

Outdoor Learning Apprenticeships Employer Case-study



Field Studies Council



■ 1. Please give a brief overview of your company and the types of services or products you provide.

Field Studies Council is an organisation dedicated to providing high-quality outdoor education opportunities for people of all ages. Their offerings include:

1. **Day Visits:** Short trips designed to give participants a taste of outdoor learning. These visits often focus on specific curriculum links.
2. **Residential Trips:** Longer stays allowing for data collection and analysis learning experiences. These trips can last several days and provide deeper engagement with the natural environment. They are ideal for school groups, youth organisations, and other educational groups.
3. **Youth Courses:** Tailored programs aimed at young people and are designed for students doing their Duke of Edinburgh Gold.
4. **Adult Courses:** Opportunities for adults to engage in lifelong learning through outdoor education. These courses cover a wide range of topics, from natural history and conservation to outdoor skills and hobbies. They are suitable for anyone looking to expand their knowledge and skills in a supportive environment.
5. **University Courses:** University led courses provide hands-on fieldwork and practical experience, which are crucial for students in disciplines such as biology, environmental science, and geography.

Field Studies council aims to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the natural world through these diverse educational experiences, encouraging sustainable interaction with the environment.

■ 2. What were the main reasons that lead you to introducing apprenticeships to your workforce?

Field Studies Council also offers apprenticeship programs designed to build a skilled workforce. These apprenticeships serve multiple purposes:

1. **Workforce Development:** Apprenticeships are designed to train individuals to become skilled members of the team. By the end of the apprenticeship, participants are well-prepared for potential full-time employment within the organisation. They are familiar with the job requirements and the unique teaching style of Field Studies Council.
2. **Educational Experience:** Apprentices get the opportunity to engage with different aspects of teaching and environmental education, helping them make informed career choices. By working closely with experienced educators and participating in a variety of educational activities, apprentices can explore different career paths within the field of education. This exposure helps them decide on their future career directions based on real-world experience.

■ 3. What were primary goals and objectives you hoped to achieve through this apprenticeship programme?

We hope to train apprentices so they can build their skill sets, gain experience in outdoor education, and, ideally, stay with us to pursue a career within the Field Studies Council. Through our apprenticeship programme, participants receive hands-on training that prepares them for various roles within our organisation. By the end of their apprenticeship, they will have developed a comprehensive understanding of their job responsibilities and our unique teaching style. This practical experience not only equips them for potential full-time positions with us but also helps them make informed decisions about their future careers in education. Our goal is to nurture a skilled and knowledgeable workforce that is passionate about outdoor education and committed to our mission.

Institute for Outdoor Learning

<https://www.outdoor-learning.org/workforce/apprenticeships.html>

■ **4. What have been the most significant benefits to your organisation as a result of implementing this apprenticeship programme?**

A huge benefit of our apprenticeship program is having apprentices who can transition directly into tutor roles because they have already received the necessary training. These individuals come into their new positions with established relationships and a clear understanding of the day-to-day operations of a centre.

■ **5. How has the apprenticeship programme impacted the skill level and productivity of your workforce?**

The apprentice program provides opportunities for those within our workforce to mentor and train the apprentices, fostering a collaborative and supportive learning environment. Additionally, it ensures we have a skilled workforce ready to be employed once they have completed their training.

■ **6. How has the apprenticeship programme contributed to the career development and progression of the apprentices within your organisation?**

Many apprentices from previous years have stayed with us and have worked their way up to become senior tutors. The apprenticeship program provided them with the skills needed to start as tutors, and as they progressed, they were able to mentor the next set of trainees, further building their skillset. This cycle of training and mentoring has created a strong, skilled workforce that continues to grow and improve, benefiting both the apprentices and the organization.

■ **7. What feedback have you received from the apprentices regarding their experience with the programme, and how have you acted on this feedback?**

Feedback on the apprenticeship has been positive. However, some apprentices felt they had too much workload, so we have now removed the AET from the apprenticeship. The AET will be something they can complete if they stay on as a tutor. This adjustment aims to ensure a more manageable workload for apprentices.

■ **8. Based on your experience, would you recommend apprenticeship programmes to other organisations? Why or why not?**

I would absolutely recommend the apprenticeship programme to another organisation because it helps build a skilled workforce to then take on permanently.

■ **9. What are your future plans for the apprenticeship programme?**

We plan to continue using the apprenticeship programme to build our workforce and their skills.