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Brand guidelines

To help you find what you want quickly, use the contents list to navigate around this document. To quit the document press 'Esc' (escape) on your keyboard and proceed to the 'File' menu.

Updated 02.12.04

Introduction

These guidelines define the basic elements of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) brand.

There are very few rules but please take the time to read and understand how they work, and how they can be used together to ensure a fresh and vital brand identity. It's crucial that the brand appears correctly and consistently in every communication.

Who we are and what we do
The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone.

Our vision is that, by 2010, young people and adults in England will have the knowledge and skills to match the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce.

Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

How we communicate

The LSC should always speak in a confident but approachable tone. We should be seen as reliable, helpful and trustworthy. A solid, grounded organisation.

Our new values are reflected in our new brand. We are rationalising and focusing our communications to deliver clarity, consistency and impact.

Before producing any piece of communication, we should always ask what the benefit will be for the LSC or our audiences. This will help ensure that we support our objectives in the most time- and cost-efficient way.

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More than words
What we say and write is as important as our visual language. The way the LSC talks is an integral part of the brand – it defines the organisation. Ensure that the right words and appropriate language are used, whatever the application.

Clear, confident and approachable.

This sounds simple but it can be used as a guide when creating any communications materials.

This means the LSC gets right to the point. It communicates in plain English, using everyday language. It tries to avoid jargon wherever possible: less is more.

Four tones

The LSC's communication style is split into four modes. Decide what is the main role of the communication you're writing, and choose the style that fits.

Information

Direct, clear and factual. Present the information as concisely as possible.

Use shorter words, sentences and paragraphs. Avoid jargon and don't overuse buzzwords. Use more verbs and fewer nouns: 'we provide skills training' rather than 'we are a skills training provider'. Use the active voice ('we do this') rather than the passive ('this is done by us').

Information language for example:
'It is our job to invest this money in skills training in England, and to make sure that it is the training that England's employers, individuals and communities need.'

Information for action

Still direct, clear and factual, but with a clear call to action. It should be obvious what you want the reader to do next.

Show what you want people to do as a consequence of what you've said:
'So we want you to….'
'That's why we're asking…'
'That means you should…'

Information for action language for example:
'By building strong partnerships with organisations like yours, we can help strengthen this country's economy and get England's skills to world-class standards. Your input into this document is a vital first step. Please complete the feedback form on the backpage.'

Consultation

Clear, involving and accessible. Encourage dialogue, be open and conversational.

Use personal pronouns: 'we' and 'you'. Use contractions from time to time: 'it's', 'we're', 'you've.'

Consultation for example:
'We know that getting small businesses interested in education and training is particularly difficult. So we're committed to developing tailored training and collaborations between providers and clusters of businesses. We want to do this in partnership with organisations like yours.'

Promotion

Dynamic and inspiring. Excite the reader, and provoke thought.

Use questions. An occasional surprise: an unexpected word, phrase or metaphor.

Promotion language for example:
'We have a large remit at the LSC. Our job is wide-ranging and complex. And what we do matters: it's important.'

Our logo

An instantly recognisable symbol of the LSC, the logo is the most valuable asset of the brand. It is crucial to reproduce the logo correctly and consistently.

It should always appear with the strapline and should be positioned in the top right hand of the cover, bleeding off on the right.

Logo variations
Always use the correct version.

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LSC master logo
This version of the logo should appear
in most applications. It should only ever
be reproduced in black.

Logo variations and rules
Consistent application is crucial.

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4x

1x

Exclusion area
The exclusion zone is the minimum area around the logo that must remain clear of typography or any other graphic device. The measurement is calculated by using a quarter of the height of the black block. The formula for the exclusion zone is shown here and applies to all sizes and versions of the logo.

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15mm/80px

Minimum size
To ensure legibility and allow for ease of recognition, the logo should never be reproduced any smaller than 15mm or 80 pixels in height.

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10mm/65 pixels

Small use version
This version should be used when the logo needs to appear below 15mm or 80 pixels. The strapline has been adjusted so that it is more legible at small sizes. It should not be reproduced below 10mm or 65 pixels in height.

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Reproducing the logo on black/dark backgrounds
A white box with exactly the same proportions as the exclusion zone (shown on the left) should be created. This should be avoided where possible, as it compromises the strength and impact of the logo.

Applying the logo on publications
The logo should be used consistently.

3mm

Leading learning and skills
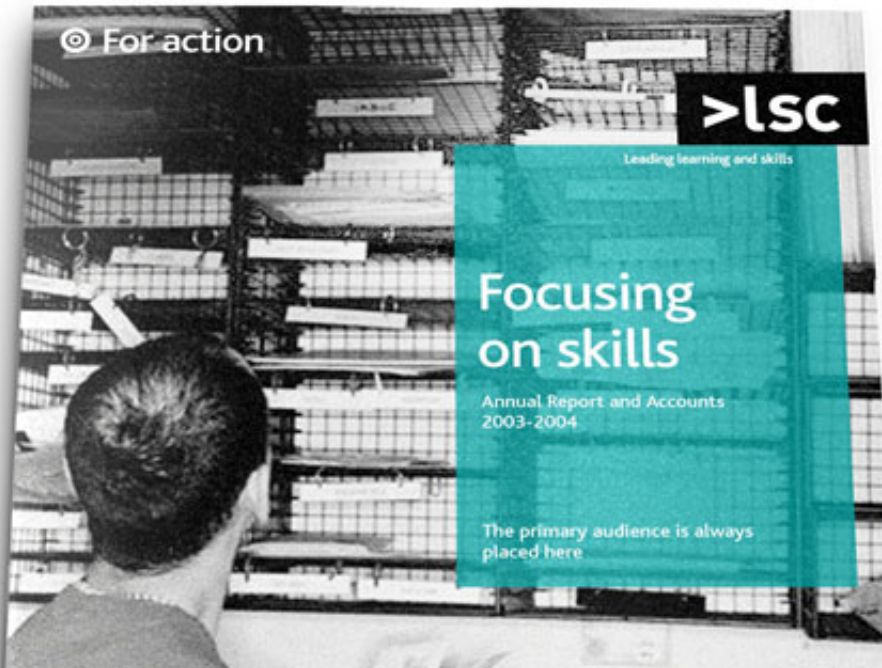
Front cover
Ensure there is significant contrast
between the logo and the background.
In those instances where the logo bleeds
off on the right hand side, ensure the
'bleed off' version of the artwork is used.

LSC bleed off logo
In these instances, where the logo bleeds
off on the right hand side, ensure a 3mm
extension is set up to extend to the right.

Applying the logo

Prominent placement
In general, the logo is placed on the top
right hand side of communications.

It should be applied confidently, in
large sizes, contrasting strongly with
the background.

Don't even consider it...
Be careful: the logo is important, it needs to be protected. It must never be redrawn or modified in any way.

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Never alter the proportions of the logo

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Don't reproduce the logo in any colour other than black

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Avoid adding effects to the logo, such as drop shadow or outlines

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Never reproduce the logo on a black/dark background without a white box

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Never reproduce the logo without strapline

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Never attempt to recreate the logo

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Never allow the logo to have transparent letters

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Don't reproduce the logo at an angle

Don't even consider it...

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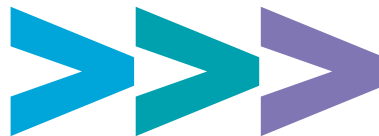**Never alter the relationship of the strapline and logo block**

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Never alter the relationship of any characters in the logo

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The chevron symbol is part of the logo, and should not be appropriated for any other use

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> Section 01

How we use colour
In the new LSC colour palette black and white dominate, with nine supporting tones.

LSC Pink
Pantone 226
C003 M100 Y000 K000
R240 G010 B129
Webhex FF0099

LSC Yellow
Pantone 116
C000 M017 Y100 K00
R255 G204 B000
Webhex FFCC00

LSC Orange
Pantone 144
C000 M059 Y100 K00
R255 G133 B000
Webhex FF9900

LSC Red
Pantone 179
C000 M086 Y080 K000
R255 G068 B011
Webhex FF3300

LSC Light Green
Pantone 390
C026 M000 Y092 K005
R183 G211 B011
Webhex CCCC00

LSC Green
Pantone 376
C053 M000 Y085 K000
R127 G195 B028
Webhex 66CC00

LSC Turquoise
Pantone 320
C100 M000 Y040 K000
R000 G142 B143
Webhex 009999

LSC Blue
Pantone 7460
C100 M000 Y009 K000
R000 G153 B204
Webhex 0099CC

LSC Lilac
Pantone 272
C060 M054 Y000 K000
R110 G105 B176
Webhex 666699

Black

Black is the main brand colour, straightforward, easy to use and effective.
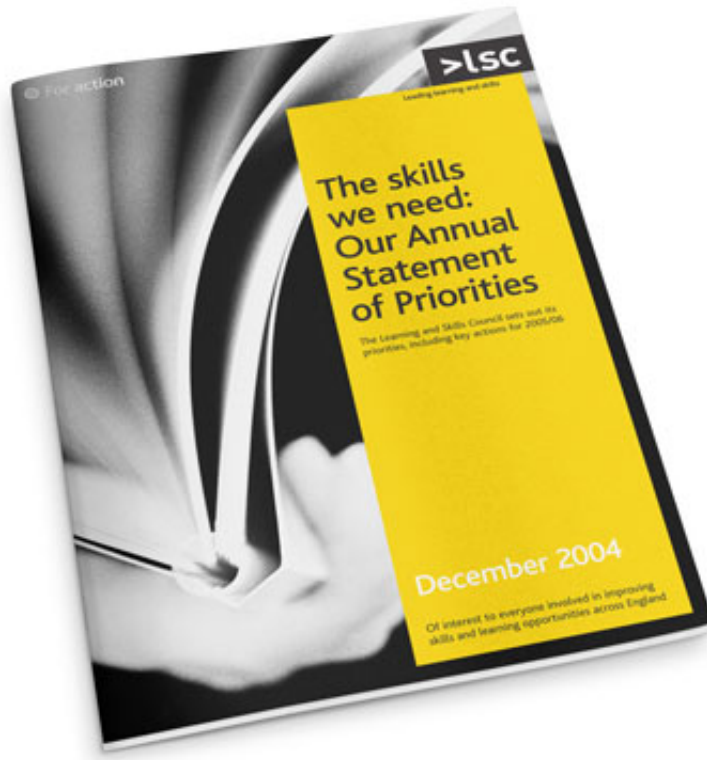
White

Don't forget white, it can be used very creatively.

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Colour in use
## The use of colour should be considered carefully and applied sparingly.

Use colour to highlight information
All publications use the panel device on the front cover.

To create impact
Use colour with confidence, employ full bleed and avoid gradients. In general, applications will look stronger if one colour is used per page; avoid the use of multiple colours. Tints of the same colour will create a coherent feel throughout a document.

Colour in use, some more guides...
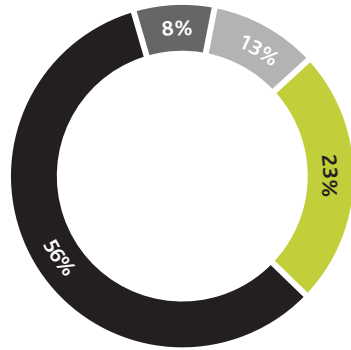
Avoid graduating colour
Use solid colour or tints.

Navigation
Colour can help the reader differentiate between areas of information.

LSC type
Within the Bliss typeface family
four weights should be used.

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Bliss

Bliss bold

Bliss medium

Bliss regular

Bliss light

Using type – a few tips
Typography should always look great, but first and foremost it's a functional tool. Use it to communicate, not decorate.

Create impact and bring information to life
Shorter headers can attract attention. Typography should suit the purpose – for example, clear and rational for information, dynamic and animated for promotion.

Use organised layouts with considered compositions and few variations of weight
Create a clear information hierarchy – three sizes of type is a good rule of thumb. Where possible, avoid the underlining of text. Never justify text and reserve centring text for headlines only.

Leaving some areas of a layout with clear white (referred to as negative space) can increase the impact of the message, and make things easier to read. If used sparingly, accent colours can be used to highlight areas of information.

Using type – a few more tips
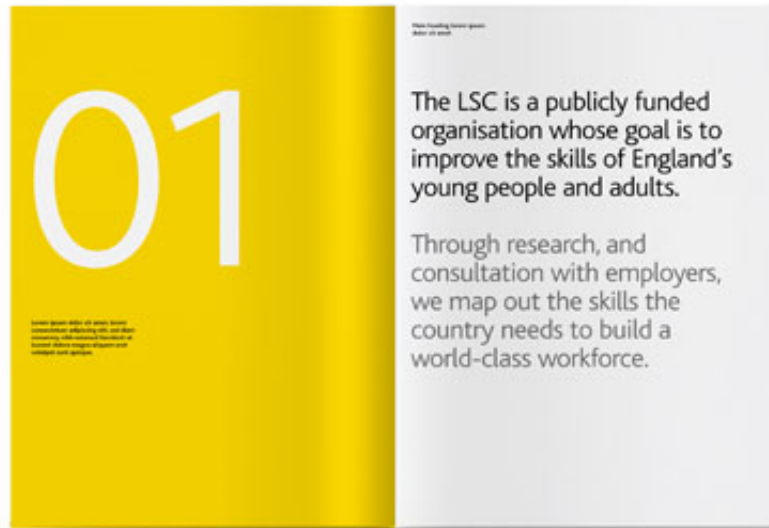
**Use size, weight and colour to create
contrast and guide the reader**
Employ a thoughtful use of elements
– not clutter.

Less is often more
Keeping things simple is a good
approach to composition. In addition,
remember our eyes are drawn to the
most striking element on the page.

Using Arial
Bliss is the typeface for published documents. Arial should be used when restrictions mean that Bliss cannot. These include 'in-house' systems, on-screen applications and online text.

Further reading
The Electronic Presentations section on Brandsite has more information on creating branded PowerPoint presentations.

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Our image style
The LSC brand uses images purposefully to build on a theme or communicate an idea. The image style is exclusively black and white. Images used in LSC publications are mainly in these four areas:

All photography is reproduced in black and white, and printed using black. A double hit of black can be used to darken the image, if required. Do not print using four colour, or duotones.

People

Directors/managers

Case studies

General illustrative

People
Can be shot alone or in groups. They can be in a meeting, interacting with colleagues or the photographer. They should be relaxed and informal, maybe even in shirt sleeves, and be engaged in what they are doing.

Positive personalities, engaged in their work life

The background and location are as important as the individual

Believable, real-life situations

As they are, expressing a personality – not models

Relaxed and natural, complementing the scene and supporting the message
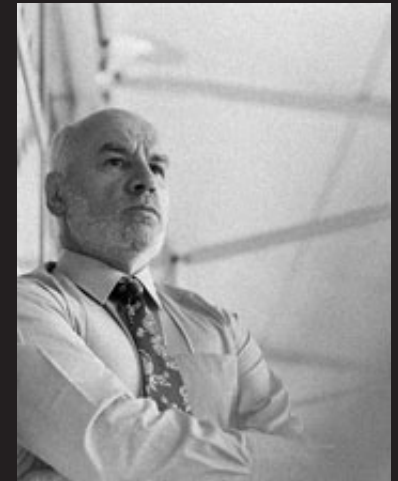
Directors/managers
Dynamic, fly-on-the-wall images of directors in discussion or in a meeting, showing a positive attitude, are preferable to posed or staged shots. Individual portraits can be taken in front of a white background.
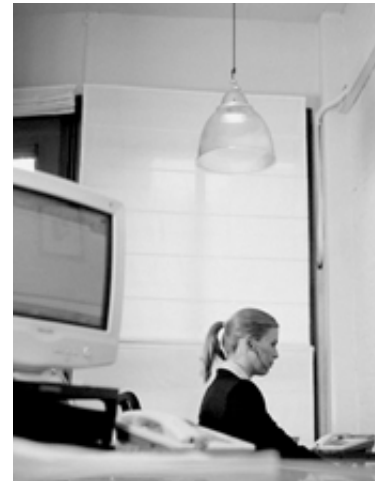

Observed, never contrived

Case studies

Individuals looking proud, confident and positive should be photographed in a real environment. Backgrounds are just as important as the person – they help tell a story. Scale and different perspectives can be used for impact.

Tell a story, create some narrative

Real people, real environments

General illustrative

Sometimes a concept is difficult to illustrate using traditional images and is best shown with something more abstract. Images can hint at the content or show a detail of it. Contrast and simplicity create powerful statements.
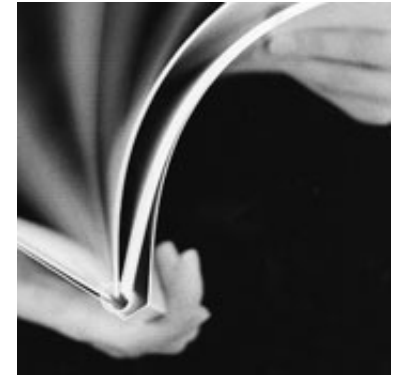

Everyday objects can be used metaphorically

Movement can provide an interesting effect

Objects can become visually interesting

How to use photography
Use it thoughtfully, not as decoration.

**Consider text and image together;
use with impact – full bleed is good**

**Have a purpose – try to tell a story;
use imagery to add detail**

Things to avoid
A rogues gallery...

Images should never be in colour, always use black and white

Avoid visual clichés

Avoid strange filters

Avoid the ridiculous

Obvious models in set-up situations do not work

Avoid obscure angles

Images should have strong contrast

Black and white, no tints or tones

Using the icons
The icons are a functional device, helping
to guide the reader.

These are the only icons you should
use; never create new ones

⇄ For consultation

ⓘ For information

◎ For action

How to use the icons
Never use them as decoration, they are designed to serve a purpose.

Icon positioning
The icon should always be placed in the
top left corner of the publication.

SIngle colour
Icons can appear in black or white only,
depending on background.