

- Overall responsibility for the continuity of apprenticeship training
- Chair Crisis Team meetings
- Co-ordination of the responses
- Liaise with Prime Funding organisations (where appropriate)
- Liaise with employers, partner providers, Awarding Bodies (where appropriate)
- Allocate resources
- Ensure safeguarding procedures continue and safeguarding information remains secure
- Responsible for deciding whether or not staff and apprentices should be sent home

Jane Simpson:

- Overall responsibility for the continuity of apprenticeship training
- Chair Crisis Team meetings
- Co-ordination of the responses
- Liaise with Prime Funding organisations (where appropriate)
- Liaise with employers, partner providers, Awarding Bodies (where appropriate)
- Allocate resources
- Responsible for external liaison
- Be prepared to answer questions from the media
- Responsible for deciding whether or not staff and apprentices should be sent home

Amber Tapsell: Head of operations and centre coordinator for Essex

- Liaise with the director and update all apprentices, learners and employers immediately on all relevant information
- Coordination of responses with M Rickards and J Simpson
- Ensure all data for apprenticeship provision is submitted and backed up where required, working closely with the operations team
- Ensure all apprentice and employer information is kept up to date, secure and backed up in case of any data loss or disruption to business. In the event of having to transfer any apprenticeship provision over to another provider, relevant data should be easily accessible so as to ensure as little disruption to learning as possible
- Meet and greet emergency services as they arrive, with a floor plan of the building if necessary.
- Ensure all significant occurrences and decisions are recorded, together with reasons for decisions made.
- Agree key information to be given to apprentices by tutors and assessors

Danny Rossie:

- To ensure, with Michael Rickards, that all employers and delivery partners are engaged and kept fully up to date throughout both normal operations and emergency operations
- Work directly with delivery staff to ensure regular updates and communications during both normal and emergency operations

All delivery/assessment staff

- To act as a continuous mode of communication between apprentices and the management by listening to, and raising any issues and concerns from apprentices
- To ensure TVA's main online learning platforms, such as OneFile, are kept up to date on learner progress throughout the apprenticeship journey and backed up for easy re-upload/transfer in any event where this is needed.
- Work closely with employers to ensure they are kept up to date throughout on relevant information
- To ensure employers concerns and issues are listened to and where possible, addressed immediately. If unable to address immediately, to promptly communicate all issues to management
- Ensure scheduled meetings with apprentices in the work placement are upheld and continuity of learning is upheld for as long as possible, or until any suspension of activity is resolved.

Continuity of Apprenticeship Training

All staff, students and apprentices are asked to ensure that they read and understand the contents of this plan and to that they remain aware of its contents in order to act and respond accordingly.

#### **Continuity of learning key considerations**

**Qualification Design:** Course resources are designed to supplement all classroom delivery, to the extent that each lecture delivered to meet learning outcomes is also supplemented by a video recorded version. Meaning that learning can continue despite any interruptions to, or suspension of activity.

**Supporting System Training:** Training for staff, apprentices, and any relevant parties will be delivered where needed in such circumstances, to ensure continuity of learning and appropriate use of distance learning and support resources. All staff (new and existing) are trained in the use of OneFile and TVA's online enrolment and induction platform as part of the standard process to ensure collective competency and responsibility for every apprentice.

**Ensuring Accessibility:** Not all apprentices may have access to the Internet, phone lines, TV or radio at the same time, or at all, during a prolonged closure or absence. Therefore, it is important to offer a variety of methods of distance learning. The Vocational Academy will abide by the Disability Act and ensure materials will be provided in alternative formats, when necessary.

#### **Tools to support the continuity of learning**

TVA apprenticeship training is delivered through a blended approach and this provides a level of flexibility and a number of options to ensure the relevant training continues to be delivered to our apprentices. The methods



of training include face to face delivery, virtual and supervised learning activities, webinars, online-coaching, telephone coaching, set reading and feedback, work-based learning assignments and work-based assessments. TVA's OneFile platform contains detailed information in terms of delivery resources, ongoing skills assessments, reflective accounts, and overall progress tracking. In the event of closure or any suspension of learning activities, apprentices, employers, and relevant staff can always continue learning during such events. It is important to note here that where possible, paper-based resources should always be made available where required in addition to hard copy apprentice folders upon request (printed from OneFile's reporting facilities along backup apprentice work).

As outlined above, training at face-to-face workshops are supplemented by video recorded versions. Where an apprentice is unable to access these due to a number of reasons, such as disability or lack of personal IT resources, we will act to rectify this as soon as is reasonably practicable

Additionally, we have qualified and experienced trainers and assessors who are able to step-in at short notice. We have also built, and continue to build, an extensive network of partners who could also step in at short notice should suspension of activity become prolonged for longer than expected.

### **Coursework and Examinations**

The Vocational Academy is required to keep copies of all essential coursework and examination results in a fireproof safe, or a second (electronic) copy off site, to ensure that no essential information is lost in the event of a disaster. Management, quality assurance and delivery teams will meet as soon as possible to consider the effect of the disaster on apprentice's coursework and examination entry. This information will be disclosed to the centre administrator and examinations officer, who will liaise with and be advised by the Awarding Bodies.

Apprentices will be offered individual advice sessions with a member of staff to discuss their concerns about the effects of the disaster on their work and any extra measures (advised by the Awarding Bodies) which are required to enable them to complete the apprenticeship successfully.

### **Communication channels**

- E-mail, phone and company mobile phones at each centre
- Social media such as our Facebook page, LinkedIn and messenger systems
- Our website and subsequent contact forms

### **Extra Travel Costs**

If apprentices have to pay extra travel costs to attend another site, then arrangements will be made to provide assistance with these costs. We will calculate the additional cost involved and arrange to make payments to apprentices on a case by case basis, in conjunction with close working relationships with employers.



### **Technology based contingencies**

We use the following, secure systems to ensure all documents are continuously backed up and kept secure:

- Microsoft SharePoint and full business access to Office 365, including OneDrive
- Drop box in the event of an emergency with Microsoft facilities to allow continuity until issues are resolved
- OneFile VLE, regularly backed up for learner evidence and progress tracking (where paper-based portfolios are used, evidence is scanned and uploaded digitally where possible to protect against loss of work)
- Induction and enrolment online platform that automatically stores relevant data on a secure server, with automated e-mailing to relevant staff members of required documents for saving to secure servers.

With such technology, we are able to ensure all documentation is continuously backed up and secure, and not stored locally on a hard drive where it can be easily lost in a disaster situation.

### **Emergency contacts.**

In case of a significant incident emergency, various contact details will be available in the programme handbook for each apprenticeship cohort and on the programme page on the virtual learning environment and on our website at [www.thevocationalacademy.co.uk](http://www.thevocationalacademy.co.uk)

These include:

The Vocational Academy landline: 01702 596022 or the director, Michael Rickards at 07885249222

E-mail: [admin@thevocationalacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@thevocationalacademy.co.uk) (group e-mail address to the operations team, including Amber Tapsell)

or [mrickards@thevocationalacademy.co.uk](mailto:mrickards@thevocationalacademy.co.uk)

In the event M Rickards is unavailable, Jane Simpson, Danny Rossie and Amber Tapsell are the main contacts to ensure resilience within TVA in the event of senior staff absence:

[j.simpson@thevocationalacademy.co.uk](mailto:j.simpson@thevocationalacademy.co.uk)

[a.tapsell@thevocationalacademy.co.uk](mailto:a.tapsell@thevocationalacademy.co.uk)

[d.rossie@thevocationalacademy.co.uk](mailto:d.rossie@thevocationalacademy.co.uk)

In the event where senior staff are unreachable, the ESFA must be contacted immediately to inform them of an emergency situation with The Vocational Academy:

E-mail Link: [helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk](mailto:helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk)

Contact form link: [Contact Form: Get help with apprenticeships](#)

Call the apprenticeship service: 08000 150 600



**Review Dates:**

Last review: Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March at weekly senior leadership team meeting

Next review: Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September at weekly senior leadership team meeting