

Guidelines for Forum members with regard to learnership opportunities for people with disabilities

Generic Forum letter to service providers

Once a service provider has contacted a Forum member for advertising a learnership, the Forum member is to please send the Generic Forum letter to the service provider.

Following the requested information being received from the service provider, the below guidelines are set out prior to circulating the service provider's advertisement to people with disabilities:

Prior to circulation of advertisements:

Research

Saqa website

You as a Forum member should ideally look up further details of the training intervention using the SAQA (South African Qualification Authority) website – www.saqa.org.za .

Learning outcomes

Pay particular attention to what Specific Outcomes the learners are meant to achieve by the end of the learning programme,

In addition, look at “vertical articulation options” after finishing that particular qualification

Thought question - Will the people with Disabilities you work with have any interest in this qualification?

Unit standards

On the last few pages of the SAQA document, one can see the different unit standards that make up part of the qualification

Thought question - Are any of these unit standards of interest to the learner?

Funding

From where is the funding for the intervention coming? Is the intervention self-funded by the company offering the learning experience or is it funded by a 3rd party grant (tenders/discretionary Grant funding from the SETA)?

Caution

If it is funded by a third party, ask to see proof that the money / grant has already been awarded and that they are not recruiting people in case their application for funding is successful. DO NOT recruit learners until money has been secured.

Sensitisation

Ideally it would be useful for you to sensitise the service provider. The host employer, the mentors, the facilitators and even all the employees within the host company where the workplace experience is going to take place need to become fully aware of, and sensitised to, the new responsibilities that have to be taken into consideration with the different disability types they will have in their workplaces. This must be done through visits by different Forum members to the company for “awareness workshops”.

Follow up

Follow-up meetings by the society together with the facilitator in charge of the training intervention are important to ensure learners are coping within their environment. This is important so that only acceptable accommodations for their disabilities are made rather than the focus of reasonable accommodation meetings being less positive.

Stipends

The Forum members should establish how much learners will be receiving as their stipend as it will give them some idea of how far afield they can source learners from. Stipends are meant to cover the transport and meal costs of the learners on training days. They are not supposed to be considered a working wage.

Workplace Safety

The Forum member should establish whether the workplace that these learners will be entering, is safe and suitable for the learners’ particular disability. If not, then the Forum members should suggest what changes would have to be made. The Forum member should also establish whether the suggestions they make are going to be implemented.

Absorption

The Forum member should establish whether there is any intention that the learners will be absorbed by the company after the learnership is complete. And if not by that particular company, does the company have any intention of trying to help the learners find employment

Information that the Forum members needs to canvass with the potential learner in respect of Learnership opportunities:

Interview

You will need to inform the learner that the first stage of a learnership is to attend an interview with the representative of the training service provider.

Documentation

In preparing for the interview process the learner will need the following documents:

A certified copy of their Identity Document. If the learner is not a South African citizen and does **not** have an identity document, the learner can submit a certified copy of his or her passport but then the learner will also need to have a certified copy of the learners work permit/permanent residency certificate.

A certified copy of the learner’s highest qualification. The **highest qualification** is usually the Matric Certificate or anything higher such as a diploma or a degree. If the learner does not have a Matric, the learner must produce a certified copy of his or her last school report e.g. Grade 10 report

A Medical certificate/report (and Therapists report if necessary). The **medical certificate** must clearly identify the learner and the nature of his or her disability and must be from a registered medical

practitioner. If the learner's disability has been assessed by an Occupational Therapist or a Psychologist then the learner will need a certified copy of the referring doctor's report **and** the therapist's report.

Questions you should ask the learner before applying for a learnership

- What are the learner's interests and abilities both in the short term and the long term?
- What are the learner's goals and what is the learner's chosen career path?
- Does the learner think the learning opportunity is going to be a good fit with his or her chosen career path?
- Has the learner thought about other career opportunities that he or she may be interested in?
- If this learnership opportunity is *not* in line with the learner's interests, abilities and chosen career path you may advise the learner that it may be better to wait for alternative learning opportunities more suited to them.

If the learner decides that applying for the learnership is in line with his or her interests, abilities and chosen career path then the learner needs to carefully consider what his or her REALISTIC ABILITIES AND GOALS are. Think about:

- What the actual physical/cognitive requirements of the learning intervention?
- What are the requirements of the work-place learning component?
- What is the career potential of the learning opportunity is and will they realistically be able to pursue such a career either in the short or long term e.g. a learner who has epilepsy will not be able to become a professional driver but could become a freight handler in the transport industry.
- You should stress that an important point to think about is that a learnership takes approximately 12 to 18 months to complete (and this time period could be longer depending on the nature of the persons disability). Therefore choosing the correct learning intervention is important because it is a big commitment to the learner's development towards their chosen career path.
- Ultimately what is the **final outcome** that the learner is hoping to achieve? Is it education or employment? If the main aim is to get a job then the learner must carefully consider which learnership opportunities will provide THE BEST EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES for them, taking into account the nature of his or her disability.

For more information, please contact Archie Roberts at
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