



Learning+Skills Council

learning
and skills
development
agency



raising quality and achievement programme

supporting the sector

*... it is essential to accelerate the pace of reform
to raise standards in the learning and skills sector
so that success is achievable for all learners,
regardless of where they live or with which
publicly-funded provider they are enrolled*

Success for all, DfES 2002

Centre for Economic & Social



Inclusion

AOC
Association of Colleges

raising quality and achievement programme

The Raising Quality and Achievement Programme is run by the Learning and Skills Development Agency in partnership with the Association of Colleges and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.

- We aim to reach all colleges and work-based learning providers.
- We offer extra support to colleges and work-based learning providers that are receiving Standards Fund money to improve their practice.
- All our activity themes are backed by a programme of research and evaluation.
- The Raising Quality and Achievement Programme is funded by a grant to the Learning and Skills Development Agency from the Learning and Skills Council.

raising quality and achievement programme

RQA Programme strands

quality information and advice service for colleges

A front-line information, advice and support helpline for colleges, backed by packs on good practice and run for the RQA Programme by the Association of Colleges

information and advice for work-based learning

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quality improvement

Regional networks and onsite support for providers on developing and implementing quality improvements

benchmarking and information

Help for managers to benchmark activities, improve processes and make better use of their own data

development projects

College and work-based learning providers' projects on strategies to improve retention and achievement

leadership for achievement

Help for governors and boards, training managers and team leaders to improve learners' achievement and the quality of provision

sharing effective practice

Regional practitioner networks and partnership activities to develop and promote good practice in cross-college and curriculum areas

contacts

benchmarking and information

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Contact Jane Owen
Tel 020 7297 9083
jowen@LSDA.org.uk

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Contact James Holyfield
Helpline 020 7840 8346

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raising quality
and achievement
programme

benchmarking
and information



Benchmarking and the effective use of management information are vital for the successful management of all organisations

what we do

The **benchmarking and information** strand will help managers of colleges and work-based learning providers to make better use of the information they already have and to benchmark their service against other providers and, where appropriate, other kinds of organisation.

what is benchmarking ?

Benchmarking is a structured process for learning from the practice of others, internally or externally, who are leaders in their field or with whom there are legitimate comparisons.

It is not just about comparing costs or taking part in a survey. It requires you to understand and map your own processes. Once gaps or shortfalls have been identified, benchmarking partners can be found.

Your processes can be improved by learning from partners' methods and by adapting and adopting good practice.

management information

Management information is more than the statistical returns required by the Learning and Skills Council and inspectorates. Good quality information is vital to your management decisions.

Information on retention and achievement and student satisfaction is becoming more readily available. But not all providers have the capacity to collect, analyse or make full use of it.

services we offer

- **Learning PROBE** (promoting business excellence), a diagnostic benchmarking tool that enables colleges and other providers to self-assess and compare themselves with others
- a **benchmarking database** of organisations willing to take part in benchmarking projects
- **workshops and support** for management teams in target-setting and using data for planning
- **benchmarking services** including questionnaires on staff and learner satisfaction
- **support to produce action plans** following staff or learner questionnaires
- **easy-to-follow guides** including:
 - Benchmarking for the learning and skills sector*
 - Consultancy for free :*
making the most of complaints
 - It's people thing :*
demystifying college information
 - Making quality sense :*
a guide to quality, tools and techniques,
awards and the thinking behind them.

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Tel 020 7297 9091
vsmith@LSDA.org.uk

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raising quality
and achievement
programme

development
projects

Development projects help with practical strategies to improve retention and achievement

what we do

The **development projects** strand:

- funds providers to take part in development activities
- encourages and evaluates innovative approaches to raising achievement
- uses action research to develop effective practice models and materials
- develops action research skills in colleges and work-based learning
- disseminates experience, knowledge and materials as widely as possible.

The projects provide valuable messages for others and help embed initiatives so that improvement strategies are sustainable and more effective.

projects to date

There have been four rounds of development projects. **Rounds 1 and 2** involved 160 colleges in England. **Round 3** focused on particular areas for improvement, including:

- value added and target setting
- tutoring for achievement
- curriculum redesign
- teaching and learning strategies
- attendance monitoring and follow-up.

One hundred **Round 4** college projects include strategies for:

- placing students on appropriate programmes
- improving achievement at Levels 1 and 2
- target-setting for vocational qualifications
- improving assessment practice and design
- identifying and supporting 'at-risk' students.

Round 5 work-based learning projects started in summer 2002. They focus on trainee retention and success. Topics include:

- integrating on- and off-the-job training
- strategies to prevent early drop-out
- achievement and progression
- working with others.

Case studies of completed development projects can be searched and downloaded from the Raising Quality and Achievement Programme website (www.rqa.org.uk).

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raising quality
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leadership
for achievement



Leadership skills are essential for those involved in governance, supervision and management of education and training

what we do

The **leadership for achievement** strand offers support for all levels of staff.

leadership

Leadership enables others to work to best effect, helps achieve improved success rates for learners and provides a crucial element to achieve positive outcomes from change situations.

the challenge

Raising learner participation, retention, achievement and progression is the goal.

a solution

Understanding and using leadership skills, whatever your role, can help you meet that challenge.

how leadership supports success

Governors and supervisory boards

Governors and supervisory boards need a clear sense of purpose to be strategic and forward-thinking. They also need to monitor and review their organisation's performance and the quality of the teaching and learning processes.

Managers at all levels

Managers need to use teamwork to achieve their objectives and empower staff and learners to take charge of their own efforts to improve learners' chance of success.

services we offer

For governors and members of supervisory boards

- **1-day workshops** to disseminate best practice and maintain the focus on raising learner achievement.

For curriculum leaders and training coordinators

- **development modules** on teams and team leadership to improve outcomes for learners
- **continuing support** in carrying out your action plan after the training
- a **support network** for the exchange of ideas.

For all staff

- **research into leadership issues** and raising learner success
- **research into the supervisory board's role** in raising standards
- **free publications** including :

*Governance today :
rising to the challenge of raising quality
and achievement*

*Leadership issues :
raising achievement.*

contacts

quality improvement team Regional networks and onsite support for providers on developing and implementing quality improvements

Contact Linda Bye
Tel 020 7297 9078
lbye@LSDA.org.uk

quality networks Contact Phil Cox
Tel 020 7297 9079
pcox@LSDA.org.uk

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raising quality
and achievement
programme

quality
improvement



Regional networks and onsite support for providers to develop and implement quality improvements

what we do

quality improvement team

The **quality improvement team** (QIT) supports providers through subsidised onsite consultancy to:

- carry out rigorous self-assessment
- produce effective action and development plans
- implement the planned actions
- monitor and confirm progress
- evaluate and review effectiveness
- make improvements to teaching, learning and support processes
- improve quality systems, managing staff, management information systems, finance and governance.

Who are QIT consultants ?

Our expert consultants have been through rigorous selection and training. They have all worked in the sector, and are experienced in colleges and / or work-based learning.

They are familiar with the issues of large, complex organisations, as well as those facing small businesses. They work individually with a provider or as part of a team.

What QIT offers

Providers are entitled to **free support** from a consultant. This might include:

- a first visit to assess needs
- a further visit to help with the development plan and / or self-assessment, support for the implementation and delivery of plans.

Further support may be charged at a subsidised rate.

Extended support for longer term change programmes can effect improvements in leadership and management and a shift in culture, and is offered to some providers with matched funding.

Work-based learning provider workshops

Regular workshops are held on self-assessment and development planning.

quality networks

The **quality networks** are events for colleges and work-based learning providers held three times a year in nine regions.

Programmes are shaped by members and planned in liaison with local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). Members can also network through e-mail groups.

Quality forums are for quality managers in colleges.

Quality support networks are for work-based learning providers.

They both help providers:

- develop 'learner-centred' approaches to quality improvement
- respond to LSC quality improvement strategies
- address the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework.

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Contact Rosemary Clark
or Maggie Scott
Helpline 020 7827 4611
qualityadvice@aoc.co.uk

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Contact James Holyfield
Helpline 020 7840 8346
enquiries@qualitywbl.org.uk

**adult and
community learning
quality support
programme**

Contact David Ewens
Learning and Skills Development Agency
Tel 020 7297 9075
dewens@LSDA.org.uk

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raising quality
and achievement
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quality
information
and advice

One-to-one quality information, advice and support for colleges and work-based learning providers to improve the quality of provision

what we do

quality information and advice service for colleges

This service for colleges is operated by the Association of Colleges (AoC) for the Raising Quality and Achievement (RQA) Programme. The **quality information and advice service for colleges** supports colleges in their drive to improve students' achievement and the quality of provision.

The AoC dedicated rapid-response **helpline** is staffed Monday to Friday 9am–5pm.

Tel 020 7827 4611
qualityadvice@aoc.co.uk

information and advice for work-based learning

This service is run for the RQA Programme by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion with the Association of Learning Providers.

Information and advice for work-based learning helps Learning and Skills Council-funded work-based learning providers – whether they are public, private or voluntary sector. Staff at any level are welcome to call.

The work-based learning **helpline** is open Monday to Friday 9am–5pm.

Tel 020 7840 8346
enquiries@qualitywbl.org.uk

both services offer

A confidential information and advice service including:

- a telephone helpline
- e-mail enquiry service
- paper-based materials
- quality information packs
- examples of policy and practice.

Ring the helplines for advice on any matter relating to raising standards:

- improving learners' achievement and the quality of provision
- information on inspection or LSC quality requirements
- referral to other colleges or providers for good practice
- referral, where appropriate, to the RQA Programme's specialist quality improvement team
- referral to other strands of the RQA Programme.

contacts

sharing effective practice Regional practitioner networks and partnership activities to develop and promote good practice in cross-college and curriculum areas
Contact Muriel Green
Tel 0115 929 9097
mgreen@LSDA.org.uk

equality and diversity networks Contact Permjeet Panesar
Tel 020 7297 9064
ppanesar@LSDA.org.uk

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raising quality
and achievement
programme

sharing
effective practice

Sharing effective practice helps to secure improvements in teaching and learning

what we do

effective practice networks

Effective practice networks provide policy updates, share effective practice and build capacity through members' development activities. Four networks meet three times a year in different regions across the country:

- student guidance
- trainee support
- tutoring
- equality and diversity.

Between meetings members can network through **e-mail groups**.

process improvement

Process improvement uses quality improvement tools and techniques to help providers analyse specific educational processes. Examples of effective practice also help pinpoint where change is needed and inform development plans.

Leading-edge providers and individual consultants give support through **one-to-one advice** and **good practice seminars**.

Themes include:

- using data to improve the performance of individual learners
- using teacher / trainer feedback and review and SMART targets to improve individual learning
- using observation of effective practice to improve learning and teaching across the organisation.

training staff trainers

Training staff trainers through residential programmes enables key college managers to use Raising Quality and Achievement (RQA) Programme multimedia resources to improve teaching and tutoring:

- improving differentiation in classroom practice
- learning mathematics through discussion and reflection
- using one-to-one tutorials to support individual learning.

multimedia resources

New **multimedia resources** will be developed to help providers challenge assumptions and develop new thinking to improve practice in:

- learner-centred initial assessment
- observation in different learning contexts.

Case studies and **training materials** will be published and will also be shared through quality forums, the RQA Programme website (www.rqa.org.uk), national conferences and networks.