Learning a new skill could help safeguard your career in the credit crunch, according to the Learning and Skills Council. Amongst the current economic difficulties experts within the LSC feel learning and developing skills such as literacy, numeracy and communication skills will make you better prepared to combat the crunch in uncertain times and could even help grow your income.

Today’s announcement aims to show that simply learning a new skill in this time of economic uncertainty can help protect and prolong our careers. The LSC recommends that a small investment in yourself – for example learning and developing skills such as literacy, numeracy and communication skills – will make you better prepared to tackle any eventuality in the current global economic situation.

The LSC’s top five tips to developing skills are:

1. You may feel that you have good writing skills, but want to move to the next level.  
   Maybe you could consider a report writing course.

2. You feel that you should brush up on your mental arithmetic.  
   Maybe you should consider a numeracy course.

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3. You want to be able to communicate more effectively with your colleagues.
   
   Consider that presentation course that you’ve always wanted to go on but have been too self-conscious to sign up for.

4. You want to be able to update the company website.
   
   Consider doing a web design or IT course – you will gain skills that can be used both at work and at home.

5. You want to go for career progression and that all important promotion.
   
   Consider enrolling on a Leadership and Management course which will put you amongst the ‘cream of the company’.

Best-selling author and career guru at jobsite.co.uk, Sarah Berry, agrees that gaining new qualifications is one way to personally ensure that you are equipped to beat the credit crunch: “People often ask me how to improve their employability, especially in uncertain economic times, and the first thing I suggest is that they update their skills. Showing your employer that you have the skills to perform a variety of jobs at work will immediately impress. It certainly rings true that a new and varied skill can make you the go-to person at work.”

But learning a new skill is not just for those who are employed, Sarah continues: “Equally, if you’re not yet in the job market or are looking to get back into work, think about how a new skill can set you apart from the competition and immediately increase your career prospects. Potential employers always look for factors which differentiate candidates and a variety of skills will be at the top of their list.”
The recent economic environment may tempt companies to cut back training budgets, but on the contrary, the LSC advises that the amount of companies making the Skills Pledge or offering courses through Train to Gain is increasing rapidly. Employees are recommended to be assertive and get onto the training courses offered.

Chris Banks, Chair – Learning and Skills Council, says: “A new skill is a great thing to have and will increase long term prospects of career progression, safeguarding your future – after all it’s in your hands.”

The LSC offers a host of support services to help those who are already in the workforce, or are about to enter the workforce, gain the skills they need to succeed and secure their future. Why not visit http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk and complete the career assessment tool to get a list of jobs that are just right for you? Alternatively, if you are interested in learning a new skill, more information on different courses and details of funding opportunities can be found at http://www.lsc.gov.uk

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Notes to editors:

Learning and Skills Council: The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.