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Framework for Excellence: Putting the Framework into Practice

June 2008

Of interest to everyone in the learning and skills
sector, including employers and learners

Further information

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Ministerial Foreword



We all share a common aim to ensure that our further education (FE) sector is recognised both nationally and internationally for its ability to deliver provision of the highest calibre and create real and sustained opportunities for business, young people and adults.

The Framework for Excellence is at the very heart of this ambition. It will underpin a new, simplified performance assessment system, that will help drive up performance right across the FE sector, by setting clear and unambiguous standards of excellence that all providers will want to achieve, so that they can demonstrate the quality of their provision.

Framework for Excellence will support moves towards a demand-led funding system by sharing details about a provider's performance with learners and employers, to help them choose the learning experience which is right for them. It will help to create new opportunities for FE and help to meet the challenging targets set by Lord Leitch in *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills* (published by HM Treasury in December 2006) to dramatically increase the investment in skills by employers and learners.

At a national level, the Framework for Excellence will play a central role in simplifying and rationalising the performance assessment landscape. It will provide robust and holistic information on performance, support planning and commissioning decisions and support the drive to ensure that funding follows customer choice.

The Framework for Excellence is being developed to apply to all providers in the FE sector. This first roll-out to colleges and work-based learning providers is an opportunity to put the hard work and commitment of everyone who has been involved in developing the Framework so far into the national arena, and bring on board those who will be using the Framework for the first time.

In continuing the journey together, we will deliver a Framework for Excellence that grows and responds to the needs of an FE sector increasingly recognised for its strong culture of self-improvement and its ability to deliver excellent provision to all of its customers. Our goal is to create an FE sector that gives people the chance to develop world-class skills, to help overcome disadvantage and achieve economic well-being – an FE sector that provides the nation with a skills base fully able to meet the challenges of a changing global economy.

Bill Rammell

Bill Rammell MP

Minister of State for Lifelong Learning,
Further and Higher Education

Prefaces

Learning and Skills Council

A better educated, skilled and motivated workforce is vital to the country's continued economic prosperity. The launch of the Framework for Excellence, as the overall performance assessment framework for FE providers, is a major part of the increased focus on delivering the best possible provision for learners and employers.

This single, clear framework for assessing performance will provide colleges and training providers with a consistent set of measures on which to base continual improvements in the quality and responsiveness of their provision. Additionally, it will provide learners and employers with clear information that enables better-informed decisions and greater choice.

With the continued commitment and support of all our stakeholders and partners, the Framework for Excellence will make a significant contribution to the improvement of the entire FE system, enhance its reputation for public service excellence and support moves towards self-regulation.



Mark Haysom
Chief Executive
Learning and Skills Council

Ofsted

Ofsted was pleased to accept the invitation from the Learning and Skills Council to work with them on the development of the Framework for Excellence. When fully implemented across the learning and skills sector, the Framework will provide a wide range of quantitative performance information that will be valuable to learners and employers, to the sector as a whole, and to Ofsted.



Christine Gilbert
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
Ofsted

Learning and Skills Improvement Service

The Framework for Excellence will be an important part of the self-improvement process, providing a means for colleges and providers to assess their performance and identify priorities for development. It will also provide a means for reassuring learners, employers and other stakeholders about the quality of provision being delivered by colleges and providers.

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service's Support for Excellence programme aims to support providers to improve their self-assessment processes, develop their capacity for self-improvement through working in peer groups, and help them respond to strategic change. This will include supporting providers in their implementation of the Framework for Excellence as is it fully rolled out to all providers.

Other LSIS programmes, such as the new World Class Skills Developing Responsive Provision programme, will provide support which relates more specifically to individual dimensions of the Framework. Following the formation of LSIS, we will continue to provide the necessary support through our own programmes and services and through the National Improvement Strategy to make continuous self-improvement a reality.



Roger McClure
Chief Executive
Learning and Skills Improvement Service

Introduction

1 The Framework for Excellence is a central feature of the new performance management arrangements proposed in the recent consultation document: *Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver* (published by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Department for Children, Schools and Families in March 2008). *Raising Expectations* proposes a single, clear framework for assessing performance that will be common across all providers of education and training for young people and adults.

2 The Framework was first announced in the Further Education (FE) White Paper – *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* (published by the then Department for Education and Skills in 2006) – supporting its overall themes, including economic mission, employability, and learner and employer choice. It is a key element of the 2008–11 Public Service Agreement 2: ‘Improve the skills of the population, on the way to ensuring a world-class skills base by 2020.’

3 This document describes arrangements for the first year of the Framework’s implementation (Version 1) by colleges and work-based learning providers. It also reviews progress over the last year, outlines key aspects of the structure and operation of the Framework, and sets out plans for future development.

4 It also sets out arrangements to publish the Framework’s results and data, and the ways in which learners, employers, providers, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Ofsted and others will be able to make use of the Framework.

5 This document is complemented by *Framework for Excellence: Provider Guide 2008/09*, a guide for colleges and work-based learning providers that sets out the detail of definitions, assessment criteria, combination rules, exemptions and data returns. The *Provider Guide* is also available on the Framework for Excellence website (<http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/>).

6 A further document will provide guidance for the institutions piloting Version 2 of the Framework in 2008/09. The pilot will focus particularly on independent specialist colleges and adult education services. This guidance will be updated regularly during the year and will be published in September 2008.

7 New guidance on self-assessment, which refers to the use of the Framework in self-assessment processes, will be published by autumn 2008.

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Progress since June 2007

8 The programme has made rapid and substantial progress since the publication of *Framework for Excellence: How the Framework Will Work* in June 2007.

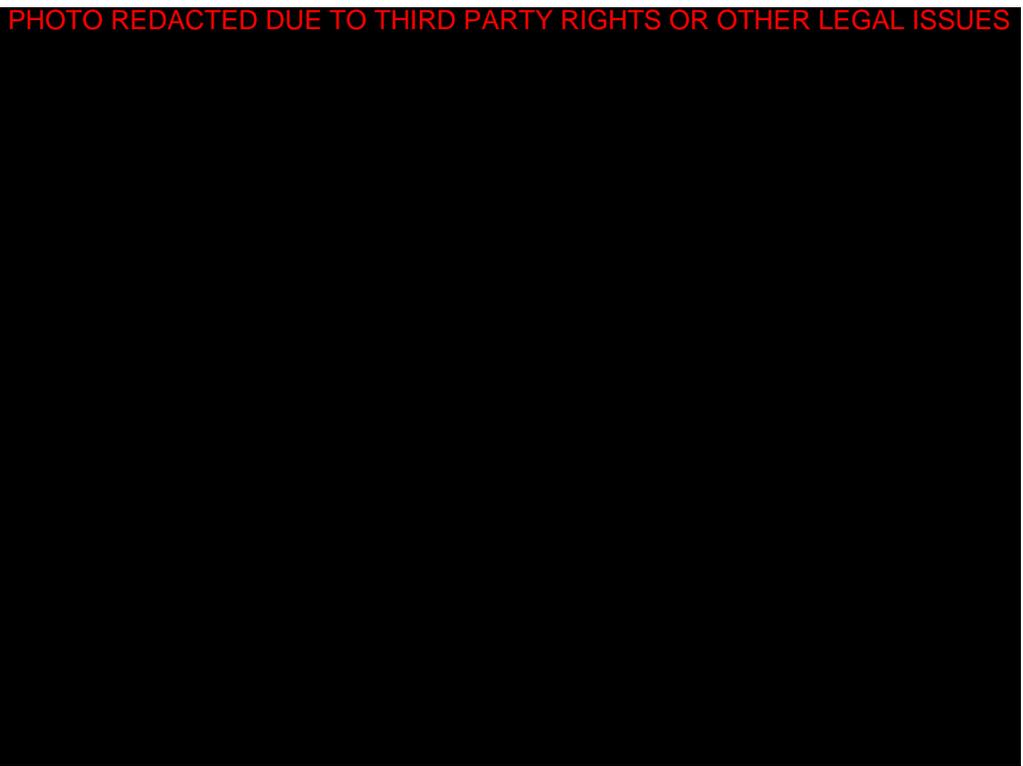
9 The first phase of piloting activity was supported by 100 providers, mainly colleges and work-based learning providers. Feedback from the pilot providers indicates that they felt their views and experiences were properly taken into account, that the concept of the Framework was broadly sound, and that it did not involve a significant increase in burdensome administration.

10 The pilot was also extremely valuable in revealing challenges and issues to be resolved, particularly in the 'responsiveness' dimension. We have developed solutions for many of these, in consultation with pilot providers and other stakeholders, and we are addressing the others as a matter of urgency.

11 In April 2008, providers received their scores and overall performance ratings (OPRs) for the pilot exercise. Further feedback was received at this stage about the content of the scoring systems and the processes by which they were disseminated.

12 In May 2008, the LSC produced *Framework for Excellence: Pilot Evaluation*, informing policy developments and providing 'lessons learned' for the second phase of pilot activity scheduled for 2008/09.

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Putting the Framework for Excellence into Practice

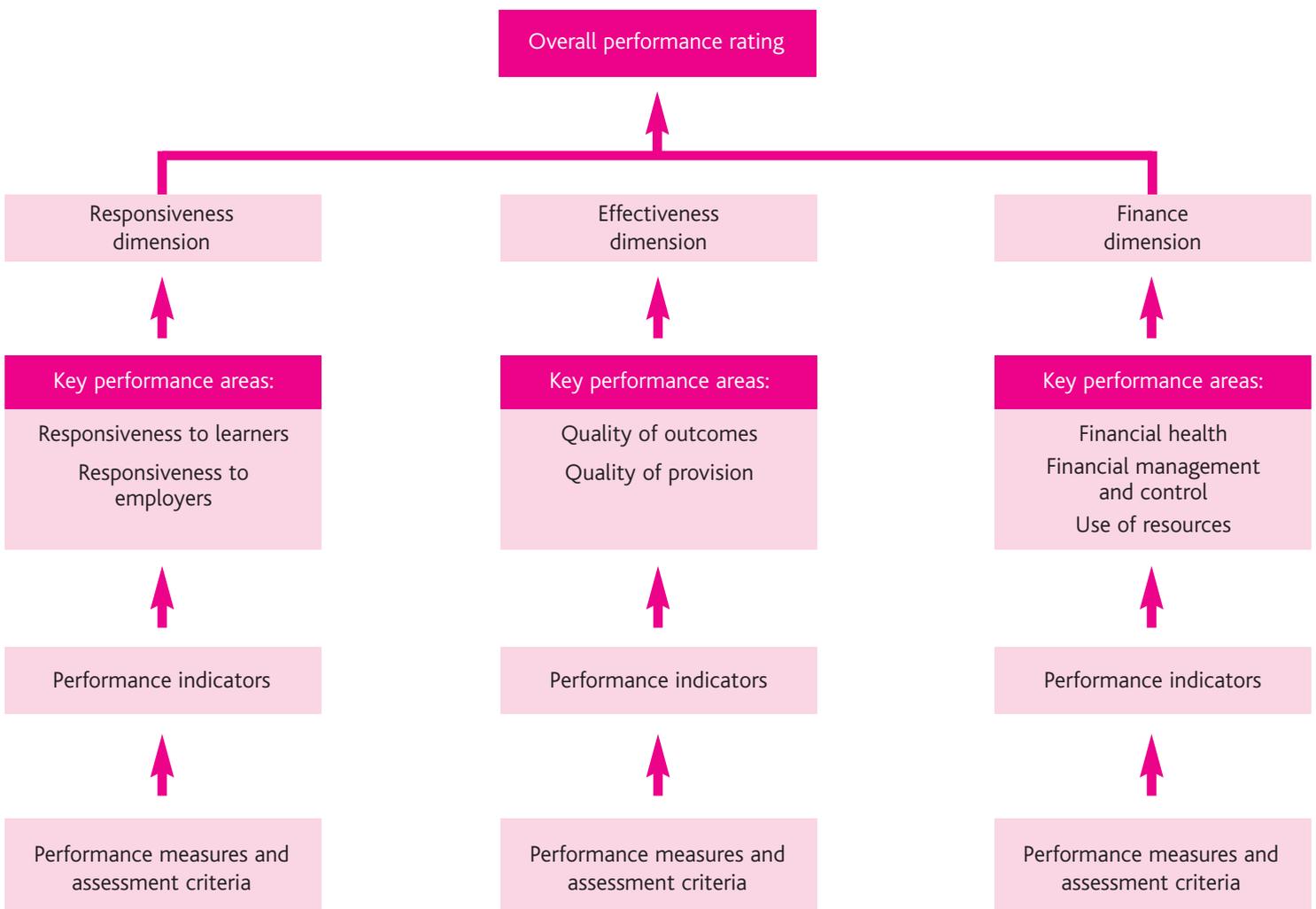
Structure of the Framework

13 The Framework comprises three dimensions that are widely recognised as critical constituents of performance: responsiveness, effectiveness and finance.

14 Each dimension contains two or three key performance areas (KPAs) that the sector has agreed are the main constituents of performance within the dimension. Performance is assessed objectively through the use of performance indicators for each performance area. Dimensions and KPAs are set out in Figure 1.

15 For each performance indicator, the provider's information or data is assessed against objective criteria and one of four grades is applied: 'outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'inadequate'. Using combination rules, these scores are combined into grades and ultimately produce the OPR.

Figure 1: Structure of the Framework for Excellence – derivation of the overall performance rating.



16 Considerations of race, disability and gender equality, and health and safety, are fundamental to the Framework: an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and will be published on the LSC website by autumn 2008.

17 Equality and diversity aspects will be developed within the 'effectiveness' and 'responsiveness' dimensions of the Framework, to reflect the extent to which each provider enables all learners to achieve their goals, including those from under-represented groups, and the extent to which providers respond to the diverse needs of learners and employers.

18 Exemptions and rules covering missing data are set out at paragraphs 35 and 40 to 48. In the exceptional circumstance that scores cannot be calculated for all three dimensions for an individual provider, the available scores will be published but the OPR will not be calculated.

19 Detailed guidance on performance indicators, and the methods for calculating scores for performance indicators, KPAs and dimensions, is set out in the *Provider Guide 2008/09*.

Scope

20 In 2008/09, the Framework will apply to all FE, tertiary, sixth-form, agricultural and horticultural, and art and design colleges, and to private training providers that deliver Apprenticeships, Train to Gain and other LSC employer responsiveness-funded provision. The *Provider Guide 2008/09* sets out in detail which elements of the Framework will be relevant for each type of provider, including which performance indicators.

21 The Framework will be piloted in 2008/09 by adult and community learning providers, independent specialist colleges and other providers not included for implementation in 2008/09.

22 From summer 2009, following this second phase of pilot activity, the Framework will apply to all providers that receive some element of LSC funding, except universities and other higher education institutions delivering FE provision, learndirect and providers that deliver European Social Fund provision only. The Framework will apply to all FE providers from summer 2010.

23 The consultation document *Raising Expectations* on the machinery of government changes proposed that the Framework be developed to underpin a single, unified provider performance assessment framework for post-16, to include sixth forms in secondary schools from 2010. This is discussed further in paragraphs 103 to 106.

Consortia, partnerships and mergers

24 We are currently treating any provision delivered by a Train to Gain consortium or a Diploma partnership as belonging, respectively, to the contract-holder or the learner's home institution. In this way, 'lead' providers must ensure that they have sufficient confidence in the providers to whom they subcontract and with whom they work in partnership.

25 We are exploring the possibility of developing data systems so that different elements of a Train to Gain contract can be attributed to the relevant delivery institution for Framework purposes. For Diplomas, while overall progress of the learner would remain the responsibility of the home institution, we are exploring how a component of a Diploma delivered in a second institution could properly be attributed to that institution.

26 In the case of institutional mergers and acquisitions, we will adopt a pragmatic approach to combine data to generate Framework scores, where appropriate and in liaison with the new institution.

Assessment criteria and weightings

27 Within the Framework, assessment criteria for each indicator set the boundaries that distinguish between 'outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate' performances.

28 These criteria are objective, apply across all provision and provider types, and have been defined at levels to ensure that Framework ratings and results are broadly consistent with inspection assessments across the FE sector. Assessment criteria are based on absolute values, to give all providers the opportunity to achieve a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'.

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29 The assessment criteria for 2008/09 have been set taking into account:

- evidence from the pilot;
- available inspection grades;
- views of a wide group of stakeholders; and
- the distribution of inspection grades and self-assessment grades across all providers where appropriate.

30 We will review and confirm assessment criteria in spring 2009, when we have data for all indicators for all colleges and work-based learning providers. The criteria will then be specified for a three-year period covering the years 2009 to 2012, rather than 2008 to 2012 as proposed previously.

31 As a general principle, and in the interests of simplicity, all elements of the Framework will be weighted equally, from performance indicators to KPAs and dimensions. However, we will review this principle, and if necessary revise it, in the light of future decisions about assessment criteria and combination rules.

Combination rules

32 To derive the indicative OPRs for the pilot providers, we based our approach on the proposals set out in 2007 in *Framework for Excellence: How the Framework Will Work*, paragraphs 33–37.

33 The pilot revealed that, in practice, this approach was rather blunt because it did not take sufficient account of differences in performance **within** a particular dimension or performance area.

34 We are developing a more sensitive and discriminating approach to calculating grades for the dimensions and the OPRs. Further information on the combination rules is available in the *Provider Guide 2008/09*.

Exemptions

35 Given the diversity of provider types and mission across the FE system, we have created clear criteria for exemptions where it would not be appropriate to apply a particular indicator or performance area to a provider.

There are three main types of exemption:

- where the KPA or performance indicator is not applicable in principle, because the provider has little or no activity in the relevant area;
- where the KPA or performance indicator is not applicable because the provider's activity is so minimal it is not possible to calculate a meaningful measure; and
- where it would be inappropriate to apply a Framework indicator to certain types of organisation.

Contextual factors

36 The pilot of the Framework investigated issues of contextual factors that are not directly within the control of a college or provider but which can have an impact upon performance and are measurable. Examples of such variables might be the characteristics of the area served by a provider or the nature of its provision.

37 In the interests of simplicity and clarity, it would be desirable to present Framework scores without reference to contextual variables. On the other hand, in the interests of equity and validity, there may be a compelling argument to take account of them in some way.

38 Several performance indicators incorporate elements of contextualisation. For example, qualification success rates (QSRs) take account of the very different success rates in short courses, Apprenticeships, A-levels and other long courses.

39 Our analytical work so far indicates that we have taken sufficient account of contextual factors. However, we will review the position early in 2009 when full data will be available for colleges and work-based learning providers. The full report of this research will be made available on the Framework for Excellence website.

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Data returns and missing data

40 The Framework's arrangements during the next year will involve some changes and additions to the processes. Most importantly, colleges and other providers covered by the 2008/09 Framework arrangements will be expected to conduct two surveys: one assessing the views of employers for whom they provide services in autumn 2008 and the other of their learners in early 2009.

41 The surveys need to produce data that is robust and comparable, without imposing unnecessary burdens on providers. The *Provider Guide 2008/09* sets out the ways in which the surveys should be undertaken.

42 The Framework for Excellence depends upon accurate and timely data. We rely on providers to ensure that data they submit is accurate, complete and submitted to deadline.

43 When the Framework is fully implemented from 2010, if a provider wilfully or negligently fails to supply the required data, or does not take the necessary steps to allow the LSC or its contractors to collect it, the LSC will give a grade 4 for the performance indicator (that is, a rating of 'inadequate').

44 For the 2008/09 version of the Framework, the LSC will apply this rule differently for the individual performance indicators, taking account of whether the data for each indicator has already been collected by July 2008. The precise arrangements for applying this rule for 2008/09 are set out in the *Provider Guide 2008/09*.

45 If the data for a performance indicator is missing through no fault of the provider, the LSC will regard the provider as exempt from that performance indicator for the year in question.

46 The LSC will collect and hold all personal data in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the LSC's data-security protocols and systems.

47 The FE national data service will perform data collection operations in due course. The LSC will check the data and raise any issues with providers, after which the usual procedures for data validation and moderation will apply. The validated set of data will then form the basis for all subsequent analyses, including the calculation of Framework for Excellence scores.

48 National data collection processes and content are subject to approval by the Information Authority. The Framework has been considered by the Information Authority and the Bureaucracy Reduction Group for further education and training on several occasions during the past 18 months. The 2008/09 arrangements take account of their views and suggestions.

Data queries

49 It is the responsibility of providers to ensure that the data they submit is accurate, complete and meets agreed deadlines. Issues resulting from incorrect or incomplete originating data from the provider will not be regarded as grounds for complaint.

50 Providers who want to question the results of their data should do this through their LSC partnership manager in the first instance.

51 Providers who are not satisfied with their Framework scores can use the LSC's complaints procedure, details of which are available on the LSC's website (www.lsc.gov.uk/ComplaintsProcedure.htm).

Using the Framework

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Publication and dissemination

52 We will share Framework results and ratings as soon as possible with individual providers, to give them the opportunity to consider any implications these may have for their own institutions before they are shared widely and published.

53 We are committed to publishing results as soon as they are of sufficient quality and robustness. On an annual cycle, we want to publish in time to inform learner and employer choices and commissioning decisions.

54 In May 2009, there will be a limited publication of Framework scores for 2007/08. These will be restricted to outputs from well-established measures with well-established national datasets (for example, QSRs). Outputs from the responsiveness dimension will only be included where data and methodologies are reliable and robust. OPRs will not be published.

55 Some 'drill-down' functionality to underlying data will allow providers to view the information from which the ratings were derived.

56 For support and liaison purposes, OPRs and any unpublished scores for the 'responsiveness' dimension for 2007/08 will be shared in spring 2009 with the individual provider and the relevant regional and local LSC teams, Ofsted, the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the new Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS).

57 All the outputs for 2008/09 will be published in spring 2010, including OPRs, the score for each dimension, the score for each KPA and data for each performance indicator. The publication mechanisms from spring 2010 will include some 'drill-down' capability for learners and employers, for example to course-level QSRs.

58 In line with the Transformational Government strategy, the mechanisms for publishing the Framework for Excellence outputs and ratings will include: the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk); direct.gov.uk for learners; and Business Link (www.businesslink.gov.uk) for employers.

59 The detail of the outputs and dissemination processes will be subject to further consultation with learner, employer and provider representative bodies, and other national stakeholders.

Use by learners and supporters

60 We want the Framework to provide information for learners and their supporters, such as parents and guardians, to enable them to make informed choices as users of our FE system. They have told us that the most useful information will relate to:

- the views of other learners;
- the quality of provision, including facilities and resources, and whether learners' needs are being met;
- learners' success rates, which are particularly significant when there is a choice of providers offering similar courses; and
- destination information, which will enable them to evaluate the worth of a course in terms of investment in time, effort and money.

61 We will continue to work with learners, employers, information brokers and other interested parties to ensure that information meets the needs of all its users. In particular, we want to explore the potential of dynamic and rapidly evolving web-based information sites, where learners can record their views directly about individual providers, courses and qualifications.

62 Information will be available from the Connexions service, the new Adult Advancement Service, from careers teachers, from Area-wide Prospectuses, from the National Apprenticeship Service, and from providers themselves, as well as from the direct.gov.uk website. This information will be fully and widely available for learners for the first time in March 2010, although some data will be available from spring 2009.

Use by employers and skills brokers

63 The Framework will provide a consistent employer-generated rating of government-funded providers that employers will easily be able to factor into their decision-making process when selecting training providers. The rating will be based on employers' views and on volumes of training delivered.

64 Skills brokers, and in future the integrated brokerage service delivered by Business Link, will use the Framework scores to support recommendations to employers.

65 Currently, there are several quality marks presented to employers and employer-representative bodies, and from research we know that these are not recognised universally. We will replace these with just two: the Training Quality Standard (TQS) (formerly known as the New Standard) and the Framework for Excellence.

66 Providers who achieve the TQS will automatically be rated 'outstanding' across the whole 'responsiveness to employers' KPA, for the period for which it is awarded (usually three years).

67 In a reciprocal arrangement, from summer 2010 any provider that is in scope for the 'responsiveness to employers' performance area might need to achieve a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' **before** they can apply for the TQS.

68 Framework for Excellence evidence will be highly relevant to support an application for the TQS, not least because the Framework's employer satisfaction survey concentrates on the same processes.

69 We are exploring how we might present QSR data to employers and brokers on a sectoral basis so that, for example, an engineering company can find out about a provider's engineering provision. For the longer term, we will work with providers and other stakeholders to consider whether it would be appropriate to publish sectoral data relating to other Framework performance indicators.

Use by providers

70 The Framework should be used by colleges and providers to assess and improve their own performance, and incorporate the findings of self-assessment into reports for governing bodies and boards. The LSC will expect all providers in scope to use the Framework's scores as part of the evidence for self-assessment from the academic year 2008/09 and refer explicitly to the Framework's performance indicators in the self-assessment reports submitted to the LSC in December 2009.

71 This will entail two things:

- making reference to the Framework's scores for 2007/08, which will have been shared with the institution in May 2009; and
- considering the Framework's scores and grades for 2008/09 and making reference to them in the self-assessment report, as data becomes available.

72 Colleges and providers should carry out self-assessment as part of their wider processes of organisational review and development. College corporations and provider company directors will be encouraged to use the Framework in setting and monitoring their own strategic goals and targets. There will also be an increased emphasis on validating self-assessment judgements, both internally and externally, using evidence such as Framework results, and through processes such as peer review. The targeting of underperformance and the management of performance risk will also be highlighted as key elements of organisational review and development. The emphasis is on driving up standards.

73 New guidance on self-assessment will be published shortly to reflect the implementation of the Framework and moves towards a more self-regulating FE system.

74 The new guidance will offer case study examples of how providers are developing their approaches to self-assessment to incorporate the new Framework and to address other policy drivers within the FE system.

75 The LSC is aiming to issue a software toolset by late autumn 2008, to enable providers to derive their own Framework ratings in real time and in line with the provider guidance. The LSC will work with Becta to consider how best to support providers to integrate the Framework into their business systems through the implementation of the Technology Strategy for FE and Skills.

Use by the Learning and Skills Council

76 The Framework will be incorporated within LSC business processes for commissioning, procurement and challenging performance.

77 From spring 2009, a consideration of published Framework ratings and indicators will become part of the strategic commissioning dialogue with providers and will inform the process of negotiated commissioning.

78 From spring 2009, the LSC's financial and wider intervention policy will take into account the publicly available elements of the Framework. From spring 2010, interventions such as Notices to Improve, and other actions such as contract withdrawal and removal of funding set out in *Identifying and Managing Underperformance* (published by the LSC in January 2008), will be triggered by Framework for Excellence ratings of 'inadequate'.

79 The LSC will incorporate the Framework, as a minimum quality threshold, into the tendered commissioning process for provision to be delivered in 2010/11.

80 From 2009/10, we will incorporate the requirements of the Framework into the 'quality assurance' section of the Financial Memorandum and the Contract for Services – Education and Training.

81 The LSC will discharge its responsibilities in relation to monitoring the financial health of providers and their operation of financial management and control with reference to the requirements of the Framework. The LSC's assessment of college capital projects will also refer to the requirements of the Framework.

82 For new providers, or those not in scope for the Framework, the LSC will continue to use other indicators as a measure of the quality of provision, such as inspection grades, robust evidence of past performance and self-assessment reports. However, we will ask providers to include details of how they will incorporate the Framework and other quality assurance mechanisms into their systems and processes.

Use in inspections

83 Within the single framework for provider performance assessment, the Framework for Excellence and inspection are strongly linked and complement each other.

84 Ofsted is currently reviewing its approach to risk assessment to guide its assessment of the urgency/priority of a provider/service for inspection, and also the degree of the inspection's intervention.

85 Ideally, Ofsted's criteria for risk assessment will use the Framework's scores, paying particular attention to 'inadequate' levels of performance. The LSC and Ofsted are working together to develop the relationship between the two processes.

86 The revised inspection handbook for September 2008 will include information on how inspectors should begin to take account of performance scores from the Framework.

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87 The Framework for Excellence score for the overall quality of provision will be based on the current inspection view of overall effectiveness. This will be derived from the most recent inspection judgement.

88 The use of Framework indicators to produce an OPR, and Ofsted inspections that come to an overall judgement, will not necessarily yield the same overall grades in every case. There are good reasons why results may differ: the Framework for Excellence produces a set of performance indicators measured against assessment criteria, while inspection considers a wider range of quantitative and qualitative evidence, in many cases including observation of teaching and learning, consideration of equality and diversity, and assessment of different aspects of a provider's work, all underpinned by inspectors' professional judgement.

Use by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service

89 The new LSIS will use the Framework's data to underpin the development and targeting of its programmes and services.

90 Where the Framework for Excellence identifies colleges or providers that require additional support to improve their performance, the LSIS will provide that support. During 2008, it will also work to incorporate appropriate Framework for Excellence ratings in its corporate and performance management processes.

91 Since 2002, the award of Learning and Skills Beacon status has been a mark of organisational excellence, demonstrating a high level of confidence in the provider by both the inspectorate and the funding body. Increasingly, we look to Beacons to be agents of change as the FE system moves towards self-regulation. The new improvement body will use the Framework to consider both the conditions under which Beacon status is awarded and those under which it may be withdrawn.

Bureaucracy

92 Our aim is to keep the Framework as simple as possible, with any new data requirements and assessment methods kept to a minimum. As far as possible, the Framework should be based on information that providers could reasonably be expected to gather and use to manage their business.

93 Costs and burdens on providers are being minimised by using existing data and systems wherever possible, and applying the principles of managing information across partners: common data definitions, gather information once, and use it many times.

94 The Framework is designed to provide an appropriate balance between fitness for purpose, sustainability, cost and bureaucracy. Improved decision-making resulting from better information, at learner, provider, commissioner and national levels, is expected to justify the investment and resources involved.

95 The 2008/09 Framework arrangements are firmly based on discussions with providers and other bodies during the past 18 months. The 2007/08 pilot, involving 100 colleges and other providers, trialled the emerging Framework. Future arrangements build on the pilot and its evaluation.

96 The Framework is being reviewed and evaluated at key stages in its development. In May 2008, the LSC produced a *Pilot Evaluation* (available on the Framework for Excellence website), and has also commissioned a longer-term evaluation of the Framework (see paragraphs 112 to 114).

Further Development of the Framework

New performance indicators

97 Additional performance indicators will be developed to provide appropriate information only where existing performance indicators are insufficient for assessing a provider's performance using the Framework. We will explore the need for additional indicators during the second phase of pilot activity in 2008/09.

98 In particular, three additional performance indicators have been proposed: retention rates (for non-accredited learning) and achievement by 16- to 19-year-olds of qualifications, which are equivalent to full Level 2 and full Level 3.

99 We will address the implications of the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) for the Framework for Excellence. This will include the development and trialling during 2008/09 of a credit success rate indicator that can take account of the level of credit achieved. Further details will be disseminated by autumn 2009.

Future piloting

100 The second phase of pilot activity will begin with the publication of new pilot guidance for 2008/09 by September 2008. Around 100 providers will be involved in piloting activities. As well as colleges and work-based learning providers, other types of provider will participate: local authorities, specialist designated colleges, independent specialist colleges, personal and community development learning providers, offender learning providers and higher education institutions with FE provision.

101 The objectives of the second phase of pilot activity will be to test the validity and robustness of new and revised performance assessment indicators proposed for use in the Framework, and to engage with types of provider in scope for the Framework from summer 2009.

102 Following the pattern of the first pilot programme, an evaluation will take place that will inform the development and roll-out of Version 2 of the Framework in summer 2009.

Future vision

103 On 17 March 2008, the Government published the consultation document *Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver*. This document makes proposals to give effect to the machinery of government changes announced in July 2007, notably the transfer of funding responsibilities for 16 to 18-year-old learners to local authorities.

104 The Government proposes that local authority commissioning and learner choice should be informed by a clear framework for assessing performance which is common across all providers of education and training for young people and adults.

105 This framework should include:

- information about standards achieved and the quality of provision;
- information about the views of young people and (where appropriate) of employers, and about the value for money achieved; and
- key performance measures of individual achievement at 19.

106 It is proposed that the framework should build on the Framework for Excellence and include school sixth forms and other providers as part of the pilot process from September 2009.

107 We are also working with colleagues from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to continue to develop the relationship between the Framework for Excellence and the Star Rating model developed by the DWP to improve the performance of its contracted employment provision.

Information and Support

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108 During the implementation and live operation of the Framework, colleges and providers will have access to information and support from a range of sources. These will include detailed guidance on the Framework website, advice and support from regional and local LSC teams and, where necessary, more specialist support from LSC National Office.

109 The LSC is holding a series of regional briefing events for providers to coincide with the publication of this policy document. To ensure maximum engagement with providers, partnership teams will organise and lead these events, supported by the national Framework for Excellence team.

110 The LSIS will continue the Support for Excellence programme, which helps providers improve their self-assessment and builds their capacity for self-improvement.

111 This programme will offer specific support for those providers involved with Version 1 of the Framework, through a series of workshops, and guidance placed on the Quality Improvement Agency's Excellence Gateway. Events to help providers involved with Version 2 of the Framework to prepare for implementation will be held in spring and summer 2009, details of which will be placed on the Excellence Gateway at <http://excellence.qia.org.uk/>.

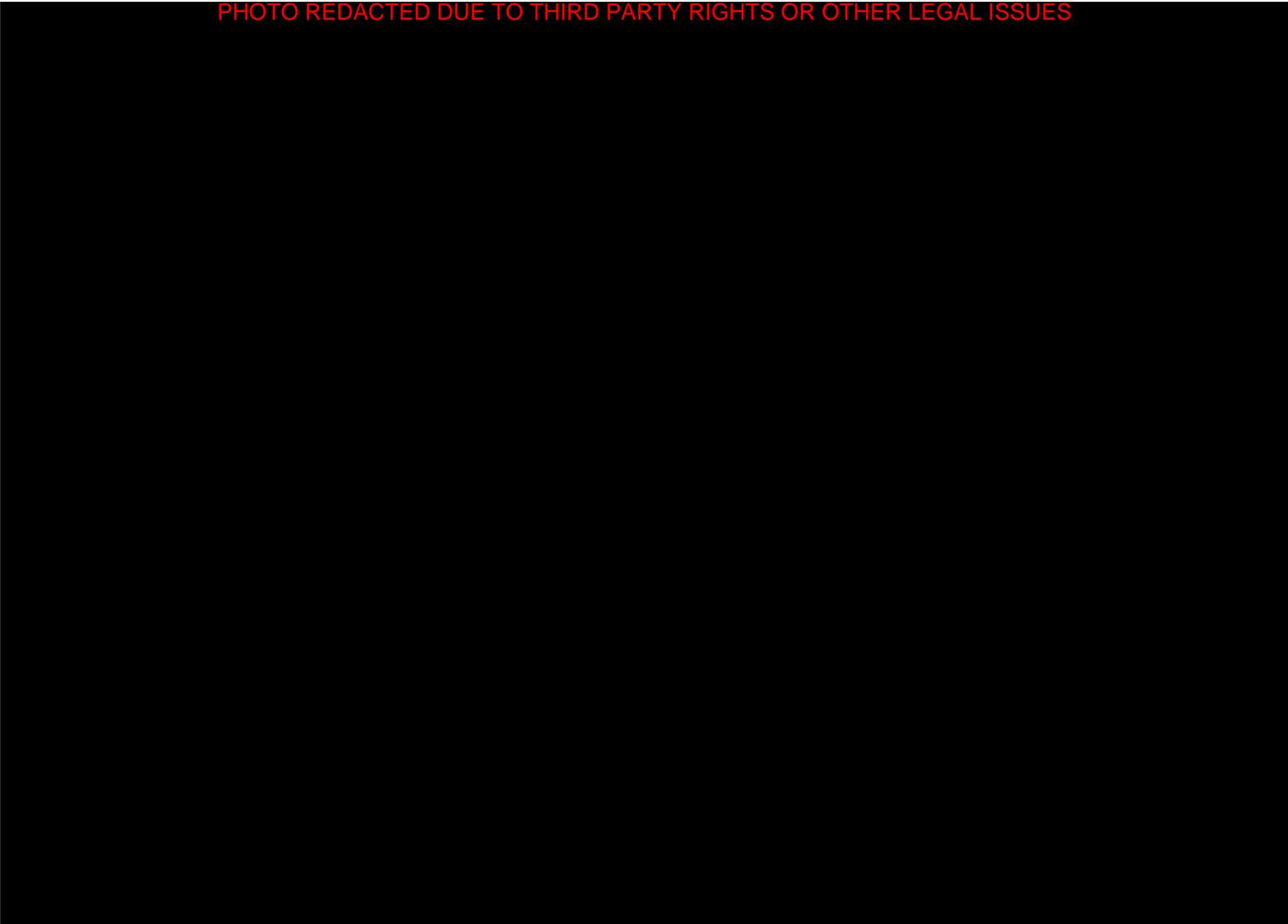
Evaluation

112 We have commissioned an independent, five-year evaluation of the benefits of the new performance management arrangements underpinned by the Framework. Interim and final reports will be published. The evaluation will also monitor the equality and diversity impacts of the new arrangements.

113 The first phase of the evaluation in 2008 will establish baselines. The second and third, in 2010 and 2012 respectively, will evaluate the use of the Framework by providers, learners and their supporters, employers and skills brokers and other stakeholders.

114 The basis of the evaluation will include surveys and interviews with a wide variety of provider staff, from governors to tutors, and from teachers to chief executives. It will also involve surveys of substantial numbers of learners and employers.

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Annex

High-level Delivery Plan

The future high-level milestones for the further development and implementation of the Framework are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Timeline for future development and implementation

Event	Month
Publication of policy document and Version 1 of the Framework	June 2008
Publication of provider guide for Version 1 of the Framework	June 2008
Implementation of Version 1 of the Framework by colleges and work-based learning providers	August 2008
Publication of guide for second phase of piloting activity for 2008/09	September 2008
Delivery of software toolset to providers	Late autumn 2008
Calculation of Framework scores for Version 2 pilots	March 2009
Publication on LSC website of Version 2 pilot evaluation	April 2009
Publication of Framework data for well-established measures	May 2009
Publication of further policy document for Version 2 of the Framework	June 2009
Publication of provider guide for Version 2 of the Framework	June 2009
Launch of third phase of piloting activity for 2009/10	June 2009
Implementation of Version 2 of the Framework by most FE providers	August 2009
Publication of Framework scores and data for most FE providers	Spring 2010
Publication of the provider guide for Version 3 of the Framework	June 2010
Implementation of Version 3 of the Framework by all FE providers	August 2010
Publication of Framework scores and data for all FE providers	Spring 2011

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