Working In Partnership – FE Taking Forward the Skills Agenda

A report of the Further Education Funding Council's Skills Working Group

Chaired by Llew Aviss

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

The purpose of the FEFC is to secure further education provision which meets the needs and demands of individuals, employers and the requirements of government in respect of the location, nature and quality of provision.

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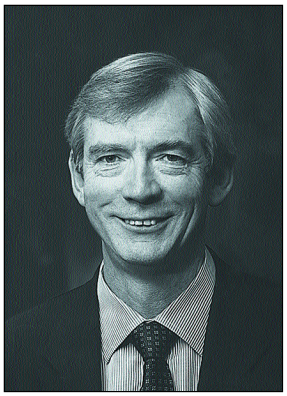
Preface



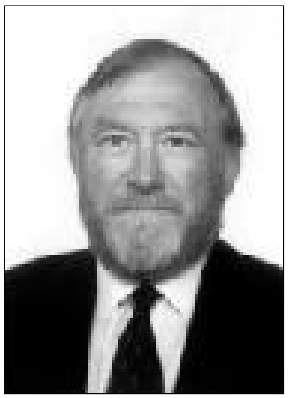
The National Skills Task Force has set a challenging agenda that needs to be taken up by a range of agencies and organisations. The further education sector plays a significant role in helping to deliver the government's skills agenda. At the same time, the Further Education Funding Council has an important role to play in the transition to the new Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It was for these reasons that the Council decided to set up a Skills Working Group to start to identify how its contribution to the skills agenda could be extended and enhanced.

The overriding message from this report is that the skills agenda can only be delivered through many agencies working together in partnership. This is as important at the national and regional level as it is at the local and sector level. Education and training providers are at the heart of this partnership, identifying and meeting local needs.

I am grateful to Llew Aviss for skilfully chairing the Group and carefully steering its work, and to the members for their contributions. The recommendations contained in this report set out some realistic steps that the Council and the LSC transition teams can start to take during what will inevitably be a busy and challenging time. I am confident that it will form a basis for a new era of multi-agency working as we all move towards the LSC.

David Melville
Chief executive

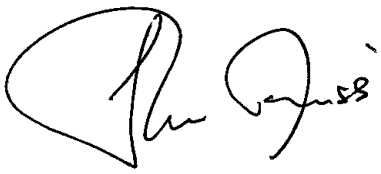
Foreword



It should be a matter of grave concern to the entire country that we rank only 15th in literacy and numeracy terms worldwide. This, perhaps more than any other statistic, helps to illustrate why the issue of skills is so crucial and why the government is giving the matter such a welcome and extended high profile. The UK has to be competitive in world terms and is running hard to catch up in skills development with more developed economies (such as Germany) as well as those that are rising fast (such as Singapore).

But the rhetoric will not turn us into winners. We need clear, realistic and rapidly attainable goals for every player in the skills arena. To this end, recognising that its role was key to the successful attainment of the skills agenda, the Council set up the Skills Working Group to highlight further education's contribution to work-related learning.

Our report concentrates on a distillation of 10 critical recommendations. The clarity that these provide is a tribute to the prodigious efforts of the Group, especially the subgroup chairs and the secretariat. Like me, they know that the true measure of our success is the extent to which these inform the continuing skills debate led by the NSTF and ultimately become translated into sustained policy and action.



Llew Aviss
Chair, FEFC Skills Working Group

Executive Summary

The Scope of the Group's Work

1 The Council established the Skills Working Group in October 1999 to identify changes to enhance the ability of FE to contribute to the government's skills agenda, and to complement the work of the NSTF. The Group was chaired by Llew Aviss (a member of the NSTF), and its membership and terms of reference are set out in annexes A and B of this report.

The Approach and Analysis

2 The delivery of the government's skills agenda relies on many agencies taking various activities and initiatives forward. The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) has a skills unit responsible for national policy. Regional development agencies (RDAs) are responsible for developing regional skills action plans. Training and enterprise councils (TECs) are responsible for improving the skills of the local workforce. The NSTF was set up to develop a co-ordinated approach to the government's skills agenda.

3 The Group considered that skills issues fall into five main themes and the report reflects these. Each theme provides an update of the activities being undertaken by agencies represented on the Group as well as those of the Council and sector. Although each agency is working on its own distinctive contribution, the Group recognised the need to engage in some more effective co-operative working to develop a more coherent approach.

4 The Group also received an analysis from the Council's individualised student record (ISR) database, which demonstrated the substantial contribution that FE currently makes to the skills agenda. Details of this analysis are provided in chapter 2 of this report.

The Structure of the Report

5 The report has three main chapters:

- Chapter 1 identifies why the Council established the Skills Working Group. It describes why a multi-agency approach is required to take forward the skills agenda. It also introduces the different perspectives of some of the principal organisations engaged in the skills agenda, many of which were represented on the Group. The chapter finishes with a brief explanation of the intended role of the LSC with regard to skills
- Chapter 2 introduces further education's contribution to the skills agenda. It summarises the roots of FE, how it has been developed and its current position. It also gives a descriptive overview of trends in FE provision in the context of skills. It describes examples of more detailed analyses, which have been done to provide information on the contribution of FE to the skills agenda
- Chapter 3 presents the discussions and recommendations of the Group under five themes. Each theme has a similar structure. First, it provides a general overview of the issues, as discussed at the Group's meetings, and highlights a key recommendation of the NSTF. Then it describes some of the current activities being undertaken by key organisations and gives a summary of Council activities, with the aim of providing a holistic snapshot. It ends with specific recommendation(s) made by the Group to the Council, the LSC or other organisations. This chapter also presents an overview of how the Group's recommendations will be monitored.

Recommendations

6 The Group's 10 recommendations focus on the how the Council, working with sector colleges, can improve its unique contribution by working more closely with other organisations engaging in the skills agenda. The recommendations are as follows.

Theme 1: Working with industry sectors

The NSTF identified that skills needs are sector based (as well as locally based). Under this theme, recommendations explore how the Council (and transition teams) can work more effectively with national training organisations (NTOs) on sector issues.

1 The Council should work closely with a range of NTOs to identify key sector qualifications that are funded through colleges and other institutions, and provide an analysis of patterns of provision by NTO sector.

2 The transition team working on the post-16 funding and allocation system should review existing practice in the delivery of work-based national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and use this review to inform the development of an effective and fair funding system that supports this form of delivery.

3 The Council should work closely with a range of NTOs to support, through information sharing and other means, the developing sector-based knowledge networks.

Theme 2: Working with regional and local partners

The NSTF also identified that skills needs are locally based. Recommendations under this theme explore how the Council (and transition teams) can work more effectively with regional and local partners on local issues.

4 The transition planning teams should liaise with regional development agencies and learning partnerships to identify best practice and emerging models and frameworks to inform the development of a planning model for local LSCs. This could lead to a series of pilot projects in planned LSC areas to test and develop the planning models.

5 The transition planning teams should work with regional observatories and TECs on the development of data models and structures for data collection and access. RDAs might consider the use of the skills development funds to initiate and support regional data modelling and analysis.

6 The Council should make extracts of the ISR data available to external bodies including RDAs. The Council should also provide initial support on awareness of the data structure and field content of the system to enable RDAs and others to carry out the detailed analysis that will support regional and local planning, making use of supply-side data.

Theme 3: Qualifications

This theme reflects the importance of qualifications and qualification frameworks as the basis of skills development, with particular emphasis on the related vocational qualifications (RVQs) referred to by the NSTF.

7 The qualifications and curriculum authority (QCA) should identify existing qualifications likely to fit into the category RVQ. The Council should analyse the extent of RVQ provision by NTO sector and the QCA should undertake research with employers, the TEC National Council, NTOs and others in particular sector areas and localities on the potential usefulness of RVQs in the workplace. This could be gauged in terms of skills required by employers and student progression on to NVQs and into higher education.

Theme 4: Staff and organisational development

This theme and recommendation emphasises the importance of continuous staff and organisational development, as these represent the biggest single investment in the training aspects of the skills agenda.

8 The Council/LSC should consider using the FE standards fund (2001-2002) to fund a significant national staff development initiative to raise the skills of all staff involved in training and learning, particularly in relation to key skills, basic skills development and information and communication technology/information technology (ICT/IT).

Theme 5: Information, advice and guidance

This theme, and recommendations to the Council/LSC, focuses on an approach for ensuring that existing and potential learners are informed and supported.

9 The Council/LSC should consider ways to utilise the FE standards fund to ensure that a high quality information, advice and guidance service is provided by strengthening the skills of all staff involved in:

- delivering advice and guidance and careers education in the post-16 education and training system
- developing learning contracts with individual learners
- interpreting labour market information.

10 The LSC should promote, as examples of good practice, institutions with sound student tracking strategies and with low percentages of 'destination unknown' on their ISR returns. The LSC should also consider the relevance of the existing destination fields on the ISRs with a view to introducing more detailed fields (for example, employer postcode and location of training).

The Way Forward

7 Five partnership review groups will carry forward these recommendations, one for each theme. Each of these will be led by an agency represented on the Group, with involvement from the Council:

- working with industry sectors – NTO National Council
- working with regional and local partners – RDA
- qualifications – QCA
- staff and organisational development – Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO), with collaboration from the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA)
- information, advice and guidance – Careers Service National Association (CSNA).

The Council will seek a summary progress report from each group during autumn 2000.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Skills Agenda

1.1 The development of a skilled and qualified workforce is at the heart of economic regeneration and inclusiveness. It is a key strategy that is being pursued at national, regional, local and industry-sector levels.

1.2 In its first report, *Towards a National Skills Agenda*, the NSTF conveyed a vision of a modern education and training infrastructure to ensure national competitiveness, a highly skilled workforce and a socially inclusive economy.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations on how the Council, working with colleges and in partnership with other agencies and organisations, can complement and add value to the work of others in taking the agenda forward. The report also describes the contribution that is made by the FE sector to the skills agenda.

1.4 The report includes details of the activities and initiatives currently being taken forward by agencies. Given the dynamic nature of this area of activity, this report presents a snapshot of the position in time (as at the end of February 2000). The report will be overtaken by developments and further reports leading up to the establishment of the new LSC and the implementation of the recommendations of the NSTF.

The Council's Skills Working Group

1.5 The Council established a Skills Working Group in October 1999 with the aim of identifying changes that would enhance the ability of FE to contribute to the government's skills agenda and to complement the work being undertaken by the NSTF. The Group included members from the principal agencies directly involved, or with a significant interest, in the skills agenda.

1.6 The Group's membership and terms of reference are contained in annexes A and B respectively. This report reflects the work of the Group and the recommendations that it developed. The specific objectives of the Group were to:

- advise the Council on measures to extend further its contribution to the skills agenda
- map the contribution of FE to work-related learning in terms of the volume and types of employment-related provision
- highlight examples of good practice in college responsiveness to employment needs.

1.7 The Group started its work in October 1999 and developed and debated the recommendations for joint working at a two-day event in December 1999. A further meeting took place in February 2000 to review and revise the recommendations and to define the structure of the final report.

The Skills System

1.8 At the launch of the LSC prospectus on 14 December 1999, David Blunkett, secretary of state for education and employment, commented that:

> The skills system we inherited was bureaucratic and complex, and failed to deliver consistently high performance. As a result we have lacked the skills we need for business competitiveness and social prosperity in the new economy.

1.9 One of the main characteristics of this area of government policy is the range of agencies that are contributing to take the agenda forward. The following paragraphs identify the roles of some of the agencies directly involved in delivering the skills agenda.

The Department for Education and Employment

1.10 The DfEE works towards the goals of an inclusive society, where everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential; a globally competitive economy with successful firms; and a fair and efficient labour market.

1.11 Skills acquisition and improvement are central to these goals, embedded in the objectives of:

- ensuring that all young people reach 16 with the skills, attitudes and personal qualities that will give them a secure foundation for lifelong learning and work
- developing in everyone a commitment to lifelong learning, so as to enhance their lives, improve their employability in a changing labour market and create the skills that the economy and employers need
- helping people without employment into work.

1.12 The DfEE, with the help of the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NACETT), has also set national learning targets (NLTs) for the percentage of young people, adults and organisations it wishes to see achieving certain levels of qualifications.

Skills Unit

1.13 Within the DfEE the Skills Unit is responsible for:

- supporting the NSTF by sourcing and presenting evidence for consideration from within the DfEE and from external organisations
- advising ministers on skills shortages and the longer-term skills needs of the economy
- co-ordinating policy and implementation of the government skills initiative programmes.

1.14 The Skills Unit works closely with policymakers in the DfEE, other government departments and agencies to achieve its aims.

Government Offices

1.15 Government offices undertake work for the DfEE in some key skills areas. Each government office has a director of skills and enterprise responsible for ensuring that the government office strategy for promoting competitiveness fully incorporates NLTs, and for enhancing the commitment of employers and individuals to lifelong learning. The directors also contribute to expertise and perspectives on DfEE policy formulation, development and implementation.

Training and Enterprise Councils

1.16 TECs were established as private limited companies in 1990-91. Each TEC has an employer-led board charged with:

- improving the skills and competitiveness of the local workforce
- contributing to the creation of a strong local economy
- improving business competitiveness
- fostering regeneration.

1.17 Each year TECs agree an annual business plan with their local government office. The plan reflects national and local priorities and provides the basis for an annual contract between the TEC and the government office.

1.18 TECs have specific responsibilities for work-related training for young people, including modern apprenticeships and national traineeships, and the work-related adult programmes.

Regional Development Agencies

1.19 RDAs came into effect on 1 April 1999. There are eight RDAs and the London Development Partnership, which will shadow arrangements elsewhere in England until new arrangements for the government of London are in place.

1.20 RDAs are the lead bodies at regional level for:

- promoting employment and enhancing the development and application of skills relevant to employment
- improving business competitiveness and inward investment
- social, physical and economic regeneration
- development of land and buildings.

1.21 Each RDA has developed and published a regional economic strategy. RDAs are currently finalising and promoting skills action plans in support of their economic strategy.

Learning Partnerships

1.22 A network of 101 learning partnerships has been established throughout England during 1999-2000. The partnerships have a non-statutory remit to widen participation in learning, to increase attainment and to improve standards to meet the skills challenge.

1.23 Learning partnerships are responsible for:

- the development of local targets linked to the new National Targets
- co-ordination of local action in such a way as to create more coherent, effective and accessible arrangements for learning, careers advice and guidance and student support.

1.24 Partnerships have developed local lifelong learning plans that set out their proposals for meeting local targets. The key roles for partnerships are to:

- provide information on youth, adult and community learning needs and on employer skill needs
- facilitate collaboration between local providers and others to work together to ensure that education and training provision is as efficient and cost-effective as possible
- ensure that gaps in provision are filled and that duplication is avoided by co-ordinating local curriculum planning and staff development.

1.25 Partnerships are able to apply for funds (£10 million in 1999-2000 and £10 million in 2000-2001) to support local collaborative activity and to implement action elements of their plans.

National Training Organisations

1.26 NTOs evolved from the former industry lead bodies. There are currently 76 NTOs (see annex C). The NTO National Council was formed from the National Council for Industry Training Organisations and was launched in October 1997.

1.27 RDAs have a remit for the geographic element of the skills agenda, and NTOs are responsible for industry-sector developments and skills issues. In particular, NTOs are responsible for:

- establishing and maintaining a sector vision
- advising on the qualifications framework
- producing a skills foresight analysis
- contributing to the lifelong learning agenda
- influencing sector and key partners.

1.28 NTOs are also responsible for establishing workforce development plans. These plans draw on existing information such as skills foresight and skills dialogue reports. The plans are intended to establish industry priorities for workforce development and to persuade agencies inside and outside an industry sector to act in a concerted manner to improve the skills and competitiveness of the sector workforce.

1.29 In February 2000 the NTO National Council consulted on the format of a common framework for workforce development plans. The consultation proposed five overarching principles that should lead to plans that are:

- demand led – reflecting future as well as current requirements
- strategic – taking a wide and ambitious view
- partnership-based – with NTOs acting in a leadership role for their sectors
- action-oriented – identifying additional or changed activity
- integrated – being informed by and informing the plans of local LSCs, RDAs and others.

The National Skills Task Force

1.30 The NSTF was set up in 1998 to assist the secretary of state for education and employment in developing a national skills agenda. The NSTF is intended to provide advice on:

- the nature, extent and geographic and industrial pattern of skills needs and shortages (together with associated recruitment difficulties) and how the UK can monitor these effectively on an ongoing basis
- practical measures to ease skills and recruitment difficulties and help to raise the level of sustainable employment, in both the short and longer term
- the likely changes in the longer-term skills needs of the economy and the extent to which these needs will be met on the basis of existing trends
- how best to ensure that the education and training system responds effectively to the needs identified.

1.31 The NSTF has produced three reports:

- *Towards a National Skills Agenda*, First Report of the National Skills Task Force, DfEE, September 1998
- *Delivering Skills for All*, Second Report of the National Skills Task Force, DfEE, June 1999
- *Tackling the Adult Skills Gap*, Third Report of the National Skills Task Force, DfEE, January 2000.

1.32 The final report of the NSTF was published in spring 2000. It draws together all the recommendations to suggest an appropriate framework for a coherent and longer-term national skills agenda.

The Further Education Funding Council

1.33 The Council was established in 1992 under the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992*. The Council's contribution to the skills agenda arises from its duty to secure sufficient and adequate provision of further education, including training to meet the needs of employers and individuals. Since 1992 the Council has been engaged in working on the skills agenda through discussion and advice from the DfEE. One of the Council's aims is to:

> contribute to the development of a highly skilled and employable workforce particularly as envisaged in national targets, in order to contribute to the creation of a thriving economy.

1.34 In a letter to David Melville, the Council's chief executive, from Roger Dawe, director general of further and higher education and youth training at the DfEE, *Further Education Funding for 1999-2001*, dated 8 December 1999, it was noted:

> National skills needs
>
> The role of further education is vital to the economic prosperity of the country. The secretary of state is concerned that its resources are focused as effectively as possible, to enable it to play a full part in meeting national skills needs.
>
> In the light of the analysis in the first report of the NSTF, the secretary of state expects the further education sector to work closely in partnership with education and training providers, TECs and employers, and with the new RDAs, to identify colleges' potential contribution to the agenda.
>
> He looks to the Council in particular to consider the feasibility of giving additional weighting in the funding method to courses which meet local, regional or national skills needs.

1.35 The establishment and recommendations of the Group are part of the response to the DfEE and to the work of the NSTF.

Further Education Institutions

1.36 FE institutions make a major contribution to the supply of skills in the economy through the learning opportunities that they offer. FE provision aims to provide individuals with the skills and knowledge that they require to secure and maintain employment, and to provide a supply of skills relevant to the needs of businesses of all types. The second chapter of this report describes and quantifies this contribution in some detail.

1.37 FE institutions have access to national and local labour market information that is used in planning and development of provision to meet local needs. The Council publication *Identifying and Addressing Needs (1997)* noted that the labour market role of colleges is to:

> facilitate and encourage a balance between the sorts of skills, competencies and qualifications demanded by the local economy against the existing and forecast stock of these skills, competencies and qualifications among local residents.

1.38 The report also commented that 'knowledge about the current and future needs of employers is always imperfect and does not lend itself to overly prescriptive planning of provision' and that 'it is ultimately up to individuals to choose the education and vocational study they desire'.

1.39 These comments highlight that although there are key roles for national, sector and regional agencies, the skills agenda will be addressed by individuals engaging with providers and employers in learning programmes and informal learning activities.

A partnership approach to securing technological excellence is being supported by the local FE colleges in Cumbria, a county where 70% of companies employ 1-10 people. Companies in the county's widely dispersed small and medium enterprise (SME) base lacked new technology in the companies and experienced difficulties of securing access to training. Discussions at a college/employer liaison committee led to an engineering partnership being formed, with employers leading its development and all making a contribution to overcoming the infrastructure challenges. The partnership aims to improve the skills base of the county, and thereby increase employment, and to pursue a long-term strategy to change perceptions about careers in engineering. Collaborative bids for funding have since been successful, and a technology learning centre and centre of excellence have been developed. Among the many benefits to businesses in the area is the facility to undertake online training needs analysis and, subsequently, training at 40 in-company centres.

Pershore Group of Colleges has a range of employer liaison groups that support the main industry sectors served and provide valuable feedback to the college. In 1999 the Food and Drink Industries Liaison Group established a 'one-stop-shop' facility to provide a number of key services unavailable at the time. The industry-chaired group, with support from the local chamber of commerce, University College Worcester and the regional TECs, also secured funding to enhance the range of services provided. Entitled Core Food and Drink, this new facility is a triumph of co-operative effort between the college and its partners in support of the assurance and promotion of quality food and drink. It should lead to the improvement of regional economic development and international competitiveness of SMEs in the West Midlands.

Other Key Agencies

1.40 As well as the agencies and groups working on the skills agenda, there are a number of other bodies that have a significant role to play and contribution to make to the development and delivery of the skills agenda. These include:

- the CSNA
- the ConneXions Service
- the Employment Service (ES)
- the Trades Union Congress (TUC)

The DfEE's Union Learning Fund, which was set up to stimulate union-led partnerships, has opened up opportunities for employees to re-skill and to access employee development including basic skills. Some £12.5 million has been made available over a four-year period. Over 100 projects have been established so far, involving union partnerships with companies, colleges, universities and TECs. As part of the TUC Learning Services initiative, as many as 2,000 union members have been trained as 'union learning representatives' to help their members negotiate and access such opportunities. Some of these representatives are trained as NVQ assessors or as front-line advice workers.

- the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)
- the Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
- the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- employers
- local education authorities (LEAs)
- the University for Industry (UfI)
- the QCA
- the FEDA.

1.41 Most of these organisations were represented on the Group and comments on their role and contribution are described in later sections of the report.

The Learning and Skills Council

1.42 The LSC will be established in April 2001. It will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of the national skills agenda through its funding for training and workforce development and its responsibility for national targets. The LSC *Prospectus* identifies some of the features of the LSC and how it will address the skills agenda. It will have responsibility for a budget of around £6 billion and for almost 6 million learners.

1.43 At national level, the LSC will work with a full range of partners to build a shared national learning and skills agenda for England. It will assess and identify current and future skills and learning needs and advise on how these can be best met, building on the work of the NSTF. To develop and inform its work, the LSC will draw together authoritative advice on skills supply and demand.

1.44 At the same time, the secretary of state will continue to be supported by a small unit within the DfEE, which will work closely with the LSC and its joint advisory group on skills.

1.45 To enable the LSC to take a demand-led approach to its work, 40% of the LSC members, together with the national chair and most local chairs, will have substantial recent business or commercial experience. This will support the development of an understanding of the needs of individuals and employers and, in particular, future employment.

1.46 The approach will also be based on partnership between government, employers, individuals and communities and will focus on the effectiveness of the total investment in skills development.

1.47 There is a clear recognition in the proposals that learning, skills and labour markets are predominantly local and sectoral. The local LSCs will be responsible for analysing local labour market and skills needs, developing local workforce deployment strategies and workforce development plans, and for Education Business Partnerships (EBPs).

1.48 It is intended that learning partnerships and local LSCs will be distinct but complementary. Learning partnerships will continue to be voluntary groupings of education and training providers and users with a local focus, identifying local needs and sharing these with local LSCs.

1.49 At the same time, the statement of priority and plans of local LSCs will need to be consistent with regional economic strategies and sector workforce development plans. RDAs will need to take account of the information and plans produced by the LSC at national and local level as well as NTO sector plans.

Conclusion

1.50 This chapter has identified the roles of the agencies involved in meeting the skills agenda. Although the establishment of the LSC will lead to rationalisation of the post-16 funding streams, the skills agenda will need to be addressed through a partnership approach between key employers, learners and key agencies.

1.51 This report and the recommendations for action identify five themes where a partnership approach can be developed by the Council and key agencies in anticipation of the development of the LSC.

Chapter 2: Further Education's Contribution

Further Education's Roots

2.1 The history of FE can be traced back to the days of the industrial revolution, when the desire for and importance of basic skills, scientific knowledge and technical knowledge began to increase rapidly. Educational training, in particular the work-based apprenticeship, was delivered by means of technical schools that were founded at the time. Since then the need for skills in the workforce has continued to grow and FE has played a significant role in meeting vocational and education training needs. Throughout its history, FE has had to respond to the changes in specific skills needs reflected in technological advancements. An overview of the history of FE is given in annex D.

Where We Are Now

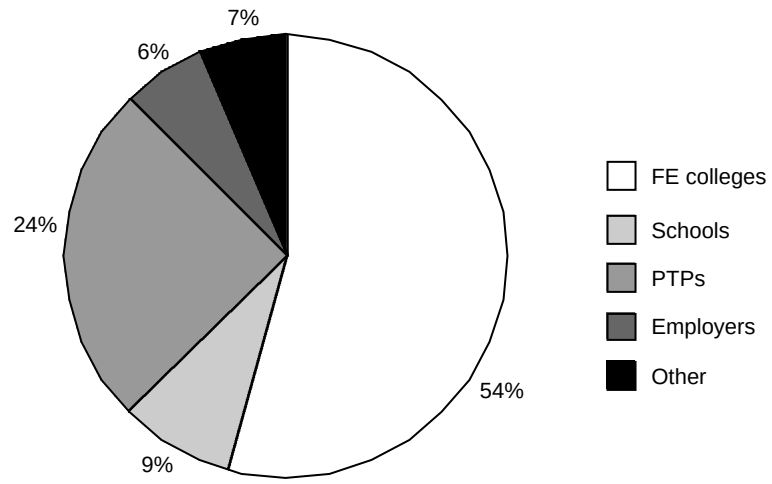
2.2 The *Further Education and Higher Education Act 1992* established Further Education Funding Councils in England and Wales. The act centralised funding mechanisms and has made it possible to monitor the nature of vocational education and training. The Council currently funds over 430 general FE and sixth form colleges, over 200 external institutions and at least 70 higher education (HE) institutions that deliver FE. Approximately £3 billion of public funds enable just under 4 million students to access FE each year.

Measuring FE's Contribution

2.3 Although measurement is difficult because of the multiplicity of routes by which individuals acquire work-related skills, there can be little doubt that the FE system makes a major contribution to skills formation in the UK economy. The most systematic measure of skills in the economy is through the possession of recognised vocational qualifications. Not only is external certification of skills important to the effective functioning of the labour market, but it also provides a basis for comparison of UK performance with other advanced economies, and now underlies the government's strategy for improving business competitiveness and individual employability through the NLTs.

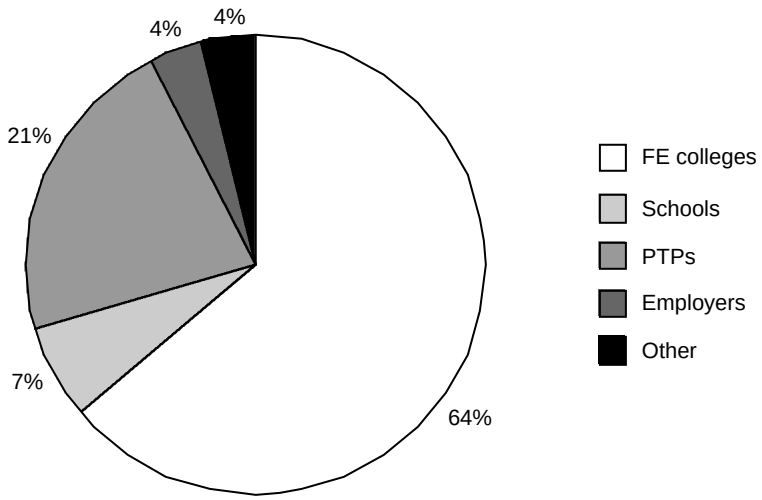
2.4 On this measure, the contribution of the FE sector is of vital importance, delivering 54% of all the new vocational qualifications acquired each year (see figure 2.1). Private training providers (PTPs) deliver 24% of new vocational qualifications overall and employers 6%. At level 3, where the comparative UK position is weakest in international terms, the college contribution is critical, with college-based learners achieving 64% of all qualifications of this type (see figure 2.2).

Figure 2.1: All Students on Vocational Qualifications, 1997-98



Source: DfEE Statistics Bulletin, 9/99.

Figure 2.2: All Students on Level 3 Vocational Qualifications, 1997-98



Source: DfEE Statistics Bulletin, 9/99.

2.5 The indirect contribution of the FE sector to skills formation is also substantial. Colleges supply around 40% of new entrants to higher education, as well as delivering about 11% of all English higher education (some 190,000 students enrol each year), mostly in the form of courses providing skills and knowledge relevant to specific areas of employment. At the other end of the spectrum, colleges are also the major providers of basic skills to adults, enrolling some 230,000 students annually in this area. External institutions also make a significant amount of basic skills provision.

Telford College's approach is to provide a high-quality, on-site, year-round service to companies, which is both flexible and responsive to their needs. College staff evaluate and investigate individual company's key performance indicators. They then devise and deliver training in the areas that will improve company performance. NVQs are evaluated to match the company's needs, with its requirements added to the assessment requirements. The results are improved productivity, efficiency, flexibility, internal communication and reduced labour turnover.

2.6 College provision is responsive to market needs. Many vocational courses are designed in conjunction with employers to provide skills and knowledge directly relevant to specific areas of employment. The content of courses is regularly reviewed to ensure continuing relevance, and new qualifications are developed to meet changing market needs. Some 17,000 qualifications are accessible within the FE sector, so there are few areas of employment where colleges cannot provide an appropriate package of learning to meet employers' requirements. Colleges likewise deliver learning programmes in a number of different ways to help meet students' and employers' needs through, for example:

- attendance in the evenings or at weekends, as well as during the day
- extended part-time courses or short intensive full-time attendance on employers' premises or in community facilities, as well as on main college sites
- distance-learning approaches using modern information and communication technologies.

2.7 Colleges work closely with employers to tailor their publicly available learning programmes to match local labour market requirements, in respect of both the mix of courses available and the content of learning programmes. Many colleges also offer dedicated provision for individual employers, and many will engage in a variety of partnerships with employers. The Council report

Working with Employers provided a wide range of examples, including the provision of work-experience opportunities for students in areas such as engineering, realistic assignments in fields such as art and design, or project work in management training. A recent Association of Colleges (AoC) survey suggested that a college typically works with 250 to 300 local SMEs, as well as with larger companies. The 1998 edition of the annual government survey on skills, *Skill Needs in Great Britain and Northern Ireland 1998*, confirmed the extent of this engagement, reporting that FE colleges were the organisations with which employers of all sizes most commonly have contact (with 45% reporting links), and that a similar percentage used colleges for the provision of off-the-job training.

In response to identified local needs in a deprived ward of the borough, St Helens College engaged in a partnership with others to refurbish and equip a miners' social club that was badly in need of renovation. Partners were CISWOL (Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation), TEP (Territorial Employment Pact), Groundwork Trust, the Committee of the Miners' Institute and the College. This learning centre was set up in a matter of weeks and is already delivering IT and basic skills programmes.

Identifying Work-related Skills

2.8 Since 1994-95 the main data collection from institutions in the FE sector has been the ISR. This is a rich source and contains information on all students enrolled at institutions in the sector together with their qualification aims and qualifications on entry (see further details in annex E). It can be used in several ways to identify the FE provision that relates to work-related skills. Key factors include:

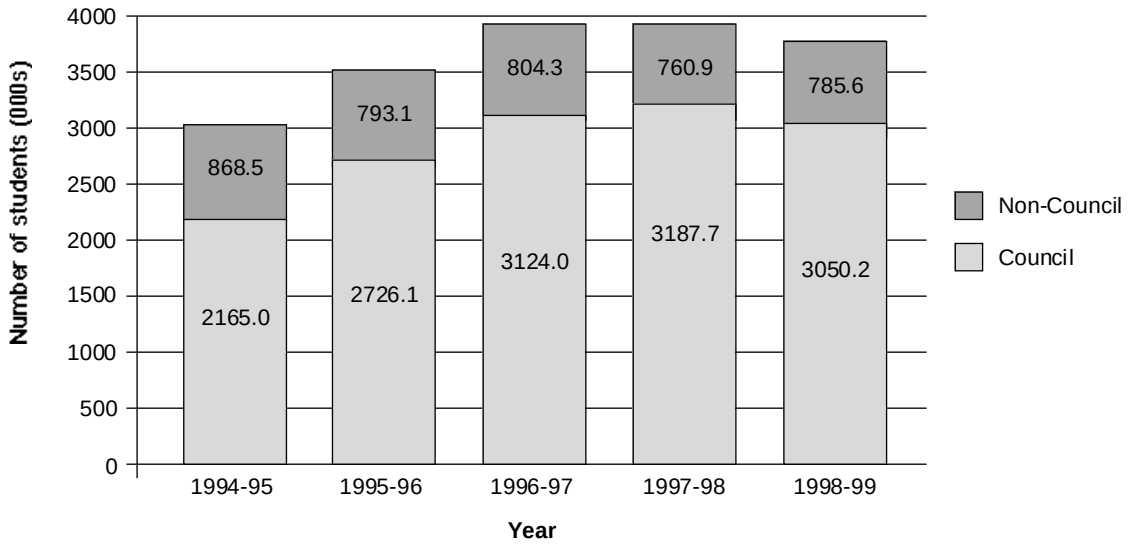
- qualifications – which can be categorised at a range of levels, from high (eg, NVQ level or programme area) down to individual qualification aims
- student characteristics – for example, age, sex, ethnicity
- location – of the student (based on postcode) and of the provision (based on the institution)
- link to employment – for example, which qualifications are funded by or supported by employers, or are taken by people receiving benefits.

Overall summary

2.9 In 1998-99 there were over 3.8 million students enrolled at FE colleges in England. Of these, 3.1 million were enrolled on provision funded by the Council. Furthermore, 530,000 students were enrolled on Council-funded FE provision in other institutions, such as local authority adult education services or HE institutions.

2.10 The number of students in colleges has increased significantly since 1994-95. There were just over 3 million students enrolled in colleges in 1994-95, of whom 2.2 million were Council-funded. Figure 2.3 shows the number of students in colleges from 1994-95 to 1998-99 by source of funding. The overall increase is a combination of a large increase in Council-funded provision and a decrease in non-Council-funded provision. The change in data collection systems in 1994-95 means that this is the earliest year with which effective comparisons can be made.

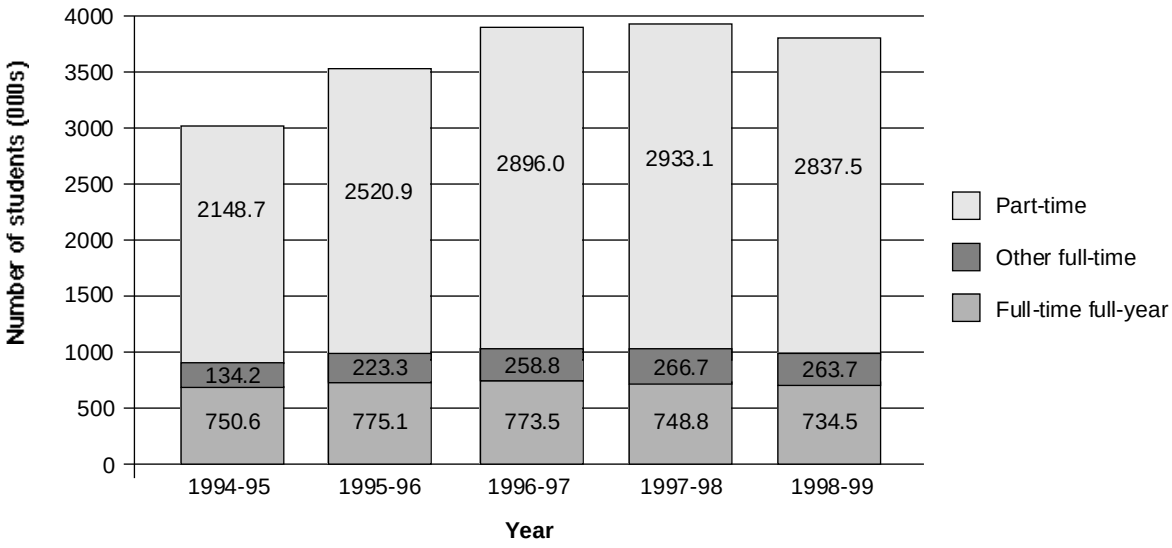
Figure 2.3: Students in Colleges, by Funding Source, 1994-95 to 1998-99



Source: ISR.

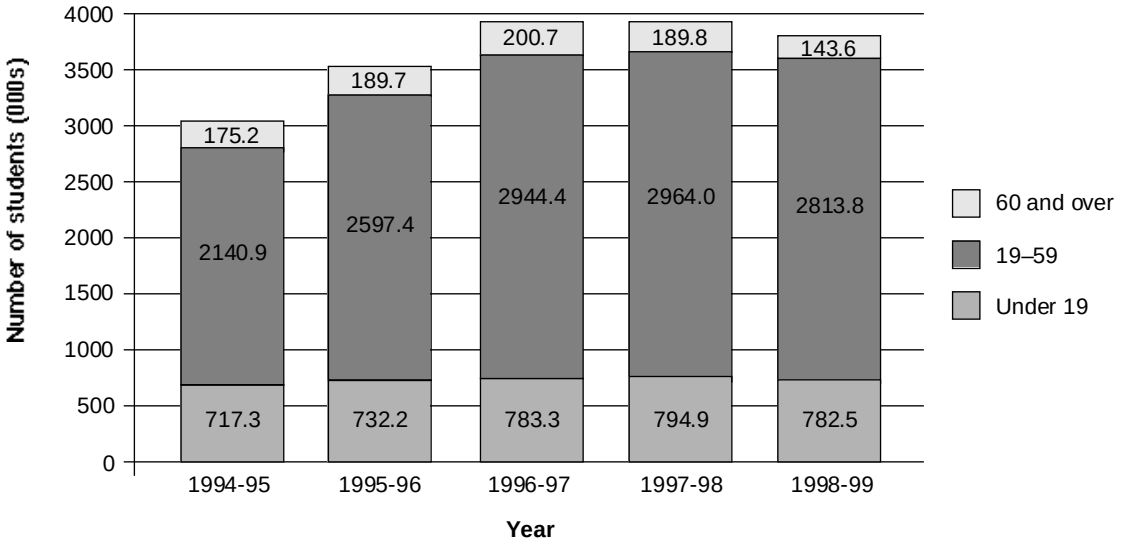
2.11 Figures 2.4 and 2.5 show the trends by mode of attendance and by age of student respectively. The main increases have been in part-time provision for adults. The period from 1994-95 to 1996-97 was one of particularly high growth. The growth in 1997-98 was less significant, and current indications are of a similar picture for 1998-99.

Figure 2.4: Students Enrolled in Colleges, by Mode of Attendance, 1994-95 to 1998-99



Source: ISR.

Figure 2.5: Students Enrolled in Colleges, by Age Group, 1994-95 to 1998-99



Source: ISR (excludes unknown ages).

Students released from employment

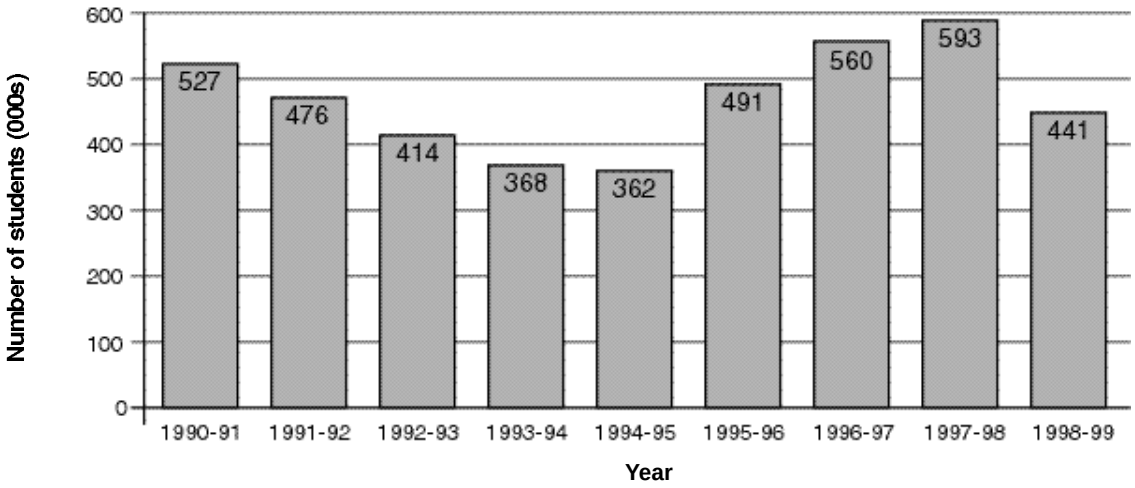
2.12 As the FE student data collection system changed in 1994-95, there is limited information available on trends before that period. However, one area where historical information is available is the level of provision for part-time students released from employment. In the period up to 1994-95, there was a decline in the number of students on part-time released programmes, from 386,800 in November 1990 to 265,200 in November 1994. This decline was steepest between 1990 and 1993, and had slowed by 1994.

2.13 In the same period, part-time provision as a whole had also declined. However, the decrease in part-time released provision was greater than the overall decrease and the proportion of released provision decreased by around 1% per year on average. This decrease in numbers on part-time released programmes took place at the same time as a large increase in the number of full-time 16-18 year olds in colleges.

2.14 From 1994-95 to 1997-98 there were significant increases in the number of part-time students who are released from employment. In the same period, part-time FE provision as a whole also increased significantly. Over this period, released provision remained at a constant proportion of the overall total.

2.15 Figure 2.6 shows an estimate of the trend in the numbers of students on released provision from 1990-91 to 1998-99. The extent to which this indicates a real trend is subject to interpretation since it may be masked by changes in employers' strategies (ie, a change to reimbursing their staff for training retrospectively, in which case students would not be identified through the ISR as having their course fees paid by their employer). To complicate this emerging picture still further, there is little information available to quantify the trends of employed people who do not get release from employment but are still expected to take courses in their own time.

Figure 2.6: Students Released from Employment, 1990-91 to 1998-99



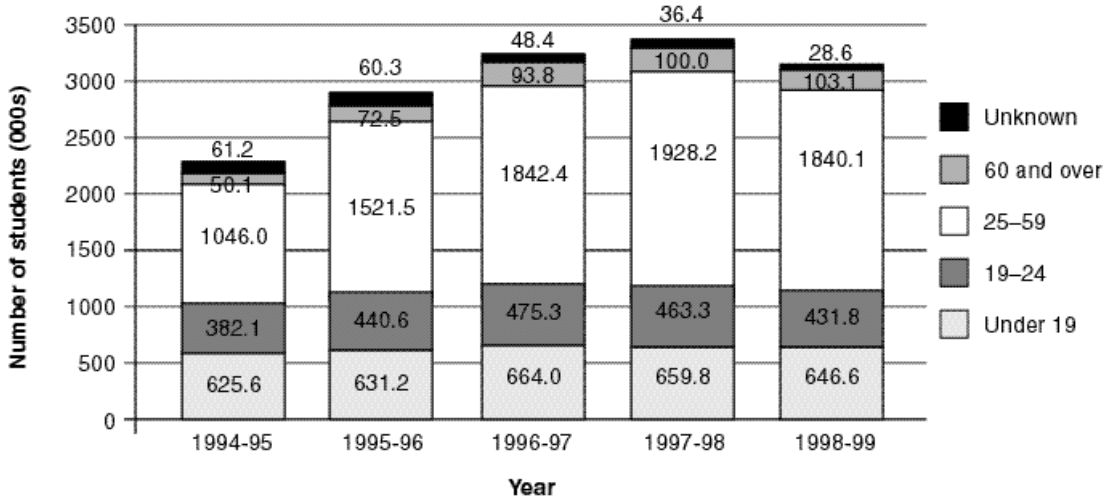
Source: FESR 1990-91 to 1993-94, ISR 1994-95 to 1998-99 (excludes external institutions).

Provision for 19-24 year olds

2.16 National ISR data can also assist with skills analysis related to the recommendation of the second report of the NSTF, which states: 'All people should be entitled, up to their 25th birthday, to publicly funded education and training, to the level of their capability, up to and including their first level 3 qualification.'

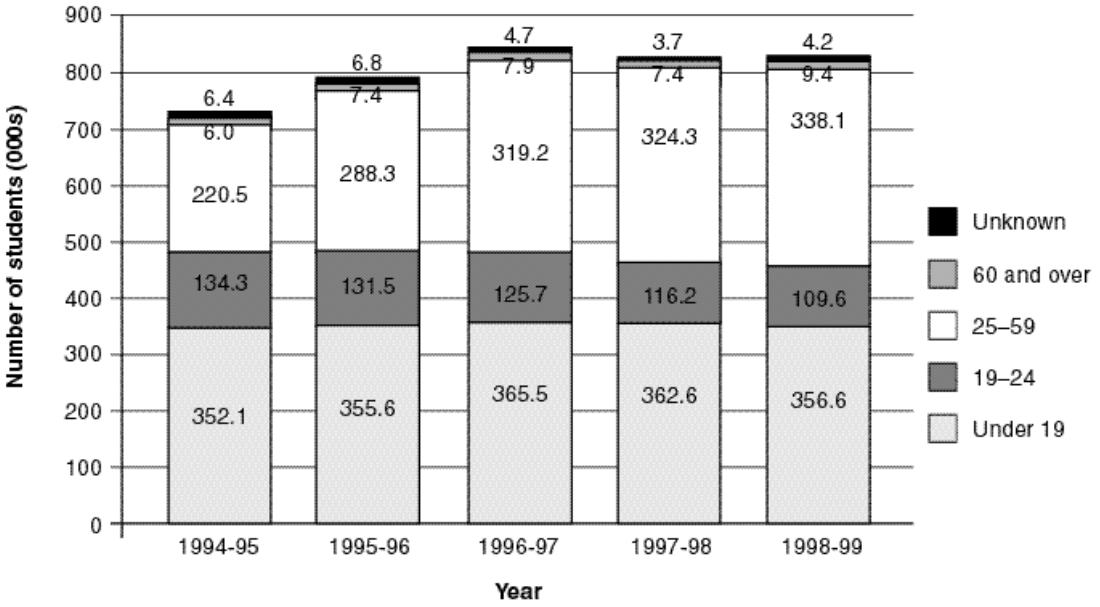
2.17 The ISR allows the identification of students by level of provision and by age. Figures 2.7 and 2.8 show the number of students on all Council-funded provision and on level 3 provision only in colleges from 1994-95 to 1998-99 by age group. The number of level 3 students aged 19-24 has decreased by 18%, from 134,300 in 1994-95 to 109,600 in 1998-99. Over the same period, the total number of students on level 3 provision has increased by 14%, and the total number of students aged 19-24 has increased by 13%. The growth in provision for 19-24 year olds has occurred particularly at entry level and level 1, with some growth also at level 2.

Figure 2.7: All Students on Council-funded Provision, 1994-95 to 1998-99



Source: FESR 1990-91 to 1993-94, ISR 1994-95 to 1998-99.

Figure 2.8: Students on Council-funded Level 3 Provision, 1994-95 to 1998-99



Source: ISR.

2.18 Further analysis of the characteristics of students by age has been done as part of the Council's work on widening participation in FE. From these analyses it is clear that, in comparison with other age groups of students, students aged 19-24 are more likely to:

- be unwaged
- be from deprived areas
- have lower retention rates.

2.19 This analysis suggests that the 19-24 age group is the one most likely to require additional assistance in participating in FE (particularly at level 3), as it is also clear that there is a trend among these students towards lower-level qualifications.

More detailed analyses

2.20 Data for provision within a programme area can be analysed in more detail, and compared with external data such as population figures, the number of employees in relevant industries or specific areas of skills shortages. One example was the analysis produced as part of the Council's review of the construction programme area. In June 1999 the Council published the construction report, which raised a number of important issues, including the difficulty of monitoring the extent and patterns of provision when inconsistent data collection systems are used by providers. The report recommended greater collaboration between providers to establish a common framework for recording and reporting information.

2.21 The work done for the construction report was extended further in the engineering programme area review. The main development was the involvement of NTOs in identifying relevant qualification aims and the demand for skills in their area. As a result, the analysis relates more closely to the need for specific skills, rather than just the enrolments on specific qualification aims.

2.22 The agriculture programme area review was published recently. This highlights the problems of trying to match labour market requirements and skills shortages to the likely supply of skilled personnel, given the diverse nature of the agriculture programme area. It does, however, state that labour market assessments are becoming more coherent and comments on the usefulness of the reports of NTOs on skills demand.

2.23 These detailed analyses can be produced at a regional or a more local level. At the regional level it becomes possible to identify more details of the sector's contribution to specific skill requirements. Although some analysis of this kind is taking place at present, it is likely to be of increasing significance with the new arrangements for post-16 education and training from April 2001, especially to local LSCs.

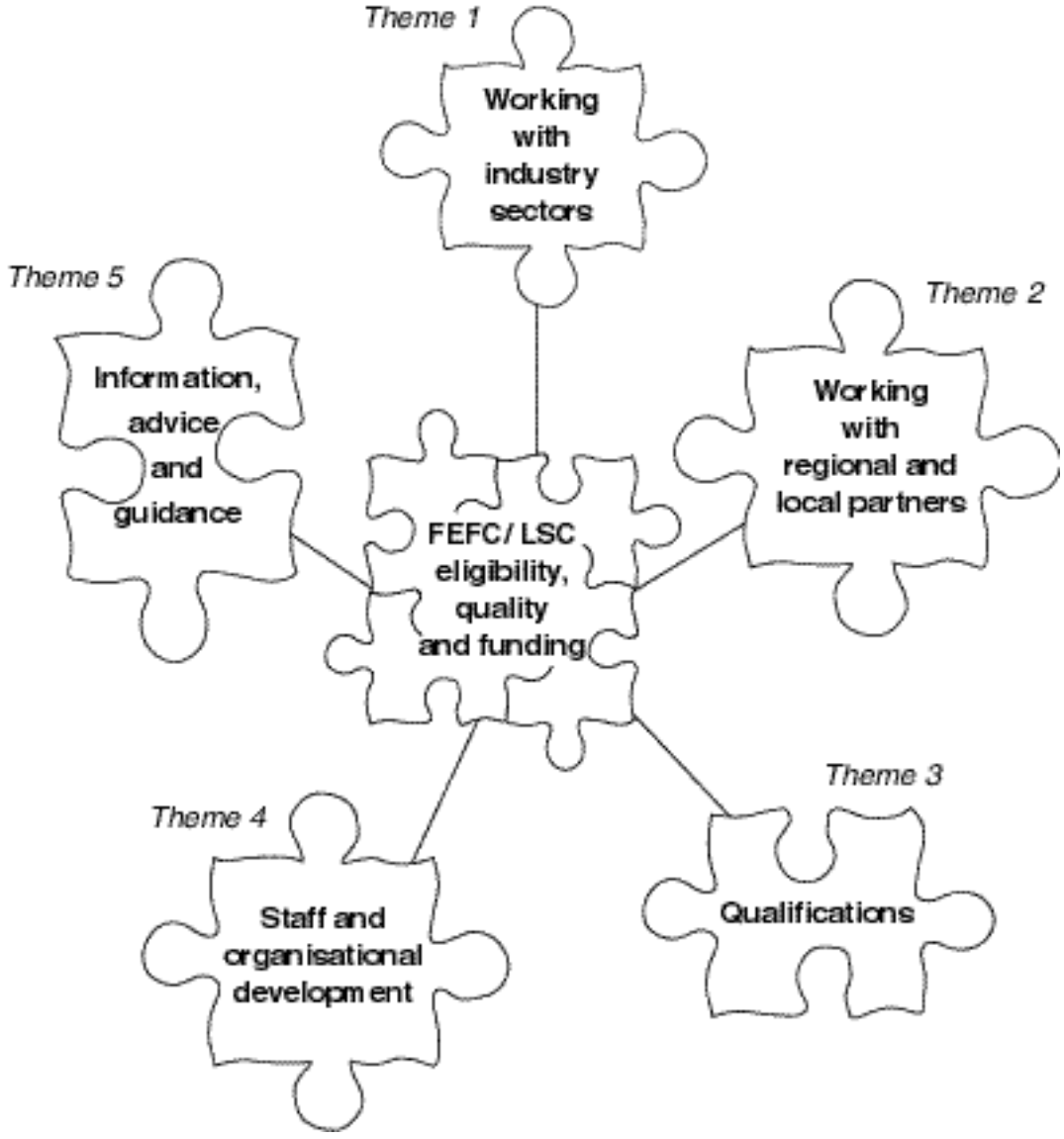
2.24 The Council is increasingly making such data analyses available on its website. A recent addition includes the aggregate analysis of institutions' strategic planning student number projections by programme area, according to local LSC boundary.

Chapter 3: Themes and Recommendations

The Skills Working Group's Approach

3.1 The initial meeting of the Group was used as an opportunity to exchange perspectives on the skills agenda and to share details of current activity. It was noted that although each agency was working on its distinctive contribution to the skills agenda, there was a need to engage in some 'joined-up thinking' on how agencies could work more effectively in developing a coherent approach to activity and developments.

3.2 The approach that was developed is summarised in the diagram, which identifies how the Council and the colleges could engage with five different themes of the skills agenda.



3.3 The Group debated issues relating to the approach to funding and eligibility for funding. It was agreed that no specific recommendations would be made in relation to these issues, given the dynamic nature of the agenda for the transition to the new LSC and the consultation and development of the new funding and allocations system. The report does contain comments on funding and eligibility issues that should be considered in the development of the new funding and allocations system.

3.4 The first report of the NSTF identified that skills needs are local and sector based. The first two themes take up these issues and explore how the Council can work more effectively with NTOs on sector issues and with regional and local partners on local issues.

3.5 The third theme on qualifications reflects the importance of qualifications and qualification frameworks, with particular emphasis on RVQs (as described by the NSTF), as the basis of skill development and funding streams.

3.6 The importance of staff and organisational development is reviewed in the fourth theme, with recommendations on how the FE standards fund could be directed in conjunction with key agencies to support the delivery of the skills agenda.

3.7 The fifth theme returns to an approach based on informed and supported individuals, and reviews issues relating to effective working with agencies on information (both demand and supply), advice and guidance.

3.8 The following sections explore these themes and put forward recommendations for action by the Council and others. The chapter ends with a summary of monitoring arrangements for implementing the recommendations.

Theme 1: Working with Industry Sectors

Introduction

3.9 The NSTF report identifies that skills issues have a sector dimension and a local dimension. This section of the report provides an update on the work of NTOs and recommendations on how the Council and the LSC could work more closely with NTOs on the development and delivery of the skills agenda.

Background

3.10 Industry sectors are increasing in importance as an effective means of articulating employer demand for skills. The White Paper *Learning to Succeed* envisages a pivotal role for NTOs.

3.11 A total of 76 NTOs are recognised by the secretary of state as the employer voice on all aspects of education and training to increase skills and competitiveness by sector. With government backing, NTOs are being encouraged to become:

> the automatically preferred point of reference for strategic leadership and practical guidance about skills and qualification needs (for their sector) and how the learning needs of people can be met through training and education.
>
> *NTO Strategic Guidance, 2000/2001*

The FEDA has established a project in partnership with National Electrotechnical Training and the Council to review demand and supply issues for electrotechnical training in a local LSC area and an RDA region. The project will bring together employers and providers to identify skills gaps and action that can be taken at a local level. It is anticipated that the work will inform the development of the LSC role working at both a sector and local level.

3.12 There are several ways in which NTOs will articulate industry skills needs in future. They include:

- skills foresight reports – each NTO will produce a thorough assessment of sector skills requirements, including the mapping of occupational and technological change and its impact on current and future skills needs
- skills dialogues – which will bring together NTOs and other business-led bodies in 15 broad groupings to provide a structured approach to articulating sector skills needs. Information and analysis from the dialogues will be made available to LSCs and RDAs, and will provide a strategic context within which to work with industry sectors
- sector workforce development plans – each NTO will have produced a workforce development plan by March 2001. The LSC prospectus states that workforce development plans:

> will need to take account of relevant national, regional and local priorities and will require close co-operation with the LSC at national and local levels and with RDAs. The plans will be the trigger for workforce development activity at industry sector level.

Key recommendations of the NSTF

3.13 The third report of the NSTF, *Tackling the Adult Skills Gap: Upskilling adults and the role of workplace learning*, considered how to spread learning in the workplace across all firms and to employees who currently have limited access to learning. The NSTF recognised that NTOs have a lead role with the UfI in providing an effective learning information service for industry, measuring progress and sector targets, spreading good practice and supporting the LSC in its skills assessment and workforce development responsibilities.

3.14 Two recommendations were made in the report that inform the sector dimension:

> 4: NTOs and the Learning and Skills Council should actively promote the use of informal learning approaches in firms, particularly SMEs, and develop, promote and fund accreditation of prior learning to help adults attain formal qualifications building on their prior work experience.
>
> 8: DfEE should require, through its contracts with UfI and NTOs, that they work together to create a new integrated learning information service for industry which brings together the information services offered by UfI with the advisory work of the NTOs.

Issues

3.15 As new and still evolving organisations, there is much work to do with NTOs in both the short and medium term. The Council has a role in working with the network of NTOs and the NTO National Council to establish how best to support sector-based employment interests in the transition to the new system.

3.16 In the medium term, it will be essential that the new LSC harnesses the potential for meeting skills needs at both local and sector level.

Recommendations

Analysis of patterns of provision by NTO sector

3.17 The current qualifications database used by the Council was developed as a tool to support the funding process. It has been used to provide analysis by Council programme area in reports such as the construction and agriculture programme area reviews. The latest programme area review of engineering took this analysis one stage further and included analysis based on NTO sectors.

3.18 This form of analysis has proved valuable in opening the debate between the sector and NTOs on skill shortages and curriculum and programme delivery.

3.19 To support analysis of provision by NTO sector, qualifications on the qualifications database need to be linked to specific NTO sectors. This linking would need to be completed in order to undertake an analysis of provision by NTO sector.

Recommendation 1: The Council should work closely with a range of NTOs to identify key sector qualifications that are funded through colleges and other institutions, and provide an analysis of patterns of provision by NTO sector.

3.20 This activity could also be used to inform the work of the skills dialogues groups and the sector workforce development plans.

3.21 This work could be further supported by the initiation of a project, perhaps led by the FEDA, to identify and document good practice on joint working between NTO sectors and the FE sector.

3.22 The outcome of this activity including any review through a FEDA project could be used to inform the development of the new funding allocation and skills system being developed by the LSC transition teams.

Funding models for workplace delivery

3.23 The Group was given an informative and stimulating presentation at its meeting in December by a college and its local employers engaged in the delivery of programmes of workforce development in the work place. The presentation raised a number of issues about how these forms of delivery could be effectively funded under the new LSC arrangements.

Recommendation 2: The transition team working on the post-16 funding and allocation system should review existing practice in the delivery of work-based NVQs and use this review to inform the development of an effective and fair funding system that supports this form of delivery.

Empowering employers

3.24 The TUC representative on the Group described the arrangements that had been put in place to support trade union representatives on public bodies that deal with training.

The TUC has established support networks for union members on public bodies dealing with training. This incorporates support for representatives on TEC and RDA boards. The support takes the form of written briefings on key issues, for example, individual learning accounts or learning to succeed. The TUC, in partnership with the DfEE, is currently developing a more systematic approach to support its union representatives for the LSC and learning partnerships. Six regional workshops have taken place to support representatives applying for LSC positions.

3.25 At least 40% of the proposed membership of the new LSC will have substantial business or commercial experience. There are also employer representatives on college corporations, RDAs and other national, regional and local bodies.

3.26 The contribution of employer-based representatives could be greatly enhanced through the development of knowledge-sharing networks. The NTO National Council is proposing to establish sector-based support groups.

Recommendation 3: The Council should work closely with a range of NTOs to support, through information sharing and other means, the developing sector-based knowledge networks.

Theme 2: Working with Regional and Local Partners

Introduction

3.27 The NSTF report identifies that skills issues have both sector and local dimensions. This section provides an update of the work of the RDAs and the learning partnerships and makes recommendations on how the Council and the LSC could work more closely at regional and local levels on the development and delivery of the skills agenda.

Background

3.28 National skills surveys, RDAs, local LSCs, learning partnerships and individual institutions' strategic plans all address skills issues at finer levels of detail and locality. There is a continuing debate about how these surveys and plans can be integrated and made consistent, and how each can add value to the development of a local skills agenda.

3.29 The local LSCs will become the focus for skills analysis and action with the learning partnerships and institutions providing input to the local plan. The RDAs will provide a strategic context for the plans and receive information from local planning.

3.30 RDAs will be making allocations against the Skills Development Fund on an annual basis to fund regional and local projects that will support the regional economic strategy and the skills action plans. The second round of these funds will be allocated in advance of the establishment of the local LSCs but in the context of learning partnerships established in each region.

Key recommendation from the NSTF

3.31 The second report of the NSTF, *Delivering Skills for All*, identified the importance of labour market and skills information and recommended that:

> 8 (vi): DfEE should work with RDAs to promote the rationalisation of survey work undertaken at a regional and a local level though combining similar local surveys into regional ones and agreeing a labour market and skills information strategy with relevant agencies in the region.

Issues

Communication, consistency and credibility

3.32 Institutional, local, regional and national plans will need to complement each other in their purpose and be based on the same data and information sources if they are to achieve coherence.

3.33 Effective communication, sharing of data and consistency and credibility checking will be an essential feature of these arrangements. Access to common sources of data and co-ordination of surveys and data analysis will need to develop.

An exciting project has been developed between the South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA) and the NTO National Council. The Sector Skills Unit, based in Guildford, supported through SEEDA's skills development fund, is managed by the National Council South East representative.

The hub of five NTOs are the Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA), the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the NTO for land-based industries, agriculture and production, horticulture and environment (LANTRA), broadcasting, film, video and multimedia (Skillset) and the NTO for electronics and software services in conjunction with the information technology NTO.

SEEDA and the NTO network share many similar objectives, particularly acknowledging that the development of skills in the region is central to improving economic success and competitiveness. As organisations, they also have complementary roles and expertise that support the delivery of these objectives.

This 'flagship' project aims to accomplish a collaborative workforce that will have a major impact on how the message from the Skills Action Plan is achieved and delivered to those who count. This partnership is the first to be formed in the UK.

3.34 At the same time, the principle of subsidiarity should be used to identify the optimum location for the main local planning activities.

3.35 Consistency with industry sector analysis and planning will need to be resolved at the local level.

Recommendations

Planning models

3.36 RDAs and learning partnerships have already completed regional development strategies, skills action plans and/or local learning plans, respectively. It is important that the new LSC should build on the best of the local planning models and frameworks that have been developed.

Recommendation 4: The transition planning teams should liaise with RDAs and learning partnerships to identify best practice and emerging models and frameworks to inform the development of a planning model for local LSCs. This could lead to a series of pilot projects in planned LSC areas to test and develop the planning models.

Data issues

3.37 The new local LSCs will need to draw on data from a wide variety of sources to establish demand and supply benchmarks at an early stage of the planning process.

3.38 Some RDAs and other regional partners have established regional observatories in an attempt to bring together a range of data and information for access and analysis.

Recommendation 5: The transition planning teams should work with regional observatories and TECs on the development of data models and structures for data collection and access. RDAs might consider the use of the skills development funds to initiate and support regional data modelling and analysis.

3.39 The Council's ISR system is a valuable asset that needs to be exploited in the lead-up to the establishment of the local LSCs and workforce development plans.

3.40 The Council's research and statistics team is likely to be fully engaged in supporting the operational transition process.

Recommendation 6: The Council should make extracts of the ISR data available to external bodies, including RDAs. The Council should also provide initial support on awareness of the data structure and field content of the system to enable RDAs and others to carry out the detailed analysis that will support regional and local planning making use of supply-side data.

Theme 3: Qualifications

Introduction

3.41 The NSTF identified a need for qualifications that can be obtained in college or off the job, core skills and knowledge to support the achievement of an NVQ, and a progression route to competence, signified by the award of the NVQ. The NSTF chose the term 'related vocational qualifications' (RVQs) to describe these qualifications. It is the QCA's remit to develop a coherent and rational qualification framework designed to meet the needs of industry, education and learners. This section of the report provides an update on the QCA's important work towards rationalising the system of vocational qualifications, drawing on advice from employers, NTOs and its own sector advisory groups.

Issues

3.42 The important issues that arise out of this area of the skills agenda are:

- development of the qualifications framework – to reduce the number of qualifications
- raising awareness of the types of qualifications and what skills they deliver to the student
- identifying qualifications to fit into the RVQ framework.

Related vocational qualifications

3.43 The NSTF expected that RVQs would add confidence to NVQs in training programmes by backing up the RVQ assessment with a separate qualification which assessed the knowledge necessary for competence. The national qualifications framework would include RVQs where they met the regulatory criteria set out by the QCA. It is envisaged that these qualifications would fit in the central vocationally related category of the national qualifications framework evolving, where possible, from existing provision.

3.44 Where young people need broader vocational experience, it is likely that GNVQs or other similar vocationally related qualifications could meet their needs. Recent changes in GNVQs have been introduced to provide wider and more flexible opportunities, for example, the introduction of three- and six-unit qualifications, with more optional choices. However, some young people may prefer a more work-related qualification. For adults, units of an RVQ might be used as a stepping stone towards an NVQ, although it is envisaged that an RVQ would be able to stand alone, as it would represent more than simply access to an NVQ.

Key recommendation of the NSTF

3.45 The Group has identified the following recommendations from the NSTF second report as being particularly relevant to this theme:

> 3 (vii): NVQs and VQs 'related to' the same National Occupational Standard should be designed so that the 'Related VQ' ('rvq') provides for the attainment and assessment of all the underpinning knowledge and understanding required within the NVQ.
>
> 3 (viii): There should be the capacity for knowledge and understanding to be assessed separately in, or via a 'rvq' alongside, all NVQs; where such separate assessment of knowledge and understanding take place, the burden of requirements for competence assessment on employers should be consequentially reduced.

Recommendations

3.46 As RVQs are admitted to the framework and developed for use in colleges, it will be important to monitor the extent of provision and to understand how this relates to demand for NVQs and any changes in the level of demand. It will be important to measure the success of RVQs in providing a stepping-stone into NVQs and to monitor progression of individuals from RVQs into other opportunities, including higher education.

3.47 The policy planning and regulatory authorities would be provided with information on the uptake of NVQs and subsequent progression from vocationally related qualifications. They could use this information to assist curriculum planners within FE institutions to respond to individuals' demands for education and training. In time, this would help to improve the competence level of the workforce.

Recommendation 7: The QCA should identify existing qualifications likely to fit into the category RVQ. The Council should analyse the extent of RVQ provision by NTO sector and the QCA should undertake research with employers, the TEC National Council (TNC), NTOs, etc, in particular sector areas and localities, on the potential usefulness of RVQ in the workplace. This could be gauged in terms of skills required by employers and student progression on to NVQs and into higher education.

3.48 The QCA has already established an advisory group (including college, awarding body and employer representatives) to advise it on improving the flexibility of vocational qualifications. This group could be invited to consider further how to develop a framework for recording, monitoring and disseminating information on existing RVQs and advising on their development as a type of qualification within the national qualifications framework over the next two to three years.

Theme 4: Staff and Organisational Development

Introduction

3.49 Staff in FE institutions are key to the delivery and relevance of programmes that deliver the skills agenda. They represent the greatest single investment in the training aspects of the skills agenda, and the relevance of their skills and the opportunities they have for structured continuous professional development are paramount. This section of the report provides an update on the work of the FENTO and the FEDA in this area and makes recommendations about where the Council could enhance this.

Background

3.50 There are two major components that underpin the development of a modern system of delivering lifelong learning: appropriate, flexible and attractive learning opportunities; and staff with the relevant knowledge and high-level skills to help people learn. If workforce development and increased take-up of formal and informal learning is to become the norm, systems of support will need to change and develop significantly from the current organisationally focused service. More people are likely to be actively supporting learners and learning – supervisors, mentors, line managers, trades union officials and others may be taking a role. Greater emphasis on partnerships with employers, trades unions and NTOs will be required to ensure that learning opportunities are relevant, forward-looking and develop the knowledge and skills for tomorrow as well as today.

3.51 The challenge for staff and managers of organisations is in managing this inevitable change, while simultaneously becoming lifelong learners themselves. Upskilling and systematic staff development should become the norm, to enable developments in the curriculum and its delivery to remain appropriate to the demands of the modern workplace. These changes will require a new sector to do different things as well as to do things differently.

Issues

3.52 The principal issues in this area of the skills agenda are as follows.

3.53 First, to identify skills shortages and training needs in relation to teachers and trainers supporting learning to ensure that the right skills are in the right place at the right time. There is a need to overcome the lack of national data on teaching and support staff.

A high priority for the e-business.nto is to bring employers and educational specialists together. A programme, 'Fixing the Future', led by Compaq and the e-business.nto, is creating a step change in the south east by engaging employers to provide FE colleges, for the first time, with the hardware, the software and the training they need to deliver competent professionals trained for the needs of the sector. The Compaq supply chain, currently 350 SMEs in the south east, is involved in the development of detailed curriculum and high-quality direct and distance-learning materials. Compaq is providing hardware and software for eight FE colleges to enable course delivery. e-business.nto and Compaq are training and accrediting general FE lecturers so that they are skilled in the latest industry standards.

'Fixing the Future' will dramatically increase the skills pool available to the sector by establishing FE as a credible alternative to private training provision and ensuring its ability to meet the needs of electronics and software service companies. This project is creating a new infrastructure to ensure the sustained currency and capability of FE to deliver training to the sector.

3.54 Second, to raise the standards of all staff involved in teaching and learning (particularly part-time staff, who make up an increasing proportion of the whole), engaging individuals in their own development and organisational development. There is a need for a common framework and coherence between the work of the employment NTO and the FENTO, which are responsible for standards in work-based training and work-based learning respectively. There is also a need for the development of:

- compulsory teaching qualifications for all FE teachers
- standards and qualifications for FE support staff
- professional qualifications for principals
- standards and training for college governors.

3.55 Third, to increase the opportunities for industrial and professional updating, for example, staff secondments to industry. There is a need to strengthen existing partnerships (such as EBPs) and encourage new ones (such as consortia of SMEs).

Key recommendation of the NSTF

3.56 The second report of the NSTF, *Delivering Skills for All*, contained several specific recommendations associated with this theme. These covered the qualifications of staff as well as their continuous professional development, particularly with reference to mathematics, IT and key skills.

3.57 In the context of this report, the Group has identified the following recommendation from the second report of the NSTF as being particularly relevant to this theme:

> 6 (v): Expertise in the teaching of key skills should be spread by funding a national programme of continuing professional development for teachers and trainers in collaboration with the FENTO, the Teacher Training Agency and other appropriate bodies.

Current activities

Other agencies

3.58 The lead agencies engaging with this theme are the FENTO and the FEDA. Some of their current activities are described in paragraphs 3.59 to 3.62.

3.59 The FENTO is preparing its *Skill Foresight* report, which will provide baseline information on the skills needs of the sector (scheduled for publication by December 2000). It is also working with other NTOs to establish the factors that enhance the delivery of vocational skills using the FENTO standards for teaching and learning. It will be working with, initially, some RDAs to establish links between colleges, local LSCs and the RDA, so that skills needs can be quickly identified and interpreted.

3.60 The FEDA's 'Skills, Learning and Work' portfolio contains multiple (Council-funded) projects aimed at staff and organisational development. The underlying concepts of many include learning in a knowledge-driven economy, skills development and distributed learning systems (a full list of related projects is provided in annex F).

3.61 The FEDA's centre for professional development is collaborating with the FENTO on standards development for teachers and managers. The centre is also working with colleges on teacher development, has written governor training materials for the Council and runs a programme for college principals.

3.62 The FEDA, in collaboration with the AoC, manages a programme of continuous quality improvement with resources from the FE standards fund; it has several strands including leadership, research, benchmarking, action planning, and provides advice and consultancy to colleges giving cause for concern.

3.63 During February 2000 the DfEE (as part of raising quality and standards in FE) issued a consultation paper on the proposed introduction of compulsory professional teaching qualifications for all FE teachers from September 2001. A ministerial announcement on the future policy is due by September 2000. Later this year a further consultation will take place on the proposed introduction of compulsory management qualifications for college principals.

The Council/FE sector

3.64 The Council encourages institutions to set out staff development strategies in their strategic plans. Through its strategic planning guidance, the Council has also encouraged the institutions it funds to attain Investor in People (IiP) status or a similar recognised quality standard. The majority of colleges either have already achieved this or are committed to doing so.

3.65 The secretary of state introduced the FE standards fund in 1999 to underpin the government's drive to raise standards. In 1999-2000, £35 million was set aside for the standards fund and four strands of activity were agreed. The purpose of two of these strands was to provide funding for training and development in support of quality improvement activities and to disseminate good practice. Most colleges have received funding under the various strands. Initiatives are under way to support principals' training and development, to improve the standards of governance and to address the poor quality of some basic skills provision. Funding has also been used to support college staff to prepare for curriculum 2000 reforms. The Council also received a number of proposals from colleges for initiatives including mentoring schemes, regional workshops and job-shadowing programmes.

3.66 In 2000-2001 the Council intends to continue funding a number of initiatives introduced in 1999-2000 and will distribute funding to six categories as set out in Circular 00/05 *Quality Initiative Standards Fund 2000-2001.*

3.67 The secretary of state has increased the standards fund to £80 million in 2000-2001 and £160 million in 2001-2002. This provides further opportunities for the Council, and the LSC when it is established, to increase the ways in which the fund can be applied.

Recommendations

3.68 Good-quality FE provision relies heavily on the staff involved in its delivery possessing a high level of appropriate skills. This is equally true of front-line teaching staff, ensuring each student's learning experience is effective and rewarding, and of careers guidance staff, delivering advice to ensure students are directed towards the most appropriate course of study (see theme 5).

3.69 Skilled staff are also necessary when it comes to the consistent interpretation of labour market information (LMI) for policy and planning purposes. This is important at the individual institution level (colleges), local level (learning partnerships), regional level (RDAs) and national level. The assessment of LMI has an impact at each of these levels and, ultimately, is fed back into advice and guidance services affecting the individual learner.

3.70 The Group identified the following recommendation as essential, in terms of improving the contribution of further education to the skills agenda:

Recommendation 8: The Council/LSC should consider using the FE standards fund (2001-2002) to fund a significant national staff development initiative to raise the skills of all staff involved in training and learning, particularly in relation to key skills, basic skills development and ICT/IT.

Theme 5: Information, Advice and Guidance

Introduction

3.71 If the nation is to develop a culture of lifelong learning, whereby individuals can achieve their full potential, it is essential that all individuals have access to high-quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance. This can be achieved only if it is based upon the sound interpretation of the demand and supply of education and skills information related to the structure of the economy and the needs of individuals. It will allow children, young people and adults to make informed choices about the skills they have or need, in order to facilitate their development through their chosen career path. A high-quality information, advice and guidance structure will also give employers access to relevant information (for example, qualifications) to recruit and develop their staff. This section of the report presents an update on the work of the CSNA and other bodies with a key role in careers guidance and makes recommendations where the Council or LSC could contribute.

Issues

3.72 The following issues have been identified for consideration.

3.73 First, the Jobs, Education and Training Information (JETI) website, recommended by the NSTF, will need to incorporate data from FE colleges relating to the nature and extent of provision and the destination of students from its main learning programmes. Student destination information is, however, both difficult and expensive to gather. Nevertheless, this information will be required from all post-16 providers as the establishment of the LSC approaches.

3.74 Second, there is a need to strengthen careers information, advice and guidance for young people and adults, ensuring that its delivery is integrated with independent guidance agencies and is consistent, impartial and of a high quality.

3.75 Third, colleges and other providers of post-16 education and training will require appropriately trained and qualified staff to interpret and understand information, particularly that on the JETI website, for the delivery of careers information, advice and guidance.

3.76 Fourth, young people under the age of 16 need to be informed that vocational education is also offered in colleges when choosing options available to them. Although other bodies have responsibility for careers advice and guidance in schools, support could be provided through the role of EBPs to achieve an integrated system.

Key recommendations of NSTF

3.77 The Group has identified the following two recommendations from the second report of the NSTF as being relevant to this theme:

> 8 (iv): There should be comprehensive training and guidance for careers teachers on how to help students interpret labour market, learning and skills information – particularly that on the JETI website – and how to make better use of it in careers education.
>
> 8 (v): There should be a uniform requirement across all providers of publicly funded education and training to publish, to prospective students, data on the destinations of previous students across all the different programmes of learning which are recognised in the institution's prospectus.

Current activities

Other agencies

3.78 Although the CSNA was identified as the lead organisation for this theme, further assistance was provided by the local government agency (LGA) nomination. There are also a number of other organisations currently undertaking work to influence the delivery of information, advice and guidance:

- the CSNA is influencing and supporting the development of education and training provision and ensuring effective support for individual progression in the context of lifelong learning and the requirements of a changing labour market
- the FEDA's centre for professional development is collaborating with the FENTO on standards development for teachers and managers. Information regarding this work can be found in theme 4 or in annex F to this report. *Effective Practice in Advice and Guidance* will be published shortly on the Raising Quality and Achievement (RQA) website
- DfEE – Directory of Training Opportunities for FE staff in careers education and guidance. Careers education and guidance in FE and sixth-form colleges – case studies for management development
- the Guidance Council has produced quality standards to be accredited by the Careers and Educational Guidance Accreditation Board
- the ConneXions strategy has been set up across government departments to 'manage the transition' from compulsory education to adulthood and working life to ensure that young people have access to high-quality education and training
- the Responsive Colleges Unit (RCU) has assisted colleges to understand the importance of tracking students' destinations since 1990, and recently published a good practice guide on efficient and effective destination monitoring.

The Council/FE sector

3.79 The Council's ISR contains information on whether an employer is paying a student's fees but no geographical information about the location of employers or training. Without this the Council is unable to monitor local responsiveness to employers' needs.

3.80 Section 50 of the *Further and Higher Education 1992* report requires institutions to collect and publish information regarding the destination of their course completers. Student destinations data on the ISR is recorded in broad categories (such as FE/HE/employment, etc), which has no meaning for students who are already in employment at the commencement of their course. Furthermore, many records are received as 'destination unknown', as it is not a compulsory field and information for some students is notoriously difficult to track down. The Council plans to contact institutions completing destination data for less than 90% of full-time students from 2000-01 onwards.

3.81 During the transition to the new LSC new data systems will need to be introduced to account for the broader range of providers. There may be scope within the new arrangements to consider recommendations made by the Group.

St Helens College offers strong support for students and was awarded a Grade 1 at inspection in this area. In addition to providing a service for individuals, careers specialists have been used in the college for adults undertaking personal surveys of employment areas and associated requirements, together with an analysis of their own strengths, interests and weaknesses. Completion of this leads to accreditation from the Open College. Support for the process has contributed to the success of the scheme with adult returners, and this will now be extended through all vocational areas within the college.

3.82 In a letter of guidance to the Council (dated 8 November 1998), Roger Dawe, director general of further and higher education and youth training, set out the priorities for the use of the standards fund. More details on the standards fund can be found in theme 4, paragraphs 3.65 to 3.67.

Recommendations

3.83 The basis of a high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance system is the core information that is used to enable informed decisions to be made. The proposed JETI website will give careers teachers access to relevant, up-to-date information. The Council's ISR database (or LSC Individualised Learner Record) contains information regarding a large proportion of supply-side information.

3.84 Destination monitoring information will form one of the many facets of the website and will be provided through colleges' ISR returns. The current destination fields on the ISR have very broad headings and, therefore, future data systems may wish to consider more descriptive fields. An effective destination monitoring system will allow more accurate evaluations and predictions of student outcomes to be conducted.

3.85 It is also essential that individuals in post-16 education and training who are responsible for providing careers advice have the appropriate qualifications and skills to deliver accurate and impartial guidance to all individuals.

3.86 A sound relationship between EBPs will enable all individuals on post-16 education and training courses to see the value and relevance of their qualifications, and those in employment to see the benefits of further training and education. There is also a role for EBPs to develop links with schools and children under the age of 16. The LSC will play a part in strengthening the role of EBPs.

At Newham Sixth Form College a class of intermediate GNVQ information technology students linked with Tate & Lyle Sugars to evaluate an example of one of the company's *Business Briefing* documents. The students then redesigned it, producing their design, mounting a display version and making a presentation to Tate & Lyle staff. The students not only enjoyed the exercise but were also able to generate evidence appropriate to the GNVQ. They also learned more about the environment and working practices of this large organisation. The staff at Tate & Lyle found the students' work and recommendations extremely useful and gained insight into the GNVQ.

Staff development

3.87 It is essential that staff responsible for providing careers information, advice and guidance, are suitably qualified to deliver high-quality and impartial information.

Recommendation 9: The Council/LSC should consider ways to utilise the FE standards fund to ensure that a high-quality information, advice and guidance service is provided by strengthening the skills of all staff involved in:

- delivering advice and guidance and careers education in the post-16 education and training system
- developing learning contracts with individual learners
- interpreting labour market information.

3.88 It is recognised that the government's priorities for the standards fund may not extend to improving the skills of the last three groups of staff. In this case it would fall to the Council to consider, within its priorities, alternative ways of addressing these needs; for example, by adopting a similar approach to that of the basic skills quality initiative.

Information

3.89 The destination of students forms a useful aspect of data collection systems. It will also form a vital part of the proposed JETI website.

Recommendation 10: The LSC should promote, as examples of good practice, institutions with sound student tracking strategies and with low percentages of 'destination unknown' on their ISR returns. The LSC should also consider the relevance of the existing destination fields on the ISRs, with a view to introducing more detailed fields (for example, employer's postcode and location of training).

Implementation and Monitoring Arrangements

3.90 The final meeting, on 11 April 2000, was an opportunity for the Group to consider what arrangements to put in place to monitor the implementation of their recommendations. Since the 10 recommendations are grouped under five themes and the success of their implementation hinges on joint working, it was agreed to establish five partnership review groups. Each of these groups will be led by an agency represented on the Group, with involvement and support from the Council:

- theme 1: working with industry sectors – NTO National Council
- theme 2: working with regional and local partners – RDA
- theme 3: qualifications – QCA
- theme 4: staff and organisational development – FENTO (in collaboration with FEDA)
- theme 5: information, advice and guidance – CSNA.

3.91 The Council will wish to draw together a summary progress report from each of these partnership review groups during autumn 2000.

Annex A

Skills Working Group Membership

Name	Nominated by/representing
Llew Aviss (chair), Llew Aviss Associates	National Skills Task Force
Dianne Williams, managing director, CWT Coventry	British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)
Bert Clough, senior education and training adviser	Trades Union Congress (TUC)
Cormac Bakewell, policy adviser	Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Doug Wilkie, education and training spokesman	Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
Mary Lord, director of education and training	TEC National Council (TNC)
Tom Bewick, policy director	NTO National Council (NTONC)
Geoff Terry, chief executive	FE National Training Organisation (FENTO)
Keith Weller, Eleanor Bale and Jackie Bawden, head of qualifications/principal officer	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
James Harris, head of skills and learning, SWERDA	Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)
Sandra Finnigan, chief executive, Lifetime Careers	Careers Service National Association (CSNA)
Frances White, post-16 adviser, Shropshire County Council	Local Government Association (LGA)
John Brennan, policy adviser	Association of Colleges (AoC)
College principals	
Margaret Murdin, Wigan and Leigh College	Tariff Advisory Committee (TAC)
Gordon Hopkins, Dudley College	Tariff Advisory Committee (TAC)
Ian Todd, City of Sunderland College	FE sector
Joe West, St Helens College	FE sector
David Hall, Pershore Group of Colleges	FE sector
Observers	
Stanley King	Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)
John Temple and Gary Clarkson, Skills Unit	Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)
Chris Mee, Competitiveness Unit	Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
Maria Hughes, development adviser, Skills, Learning and Work	FE Development Agency (FEDA)

Council staff

Geoff Daniels, assistant director and
head of education policy, secretary to group

Jenny Burnette, director,
Greater London Regional Office,
acting secretary to group

Mike Wallace, regional education officer

Louise Butcher, education policy officer,
clerk to group

Colin Stronach, acting chief statistician

Avril Willis, senior inspector

Richard Jewkes, education policy co-ordinator

Papers copied to

Cliff Allen (head of teaching and learning project)	HEFCE
Kirsten Tholstrup (development section)	FEFCW
Eddie MacIntyre (principal), Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies	National Skills Task Force

Annex B

Skills Working Group Terms of Reference

Objectives

1 Key objectives of the Group will include:

- advising the Council on measures to extend further its contribution to the skills agenda
- mapping the contribution of FE to work-related learning, in terms of the volume and types of employment-related provision
- highlighting examples of good practice in college responsiveness to employment needs.

2 The Council is also likely to seek advice on:

- development and funding of unit-based programmes and qualifications to assist the flexibility of colleges' responses to employer needs
- methods of expressing skills shortages, identified by the NSTF or employer bodies, in terms of qualifications required
- opportunities for college staff to develop and update knowledge and skills related to the labour market.

Scope

3 The Group will aim to advise the NSTF on FE's contribution to work-related learning. It may also be able to identify a particular programme area (for example, information technology) in which the Council can take specific steps to improve FE's responsiveness to the government's skills agenda.

4 During the course of its work the Group may also identify areas on which it would like to offer advice to the DfEE. An example of this might relate to policy on the balance of fees and public funding in meeting the costs of education and training, and the government's expectation that employers will make an increased contribution to the funding of further education. Furthermore, the Group can consider basic skills as an important aspect of the skills agenda and may wish to comment on issues identified in the Moser report.

5 A role for the group may be identified beyond April 2000. If this proves to be the case then its membership, role and remit would be reviewed.

Reporting arrangements

6 The Group will report to the Council, and the Council will present the Group's findings to the NSTF. A report of the Group's work was presented in April 2000.

Annex C

List of National Training Organisations

Accountancy NTO

Animal Care and Equine NTO (ACENTO)

Association for Ceramic Training and Development

Bakery Training Council

Banks and Building Societies NTO

Board for Education and Training in the Water Industry (BETWI)

British Plumbing Employers Council (BPEC)

British Ports Industry Training Ltd

CAPITB

Central Government NTO

Chemical Manufacturing and Processing NTO

Cleaning and Support Services NTO

Community Justice NTO

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

Council for Administration

Cultural Heritage NTO

Custodial Care NTO

Dairy Training and Development Council

Distributive NTO (DNTO)

e-business.nto

Electricity Training Association (ETA)

Employment NTO

Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA)

Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB)

Engineering Services Training Trust Ltd (ESTTL)

EPIC (Extractives and Mineral Processing Industries NTO)

Food and Drink National Training Organisation

Footwear and Leather NTO

Furniture, Furnishings and Interiors NTO

Further Education NTO (FENTO)

Gas Industry National Training Organisation

Glass Training Ltd

Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Authority

Healthwork UK – The Health Care NTO

Higher Education Training Organisation

Hospitality Training Foundation (HTF)

Information Services NTO

Information Technology National Training Organisation (ITNTO)

Institute of Customer Service

Insurance and Related Financial Services NTO

Key Potential UK (Housing)

Languages NTO

LANTRA NTO Ltd

Local Government NTO

Management and Enterprise Training Organisation

Meat Training Council

Merchant Navy Training Board

METIER (arts and entertainment)

Motor Industry Training Council

National Electrotechnical Training

National Textile Training Organisation

NTO for Early Years

NTO for Sport, Recreation and Allied Occupations

nto tele.com

OPITO – NTO for the Oil and Gas Extraction Industry

Paper Education and Training Council

Passenger Transport Forum for Employee Development (TRANSFED)

Paulo NTO (Community Based Learning and Development)

Petroleum Industries NTO

Pharmaceuticals Industry NTO

Photo Imaging NTO

Polymers and Associated Industries NTO (PAINTO)

Print and Graphic Communication NTO

Property Services NTO

Rail Industry Training Council Ltd

Refractories and Building Products Training Council

Road Haulage and Distribution Training Council

Science, Technology and Mathematics NTO

Seafish Training

Security Industry Training Organisation (SITO)

Skillset (broadcast, film, video)

Steel Training Ltd

Training Alliance for Surface Coatings (TASC)

Training Organisation for Personal Social Services

Ttento (Travel, Tourism Services and Events)

Voluntary Sector NTO

Annex D

History of Further Education

1 The roots of FE lie in the mechanical institutions and technical schools that were constituted in the later stages of the industrial revolution. The nature of education and training available at that time, including the work-based apprenticeship, attempted to improve basic skills (literacy and numeracy), scientific skills and technical knowledge. However, the absence of compulsory general education and a low level of state support proved to be a barrier to the success of the British education and training system in responding to the demands of industrialisation (Hayward, 1997).

2 Nevertheless, the large number of students requiring certification for their studies at these institutions brought about the advent of examining bodies such as the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI). Indeed, the CGLI played an important role in the establishment, in 1883, of Finsbury Technical College, which delivered daytime and evening classes in a wide range of vocational subjects.

3 Towards the end of the 19th century more public funding was made available through the *Technical Instruction Act 1889* and the *Local Taxation Act 1890*. The result was the establishment of a wide range of technical colleges and polytechnics, which provided the majority of training for adults and young people. This development laid the foundation for today's FE. Furthermore, it was during this period that the Ordinary National Certificate and Higher National Certificate were established, and individuals holding such qualifications were deemed to be of great value to employers in certain industry sectors.

4 The second world war brought about a major increase in the volume of technical education courses, whereby workers would attend technical colleges on a daytime release basis. Much of this training was geared towards the war effort and was therefore not suitable for other industry sectors. Since then, a number of different organisations have been established to increase skills training in the United Kingdom with varying degrees of success. In the 1960s, students often underwent an intensive year of off-the-job training conducted in a technical college. Government schemes introduced in the 1980s, such as Youth Training and Employment Training for adults, also offered off-the-job training in FE colleges.

5 Although FE has provided a large proportion of vocational education since the industrial revolution, in recent decades it has also provided opportunities for adults wishing to improve their academic qualifications and for young people to continue education away from the school environment.

6 The *Further and Higher Education Act 1992* saw the launch of further education funding councils in Scotland, Wales and England and the centralisation of public funds for education and training at qualifying institutions.

7 A good source regarding the history of FE can be found in *FE and Lifelong Learning: Realigning the Sector for the Twenty-first Century*, by Green and Lucas, Institute of Education, University of London, 1999.

Annex E

Data Collection System: ISR

1 Since 1994-95, the main data collection system used by institutions in the FE sector has been the individualised student record (ISR). This contains information on all students enrolled at institutions in the sector along with their qualification aims and qualifications on entry.

2 Before 1994-95, student data were collected by the DfEE through the further education statistical record (FESR). This gave a summary of student enrolments on 1 November each year. The ISR is an all-year return, that is, it contains details of students enrolling throughout the year rather than those enrolled on one specified date. The ISR contains more detail and allows more comprehensive and powerful analysis than the FESR did, but as a result of the change of systems effective comparisons between 1994-95 and earlier years are not always possible.

3 The ISR consists of three main datasets:

- student data, such as student name, postcode, date of birth and ethnicity
- qualification aim data, such as qualification code, start and end date, funding source
- qualification on entry data, such as qualification type, level and grade.

4 In each year, an institution returns to the Council one student record for each student enrolled during that year, along with one record for each qualification aim that student was enrolled on. For some students, particularly full-time 16-18 year olds, one record is also provided for each of their qualifications on entry.

5 The ISR data for individual students and their qualification aims can be linked to other data to provide more complex analyses. A fundamental source for analyses is the qualifications database, which provides detailed information about the qualifications available in FE institutions. The database allows details of the title, type, level and subject of a qualification to be identified from the qualification code included in the ISR.

6 The structure of the ISR allows great flexibility in analysis. In principle, analyses can be provided using any combination of the variables in the ISR or the qualifications database. Analyses of ISR data range from comparatively simple summaries of the total provision in the sector to more in-depth work on, for example, the characteristics of students aged 19-24. The most detailed analysis can relate to a specific skill, such as the analysis of AutoCAD qualifications.

Annex F

List of FEDA Research Projects

Recent, current and proposed research and development activity

Promoting Learning in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (1998)
A project that identified effective practice in meeting the specific training needs of SMEs (publication available)

Supporting Local Small Businesses (July 1999)
A research project that investigated collaborative approaches to providing support to micro businesses (report available)

Investing in Training for the 21st Century (July 1999)
A collaborative project with British Aerospace that identified new models for collaboration between employers and training providers. This work was disseminated at a high-profile conference organised jointly by BAe and the FEDA, held at BAe corporate headquarters in Farnborough (report available)

Learning With Business (1998)
A project that examined the role of placements and secondments to business and industry in staff development and updating (publication available)

Business Associates in Colleges (September 1999)
This project examined secondments and placements from industry education (report available)

College/Employer Links (December 1998)
Commissioned research for FOCUS TEC investigated the extent of links with employers and how these could be improved. This involved a major survey of employers in the central London area (report available – subject to FOCUS TEC agreement)

FEDA's ADAPT UfI Project (1998-2000)
Developing the capacity of FE colleges to deliver training to SMEs, particularly those in supply chain relationships, through innovative and cost-effective mechanisms (benchmark survey report available)

Developing the UfI Negotiated Work Based Route (1999)
Exploring ways to secure learning and qualifications for people in employment through UfI (commissioned by UfI)

Basic Skills in the Workplace (April 1999)
Research for FOCUS TEC in the development of Basic Skills in the Workplace provision, linked to an enhanced ILA. This involved a major survey of SMEs in the central London area, which enquired about employers' and employees' basic skills needs and potential for collaborative provision between employers (report available – subject to FOCUS TEC agreement)

Improving the Value of NVQs and Other Vocational Qualifications (September 1999)
The FEDA undertook research with the college sector for the QCA on proposals for increased flexibility in NVQs and other vocational qualifications (report available)

Understanding and Sustaining Employability (November 1999-June 2000)
This project will suggest a working definition of employability in the context of current and future demands of the workplace, suggest how employability may be developed to accommodate changing demands and identify the learning contexts in which it may be developed (research specification available)

Predicting and Meeting Long Term Skills Needs (November 1999-June 2000)
This project will investigate current practice in identifying longer-term skills needs through labour market information to inform FE provision and how this may be enhanced by strategic partnerships and sustained relationships between education providers and industry. The project will provide a framework to secure a strategic and responsive curriculum for work-based learning (research specification available)

The Development of Corporate Universities (October 1999-March 2000)
In association with the DTI and DfEE, the FEDA investigated the rationale, aims and activities of corporate universities to discover their benefits, difficulties and impact on business

Sector Based Approaches to Securing Relevance in Work-Related Learning Programmes (November 1999-April 2000)
The FEDA and the NTO National Council collaborated in this project to identify the extent of working partnerships between NTOs and FE Colleges and work-based training providers, suggest ways in which this work could be extended and produce good practice guidelines for such partnerships (research specification available)

Management Education and Training (November 1999-April 2000)
In this project the FEDA and the Management National Training Organisation looked at good practice among employers in the Modern Apprenticeship in Management, linking this with mapping of GNVQ specifications, tracking progression potential and lastly providing reference and signposting tools for students, teachers, employers and their organisations (research specification available)

Developing Customer Feedback Methodologies for UfI (January-July 2000)
A commissioned research project investigating a range of methods for collecting customer feedback

Projects under development in the skills, learning and work portfolio

Securing a Rapid Response to Skills Shortages (January-July 2000)
This project will provide guidance and good practice exemplars on learning programmes to upskill/update people in, or seeking, employment

Developing Leading Edge Staff in Colleges (January-July 2000)
This project will investigate the potential of college/industry partnerships to provide cost-effective models for professional development and updating. It will build on previous FEDA work in this area

Appendix

Abbreviations

AoC	Association of Colleges
CSNA	Careers Service National Association
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
EBP	Education Business Partnership
FE	further education
FEDA	Further Education Development Agency
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation
FESR	further education statistical record
HE	higher education
ICT/IT	information and communications technology/information technology
IiP	Investors in People
ISR	individualised student record
JETI	Jobs, Education and Training Information
LEA	local education authority
LGA	local government agency
LMI	labour market information
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NACETT	National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets
NLT	national learning target
NSTF	National Skills Task Force
NTO	national training organisation
NVQ	national vocational qualification
PTP	private training provider
QCA	qualifications and curriculum authority
RCU	Responsive Colleges Unit
RDA	regional development agency
RQA	Raising Quality and Achievement
RVQ	related vocational qualification
SME	small and medium-size enterprise
TEC	training and enterprise council
TUC	Trades Union Council
UfI	University for Industry

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