



Economic Development Grant Scheme

**Small Business
Training Grant**

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1. Key points

- This is a grant of up to 90%, up to a maximum of £1,000, for use towards non-statutory staff training for businesses in Orkney.
- The minimum grant funding level will normally be £250.
- Applications are limited to one per business per financial year and can be for more than one individual within the business.
- Applicant businesses must normally be full-time enterprises engaged in economic activity and based in Orkney.
- Businesses receiving grant funding from other sources will not be eligible to apply.
- Only expenditure made on or after the date of any offer of grant is eligible.
- If an application is approved, payment of grants is made retrospectively.
- Grant claims should be made within 4 weeks of undertaking the training, and supported by proof of payment.
- If claims are approved, payment of a grant can still take up to 2 weeks.
- This grant represents Minimal Financial Assistance (further details available on request).

2. Programme Overview

Small businesses in Orkney can apply for this grant to help them upgrade skills within their business and develop their workforce towards training they have identified that:

- Helps the owner, manager or employees gain skills that directly result in benefit for the business, for example it will improve products, processes or services in the business.
- Does not attract financial support from any other source.

The Small Business Training Grant, funded by Orkney Islands Council and administered by Business Gateway Orkney, is available to help small businesses located in Orkney develop their skills with up to 90% grant funding of up to £1,000 per business.

The grant has been designed as a sustainable business development mechanism to assist skills enhancement that will help grow Orkney's economy.

3. Eligibility

Applications are welcome at any time from small (< 50 employees) local organisations that engage in economic activity, receive sales income and have been trading for 6 months or more and are permanently based in the Orkney Islands Council area.

The Grant can help with the cost of:

- External training fees (face-to-face or by distance learning);
- Visiting trainer fees;
- Associated travel and accommodation costs. Travel and accommodation costs should not exceed training costs, unless in exceptional circumstances (please refer to sections 3.1 and 3.2).

Approval of a grant must be obtained **before** any training and costs are committed to. Applicants also need to ensure they have financial arrangements in place to manage the cash flow implications of retrospective payment of a grant.

The grant cannot be used for the following costs:

- Training that is a statutory requirement, mandatory or is routinely undertaken within the business, including Continuous Professional Development (CPD) that is a requirement of a professional membership;
- Training where very similar training is already provided by the Council at nil-cost e.g. Business Gateway workshops.

3.1 Travel

Air travel is often considered the most time efficient method of travel to and from Orkney. Travel by ferry and car may be supported with each case being considered on its own merits by the Council in advance of the journey being taken. Claims for mileage can be supported at a rate of 30 pence per mile.

Only cheapest fares and travel by public transport where available are considered eligible (taxis should only be used when absolutely necessary).

All travel tickets should be retained and submitted as evidence of expenditure. If the ticket has to be surrendered on disembarkation then a receipt must be requested and retained.

3.2 Accommodation

Overnight accommodation (including breakfast where provided as part of the rate) can be considered at a rate of up to £110 per night. There is no support for costs incurred staying with friends or family. **No other subsistence costs will be supported.**

3.3 Ineligible businesses

Businesses receiving grant funding from other sources may not be eligible to apply and should discuss in advance with Business Gateway. Certain business types are not eligible for grant funding. These include those involved in:

- The sex industry
- Politics
- Religion
- Nude or semi-nude modelling or photography
- Pyramid selling

Or any business that may bring Orkney Islands Council into disrepute.

4. Application Procedure

To apply for the grant, you will be asked for:

- A completed application form that includes details of the training to be undertaken, how it will improve the skills for the business as well as justification why funding is required from Orkney Islands Council;
- A quote/estimate for the cost* of the proposed training; and
- A note of travel and accommodation costs* (for limits refer to sections 3.1 and 3.2).

** If you are VAT registered, the VAT element will not be eligible for grant assistance.*

A completed application will then be assessed by the Business Gateway Manager to ensure it meets the approval criteria and to add their recommendations. It will then be submitted to the Economic Development Manager for final approval.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application within 15 working days of the completed final application being submitted. Any offer of grant will be made by letter and applicants will have 10 working days to accept the offer along with any conditions, sign and return the letter.

The determination of eligibility in respect of any grant application shall lie within the absolute discretion of Orkney Islands Council.

5. Payment Procedure

After receiving and accepting an offer of a grant, the applicant will pay the full cost of the training and any associated travel and accommodation costs before claiming back any grant support through submission of completed grant claim form(s) that are supported by evidence of payment in the form of bank or credit card statement **AND original** receipted invoices, tickets or purchase receipts. Individual trainees will also be required to sign a declaration and provide short feedback on the training undertaken. Original documents will be stamped, copied and returned to the applicant.

Payment will be made by BACS transfer into the applicant's business bank account. Please be aware that there will be a time lag between claim submission and payment received of up to two weeks, due to the Council submission and payment deadlines – more information can be provided on request.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: Applicants must ensure they have financial arrangements in place to manage the cash flow implications of retrospective payment of grant.

Applicants will have 4 weeks from when they undertake their training to complete and claim the grant, unless otherwise agreed in writing with Business Gateway.

Only costs specified in the approved application can be claimed. If total costs are lower than the approved grant then the lower figure will apply.

All applicants must comply in full with the requirements of the grant funding. Payment of the grant will be withheld if:

- Any guideline is not complied with (unless a written dispensation is obtained);
- Any information is provided which is misleading or incorrect;
- Any information required is not fully provided with copies of the appropriate source documentation.

Orkney Islands Council reserves the right to recover the grant if any of the grant conditions are broken.

6. Other Conditions

Business Gateway, on behalf of Orkney Islands Council, reserves the right to use details, excluding personal information, of any project in receipt of grant funding for publicity purposes and to share information with parties appointed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the funding.

The names of all businesses and or individuals receiving support, and the value of the support, will be reported to Elected Members of Orkney Islands Council. Orkney Islands Council may be required to make an application or project proposal for Council funding available for public scrutiny under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Applicants should make the Council aware of any parts of their application or proposal which may prejudice its interest if it were made public.

Applicants' records may be subject to inspection at any time. Additional conditions may be imposed on any applicant as may be considered appropriate by the funders of the scheme.

More information about how the Council will use your personal data and your rights is available here: <http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Online-Services/privacy.htm>

All applicants (but not all trainees) must be 18 years of age or over. The business must remain based in the Orkney Islands Council area for at least twelve months.

7. Additional Supporting Information

You may wish to also explore support on offer to businesses from Skills Development Scotland at www.ourskillsforce.co.uk