

Leading learning and skills

Framework for Excellence: Unified Post-16 Performance Assessment

July 2009

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

Further information

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Ministerial Foreword

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) share a mission to improve the opportunities available for young people and adults so that they can fulfil their potential and realise their ambitions, and so that their employers and the country as a whole can meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive global economy.

A responsive, high-quality post-16 education and training sector is fundamental to this. In recent years this sector has shown its capacity to improve in all aspects of its business. However, the continued record levels of investment in education and training provision will only ensure that young people and adults are prepared for higher levels of education and the world of work if they are matched by an equal commitment to the continued improvement of quality and delivery. The Framework for Excellence (the Framework) is central to this. It will give parents, carers, learners of all ages and employers access to detailed information about the quality of post-16 provision. This will help them to make informed choices about what and where they want to study or train. It will also be used by organisations that commission or fund provision, helping them to focus their investment on meeting local needs.

The Framework will also be used to support new performance management arrangements. We are working together to develop these for introduction in 2010 when, following legislation, the Skills Funding Agency and Young People's Learning Agency are established and local authorities take on their new responsibilities. All of this will ensure that we have robust and consistent measures in place to assess the performance and quality of post-16 provision, so that judgements and interventions are founded on sound and timely intelligence.

This year also represents a significant step in the continuing development of the Framework, as we extend its application to the post-16 schools sector. The Framework will provide a comparable assessment of all post-16 further education provision and providers. We are developing the detail of how this will operate in future by piloting the Framework in over 100 school sixth forms and in 23 local authorities. This will ensure alignment with the emerging School Report Card (the new reporting mechanism for pre-16 provision in schools) to create a whole-school approach to measuring and reporting on the quality of provision.

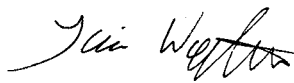
Many stakeholders and users have been involved at all stages of the development of the Framework. From this, we know that embedding it presents many challenges. We have recognised the importance of ensuring that measurement and reporting is done in a fair and consistent way, minimising the bureaucracy and administration involved, and taking 'collect once and use often' as our shared mantra.

The coming year heralds a new and exciting phase in the Framework's development. We will continue to engage the sector and key stakeholders, and together deliver a Framework that enhances the performance and reputation of the post-16 sector for the benefit of all its users.



Kevin Brennan

Minister for Further Education, Skills, Apprenticeships and Consumer Affairs (jointly with DCSF)



Iain Wright

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for 14–19 Reform and Apprenticeships

Preface

From the Learning and Skills Council, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, and the Local Government Association

We welcome the progress that has been made to implement the Framework for Excellence in colleges and independent training providers and to prepare the pilot for use by schools with sixth forms and local authorities.

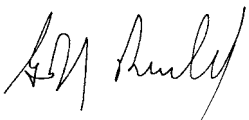
Our overarching ambition is for a clear and coherent approach to performance management, working simply across all post-16 provision, linking to pre-16 provision, to give learners, parents and employers better information about the quality of provision available, helping them to make more informed choices.

This is a goal which we all share and this is why we have been closely involved in the development of the Framework.

As well as supporting broader aims, we also expect it to deliver on some specific goals. For local authorities, for example, it will provide essential information on the quality of provision available to an area, helping to inform commissioning decisions and underpinning their new role in performance-managing 16–18 providers. It will be linked to the new School Report Card so that it is simple and easy to use.

The pilot use of Framework for Excellence by schools with sixth forms marks a significant step towards a unified performance assessment framework for post-16 education and training providers. A unified framework will help to ease the transition to new arrangements introduced through Machinery of Government changes. It will facilitate greater and more informed choice for learners, parents and employers. It will underpin co-operative approaches to commissioning and regulation and will support new inspection arrangements.

We are pleased to be working closely with BIS and DCSF to sponsor the development of the Framework for Excellence, and we look forward to its continuing development and to the success of the pilot.



Geoff Russell
Chief Executive, Learning and Skills Council



David Collins
Chief Executive, Learning and Skills Improvement Service



John Freeman CBE
Director, React Programme for the Local Government Association

From Ofsted

Ofsted has been involved in advising the LSC and Departments on the development of the Framework for Excellence performance measures. It is our intention that we will use the measures to help determine our inspection programme annually, and as a source of evidence in helping Her Majesty's Inspectors to arrive at their judgements.

We are an independent assessor on the Sponsoring Board to ensure that the Framework developments are compatible with our new inspection arrangements. We welcome the consistency, simplification and coherence that a set of common measures will bring to the learning and skills sector.



Christine Gilbert
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Ofsted

Introduction

1 This policy document is intended primarily for use by those delivering post-16 education and training, including schools, colleges, independent training and other learning providers; those working in organisations responsible for funding and/or commissioning post-16 provision (the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), local authorities and the Skills Funding Agency); and those involved in assessing and improving performance, including Ofsted, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and School Improvement Partners (SIPs).

2 It can also be used by those new to the Framework for Excellence, to help understand progress to date.

3 The document sets out the context in which the Framework will operate; records progress over the last year; sets out its planned shape in 2009/10; and describes further developments.

4 It explains how the Framework is part of a new and integrated approach to the performance management of post-16 education and training. This includes how it relates to inspection, the new School Report Card and other assessment and evaluation processes.

5 Later sections describe how the Framework results will be published and how Framework data and scores can be used by learners and employers, providers, commissioners, inspectors and funders, to make more informed choices and decisions.

6 The operational details of the Framework – including what providers need to do, the definition of indicators and how scores are calculated – will be published at the end of August 2009 in *Framework for Excellence: Provider Guide 2009/10*.

Context: An integrated approach to managing performance of post-16 education and training

7 The 2008 White Paper *Raising Expectations: Enabling the system to deliver* (DCSF and DIUS, March 2008) proposed a new performance management system, comprising separate but interrelated lines of accountability, pre- and post-19. This will be introduced in 2010. Details of a new performance management framework will be available in autumn 2009. This will set out clear roles and responsibilities for all those involved in performance management, including government departments, agencies and organisations supporting post-16 providers, and individual providers. It will also

describe in detail the components of the new performance management system, including:

- establishing and agreeing standards of performance and expected outcomes (and how the sector will be involved in this process);
- assessing performance against those standards (outlining the role of providers and partners and how the role of the single account manager will operate);
- procuring adequate and appropriate provision (describing how a new provider accreditation system will operate);
- seeking and acting on the views of users, including learners, parents and employers;
- providers managing and improving their provision (explaining how collaborative working will be used in assessment and in driving up the performance of the further education sector more generally); and
- inspection and, where necessary, the delivery of support and challenge, and other intervention activity.

8 Critically, the aim of the new performance management framework will be to ensure a consistent approach to measuring and reporting performance for all post-16 further education.

9 The key principle underpinning the performance management framework will be a shared responsibility for performance management across the sector. Individual providers will retain ownership and responsibility for improving their own performance, working collaboratively with lead departments, agencies and partners on performance issues. The Framework will be at the heart of these shared arrangements, providing timely and comparable data – including data on minimum levels of performance. This data will help providers to assess their performance and identify where they need to take action to improve.

10 The Skills Funding Agency and local authorities will play a key role in the future performance management of post-16 providers. The Framework will be a key tool in underpinning the decisions that these organisations make.

11 Support will be available to all providers delivering post-16 provision. Further education non-financial improvement activity will be the responsibility of LSIS. Schools will be supported through SIPs.

12 Together with provider representative organisations and other stakeholders, BIS and DCSF are working closely on the development of these new arrangements to ensure that there is an integrated approach for pre- and post-19 provision. Further details will be published in autumn 2009.

What is the Framework for Excellence?

13 The Framework for Excellence is the Government's performance assessment framework for further education colleges and post-16 education and training providers currently funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and in future by the Skills Funding Agency, the YPLA and local authorities.

14 The Framework is commissioned by BIS and DCSF. Other sponsors include the LSC, the Local Government Association, LSIS and the Association of Directors of Children's Services. Ofsted is an assessor on the Sponsorship Board.

15 External partners and stakeholders involved in the development and piloting of the Framework include: the Association of Colleges, the Association of School and College Leaders, the Association of Learning Providers, Hoxe, the Association of National Specialist Colleges, the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum, the 157 Group, the Single Voice, the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education and a large number of individual colleges and providers.

16 The Framework is formed from a set of key performance indicators, covering success rates, the views of learners and employers, learner destinations and finance. Together, these provide an independent and quantitative assessment of the performance of individual providers and of the sector as a whole.

17 Performance is scored against national standards, with grades and scores for the performance indicators calculated and published annually. Publication will enable users (primarily learners and employers) to make comparisons between providers and help to inform choice.

18 The vision for the Framework is that published information should be presented in a way that is meaningful and in sufficient detail to inform user choice. Users will be able to view additional information about a provider's performance by accessing some levels of the underlying data to disaggregate performance (for example, by location or type of provision).

19 In the future, ownership and policy responsibility for the Framework, including revision of existing or development of new indicators, will be shared through joint governance arrangements between BIS and DCSF.

To ensure that the Framework is fit for purpose across the pre- and post-19 systems, detailed work may be carried out jointly by the YPLA and the Skills Funding Agency, working co-operatively and collaboratively with provider representative organisations.

What are the benefits of the Framework for Excellence?

20 The Framework will:

- provide robust and timely information on the performance of post-16 providers;
- give learners, parents and carers, careers teachers and advisers, employers and skills brokers the information they need to make informed choices about the quality of providers and post-16 education and training;
- help providers to improve the quality of provision by setting clear and measurable standards of excellence and by providing a rich source of data for providers to benchmark themselves against;
- provide commissioners and funders of provision with consistent and comparable data, across all post-16 providers, regardless of type;
- identify excellence, so that this can be rewarded and used to support improvements across the sector;
- identify areas of underperformance to allow for more effective actions, intervention, support and challenge; and
- provide evidence to inform policy, planning and funding and enable the Government to evaluate the success of its learning and skills strategies.

The Framework for Excellence in 2009/10

Which providers will it apply to?

21 From 2009, the Framework for Excellence applies to all further education providers that receive 16–18, employer responsive or learner responsive funding from the LSC, **except:**

- higher education institutions delivering further education;
- Ufi or organisations solely funded by it;
- central government departments or organisations reporting directly to them; and
- non-departmental public bodies.

It **also** applies to independent specialist providers that predominantly receive funding for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

22 From 2010, subject to further developments and evaluation, the Framework will be applied to all schools with sixth forms. It will also apply to further education delivered by higher education institutions. However, it will not apply to higher education provision funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Similarly, the Framework does not include young people aged under 16 who may be learning in colleges.

23 At this stage, informal adult learning (IAL) is not in scope for the Framework. A recent White Paper, *The Learning Revolution* (DIUS, March 2009), sets out a new vision for IAL that includes a much wider definition, exceeding that which is funded by the state. While we will still fully expect to see a continued focus on ensuring the quality of this provision, we are reviewing the appropriateness of the Framework for assessing it.

24 Previously we specified a minimum amount of funding that a provider needed to receive before it came within the scope of the Framework. We have removed this in order to make the Framework as inclusive as possible. This brings more providers into the scope of the Framework. However, some providers will not be assessed against all indicators – in those cases where indicators are not relevant to the business they deliver. Details of exemptions and how this will work will be given in the supporting *Provider Guide* (to be published at the end of August 2009).

25 In the case of provision delivered by a Train to Gain consortium or a school sixth form or area partnership, it is the contract holder or the 'home' institution of the learner that is in scope for the Framework. They are therefore responsible for ensuring that providers to whom they subcontract and with whom they work in partnership meet the expected standards.

26 In the case of institutional mergers, acquisitions and de-mergers, we will adopt a pragmatic approach to handling the data for the former institution(s), where appropriate and in liaison with the new institution(s), in order to generate Framework scores and grades.

What does the revised Framework for Excellence look like?

27 The Framework has been developed to improve its fitness for purpose. This has been strongly influenced by experience from piloting and feedback from providers and stakeholders during implementation. It also takes account of how the Framework needs to operate within future commissioning and performance management arrangements.

28 From 2009, the Framework is much simpler and more sensitive to the diverse nature of the further education sector. It has a small number of core performance indicators that will apply to all types of provider. Following sector feedback, four of the 'use of resource' finance measures have been removed. The *Provider Guide* (to be published at the end of August 2009) sets out the criteria and scoring mechanisms for each indicator in more detail, including information on exemptions.

29 The core indicators are supplemented by specific indicators that are relevant to particular types of provider and provision. For example, employer views will apply only to those providers delivering training for employers.

30 We have distinguished those elements of the Framework that are most important for learner and employer choice and that therefore need to be published. At the same time, we have recognised that other aspects are not suitable for publication, although they are useful and will, therefore, be accessible to commissioners, funders and inspectors.

31 Our intention is not to produce an overall performance rating in 2010 or 2011. We will, however, continue to assess the need for one – or for a similar summary rating – in light of future developments.

32 We will extend the learner destinations survey in order to capture and report employment destinations more fully, including employment gained by learners progressing within education and training. This will recognise the importance of employment outcomes, particularly in the current economic context and during the subsequent recovery.

33 Table 1 sets out the Framework for Excellence indicators for 2009/10.

Table 1: Framework for Excellence performance indicators for 2009/10

Category	Indicator	Core or specific	Published or unpublished
Learner and qualification success	Qualification success rates	Core	Published
Learner views	Learner views	Core	Published
Learner destinations	Learner destinations (including a statement of volume of employment outcomes)	Core	Published
Responsiveness to employers	Employer views	Specific	Published
	Amount of training (statement of volume for information; not graded)	Specific	Published
	Training Quality Standard	Specific	Published
Financial health and management	Financial health	Specific	Unpublished
	Financial management and control evaluation	Specific	Unpublished
Resource efficiency	Funding per successful outcome	Core	Unpublished

How will the Framework for Excellence be used?

By providers

34 Robust review, self-assessment and self-evaluation have developed in effectiveness over time. They will become ever more important as means to improve quality and drive up standards. The Framework will underpin the new performance management framework. It is therefore essential that providers have a clear understanding of their own performance as assessed against the Framework indicators. Staff in all parts of a college or provider will need to understand how the scores are derived and how they can manage performance related to their outcomes.

35 Governing bodies, management and supervisory boards, and management teams will find Framework data and scores useful in setting and monitoring progress against their strategic goals and targets, and are encouraged to do so. They will need to take note of the Framework scores at regular intervals in the business planning cycle. As the Framework develops, objective data and the developing ability to compare performance with other, similar providers will be essential tools to help to identify and address instances of underperformance.

36 Providers will be expected to use Framework scores as part of the evidence for their self-assessment from the academic year 2008/09, and to refer explicitly to its performance indicators in their self-assessment reports to be submitted in December 2009. Guidance on self-assessment in the further education system indicating how Framework scores should be used has been published as *Self-assessment – Updated Guidance for the Further Education System* (<http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/publications/publisheddocuments-self-assessment-Updated-Guidance-for-the-Further-Education-System.htm>). LSIS will publish an updated online practitioners' guide to self-assessment and improvement planning later this year.

37 Where a provider's individual scores and grades identify performance issues or areas for improvement, support to improve will be provided by LSIS. Support is available across a range of programmes but primarily from the Support for Excellence programme, which helps providers improve their self-assessment and capacity for self-improvement. More information about the Support for Excellence programme is available at excellencegateway.org.uk/sfe or <http://lsis-sfe.co.uk/>.

By commissioners and funders

38 Every year, the LSC has set out its policies and processes in relation to the identification of underperformance in colleges and providers. In 2009/10, the LSC will use Framework scores and grades to inform, support and confirm decisions relating to the extent to which the LSC acts and intervenes. Further details will be set out in the next edition of *Identifying and Managing Underperformance*, which will be published later this year.

The LSC, BIS and DCSF will continue to discuss with stakeholders the development of a new performance management framework. This will include how commissioners will use Framework scores and grades to support intervention activity from 2010/11.

39 Through the National Commissioning Framework the LSC's successor bodies and local authorities will take account of Framework for Excellence outputs when making commissioning decisions.

40 The LSC and its successor bodies will discharge their responsibilities in relation to monitoring the financial health of providers and their operation of financial control with reference to the requirements of the Framework.

41 More immediately, commissioning guidance for local authorities will be explicit in setting out how Framework for Excellence outputs should be considered alongside other performance data. The LSC will continue to be responsible for commissioning until the new arrangements are in place from April 2010, so it will be within this established process that the 2008/09 results are considered. The LSC is familiar with these issues and is actively working with local authorities to ensure that they can transfer their knowledge and expertise during this transition period.

By learners and employers

42 To help them make choices about their learning and training, learners, parents, employers and their intermediaries will have access, via a Framework for Excellence website, to a provider's grades and scores for their published performance indicators. Web links will provide users with access to more detailed information and ways of making comparisons across a range of providers.

43 The website will link to other sites – such as Ofsted's and the provider's own website – to allow users easy access to additional information about providers, such as location or childcare facilities, for example. It will also be integrated over time with existing services and websites that users currently access, such as the Apprenticeship vacancy matching system, area-wide prospectuses and the Employers' Guide to Training.

44 The first release of the website will be available in 2010, and it will continue to be developed during 2010 to 2012.

45 We plan to publish 2008/09 results at the same time as full publication in 2010.

How the Framework for Excellence Fits with the Broader Performance Management Landscape

With school sixth forms

46 A group chaired by DCSF is steering the development of how the Framework will apply to schools with sixth forms. The steering group includes representatives from the Association of Colleges, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Association of School and College Leaders, the Local Government Association and the Sixth Form Colleges Forum. Ofsted is an assessor on the group.

47 In 2009/10, over 100 schools with sixth forms and 23 local authorities will be involved in piloting the Framework. Colleges and providers will be invited to join technical advisory groups and a national user group of providers, which advises on the implementation.

48 There are six broad priorities for the pilot. These are to:

- ensure that data are available to enable indicators to be calculated in the same way for all post-16 providers;
- pilot the use of the Framework for Excellence performance indicators by schools with 16–18 learners;
- pilot the use of the Framework for Excellence by local authorities;
- clarify the potential benefits that could be realised through a unified post-16 performance assessment framework;
- explore methods of including or referencing the performance of partnerships and consortia within the framework; and
- develop and test a small number of new performance indicators.

49 We acknowledge that there are concerns about the differences in the way that success rates are calculated for schools and for colleges and the potential for this to impact on commissioning decisions. Options for alignment will be explored through the Framework school sixth form pilot.

With the School Report Card

50 The School Report Card will be central to the new accountability landscape for schools. It will provide a single tool to support quality improvement in schools. It will be used by school staff and governors, Ofsted and SIPs and will also provide essential information for pupils and parents.

51 The School Report Card will cover education in schools up to age 16 but, where relevant, will also need to include a measure of the effectiveness of a school's sixth form provision. This will be drawn from the Framework for Excellence published data.

52 The School Report Card is currently being developed and will be piloted over two years from autumn 2009. BIS and DCSF will work, together with partners, on its development and on the Framework for Excellence, to ensure that they are aligned appropriately.

With Ofsted

53 Ofsted recognises the strong and complementary links between inspection of post-16 education and training and the performance indicators in the Framework. Ofsted is contributing to the discussions about the future performance management system, and is planning to use the shared set of performance indicators being developed as part of the Framework.

54 Development: Ofsted will advise sponsoring partners to ensure that performance indicators are robust and 'fit for purpose'. The development of a more detailed reporting capability on the Framework for Excellence website will provide users with more information on individual course and subject performance than will be contained in inspection reports.

55 Integration: Ofsted is committed to aligning its inspection frameworks across all post-16 provision and, as they become available, will use the Framework performance indicators as part of this process.

56 Coherence: Ofsted aims to ensure that the revised post-16 inspection arrangements (September 2009) and Framework performance indicators are coherent. Revised school inspection arrangements align inspection of sixth forms more closely with arrangements for other post-16 providers.

57 Inspection: Ofsted inspectors will draw on Framework indicators (when they are fully developed) to support post-16 inspection activities. The Common Inspection

Framework considers many aspects of provision that are not covered by the Framework. The inspection handbook for further education and skills will include guidance for inspectors in using performance information from the Framework. In the event that the Framework is extended to include schools with sixth forms, Ofsted will prepare additional inspection guidance for schools.

58 Inspection selection: Ofsted will draw on Framework indicators (as they are fully developed) to help inform its inspection selection process on an annual basis. It is possible that weak performance in a number of areas of the Framework could mean that an inspection is brought forward.

59 If Ofsted decides that a school previously judged good or outstanding is not to be inspected three school years from the end of the year in which its last section 5 inspection took place, Ofsted will publish an interim assessment. This may be superseded by the proposed School Report Card.

60 Ofsted will undertake an interim assessment for most colleges and providers, where overall effectiveness is 'good' or 'outstanding', around three years after a full inspection. This will be based on information available for inspection selection, which includes Framework for Excellence indicators, and may draw on other sources of evidence including self-assessment/evaluation documents.

61 Our current thinking in terms of the relationship between the Framework, inspection and the School Report Card is set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Framework for Excellence, School Report Card and inspection

Framework for Excellence	School Report Card	Inspection judgements supported by Framework performance indicators
Learner and qualification success	Attainment	Learner attainment
Learner progress	Pupil progress	Learner progress
Learner destinations	Wider outcomes	Outcomes for learners (Every Child Matters)
Learner views	Pupils' perceptions	Learner enjoyment; extent to which learners' needs are met; guidance and support
Not included	Parents' perceptions	Parents' views of school
Responsiveness to employers	Not included	Links with employers; extent to which employers' needs are met

With Every Child Matters

62 The Framework already reflects some of the key aspirations of Every Child Matters – for example, ‘enjoy and achieve’. In addition, the LSC is discussing with DCSF and other partners the development of a single learner survey for school sixth formers, which will provide additional information about learner well-being. We will explore, with partners and providers, the possible inclusion of questions relating to learner well-being in the survey of 16- to 18-year-olds in colleges, independent training providers and other types of provider.

With comprehensive area assessments

63 The LSC is working with the Audit Commission to explore ways in which the Framework can inform area assessments, as part of the comprehensive area assessment (CAA) process. The indicators used in the Framework are broadly compatible with the national indicator set used in the CAA.

With higher education

64 The Quality Assurance Agency and HEFCE will consider how Framework data can be used alongside the full range of other information, in order to determine the amount and nature of external review carried out in each institution that delivers higher education.

65 The LSC is working with HEFCE and the Higher Education Statistics Agency to optimise data-sharing in the spirit of better regulation. We have also entered into a Memorandum of Collaboration with HEFCE, which covers the sharing of information about institutional risk and which ensures that there is greater efficiency and openness.

Future Developments

Assessment criteria

66 We want the Framework to operate with certainty and stability, so we have set assessment criteria which reflect the progress the sector has made and which set standards that we expect to maintain for three further years.

67 We need, however, to keep these standards, and hence the assessment criteria, under review. This is partly to ensure that the criteria remain valid as the Framework is extended to include new types of provider, and partly to monitor and to respond, if necessary, to the impact of the present economic situation.

Contextual factors

68 An initial study, *Testing the Case for Contextualisation in the Framework for Excellence* (<http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/publications/publisheddocuments/Testing-the-Case-for-Contextualisation-in-the-Framework-for-Excellence.htm>) showed that the Framework takes sufficient account of contextual factors. Several performance indicators incorporate elements of contextualisation. Qualification success rates, for example, take account of the very different success rates in short courses, Apprenticeships, A-levels, and other long courses. Learner views take into account the level of qualification.

69 However, we have commissioned a follow-up study to analyse 2009 Framework outputs and will publish the findings in autumn 2009.

How it will work in schools

70 The outcomes of the pilot will determine how the Framework will be implemented in schools with sixth forms in the future.

Improving data collection

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

72 We know that providers want a streamlined approach to surveys. They want to be able to incorporate the Framework surveys into their existing surveys; to use the data from the learner and employer views surveys to support quality improvement at subject sector and course

level; and to find out what learners and employers really thought of their experience.

73 We will work with providers and other key stakeholders over the next 18 months to:

- integrate Framework for Excellence surveys as far as possible with colleges' and providers' own processes;
- make the window for the collection of responses as flexible and as wide as possible, to align with colleges' and providers' own surveys;
- provide access for colleges and providers to underlying response data at a level that is as detailed as possible, to support meaningful improvement activity; and
- create, if possible, a single survey for piloting by schools with sixth forms in 2009/10, to include health and well-being questions relevant to Every Child Matters outcomes.

74 It is essential to have complete, accurate and timely data from providers, in order to ensure that the analysis of the Framework is robust and accurate. We rely on providers to ensure that data are complete and submitted to deadline.

75 Existing data collections that underpin the Framework form part of the funding agreement with providers. The agreement makes clear what action will be taken if problems are encountered with the supply of data. In the event that data returns for the learner and employer views surveys, and learner destinations, are insufficient to calculate scores and grades, we will include a statement to that effect when the Framework outputs are published. We will work with the sector on how to improve data returns from providers.

Improving data presentation

76 We will make all the relevant scores and grades for each performance indicator available to individual providers on the Provider Gateway as soon as possible, in spring 2010. This is to allow the maximum amount of time for data checking and verification prior to publication.

77 The Framework for Excellence application on the Provider Gateway will be developed to offer providers extended access to the underlying data, including the survey data, in order to minimise the need for additional reports.

78 The Framework for Excellence public reporting website will be subject to ongoing development as we improve the presentation of information based on what we know to be of importance to users. As data-collection methodologies develop, we will provide access to supporting information (below the level of score and grade) to support learner and employer choice. In 2010, as a starting point, we will aim to include: learner destinations into further learning and into employment, and by age; learner views by age; qualification success rates by broad course type, by subject sector area and by age group.

79 The technical details of a 'search and compare' facility are still being developed and are likely to include the ability to search the Framework for information by:

- provider name;
- provider type;
- location (region/area); and/or
- postcode.

Performance indicators

80 We may need to develop the existing indicators further – and indeed add new ones. We will work collaboratively with the sector and continue to ask providers, their representative organisations and other stakeholders for their views on this.

81 As a result of enhancements to the Framework's structure, we will also review the relationship between the Framework for Excellence and the Training Quality Standard. Working closely with employer and provider representative organisations, we will also take a fresh look at the amount of training data, and at how this might be included in the revised Framework structure.

Information and Support

82 In June 2009, the LSC held a series of regional briefing events for all colleges and providers within the scope of the Framework in 2009/10. Although these events summarised the policy overview, the main focus was on the operational requirements for implementation of the Framework in 2009/10. Working with DCSF, we also held three launch events for schools and local authorities involved in the piloting of the Framework in 2009/10.

83 The Framework for Excellence website (ffe.lsc.gov.uk) is regularly updated and provides a detailed source of information and guidance. Colleges and providers have access to a range of resources, including detailed guidance notes and a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on all aspects of implementation. There are specific pages of the website which provide similar information for school sixth forms and local authorities involved in the pilot.

84 This policy document is supplemented by the *Framework for Excellence: Provider Guide 2009/10*; this will be available from the Framework website from the end of August 2009. A Pilot Guide for schools and local authorities, *Unified Post-16 Performance Assessment: School Sixth Form and Local Authority Pilot Guide*, is also available at http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/SchoolsLA_Pilot_GuideV2-final1.pdf. This is a live document which will be regularly updated as the pilot progresses.

85 The LSC issues a regular Framework for Excellence Bulletin to provide operational guidance and updates on the Framework; this is circulated to subscribers by email and published on the website. To subscribe to the Bulletin please email frameworkforexcellence@lsc.gov.uk, inserting the word 'Bulletin' in the header. Support is provided to schools and local authorities through a nominated 'key contact'. They receive a regular 'Pilot News' email and have access to a dedicated pilot mailbox.

86 Colleges and providers should continue to contact their local LSC teams for information and support in the first instance. As the Machinery of Government changes are implemented, however, this is likely to affect the nature of the local support available. We will monitor the situation closely and announce alternative arrangements for accessing support and guidance if necessary.

Annex:

Progress since June 2008

- 1 The first phase of implementation of the Framework for Excellence was undertaken in 2008/09. It was applied to 1,218 colleges and private training providers delivering Apprenticeships and Train to Gain, and comprised eight performance indicators: learner views, learner destinations, employer views, qualification success rates, financial health, financial management and control, resource efficiency and delivery as a proportion of LSC allocation or contract.
- 2 Learner views, learner destinations and employer views have never previously been measured at provider level; data for these was collected through surveys. Although we will work with providers to improve return rates, at an individual level the responses were significant.
 - The learner views survey gathered responses from over 520,000 learners (compared with 43,756 in the 2007 National Learner Satisfaction Survey).
 - The destinations of 481,716 learners were identified.
 - More than 37,200 employers participated in the employer views survey.
- 3 The outcomes for the Framework in 2008/09 demonstrate the high levels of quality in many areas of the sector. For each Performance Indicator, over half of the providers for which grades were determined achieved 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.
- 4 Some timing issues emerged, however, which affected our plans for the limited publication of 2008/09 Framework outputs in June 2009. The commissioning Framework will be published for consultation in autumn 2009, prior to final publication in April 2010. The new Performance Management Framework will not be published until April 2010. Detailed information to support learner and employer choice will only start to become available from 2010. In view of this, we agreed not to put individual results in the public domain in 2009.
- 5 We identified a small number of data problems during the period set aside for providers to check and query their 2008/09 outputs prior to finalisation and/or publication, and these were addressed swiftly. We have identified the causes and have further developed our quality assurance processes to ensure that such problems do not arise in the future. We will maintain the opportunity for providers to check data in future years.
- 6 Further information about the lessons learned from the 2008/09 Framework and the action we will take as a result will be published separately on the Framework for Excellence website.

Glossary

BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
CAA	Comprehensive Area Assessment
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
IAL	Informal Adult Learning
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSIS	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
SIP	School Improvement Partners
YPLA	Young People's Learning Agency

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© LSC July 2009
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Publication reference: LSC-P-NAT-090146