skillcast

The Small Business Guide to Cost-Effective Compliance Training

How to protect your firm on a limited time and budget

Whether you're a startup, a small team in a regulated sector, or simply a business that wants to stay safe and professional, compliance training is no longer optional. In this guide, we'll show you how to manage it affordably.

Compliance training isn't just for big business

Many small business owners assume that formal compliance training is only necessary for large corporations. In reality, businesses of all sizes face regulatory obligations, and ignoring them can lead to serious consequences. The good news? Effective compliance training doesn't have to be complicated or expensive.

This guide explains how small businesses can meet their legal duties, improve team awareness, and stay audit-ready without investing in large-scale training systems.

What you'll learn in this guide:

- Why compliance training is vital for small firms
- Which regulations apply to your business
- Common pitfalls and how to avoid them
- Practical do's and don'ts for staying compliant
- What to look for in a training solution

Small businesses face big compliance risks

Regulations apply to your business regardless of size. SMEs often assume regulators overlook them until an incident proves otherwise.

Some of the regulations that small businesses should look out for include:
- GDPR - Data Protection
- Bribery Act
- Health & Safety Regulations
- Money Laundering Regulations
- Preventing Sexual Harassment
- Failure to Prevent Fraud
- Cybersecurity

Do:
- Establish which laws apply to your business and sector
- Document your policies
- Track and document compliance activity, including training
- Review incidents or complaints for lessons learned

Don't:
- Assume that fewer employees means fewer responsibilities
- Assume you can outsource liability to suppliers or contractors
- Wait for a breach to trigger your first training rollout

Compliance made simple

Real-world risks for small businesses

Compliance failures can be devastating for small businesses. Here are some examples:

- **Data breach:** An agency faces fines and reputational damage for failing to secure candidate CVs.
- **Harassment allegations:** A small events business faces a massive fine for failing to prevent sexual harassment
- **Money laundering:** A small financial services firm is shut down by the FCA for failing to perform the necessary AML checks
- **Gifts and hospitality:** A property firm faces criminal prosecution for offering gifts and luxury event tickets to planning officers

These examples show how even small gaps in compliance can lead to serious regulatory, legal, or brand consequences.

Regulatory fines, lawsuits, and reputational damage can be catastrophic, especially for small companies without the financial cushion to absorb losses. Examples of costs include:

- Penalties running into millions
- Damages claimed by large customers under liability and indemnity clauses*
- Criminal liability for directors under anti-bribery laws
- Workplace injuries leading to six-figure compensation claims
- Revenue losses due to client or supplier disengagement after breaches

* Large customers may face much larger fines/penalties, and if the breaches are due to your actions, they may be able to pass those on to you.

Compliance made simple

Online training works best for small firms

Good compliance training isn't about box ticking and just meeting legal minimums. Effective training changes employee behaviours and creates a culture of accountability.

For small businesses, e-learning provides flexibility, consistency, and value. It avoids the high costs and complexity of in-person sessions and allows staff to learn at their own pace.

Best practices tips:

- Short modules that fit into the working day (10–20 minutes)
- Real-life case studies, not just legal definitions
- Professional but conversational tone
- Reinforcement with microlearning refreshers

Advantages of online compliance training:

- Accessible from anywhere
- Available 24/7
- Easy to scale as your team grows
- Lower cost per user
- Monitor completions, reporting and tracking
- Easy assignment and automatic follow-ups

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Compliance made simple
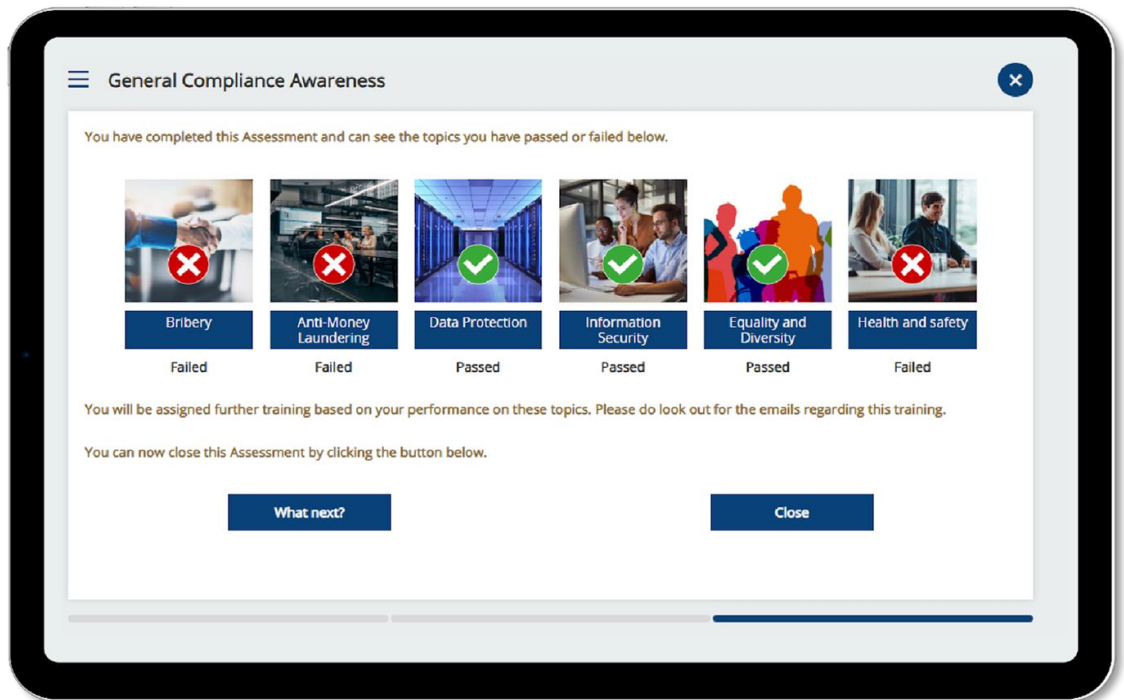
What to expect from your e-learning platform

When evaluating providers, keep these core requirements in mind:

- Quick setup and low technical overhead

- Straightforward admin controls

- CoreCompliance content included as standard

- No need for IT integration

Remember: not all platforms are built for small businesses

Do:

- Check the setup time

- Try out the product before you buy

- Ensure that it has adequate admin capability

Don't:

- Choose a retail site that sells courses individually rather than as a package solution

- Choose a system that was clearly built for big enterprise teams

Compliance made simple

Choosing the right solution for your business

Choosing a training solution can be daunting. These elements can make the difference:

- **Relevance:** The content must reflect your sector and regulatory risks.
- **Simplicity:** The interface should be usable by non-technical admins and staff.
- **Automation:** Training reminders and tracking should be built-in, not manual.
- **Affordability:** Look for pricing that scales with your team, without unnecessary extras.
- **Transparency:** Understand what you're paying for. No hidden charges.

Do:

- Ask about reporting capabilities and how managers will monitor training
- Check if updates to the training content are included
- Find out how long onboarding takes and whether support is included

Don't:

- Buy complex systems with features you won't use
- Assume high price equals high quality

Compliance made simple

Things clients love about CoreCompliance

- No setup fees, no long contracts

- Short courses designed to engage, not overwhelm

- Real-time reporting (no spreadsheets)

- Fast onboarding and responsive support

- Relevant training on cybersecurity, data protection and health & safety

"Simple and straightforward UX. Signed up and could roll out training immediately with no problems. Colleagues are up and running and already completing courses. Very impressed with the content."

– Client in Financial Services

Compliance made simple

Why small businesses love CoreCompliance

CoreCompliance by Skillcast was built from the ground up for companies with fewer than 50 employees. It's a streamlined solution that gives you:

- A selection of ready to use courses on, including: **GDPR, Anti-Money Laundering, Bribery Prevention, Cybersecurity, DORA, Preventing Sexual Harassment, Health & Safety**

- Robust record keeping and reporting

- A simple but comprehensive management dashboard
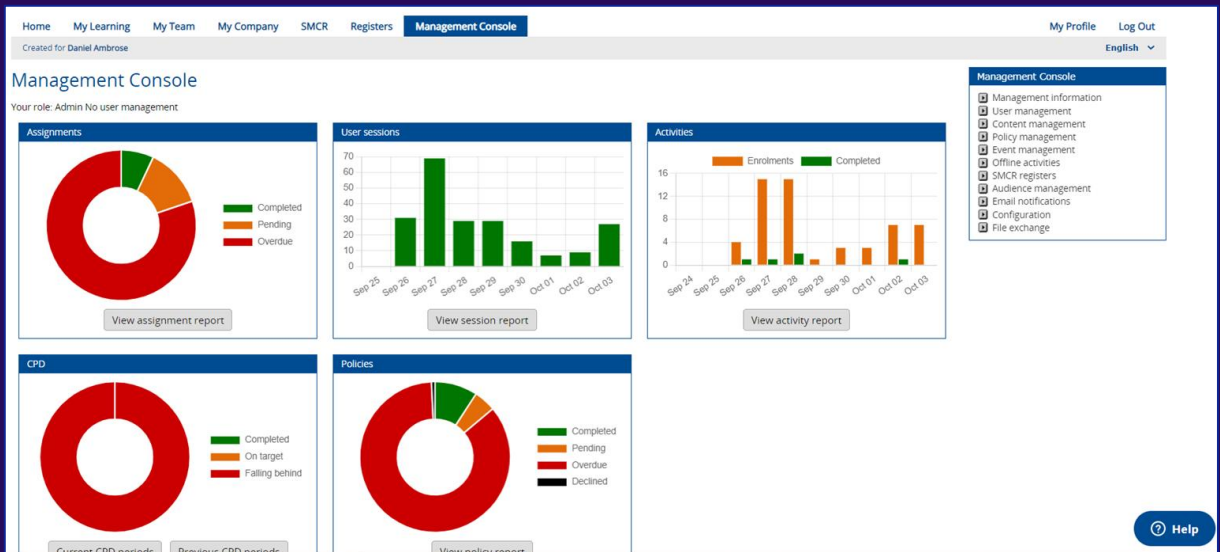
Affordable prices starting at **£349/year**

Try CoreCompliance

Compliance made simple