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CIRCULAR

THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
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COUNCIL

Standards Fund: Strand 3

To

Principals of colleges
Chairs of college corporations

Circular type

Information

Summary

Information on the use of strand 3
of the standards fund

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99/44

Standards Fund: Strand 3

Introduction

1 Circular 99/24, *Use of the Standards Fund* provided details of how colleges could make applications for funds under each strand of the standards fund. The Council indicated that further development work would be required before details of strand 3 of the standards fund would be available. This circular provides details on the use of strand 3 of the standards fund in the financial year 1999-2000.

2 Strand 3 of the standards fund is for training and development. In 1999-2000, the Council intends to fund four aspects of training. They are:

- the basic skills quality initiative
- curriculum 2000 developments
- training for principals
- training for governors.

3 The arrangements for funding are described at annex A.

Background

4 In June 1998, the Council consulted colleges on measures to improve the quality of the sector's work. The sector's response (summarised in Council Circular 98/37, *Quality Improvement Strategy: Responses to Consultation*) indicated significant support for the Council's quality improvement strategy. Since then, implementation of the Council's strategy has included the introduction of arrangements for target-setting and the publication of benchmarking data. The quality improvement strategy remains a critical part of the Council's measures to help colleges improve the learning opportunities of students, particularly young people.

5 Council Circular 99/24, *Use of the Standards Fund* set out the arrangements for using the standards fund in the financial year 1999-2000. The secretary of state introduced the standards fund to underpin the government's drive to raise standards. It comprises £35 million in 1999-2000 and £80 million in 2000-01. The priorities for use of the standards fund were set out in a letter of guidance to the Council, dated 8 December 1998,

which was circulated to all college principals. They are:

- strand 1: targeted intervention in colleges causing concern, notably those demonstrating poor performance against key indicators
- strand 2: post-inspection support for other colleges, as appropriate
- strand 3: training for existing and potential college principals, and continuing professional development for lecturers
- strand 4: dissemination of good practice.

Standards fund 2000-01

6 The Council is working closely with the Department for Education and Employment to plan its use of the standards fund for 2000-01. Colleges will be consulted on the Council's proposals in February 2000.



Use of Strand 3

1 The purpose of strand 3 is to provide funding for training and development in support of quality improvement activities.

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

2 The use of the standards fund to support basic skills development will build on the work of the Council's inclusive learning quality initiative. The inspectorate's survey of basic skills, published in April 1998, identified scope for improvement in the quality of basic skills teaching. The report of the Moser group, *Improving Literacy and Numeracy: A fresh start*, highlighted the fact that 7 million adults in the country have real problems with literacy and numeracy.

3 In order to address this need, the Council is supporting a major programme of staff and organisational development. The basic skills quality initiative is designed to improve the quality of provision of basic skills in the sector and should lead to:

- improvements in the standard of basic skills teaching in the sector
- better learning experiences for students
- an increase in the number of learners participating in basic skills
- improved levels of retention and achievement in basic skills
- improvement in the United Kingdom's rating in literacy and numeracy in the European league table

and, also should lead to:

- better quality contributions from further education institutions in learning partnerships
- improvement in people's capacity to work and progress in education and employment.

4 The initiative will draw on existing good practice and will involve the production of staff development materials, supported by trained facilitators. The facilitators will be responsible for assisting institutions to develop and implement action plans and to make the best use of the materials. The first phase of the initiative is to

prepare materials and train facilitators. The second phase will take place in 2000-01 and will be to help institutions to make the best use of the materials.

5 The materials will cover seven broad areas of basic skills:

- teaching and learning
- student achievements
- guidance and support
- curriculum organisation and course management
- staff development
- quality assurance
- learning resources, accommodation and staffing.

6 The Council invited institutions to participate in the initiative in 1999-2000. One hundred and sixteen applications were received; of these, 24 applications involving 28 institutions were selected to develop materials. These institutions and the materials they will be developing are set out in annex B.

Next steps

7 The materials will be published and will be available to all institutions for the 2000-01 teaching year. Recruitment of facilitators will start in spring 2000.

Curriculum 2000

8 Details of proposed funding arrangements for curriculum 2000 reforms are set out in Circular 99/33. Strand 3 will be used to provide funds to help colleges to prepare for these reforms. It is intended that further funding will be provided from the much larger standards fund available in 2000-01.

9 The Council has written to college principals outlining how it intends to allocate these funds to colleges. Colleges will wish to plan their use of the funds so that they complement other monies available for related purposes. The inclusive learning quality initiative and the DfEE key skills support programme are examples of other funding available. Schools with which colleges may wish to co-operate have access to a separate standards fund for this work.

10 A consultative group of college principals and representatives from sector groups recommended that funds should be made available for colleges to release staff in order to complete preparatory work for the curriculum reforms. It is envisaged that colleges may wish to work in partnership with other local providers to ensure that maximum benefit is derived from the funds allocated. The key tasks to which these funds might be allocated are:

- support and guidance for those planning the curriculum
- updating and training for those whose role is to provide guidance to students, for example, personal tutors
- the support of partnerships for delivery of the 16–19 curriculum, for example school/FE, FE/FE, FE/HE.

11 The tasks identified by members of the consultative group as essential preparation for the reforms are set out in annex C.

12 Table 1 sets out the Council's approach to funding. This enables it to meet its responsibilities for the consistent use of funds, yet reflect local needs. It has, therefore identified colleges within funding bands according to college size as measured by 16–18 year-old student numbers.

Next steps

13 College inspectors will monitor the response of colleges to the reforms, and the use to which colleges put the funds. Colleges have been asked to prepare a brief report on the expenditure of their allocation, for the attention of their college inspector, before the end of May 2000.

A Training and Development Programme for Principals

14 There is a desire to enhance management skills within the further education sector. Announcements by government ministers indicate the high priority they accord to training and development for college principals and those who aspire to become principals. The government's intention is to introduce a qualification for principals in 2001. Although the details have yet to be developed by the DfEE, it is likely that it will be based on the management standards developed by the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO). These will be finalised by May 2000.

15 In April 1999, the Council consulted the sector on its intention to fund training and development for existing and aspiring principals. Respondents to this consultation exercise indicated that there was overwhelming support for the proposal. In Circular 99/24, the Council indicated its intention to make funding available for attendance by up to 100 principals or aspiring principals on training courses during 1999-2000. The Council also indicated that further funding would probably be available in 2000-01. The stated intention was to provide training programmes of high status and akin to the civil service top management programme. A small focus group comprising representatives of the further education sector was set up to develop the priorities for the training programme. The group included representatives from the following organisations:

- Association for College Management
- Association of Colleges

Table 1. Funding for Curriculum 2000

Full-time full-year 16–18 students	Colleges	Proposed allocation	Allocation all colleges
No.	No.	£	£
1–499	73	2,000	146,000
500–999	130	4,000	520,000
1,000–1,499	134	6,000	804,000
1,500+	94	8,000	752,000
Total			2,222,000

Source: colleges' ISR data for 1997-98

- Association of College Registrars and Administrators
- Association of Principals of Colleges
- Further Education Development Agency
- Further Education Funding Council for Wales
- FENTO.

16 The conclusions of this group were that, in 1999-2000, a training and development programme should be developed for principals, primarily designed to improve leadership and strategic management skills. If further training were funded in 2000-01, the target group might change. To take this work forward, the Council has invited organisations to tender for a contract to develop and offer modules of management training in:

- personal development
- leadership
- strategic management.

17 The content of the modules will be based on the draft further education management standards. It is intended that the programme will be designed to meet individual needs and will recognise existing ability and expertise. It is expected that the design and delivery of the programme will draw on experience within industry, commerce and education.

18 The personal development module will be an essential precursor to participation in the modules on leadership and strategic management. It should provide principals with the opportunity to prepare an individual development plan, which should address on-going professional needs as well as matters related to college improvement. The personal development module should assist principals in dealing with real problems in their workplace.

19 It is anticipated that the modules in leadership and strategic management are likely to be delivered on a taught basis in a residential setting and that the length of a module is likely to be between three and five days. Principals attending a course will have their fees and other expenses paid directly from the standards fund.

20 Although participation in the training would not automatically lead to a qualification, it is likely that successful participation would gain some credit towards or exemption from aspects of a new

qualification, particularly since the training will be based on the draft management standards for further education.

21 In summary the training will:

- be high quality
- provide opportunities to learn from the business and commercial sectors
- allow principals access to leading edge thinking and developments in leadership and strategic management
- recognise principals' ability and expertise
- be flexible in delivery
- help principals to deal with the real problems and opportunities facing them
- contribute to raising standards and college improvement in the further education sector
- be accessible to all principals
- use innovative and advanced teaching methods
- provide participants with an opportunity for accreditation or gaining credit that they can transfer if they choose to do so.

Next steps

22 Further details of the training will be sent to colleges in December 1999.

Governor Training

23 The Council established the good governance working group in February 1999, the purpose of which was to update the current guidance available to governors in line with recent developments and the need to raise standards. The Council is particularly concerned to help governors carry out their duties with confidence and sufficient understanding. The employment and education minister, Baroness Blackstone, proposed that all governors should, within six months of appointment, participate in appropriate training and development specified by the Council, to include modules on induction, financial and other key responsibilities. The training modules provided will reflect the guidance produced by the Council's good governance working group.

24 The level of governors' training and knowledge of their responsibilities varies widely from college to college. Good governance has contributed to strong

management and financial control. Following modifications to colleges' instrument and articles of government (summarised in Council Circular 99/30, *Instrument and Articles of Government: Modifications*, effective from 1 August 1999), colleges have been required to redetermine the composition of their governing bodies. Accordingly, it is likely that there will be a considerable number of new governors being appointed in the forthcoming months.

25 The Council intends that every governor will be both enabled and encouraged to participate in the programme of training modules, either through self-study, or through facilitated delivery. Facilitated delivery will be assisted by the provision of supporting material for each module to enable trainers to deliver the training to governors.

26 The anticipated outcome will be improved governor knowledge and skills. Governors should have increased confidence in their ability to both fulfil their responsibilities and effectively govern their college. Across the sector, overall standards of governance should rise, resulting in higher standards of provision at colleges. To take this work forward, the Council invited organisations to tender for a contract to develop the detailed training material and associated supporting material for trainers, based on the indicative module specifications provided by the Council. The contract has been awarded to a consortium led by FEDA. When available, each module will be capable of completion through self-study, but also be in a form which enables delivery by a facilitator or trainer. To facilitate self-study and delivery to the sector, the modules and associated supporting materials for training will, therefore, be available in written and electronic form.

27 The training programme will be modular in structure and will focus on:

- induction
- financial responsibility
- strategic planning
- human resource management
- curriculum and quality
- the audit committee, the search committee and the role of clerk to the corporation.

Next steps

28 The training materials should be available to colleges in spring 2000 and training programmes available in summer 2000.

Institutions Developing Materials for the Basic Skills Quality Initiative

College	Development areas
Barnsley College	teaching and learning methods; learning resources; staffing and accommodation
Blackburn College	curriculum organisation; training needs and development; implementing staff development
Brockenhurst College	identifying, assessing and recording learning; support for learning
Bury College	curriculum management; quality assurance framework; improving basic skills provision
Camphill Community *	identifying, assessing and recording learning; support for learning
De Montfort University and Lincoln Learning and Training Support Services	design of programmes
Derby Tertiary College, Wilmorton	marketing and recruitment; learning resources; staffing and accommodation
Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology *	training needs and development; implementing staff development; quality assurance framework; improving provision
Havering College of Further and Higher Education	support for learning; quality assurance framework; improving provision
Havering Adult College	implementing staff development
Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College	guidance and tutorials
Lewisham College	curriculum organisation; curriculum management; marketing and recruitment
Liverpool Community College	design of programmes; teaching and learning methods; guidance and tutorials
Manchester Adult Education Service	initial assessment; design of programmes; teaching and learning methods; partnerships and community links
New College Nottingham	curriculum management; marketing and recruitment
Norfolk Adult Education Service	identifying, assessing and recording learning; training needs and development; learning resources; staffing and accommodation
Northern College for Residential Adult Education	support for learning; guidance and tutorials; partnerships and community links

* *consortium*

College	Development areas
Oaklands College	design of programmes; identifying, assessing and recording learning; quality assurance framework; improving provision
Sandwell College	curriculum organisation; curriculum management; support for learning
Southgate College	initial assessment; support for learning
Tameside College	identifying, assessing and recording learning
Warwickshire College	partnerships and community links
Wigan and Leigh College	initial assessment; design of programmes; teaching and learning methods

Curriculum 2000: Support for Staff Development

Tasks which need to be completed in all colleges in preparation for curriculum 2000 reforms

- user-friendly publicity information prepared to give to school pupils in years 10 and 11 early in the autumn term (presupposes decisions have been made about the offer)
- awareness raising among careers officers and careers teachers, pupils and parents
- familiarisation with new specifications; design of schemes of work which will enable success in what are effectively two separate one-year programmes
- finalise the organisational framework for the offer (timetabling, possibly jointly with other institutions)
- plan guidance into the curriculum
- rewrite tutorial handbooks, and ensure understanding of the changes among those who have to do tutoring. This will include a significant mid-programme review at the end of year 1
- integration of key skills into teaching and learning
- review examination arrangements
- capturing student records for the individualised student record (ISR) and other purposes
- devise methods of tracking students through a varied programme
- supporting onward progression through work with admission tutors
- managing the transition from the old to the new (next year, with both models running in parallel, could be more complex than the preparatory year)
- maintaining standards through curriculum change
- maintaining staff motivation.

