

## Common Learning Solutions

Professionals learn their skills in a wide variety of ways, both formally and informally.

*Learning solutions* is a term we use to describe the modes of learning used (e.g., online learning or classroom) and the environments that provide opportunities to learn (e.g., a course, self-directed study, on-the-job mentoring or coaching).

### Formal solutions

The most common formal solutions are courses. Courses are learning events with a series of activities, presentations, or guided projects in a defined period of time (with a specific start and end). In general, participants are expected to attend the entire event, which may include a formal assessment.

- Short classroom courses, one week or less (can include workshops, seminars, etc.)
- Long classroom courses, multiple weeks
- Online courses, mostly synchronous (made up of live presentations or webinars)
- Online courses, mostly or fully asynchronous (mostly self-directed, with limited or no live sessions)
- MOOCs (courses open to large numbers of participants and having limited instructor assessment)

### Informal and Semi-Formal

These learning activities are usually less defined in terms of a start and stop date, and include trainers or facilitators with less formal roles, or instead of trainers, coaches or more experienced colleagues.

- online seminars or webinars (often less than a day, but might be grouped in a series)
- conferences or seminars (in-person meetings)
- self-directed learning (the learner accesses information and learning resources as assigned or under their own initiative)
- on-the-job training (job practice under the guidance of an experienced person)
- a job manual or documented instructions (using printed or online resources for self-help on the job)
- mentoring and coaching (a more experienced person provides periodic guidance over an extended period of time)
- learning from colleagues (in office or off-the-job discussions, or via an online community, sometimes through formal or informal communities of practice, including online discussion forums or blogs)
- working in teams (with peers or more experienced colleagues)
- working independently (and trying new things to improve work outcomes)

### Blended solutions

Often the best choices for learning are combinations of the above solutions or variations on them.