

What is a Learnership?

A learnership is a learning programme that ultimately provides you with an occupational qualification. It has two parts:

- 1) classroombased learning at a training centre and
- 2) on-thejob training in the workplace.

Government has determined 85% of learners must be black, 54% must be female and 4% must be people with disabilities.

Who can apply?

Anyone can apply for a learnership. Learnerships are available to unemployed people, young people leaving schools and colleges, and people already in jobs. Learnerships are not restricted to any age group.

What's really great about learnership programmes is that they're not determined by prior education or training. They're also available on various levels, depending on the learner's level of competence.

What are the costs involved?

Costs to you? Nothing. There's no charge for a person to participate in a learnership. In fact, everyone selected for a learnership programme must be paid a learner allowance by their employer. So you actually make money from learning. And the precise amount depends on the type of work you do.

What do I need to know?

For you to participate in a learnership, there must be an employer willing and able to provide the work experience. The learnership must also lead to a qualification in terms of the National Qualifications Framework; be registered with the Director-General of Labour; and relate to an occupation.

If you're accepted for a learnership, you'll have to sign a legal agreement with your employer. It will state your rights and responsibilities, the rights and responsibilities of your employer and the level of the learnership allowance. The training provider (person or organisation providing the theory part of your training) will also sign the legal agreement.

The lengths of different learnerships differ, but the minimum duration is usually one year.

How are SETAs involved in learnerships?

Each SETA organises and facilitates the funding of learnerships in its specific area of the economy. It also ensures that the training is up to industry standard.

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What happens at the end of the Learnership?

If you complete your learnership successfully, you'll have a qualification that is recognised throughout the country – and you'll have a certificate to prove it. The certificate will describe the skills you've learned on the job and in your training.

But will I get a job?

If you were unemployed when you started the learnership, there's no guarantee of a job at the end - because the employer who provided your experience and training does not have to offer you one. But with a qualification and work experience, you'll be in a much better position than you were before to get a job elsewhere in the workplace. You can think about obtaining more qualifications, or even starting your own business.

What are Skills Programmes?

Like learnerships, skills programmes are focused on the workplace. Skills programmes are portions of, and lead to, learnerships and when a learner completes a course, he or she gains credits towards a National Qualification. Skills programmes are often a lot shorter than learnerships, so their immediate benefits are pretty impressive. The major emphasis is on skills training in a practical and hands-on fashion.

How to register as a work seeker:

- Visit your nearest labour centre. This will enable employers to find you if they're looking for candidates for learnerships.
- Complete the Work Seeker Registration Form and hand it in at the centre.
- Keep in contact with the centre and let them know if your details change.
- Keep your CV up to date and prepare for interviews (see Job-Seeking).

So what's next?

The Department of Labour is in charge of recruiting, selecting and referring potential learners to the appropriate employers. If you're unemployed, register with the Department as a work seeker.

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