



MERIT SKILLS
TRAINING & CONSULTANCY

Information and Guidance



Introduction

At Merit Skills we want to provide you with the highest quality training and development solutions. We also believe it's essential to provide information, advice and guidance to support any training programmes we deliver. So we do our very best to make sure clients and learners can easily access impartial and confidential information and advice on our services.

Information policy

We aim to provide up-to-date, accurate and complete information on all of our training courses. Core information given, where appropriate, includes:

- Pre-entry qualifications and previous knowledge/experience
- Course objectives and outcomes
- Course delivery and learning method
- Qualifications on completion and progression opportunities
- Relevant timeframes, including hours of attendance

We also provide customers with information on other training and career development options where it's deemed appropriate. To help them make the best decision, we will direct them to alternative information sources for advice or guidance.

For many of the subjects covered within this booklet we have formal policies and procedures. These are available on request, if you would like a copy please ask your trainer or assessor.

We hope this booklet is useful to those using it and are keen to hear your feedback on it. If you have any suggestions for its improvement please pass them to any member of our team.



Confidentiality and data protection

We comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. In order to provide a quality service and respond to clients efficiently we hold records of client / learner information.

Information is kept securely with access restricted to authorised staff only. No information about individuals will be passed to a third party without the express consent of the person. If information has to be provided to funding bodies or examination bodies individuals will be informed in these instances.

Any information held by us on an individual may be accessed by them, this information is not held any longer than is necessary for the specified purpose in line with specific requirements.

About Merit Skills

History

Merit Skills Ltd was founded in 2010 and is an organisation created to provide cost effective, high quality training and development products for individuals and organisations, delivered by the best industry experienced staff.

We offer a wide range of off-the shelf-products, whilst also specialising in development of solutions designed precisely to meet our client's specific requirements.

The team at Merit Skills have many years experience in providing training and development to a wide range of customers, ranging from multi million pound contracts to ad-hoc requirements. We aim to build on that experience to deliver an honest, cost effective, down to earth service to our customers.

Centre location and address

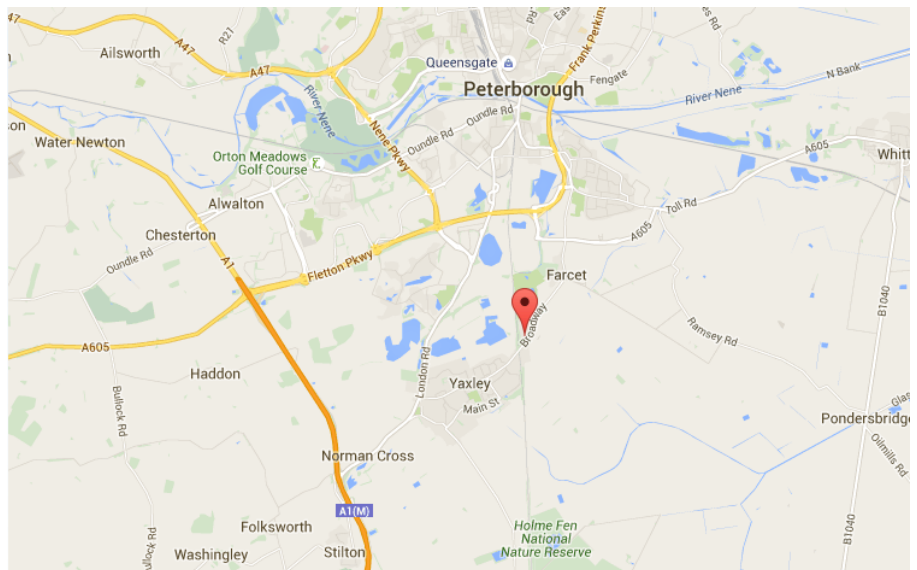
Our training centre address is:
9 Broadway Business Park
Broadway
Yaxley
Peterborough
PE7 3EN

Contact details

We have 2 telephone numbers:
01733 246415
01733 248139

Web site

We have 2 web sites:
www.meritskills.co.uk www.waterskills.co.uk



People involved in delivering your qualification

Training

All of the training provided will be delivered by appropriately qualified and experienced trainers.

Assessment: How it works

Assessment

Assessment of any exams, tests, assignments, projects, evidence or other work you have undertaken will be assessed by qualified and experienced assessors who have proven skills and knowledge in the subject area concerned.

Assessment: How it works

In order for learners to be able to effectively progress towards meeting the requirements of their qualification, trainers and assessors must make sure that the supporting knowledge, understanding and skills required for each assessment criterion are fully addressed.

We recommend that teaching and development of subject content and associated skills be referenced to real life situations, through the utilisation of appropriate work-based contact, vocationally experienced delivery personnel, and real life case situations.

When assessors are satisfied that the candidate has met all of the requirements for a unit, they will confirm this by signing an evidence record sheet for that unit to show that the assessment process is complete.



Initial assessment of learners

It is important for centres to carry out an initial assessment that identifies what competence and knowledge a learner already has and the gaps that they need to look at. This will help plan the assessment because it allows assessors to help learners understand the best place to start collecting evidence. It will also identify the units for which learners may require further support.

Assessment planning

Assessors will take responsibility for assessment planning with learners. This will involve agreeing a number of issues with learners including:

- finding the best source of evidence to use for particular units of their qualification
- finding the best way of assessing the candidate
- confirming the best times, dates and places for the assessments to take place

Assessors must make a note of their assessment planning and regularly give feedback to learners.

Making assessment decisions

It is not necessary for learners to meet all the criteria every time they carry out an activity but it is necessary that all learners produce their own evidence to meet all assessment criteria. They must consistently provide enough evidence for assessors to believe that the candidate is competent in their working environment.

Assessors should:

- plan with the learners
- assess candidate performance, knowledge and understanding
- look at the evidence
- question and give feedback to the candidate working towards these qualifications

They should also be satisfied that the candidate has demonstrated competence when meeting the assessment criteria.

All criteria must be completed before the assessor can sign the unit off as complete.

Methods of assessment

It is the assessor's responsibility to agree the best method of assessing a candidate in relation to their individual circumstances. The methods agreed must be:

- valid
- reliable
- safe and manageable
- suitable to the needs of the candidate



Special Assessment Arrangements

If you have a learning difficulty and/or disability we will provide additional support and make reasonable adjustments to enable you to overcome any barriers to learning. At commencement of your course, we will make an assessment to help us arrange any support that you may need in order to complete your course. We provide dyslexia screening and special examination arrangement assessment and apply for any special examination arrangements that you may require.

Appeals

If you feel that an assessment decision for your work does not reflect its quality, or if you want to ask for more information about the decision, you should first see the person who assessed your work. The assessor will explain their decision. If you are not satisfied with this you can appeal against your grade. The Assessment Appeals Procedure is available from your trainers and assessors.



Quality Assurance

Internal Quality Assurance

If you are working towards a qualification your work will pass through 2 stages of quality assurance. The first stage is Internal Quality Assurance (IQA). The internal quality assurer works for our centre and will sample your work at various stages of your qualification and confirm agreement with your assessors' decisions. The IQA might also observe assessment taking place.



External Quality Assurance

The second stage of quality assurance is External Quality Assurance (EQA). The External Quality Assurer works for the awarding body and will undertake a similar role to the IQA. The EQA will also audit the centres procedures and records. Usually once the EQA is satisfied the assessment standards have been fully met the centre can apply for certification.



Your qualification

Awarding bodies

Merit Skills currently work with three awarding bodies depending on the qualification being undertaken. Our current awarding bodies are:

Awarding Body	Subjects Accredited
City and Guilds	Business Administration Customer Service Functional Skills
CABWI	Network Construction Leakage Detection Distribution Control
ILM	Team leading Management



Structure

Most qualifications are structured in a similar way. They consist of:

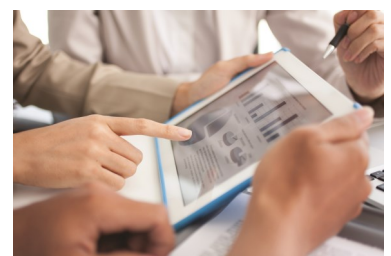
Units

Qualifications are broken down into units. The number of units can vary usually between 4 and 12. Each unit will have a title that describes the area of competence being covered. Some qualifications consist of a set of units that are mandatory with no choice to be made. Others have a set of mandatory units which must be completed followed by a number of units from which a set number of options can be chosen. There may also be a number of additional units that can be taken if desired. Your assessor will support you in making appropriate choices.

Learning outcomes

Each unit is broken down into learning outcomes. These further describe the areas of learning or assessment. Learning outcomes can usually be split into three categories:

- Performance – the ‘doing’ aspect
- Knowledge – what you need to know
- Behavioural – how you are expected to behave



Assessment criteria

Each learning outcome is broken down into assessment criteria. Usually a clear and concise sentence or short statement that describes the performance or knowledge must be demonstrated.

Scope or range

Some assessment criteria have range or scope statements associated with them. These are usually lists of items that must be covered as part of the particular assessment criteria.

Combination

Apprenticeships can require just single qualification to be completed. These qualifications incorporate all of the necessary knowledge and performance requirements. Other apprenticeships require two qualifications one is about 'knowledge' the other about 'competence'. Your assessor will explain the details of your qualification.

Functional skills

Functional Skills are the essential skills needed for ENGLISH, MATHS and ICT, vital for young people and adults to participate in life, learning and work.

Functional Skills feature in most educational and training choices. They are an essential, compulsory element in two main qualification routes for young people from 14 to 24; in apprenticeships and the Foundation Learning Tier, as well as being stand-alone qualifications in their own right at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2.

The development of Functional Skills is seen by the Government as essential to address employers' concerns that young people and adults are not achieving a firm enough grounding in the basics. Functional Skills strengthen and bring consistency to learning routes for young people and adults and have now replaced basic and key skills.

Duration and time table

Where attendance is required at the training centre a timetable will be issued to you.

Reviews

Reviews of progress throughout your apprenticeship will be carried out regularly. Intervals between reviews will not be more than 10 weeks. Reviews will normally take place with your trainer/assessor and your manager at a convenient location which will often be your place of work. Your trainer/assessor will inform you of details well in advance of this taking place.

Keeping track of progress

Your assessor will keep track of your progress and records will be kept. These will normally be shared with your employer.



Certification

The centre will apply for your certification after final quality assurance has taken place. The certificate will be awarded by the relevant awarding body and will usually be sent to the centre who will then forward to your employer.

Progression Opportunities

Most but not all qualifications offer progression opportunities. For example If you have repeated Level 2 Diploma in Customer Service you may wish to progress to the Level 3 and 4 Diplomas. Your trainer or assessor will be able to provide you with information of progression opportunities

Levels of qualification

All vocational qualifications are given a numeric level which indicates its level of difficulty. The table below shows how the levels equate to other qualifications:

Level	Other Qualifications			
8	Doctorate			
7	Master's Degree			
6	University Degree BA, BSc			
5		Foundation Degree	HND	
4			HNC	
3	A- Level	A2 AS	L3 Extended Diploma (National Diploma)	L3 Diploma (National Certificates)
2	GCSE Grades A-C	L2 Diploma (1 st Diploma)		
1	GCSE Grades D-G	L1 Diploma (Foundation)		
Entry level 1	Key Stage 3	E3 Diploma (Foundation)		

Equality of opportunity

Merit Skills is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity. We will adopt measures to combat discrimination on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, health status, disability, sexual orientation and political or religious beliefs.

We ask you:

- To co-operate with your fellow students and staff
- Not to use racist, sexist or other discriminatory language, jokes or materials
- To challenge others if they treat people unfairly
- To let us know if you are aware of any discriminatory behaviour
- If you feel that you have been harassed or discriminated against, please do something about it
- If appropriate, you could tell the person whose behaviour is offensive - they may not realise what they have done

To use the Merit Skills complaints procedure - your you trainer/assessor will be able to help you.



Punctuality

Whilst in training, it is important to attend training and assessment events regularly and on time. In our experience, students who attend all their classes are more likely to pass their course.

Health and Safety

We will strive to ensure that all activities we arrange are safe and this is how we approach this:

All Training Events

Prior to all events your trainer or assessor will carry out a risk assessment irrespective of an assessment of the activity being risk assessed previously. This will be recorded in the course booklet. Learners will be informed of any hazards and risks and how they will be managed.

Practical activities

All of the practical training activities that we carry out have been risk assessed and our trainers and assessors will inform you at the start of activities how they must be carried out to ensure the safety of everyone concerned. A secondary risk assessment will be carried out immediately before each event; this will be recorded in the course booklet.

Activities in your work place

Trainers and assessors will ensure that they are aware of, understand and comply with any safe systems of work that are in place. They may ask you to help them find the necessary information if it is not immediately obvious to them.

In all cases

If you have any concerns about the safety of yourself or others or do not understand how to carry out any activities stop and ask your trainer and assessor

Safety equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Where activities require the use of PPE we will give you advance notice of this. This might include:

- Overalls
- Head protection
- Safety footwear
- Eye protection
- Gloves

These should be provided by your employer where they are required in your work place.

Specific safety equipment

Where specific safety equipment is required for particular task we will either provide it or make arrangements with your employer to provide.

In all cases if you have any concerns regarding safety stop and discuss with your trainer/assessor.



Resources & Technology

Resources

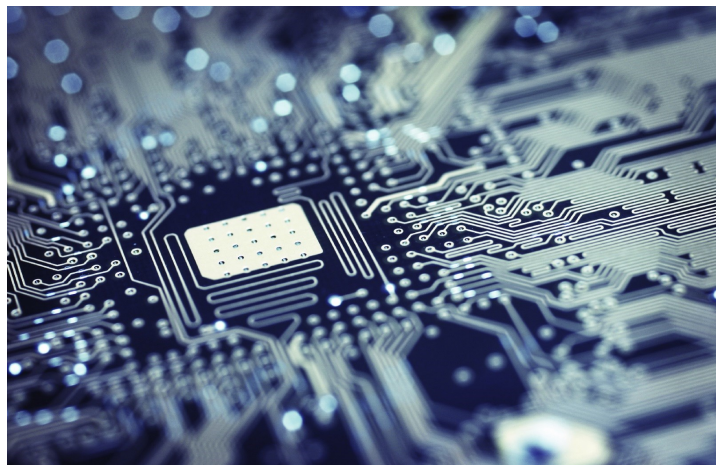
We are continually developing our learner resources to support our clients. Our web site is full of information about our training and development products and resources that might be useful to you.

For our practical subjects we use all of the materials and equipment that you will use in the workplace in order that you are well prepared for your work role.

Technology

We try to take advantage of technological developments to deliver our services. For example we promote the use of e-portfolios to enable our learners to work towards their qualifications at a time and location that suits them best.

We regularly use social media such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to communicate with our clients and potential clients.



Safeguarding

Merit Skills takes safe guarding of young people and vulnerable adults very seriously. Safeguarding is how we protect children, young people and adults at risk of abuse.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, it's about:

- Protecting children, young people and adults who are at risk of abuse
- Preventing neglect, abuse and exploitation
- Helping you to keep yourself safe or put plans in place to help protect those who cannot protect themselves
- Everybody feeling safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances are

Abuse of an adult includes:

- Not caring for an adult properly (neglect)
- Controlling or pressuring an adult to give away money or property (financial)
- Threatening, humiliating or harassing an adult (psychological)
- Hurting an adult and causing injury (physical)
- Touching or doing things to an adult without consent (sexual)
- Treating an adult badly because of disability, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age or gender (discrimination)
- An adult who neglects their own health or who self-harms
- Sexually exploiting an adult for money, power or status (sexual exploitation)
- Abuse of a child includes:
 - Not caring for a child properly (neglect)
 - Ongoing emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect of a child (psychological)
 - Hurting a child and causing injury (physical)
 - Forcing or persuading a child into sexual activities (sexual)
 - Cyber bullying, grooming, sexually abusing or exploiting a child online (online)
 - Sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (sexual exploitation)

Abuse can be carried out by anyone anywhere. If you are worried about your own or someone else's safety you should;

- in an emergency call 999
- if there is no immediate risk call the police on 101
- report it to you trainer and assessor
- Contact Tutor or member of staff if needed



Radicalisation

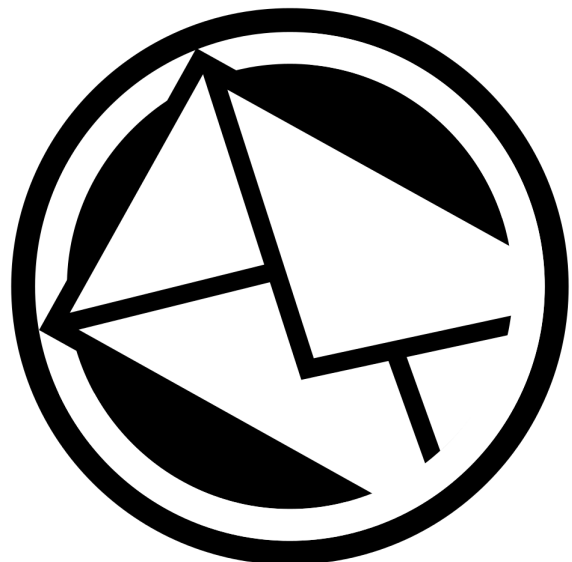
Radicalisation is defined in the government's PREVENT strategy as "the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism".

We have a duty to create and maintain a safe, healthy and supportive learning and working environment for our learners, staff and visitors alike. We recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for students. We further recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect our students from potential harm. We all have a duty to report any behaviour that we believe may be related to radicalisation. If you have any concerns please raise the issue with you trainer/ assessor or any member of our staff.

We have procedures in place to address such situations and further information is available on request.

Feedback

We are keen to improve all of the services we provide and your feed back is extremely valuable to us. If you have any comments on this document or any other products and services we offer please take the opportunity to speak to any of our staff or email us at info@meritskills.co.uk .



British Values



Are you a respectful individual?

Being a respectful individual is being a good citizen who is able to act respectfully towards others and ourselves. Even if we have disagreements with others, we must still communicate this in a respectful manner.

Have you got the right social and moral skills?

Social and moral skills are needed to live happily in everyday life as they are key interacting with others around you.

Equality

Treating everyone equally and fairly is something that we do without thought, but not discriminating by gender, religion, appearance and background is essential to British values.



Democracy

Everyone has a say and an opinion at Merit Skills. You help improve how we operate as a business.

The Rule of Law

Respecting the rules that we have at Merit Skills for your own safety and others around you.

Tolerance

At Merit Skills there may be many religions and backgrounds, it is important that all views are respected.

Mutual Respect

Merit Skills gives you respect and freedom as long as are values are upheld.

Individual Liberty

This is giving you the chance to make decisions and do what you wish.

Other sources of information

Web sites

The following web sites may offer useful information advice or guidance to help you in your studies or for your future career development:

Awarding bodies

City and Guilds	cityandguilds.com
ILM	www.i-l-m.com
CABWI	cabwi.co.uk

Career opportunities

Talent Source Network	https://www.talentsourcenetwork.co.uk/entry-level
Apprenticeships.gov	http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/the_apprentices
First Job	https://www.firstjob.com/
National Careers Service	https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx
Notgoingtouni	http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/

General Information

Connexions Direct	http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/index.htm
Citizens Advice Bureau	www.citizensadvice.org.uk/
Stay Safe Online	www.staysafeonline.info
Youth to Youth	www.youth2youth.co.uk
TheSite.org	www.thesite.org
The Samaritans	www.samaritans.org.uk/



Glossary of terms

There are often verbs or terminology used in the training and assessment that need to be understood in order to correctly complete the work in hand. This glossary of terms is design to aid understanding of those terms:

Analyse	to examine in detail in order to discover meaning, essential features, etc
Apply	to devote oneself with diligence to bring into operation or use to put to practical use; utilise; employ
Assess	to judge the worth, importance, etc, of; evaluate
Calculate	to solve (one or more problems) by a mathematical procedure; compute
Carry out	to perform or cause to be implemented
Chart	to plot or outline the course of to make a detailed plan of to make a chart of
Classify	to arrange or order by classes; categorise
Collect	to gather together or be gathered together
Communicate	to impart (knowledge) or exchange (thoughts, feelings, or ideas) by speech, writing, gestures, etc
Compare	to regard or represent as analogous or similar; liken
Compile	to make or compose from other materials or sources
Complete	to make whole or perfect to end; finish
Conduct	to do or carry out
Contrast	to distinguish by comparison of unlike or opposite qualities
Contribute	to give (support, money, etc) for a common purpose or fund to supply (ideas, opinions, etc) as part of a debate or discussion
Define	to state precisely the meaning of (words, terms, etc)
Deliver	to carry (goods, etc) to a destination, esp. to carry and distribute (goods, mail, etc) to several places to hand over, transfer, or surrender to produce or perform something promised or expected
Demonstrate	to show, manifest, or prove, esp. by reasoning, evidence, etc
Describe	to give an account or representation of in words
Design	to work out the structure or form of (something)
Detail	to list or relate fully to include all or most particulars
Develop	to come or bring to a later or more advanced or expanded stage; grow or cause to grow gradually
Devise	to work out, contrive, or plan (something) in one's mind
Discuss	to have a conversation about; consider by talking over; debate to treat (a subject) in speech or writing

Estimate	to form an approximate idea of (distance, size, cost, etc); calculate roughly; gauge
Evaluate	to ascertain or set the amount or value of to judge or assess the worth of; appraise
Examine	to look at, inspect, or scrutinise carefully, or in detail; investigate
Explain	to make (something) comprehensible, esp. by giving a clear and detailed account of the relevant structure, operation, surrounding circumstances, etc
Explore	to examine or investigate, esp. systematically
Generate	to produce or bring into being; create
Give	to present or deliver voluntarily (something that is one's own) to the permanent possession of another or others to impart or communicate
Identify	to prove or recognise as being a certain person or thing; determine the identity of
Illustrate	to clarify or explain by use of examples, analogy, etc
Implement	to carry out; put into action; perform
Interact	to act on or in close relation with each other
Interpret	to clarify or explain the meaning of; elucidate
Investigate	to inquire into (a situation or problem) thoroughly; examine systematically, especially in order to discover the truth
Justify	to prove or see to be just or valid; vindicate to show to be reasonable; warrant or substantiate
Keep	to have or retain possession of
Lead	to show the way to (an individual or a group) by going with or ahead to guide or be guided by holding, pulling, etc to phrase a question to (a witness) that tends to suggest the desired answer
Measure	to determine the size, amount, etc, of by measurement
Monitor	to observe or record (the activity or performance) of (an engine or other device)
Organise	to form (parts or elements of something) into a structured whole; co ordinate
Outline	to give the main features or general idea of
Participate	to take part, be or become actively involved, or share (in)
Perform	to carry out or do (an action)
Plan	to have in mind as a purpose to make a plan of (a building)
Prepare	to make ready or suitable in advance for a particular purpose or for some use, event etc to put together using parts or ingredients; compose or construct to equip or outfit

Present	to show, exhibit to put forward; submit to bring or suggest to the mind
Produce	to bring (something) into existence; yield to bring forth (a product) by physical or mental effort; make
Profile	to draw, write or make a profile of
Promote	to further or encourage the progress or existence of to raise to a higher rank, status degree etc to urge the adoption of; work for to encourage the sale of (a product) by advertising or securing financial support
Propose	to put forward (a plan, motion, etc) for consideration or action
Provide	to put at the disposal of; furnish or supply
Recognise	to perceive (a person, creature, or thing) to be the same as or belong to the same class as something previously seen or known; know again
Recommend	to advise as the best course or choice; counsel
Research	to carry out investigations into (a subject, problem etc)
Review	to look at or examine again to look back upon
Select	to choose (someone or something) in preference to another or others
Serve	to render or be of service to (a person, cause, etc); help to distribute or provide
Show	to make, be, or become visible or noticeable to indicate or explain; prove
Suggest	to put forward (a plan, idea, etc) for consideration
Summarise	to make or be a summary of; express concisely
Understand	to know and comprehend the nature or meaning of
Undertake	to contract to or commit oneself to (something) or to do (something)
Use	to put into service or action; employ for a given purpose



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