

Technology Exemplar Network

Prospectus

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1 Introduction

This prospectus provides detailed information regarding the concept, set-up and operation of the Technology Exemplar Network (the Network). It sets out:

- the background to its development
- its aims
- an overview of its delivery
- benefits of participation
- the operational processes for setting up the Network, including the timeline
- the criteria and objectives for providers who wish to participate
- how to apply

2 Background to the Technology Exemplar Network

- 2.1 Current policy creates a need for professional, flexible and creative solutions that enable providers to deliver, manage and support learning in innovative ways that meet the diverse needs of 21st century learners. The government has set some challenging targets and meeting these will require the application of technology enabled solutions.
- 2.2 We know that technology can be used to great effect to support the delivery, management and support of learning and the management of the business process. However, the embedding of this, i.e. the level of e-maturity within providers varies greatly.
- 2.3 The Network supports the DIUS/DCSF e-strategy and is one of a range of initiatives designed to support providers in further developing their e-maturity to meet current challenges and targets.
- 2.4 The Network has been developed in direct response to feedback from providers through formal research and informal consultation.
- 2.5 The driving force behind the establishment of the Network has been the recognition that, for learning providers to plan the implementation of sustainable technologies, they need evidence of what has worked to date. By reviewing real examples of effective practice taking place elsewhere and sharing experience, learning providers can further develop their plans for future investment and implementation of technology for learning.
- 2.6 The Network has been developed in partnership between Becta and LSC and supports both organisations' complementary strategies for encouraging and promoting further investment in and integration of technology for learning into the FE and Skills sector.

- 2.7 The Network recognises that not only does the level of e-maturity within providers vary, but also that no one provider can yet claim to have reached full e-maturity across all aspects of delivery. It therefore aims to support all those taking part to develop further the embedding of technology within their institution and in doing so to help them progress in their journey to fuller e-maturity. This is facilitated by (funded) participation in the Network itself and through the provision of capital funds to support participating providers' development plans.
- 2.8 Investment of £3.9m has been made available from LSC and Becta to support phase one of the Network.
- 2.9 Phase one runs from January 2008 until July 2008, although associated development projects will continue beyond this period. Final evaluation of these development projects will be available in April 2009.

3 Aims of the Technology Exemplar Network

The Technology Exemplar Network aims to:

- create a prestigious and highly respected exemplar status that recognises a high level of achievement in the use of technology for the benefit of learners
- improve the use of learner focused technology and levels of e-maturity within providers in the FE and Skills sector and promote effective practice across the sector
- establish a national network of peer support for providers across the FE and Skills sector
- build peer support skills across the sector
- have a positive impact on the quality of provision to learners and the learner experience.

4 Overview of the Technology Exemplar Network

- 4.1 The Network will create a national support network by encouraging providers with a proven track record of successfully embedding technology into their learning and teaching to create a forum to share best practice with other providers. There will be two groups of providers – 'supporting' providers and 'developing' providers.
- 4.2 The Network will facilitate and promote a strong peer support network across the sector. This will involve a small number of providers who are more advanced in their journey to e-maturity and who will be the network hosts. These exemplar 'supporting' providers will be available to other 'developing'

providers, through visits and subsequent networking, sharing their experience and expertise in an informal setting.

- 4.3 Key to becoming a supporting provider will be the successful achievement of exemplar status. Exemplar status is a prestigious and highly respected award which recognises exceptional achievement in the strategic approach to embedding the use of technology across the institution. It demonstrates proven success in the effective use of technology to benefit learners.
- 4.4 A broad definition of a supporting 'exemplar' provider is one that has a strong track record of embedding the use of technology into their teaching and learning and is open to honest discussion with other providers about their inspirational journey. Up to ten providers will be awarded exemplar status in phase one and will participate in leading the Network as supporting providers.
- 4.5 A broad definition of a developing provider is one that can demonstrate strong commitment to progressing further in their e-maturity journey and is prepared to engage with the Network in an open and honest manner. Up to 50 providers will participate in the 'developing' provider category in phase one.
- 4.6 Groups of developing providers will be invited to visit a supporting provider for an initial networking event. These events will include opportunities for both formal and informal engagement and discussion amongst all those involved. It is likely to involve an overnight stay with dinner.
- 4.7 Supporting providers will share their experience and provide an opportunity to review their 'exemplar' delivery. In addition, these events will provide everyone involved with the opportunity to network in an open and honest manner to share their experience, aspirations, issues, barriers and development plans. Relationships developed will be built upon through ongoing networking and dialogue amongst participants using a variety of media.
- 4.8 Supporting providers will develop a multimedia resource in the first phase as well as contribute to the development of a case study describing their 'exemplar' aspects of delivery.
- 4.9 A project management team commissioned by Becta and the LSC will provide administrative support, event facilitation and advice and guidance on the peer networking approach. This will support all providers, especially the hosts, in making the network a success.

4.10 Formal independent evaluation of phase one of the Network will be undertaken, which will address:

- the effectiveness of the peer networking and engagement
- how the participating providers have developed as a result of the programme
- the impact on learners, employees and providers.

4.11 Subject to positive evaluation of phase one of the Network, both Becta and the LSC are committed to the sustainable development of the Network.

5 Benefits of exemplar status

Gaining exemplar status will provide an opportunity:

- to achieve a prestigious and highly respected exemplar status, recognising a high level of achievement in the use of technology for the benefit of learners
- to raise profile and demonstrate success within the local community and on the national stage
- to advocate the value of embedding technology for learning
- for peer and national agency recognition
- to influence national policy.

6 Benefits of participating in the network

Membership of the Network will provide participating learning providers with an opportunity:

- to improve levels of e-maturity
- to network with and learn from other providers
- to improve the quality of provision and therefore enhance the learner experience
- to learn about potential pitfalls to avoid lessons and areas of effective practice
- to develop peer support skills in line with the self regulation agenda
- for organisational and personal growth
- to participate in the development of sector e-maturity models
- to develop long term supportive relationships with other providers.

7 Funding

- 7.1 All learning providers will receive revenue grants to support their participation in the Network. Revenue grants of £7,500 are provided to enable learning providers to release staff to participate in the Network and fulfil the requirements of this, be they contributing in either a supporting or developing role.
- 7.2 Capital grants of up to £50,000 are available to all providers to support the further development of technology enabled solutions to support learners.
- 7.3 A further revenue grant of up to £5,000 is available to supporting providers for the production of a multimedia resource that will be used initially to support the other Network participants and will also be made more widely available through Excellence Gateway.

8 How the Network will work: Timetable

- 8.1 The Network was announced by Bill Rammell on 11 October 2007.
- 8.2 Learning providers will be invited to submit an application to become an 'exemplar' supporting provider in November and December 2007. The closing date for applications is 31 December 2007.
- 8.3 Applications will be reviewed and assessed during January 2008. Assessment will include a formal site visit for shortlisted applicants.
- 8.4 Successful exemplar supporting providers will be notified on 8 February 2008.
- 8.5 The successful supporting providers will attend an initial workshop on 19 February 2008 to enable them to discuss the operational delivery of the Network and establish relationships. This workshop will initiate the process of peer support and networking.
- 8.6 A major launch announcing and showcasing the supporting providers and inviting all eligible learning providers to submit an application to participate in the Network as developing providers will take place on 20 February 2008.
- 8.7 The closing date for applications for developing providers is 19 March 2008.
- 8.8 Successful developing providers will be notified on 28 March 2008.
- 8.9 The Network project management team will work with all participating providers to arrange and facilitate the initial network engagement via the hosted visits of groups of developing providers to their nominated supporting provider. These visits will take place during April and May 2008.

- 8.10 Developing providers will submit their action plans and bids for capital grants by 23 May 2008.
- 8.11 All providers will submit self-assessment reports on their funded development projects in October 2008 and March 2009.

9 Criteria for selection of supporting providers gaining exemplar status

9.1 It is recognised that no provider is fully e-mature in all aspects of their management, delivery and support of learning. In addition to being a 'good all round provider' and having a whole organisation approach to embedding the use of technology within learning and teaching, supporting providers will be asked to propose two key aspects of their management, delivery and support of learning that have had a significant impact on learners, staff or employers. This may include, but is not restricted to:

- 14-19
- personalisation
- employer engagement
- student support
- assessment
- sound pedagogical use of classroom-based technology
- VLE
- MLE
- learner engagement
- staff development
- developing 'expert learner' skills such as critical analysis, reflection, autonomy

9.2 Selected providers will also need to have the capacity and capability to deliver the requirements of peer support. This includes 'soft skills' such as being able to field inspirational leaders and practitioners who can clearly articulate the objectives, successes, pitfalls and learning points they have experienced.

9.3 The full criteria are:

- being a good all round learning provider, including demonstration of successful Ofsted inspections
- demonstrating a whole organisation approach to embedding the effective use of technology
- having an inspirational story to tell about one of two aspects of delivery that have benefited from incorporating technology

- demonstrating commitment at the highest level of the organisation (Principal, Chief Executive, Managing Director etc) to engaging with the Network
- demonstrating that an e-strategy is embedded within corporate strategies and objectives, most critically the strategy for teaching and learning
- investment in changing (or maintaining if appropriate) the culture of the organisation in embracing the effective use of technology
- having a culture of continuous improvement, including a clear action plan for furthering e-maturity
- demonstrating the positive impact embedding the use of technology has had on learners, staff and/or employers
- having the capacity and commitment to deliver the objectives of the Network
- being prepared to engage with the network in an open and honest manner to share aspirations and issues/barriers/areas for development with all participating supporting and developing providers.

10 Objectives for supporting providers

- 10.1 Implement a support scheme that provides for peers to visit and review practice within their establishment and provides on-going advice through a strong peer support network.
- 10.2 Further develop their e-maturity through the implementation and evaluation of an innovative development project.
- 10.3 Implement, monitor and internally evaluate / self assess their project, providing evaluation reports to project sponsors.
- 10.4 Two self-assessment / evaluation reports are required: 31 October 2008 and 31 March 2009. It is expected that this evaluation would be an element of the provider's quality improvement strategy.

Self assessment review success of development projects in terms of:

- positive movement along identified aspects of the e-maturity framework
- impact on learners and the learning experience
- impact on staff
- impact on employers (if appropriate).

11 Criteria for selection of developing providers

Developing providers will need to:

- demonstrate commitment at the highest level of the organisation (Principal, Chief Executive etc) to engaging with the Network
- have the capacity and capability to contribute to the Network and develop their action plans for improvement
- demonstrate the inclusion of the appropriate use of technology within their corporate strategies
- demonstrate progress to date in their e-maturity journey
- demonstrate their commitment to further developing their institutional e-maturity
- be prepared to engage with the network in an open and honest manner to share their aspirations and issues/barriers/areas for development with all participating providers.

12 Objectives for developing providers

- 12.1 Establish a positive and supportive relationship with one or more supporting providers that have a positive impact on their own development and implementation of e-strategy.
- 12.2 Develop an action plan for improvement, including strategy update and proposals for development by April 2008.
- 12.3 Implement, monitor and internally evaluate / self assess their plan, providing evaluation reports to project sponsors.
- 12.4 Two self-assessment / evaluation reports are required: 31 October 2008 and 31 March 2009. It is expected that this evaluation would be an element of the provider's quality improvement strategy.

Self assessment will review success of development projects in terms of:

- 1 Positive movement along identified aspects of e-maturity framework.
- 2 Impact on learners and the learning experience.
- 3 Impact on staff.
- 4 Impact on employers (if appropriate).

13 Participation: How to become a supporting provider

To apply for exemplar status and to become a Technology Exemplar Network supporting provider, learning providers will need to refer to the Invitation to Participate: Exemplar Status Supporting Providers and complete the associated application form. These are available on the Becta website at <http://www.becta.org.uk/feandskills/exemplarnetwork>

LSC and Becta will formally invite applications from all eligible learning providers in November 2007 by writing to principals, chief executives and heads of service.

The closing date for applications is 31 December 2007.

14 Participation: How to become a developing provider

To apply to participate in the Technology Exemplar Network as a 'developing' provider, learning providers will need to refer to the Invitation to Participate: Developing Providers and complete the associated application form. These will be available in February 2008 on the Becta website at <http://www.becta.org.uk/feandskills/exemplarnetwork>

LSC and Becta will formally invite applications from all eligible learning providers in February 2008 by writing to principals, chief executives and heads of service.

The closing date for applications is 19 March 2008.