

Quality improvement and self-assessment

May 2005

Of interest to general further education colleges, sixth form colleges, colleges of art and design, agricultural colleges, higher education institutions with further education provision, specialist colleges for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, independent training providers, former external institutions, adult and community learning, Ufi/learn`direct` and those providers funded by Jobcentre Plus.

For information

This document sets out guidance for providers about self-assessment and quality improvement. It aims to support the Government's vision of a learning and skills sector that is able, by 2008, to meet its own priorities and targets for improvement, drawing effectively on the findings of inspection and annual self-assessment. It is published by the Learning and Skills Council in partnership with the following organisations:

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Its aim is to help more people into work and more employers fill their vacancies. Jobcentre Plus funds a number of labour market related training and development programmes, including the New Deal.

Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)

The Adult Learning Inspectorate inspects education and training for adults and work based learning for all over the age of 16.

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)

Office for Standards in Education is a non-ministerial government department established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to take responsibility for the inspection of all schools in England. Its role also includes the inspection of local education authorities, teacher training institutions, youth work and the regulation of early years childcare, including childminders. Ofsted is responsible for the inspection of all 16–19 education and of most learners below the age of 19.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

The Department for Education and Skills was established with the purpose of creating opportunity, releasing potential and achieving excellence for all.

Of interest to general further education colleges, sixth form colleges, colleges of art and design, agricultural colleges, higher education institutions with further education provision, specialist colleges for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, independent training providers, former external institutions, adult and community learning, Ufi/**learn**direct and those providers funded by Jobcentre Plus.

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Executive summary

This document sets out guidance for providers about self-assessment and quality improvement. Evaluating the success of learners is at the heart of self-assessment, but it is also very much about assessing how well the needs of employers and communities are being met and the active promotion of equal opportunities and health and safety. Self-assessment will also make clear providers' capacity to bring about improvement and their success in doing so. This guidance is strongly informed by the need to minimise bureaucracy, to build trust across the sector and to strike a balance between promoting consistency and respecting the enterprise, diversity and autonomy of providers.

The ways in which the planning and funding bodies and the inspectorates will use the self-assessment reports are explained. In particular self-assessment will inform the judgements of the inspectorates and the planning and funding bodies about how far providers have been successful in securing improvement. It will set out providers' success in achieving the targets in their respective Learning and Skills Council (LSC) development plans and Jobcentre Plus action plans. The broad criteria against which self-assessment will be carried out are indicated, including its relationship with the LSC's three-year development planning framework, the Jobcentre Plus contract award and action planning process and the Common Inspection Framework (CIF). The principal features of a robust self-assessment are also outlined. The significance of the new Ofsted Annual Assessment Visit (AAV) is explained. Reference is also made to reinspection and post inspection action planning. The importance of the promotion and sharing of good practice and the role of the new Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) are also noted.

Introduction

1

This guidance covers general further education (FE) colleges, sixth form colleges, colleges of art and design, agricultural colleges, higher education institutions with further education provision, specialist colleges for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, independent training providers, former external institutions, adult and community learning, Ufi/**learndirect** and those providers funded by Jobcentre Plus. It sets out the main purposes and uses of self-assessment in the context of a government policy under which providers are held accountable for their own quality and improvement. It has been produced by the LSC in consultation with Jobcentre Plus, the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), together with representatives of providers. It complements the LSC's Annual Planning Review of providers' three-year development plans, the Jobcentre Plus Quality Framework and the revised Common Inspection Framework (CIF), implemented from April 2005 for some Adult Learning Inspectorate single remit inspections and from September 2005 for colleges. This guidance does not cover self-assessment for school sixth forms but broadly parallel arrangements are in place. More detailed guidance on operational practice for carrying out self-assessment will be developed in separate procedural documents, supported by good practice guides.

2

Full account is also taken of the Government's objectives to raise further the quality and standards of provision and to ensure that poor quality provision is either improved or removed. A major contribution to this will be achieved through improving the capacity of providers to implement effective quality improvement plans based upon evaluative self-assessment reports. As an integral element of their self-assessment providers will develop a clear statement of the actions to sustain the strengths and secure improvement. This will ensure progress

towards an overall goal of consistently high quality, responsive and improving providers. Although the term quality improvement plan will be used throughout the rest of this guidance, the intention is not to be highly prescriptive about the structure and content and the relationship with providers' other plans so long as the key aim of quality improvement is addressed.

3

The requirement for providers to undertake self-assessment began as a preparation for inspection, although it is an essential business process in its own right. It soon developed to meet the dual purposes of serving the provider's needs as well as for inspection. In addition, for LSC and Jobcentre Plus funded providers, it now plays a key part in measuring the effectiveness of their development/action plans. This means that, while the focus on the learner is retained, there will now be a much greater emphasis than formerly on meeting the needs of employers.

4

Primary responsibility for improving the quality of provision rests with the provider. This was made clear in the White Paper, *Learning to Succeed* (June 1999).

The principal responsibility for quality improvement remains with providers themselves. The Government looks to all providers to adopt strategies for securing continuous improvement as many already do. These strategies should be based on self-assessment and action planning (including target setting) and responding and acting upon learner feedback and complaints.

Providers are required to complete an annual self-assessment report that evaluates all aspects of their provision, accredited and non-accredited. This will derive from their continuous process of self-assessment.

5

The chief purpose of self-assessment is to support the provider's own work on quality improvement and to measure progress against its own mission and goals. The use by other organisations, though important, is secondary. A single self-assessment serving several purposes will reduce bureaucracy and will enable providers to devote more of their resources and energies to meeting the needs of learners, employers and communities, and to improving quality.

6

The approach of the planning and funding bodies and the inspectorates now places much greater emphasis on a risk assessment, based on an evaluation of the capacity of the provider to maintain and improve quality. The approach of the planning and funding bodies is explained in paragraphs 23–31. A new feature, which will help the inspectorates to reach judgements upon this specifically in relation to sixth form and general further education colleges, will be the Annual Assessment Visit (AAV) to each college carried out by Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI). The ALI's Quality Monitoring Visit (QMV) also addresses risk assessment. These are explained in more depth in paragraph 33.

The Common Inspection Framework

7

Effective self-assessment, supported by an integral quality improvement plan that takes into account the outcomes of inspection, is the key to improvement. For both the planning and funding bodies and the inspectorates, it will be an important tool in determining the extent of risks to the quality and delivery of provision and therefore the scale of their response.

8

The basis of self-assessment will derive from the five key questions in the Common Inspection Framework.

- How well do learners achieve?
- How effective are teaching, training and learning?
- How well do programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners?
- How well are learners guided and supported?
- How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Judgements will be graded as follows:

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Although providers' self-assessment reports should use the five questions as the basis of their approach, the questions should be flexibly interpreted in the light of each provider's own mission, goals and context, particularly since the self-assessment report will meet the needs of both the planning and funding bodies and inspectorates. So, for example, the greater emphasis on meeting employers' needs is a crucial issue to be addressed. The reports should be graded using the above grades and descriptors for each key question and for separate curriculum/subject sector areas.

Features of effective self-assessment

9

The self-assessment process must be effectively led and managed and should be an integral part of the organisation's management. This requires the creation of a climate of trust in which the members of a provider's staff are constructively self-critical about their performance. Governors, boards of directors, trustees, chief executives and senior managers should be committed to the aims of self-assessment and actively involved with it. Self-assessment of their own performance will demonstrate leadership by example. Management at all levels will actively participate in the self-assessment process as part of their responsibilities for raising standards and improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the provision. They will approve the final self-assessment report and will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the self-assessment in securing improvement.

10

The nature of self-assessment will vary according to the scale and nature of the provision for which each provider is responsible. Providers will need to demonstrate understanding of what they do well, what needs improving and how improvement can be monitored, achieved and evaluated. Whatever the precise approach, the key test of the resulting self-assessment report is its ability to demonstrate how high quality is sustained and improvement is ensured.

11

The report should directly relate to and drive the provider's development/action plan to demonstrate how strengths are sustained and improved and how key areas for improvement are addressed. The outcomes of the self-assessment are a basis for action. Effectiveness will need to be measured by the regular monitoring and evaluation of progress against objectives. The self-assessment report should include an evaluation of the extent to which actions identified in the previous report have secured improvement.

12

The provision and analysis of robust data will be a vital foundation of self-assessment. Providers are expected to draw upon a wide range of performance data to inform their self-assessment report and compare their performance with others through use of nationally available benchmarking data. LSC providers are expected to use the New Measures of Success developed by the LSC, inspectorates and DfES as they become available. Jobcentre Plus providers will have regard to their contractual targets and any nationally produced comparative data. Use of comparative data will inform the dialogue between the planning and funding bodies and the provider. Of particular importance are trends in providers' performance over time and how providers have influenced and responded to these trends.

13

The development and dissemination of good practice can assist providers to carry out accurate and robust self-assessment, to write their self-assessment reports and, as appropriate, the summaries of self-assessment reports (see paragraph 19). The ability to self-assess effectively, to identify strengths and weaknesses and to implement identified improvements is critical to the development of a continuously improving sector. Action to implement identified improvements is a necessary precondition for change.

14

The involvement of individuals or organisations external to the provider can be helpful in assuring the rigour of a self-assessment and in strengthening objectivity. External involvement may also raise significant issues or questions, which had not previously been considered. It will also test the clarity and the effectiveness of the analysis in the self-assessment reports and confirm whether it conveys clearly what the provider intends.

Responsiveness

15

Responsiveness to clients'/customers' needs is a key requirement in planning provision and therefore will be a key feature of a self-assessment report. All providers should identify and respond to the needs of learners, employers and the local community. Continuous improvement will ensure learners have a higher chance of success on the provision of their choice and to progress to higher education, further education, training and/or employment. Responsiveness to the needs of the community will enhance and support partnership between different agencies.

16

Self-assessment should specifically address the effectiveness of providers in ensuring that learners have the necessary workplace skills for employment and indicate how providers are responding to needs identified and agreed with their planning and funding bodies. Providers will need to demonstrate that they clearly understand the skills needs of their local area and how they can make an effective contribution to local skills priorities, including, where appropriate, wider regional, sectoral and national demands. The self-assessment should also refer to the involvement of employers in

ensuring that the curriculum/subject sector categories available and its training, learning and assessment are well attuned both to learners' and to employers' needs.

Equal opportunities

17

Providers must promote equal opportunities through all aspects of their work. The planning and funding bodies, the inspectorates and others will work to ensure that providers are aware of their responsibilities, including the need to implement relevant legislative/statutory requirements, and that the ethos of advancing equal opportunities runs through all that they do. Their evaluation

will monitor the effectiveness of actions taken to support and encourage equality of access and participation in learning. All partners should work to ensure that all learners achieve to the best of their ability, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, age, disability and/or learning difficulties, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

Health and safety

18

Health and safety are integral to quality improvement. Providers are expected to meet legislative/statutory and contractual requirements for health and safety. The self-assessment report will include a statement

of the arrangements for learners' health and safety and indicate how providers are promoting the concept of the safe learner. The planning and funding bodies will seek assurance that providers have systems in

place to ensure that learning and training takes place in a safe, healthy and supporting environment with satisfactory supervision.

Minimum requirements for self-assessment reports

19

Providers will be asked each year to make available to the planning and funding bodies and the inspectorates the latest version of their self-assessment report or, where appropriate, a high-level summary. The self-assessment report will normally be submitted in an electronic format. Jobcentre Plus providers will be able to submit their reports electronically as detailed in the Quality Framework. Providers should be aware that the LSC's Annual Planning Review will need to consider the provider's latest self-assessment report. In the interests of minimising bureaucracy the LSC is creating a web portal, the Provider Quality Gateway, in which providers' self-assessment reports will be held. The LSC and the inspectorates will use this database as the source of each provider's self-assessment. Each provider will only have access to information held about their own organisation and this information will not be available to other providers. For large providers it will often be appropriate to provide a high-level summary self-assessment report for the use of the inspectorates and the planning and funding bodies. This relatively brief summary assessment will derive from a more extensive self-assessment. Annex A sets out the key criteria for a summary. For smaller providers the full internal self-assessment report should be sufficient.

20

An annual self-assessment report gives the opportunity to evaluate what is well done, what needs to improve and to ensure that improvement is achieved. It will report on the effectiveness of the improvement strategies set out in each provider's development/action plan, which will include evidence of how these are being implemented. For good providers this will already be a well-established practice.

21

The self-assessment will need to evaluate both the provider's progress in implementing its development/action plan and its effectiveness in improving quality.

Within this broad context providers are asked to produce a self-assessment report which:

- gives an introduction which includes the context of the provider and a description of the main components of the self-assessment process
- indicates progress made in relation to its development or action plan with the planning and funding bodies
- makes judgements against the evaluative requirements of the development/action plan and the revised Common Inspection Framework
- is aligned, where practicable, to the subject sector categories (previously areas of learning)
- includes judgements on all areas, accredited and non-accredited, inspected by Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate
- differentiates judgements into key strengths, areas for improvement and improvements since the last self-assessment
- is rigorous, analytical and based on valid and reliable evidence
- has a quality improvement plan which sustains the strengths and addresses the key areas for improvement
- supports the agreement with the planning and funding bodies of challenging but achievable targets for learners' success based upon national benchmarking data, where available and, for Jobcentre Plus, job entries
- evaluates the quality of teaching and learning
- evaluates all learners' achievements
- indicates how the views of learners, employers, parents and other stakeholders have been obtained and taken into account
- monitors and reviews the extent to which planned actions are leading to improvement
- is graded using the descriptors in the CIF for each key question and subject sector category
- is submitted to the relevant funding body each year
- demonstrates evidence of promoting equality of opportunity and meeting other legislation, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the Disability Discrimination Act
- demonstrates evidence of promoting the concept of the safe learner and that sufficient and suitable arrangements for learner health and safety are in place.

The roles of the planning and funding bodies, the inspectorates and the Quality Improvement Agency in self-assessment

22

The planning and funding bodies and the inspectorates will use providers' self-assessment reports to inform their judgements about the effectiveness of the provider in improving the quality and the responsiveness of its provision in meeting local needs. Should a self-assessment not be effective in securing quality improvement, the planning and funding bodies will work with the provider, using the services, where appropriate of the Quality Improvement Agency, to enable the provider to improve the effectiveness of its self-assessment as an integral part of its overall improvement strategy. Subsequent inspection and funding bodies' analysis will test how far this strategy has succeeded.

The planning and funding bodies

The LSC – three-year development plans, the Annual Planning Review and self-assessment

23

In 2003, through *Success for All*, the LSC introduced a new framework for quality and success which focuses on ensuring that individual providers are able to meet the demands of learners, employers and local communities for learning and skills, through the provision of high quality learning and training programmes that maximise learners' success. The Annual Planning Review and agreement of three-year development plans with the providers are at the heart of this new framework. This informs the LSC's approach to quality improvement, which will centre upon constructive and searching dialogue with providers, informed by their self-assessment and other evidence, during the Annual Planning Review.

24

All providers agree a three-year development plan with their local LSC that sets out how they will contribute to meeting the local needs of employers, widening participation, and their commitment to improve learners' success. For those areas of provision where learners' achievements are less clearly defined, the LSC has developed the Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning (RARPA) approach. Local LSCs will review annually with providers the implementation of their three-year development plans and progress towards achieving the headline performance measures. The starting point for the review will be the provider's own assessment of its progress and the extent to which it has successfully managed the risks to delivery identified in the plan. The review will draw on the self-assessment report and its quality improvement plan in addition to other evidence, such as the individualised learner record (ILR) data that the provider returns to the LSC, performance against national, regional and local benchmarks for learner success rates, and the findings of inspection. The LSC will only agree a development plan that clearly identifies factors that will lead to improvement in quality or sustain high quality.

25

Where providers are able to demonstrate through self-assessment effective management of the risks to outstanding or good quality, the LSC will adopt a less intensive approach to the Annual Planning Review. If the review identifies poor quality provision or lack of progress towards the achievement of headline performance measures, the LSC will discuss with providers options for support and intervention. If the LSC considers the self-assessment lacks rigour it will work with the QIA to support the provider in the revision of its self-assessment. The LSC will no longer fund persistently poor quality provision that does not meet its needs and priorities and which delivers poor outcomes for learners.

26

A significant feature of inspections, which will continue, is the parallel working between the LSC's Provider Financial Assurance (PFA) service centre and the inspectorates. The concurrent inspectorate and PFA reviews are undertaken in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the LSC and the inspectorates. Under this, the LSC provides the inspectorates with financial information and advice to inform inspections on the basis of risk to the provision. PFA reviews will coincide with inspection wherever possible and evidence will be shared and outcomes discussed as appropriate. For providers not subject to PFA reviews, the LSC will provide appropriate financial briefings to the inspectorates. The parallel working and the sharing of evidence between the PFA service centre and the inspectorates have been extremely successful in ensuring consistent messages to providers and in reducing the administrative burden which would otherwise result from separate visits.

27

The preparation of the self-assessment report by providers funded by the LSC should therefore take account of the scope of the PFA service centre's reviews, in relation to the governance of colleges and financial management for all providers. Judgements in relation to those areas reviewed by the PFA service centre should also contribute to overall judgements about the grading of leadership and management in the self-assessment report. More information on PFA service centre reviews of financial management and governance can be found in Annex B.

28

The LSC and the inspectorates will share information from the Annual Planning Review and the AAV (see paragraph 34) in coming to decisions about actions to be taken with providers.

Jobcentre Plus**29**

The Jobcentre Plus Quality Framework provides the basis for maintaining and improving quality in its provision. Continuous self-assessment and action planning are key factors in effective quality assurance. Each provider funded by Jobcentre Plus has an action plan which feeds into an annual self-assessment report. This in turn feeds back into the action plan, which is intended to be a living document. Jobcentre Plus will assess the rigour and effectiveness of the provider's self-assessment process and agree the action plan.

30

Jobcentre Plus will agree with providers the date they are required to submit their self-assessment report. This will be within the first twelve months of the contract award and annually thereafter. Targets and actions are agreed as part of the award of contract and are recorded in the provider's action plan. This process of continuous self-assessment, linked to contractual requirements, will ensure that providers critically appraise and grade their provision to assess its impact upon their customers' experience. The rigour of the self-assessment report and the action plan will be used to inform the frequency of the monitoring and review process undertaken by Jobcentre Plus.

Joint LSC/Jobcentre Plus funded providers**31**

A significant number of providers are in receipt of funding from Jobcentre Plus and the LSC and may have both a development plan with the LSC and an action plan with Jobcentre Plus. These providers should submit one single self-assessment report at the same time to both planning and funding bodies.

The inspectorates

32

The Common Inspection Framework is central to raising standards. The cycle of inspections for various categories of providers is not identical. (The second cycle for work based learning and Ufi/**learndirect** inspections will run from April 2005 to March 2009; for colleges from September 2005 to summer 2009; for Jobcentre Plus sole providers, from April 2006 to April 2010; and for adult and community learning, from September 2006 to June 2010). The continuing pursuit of quality improvement over time, as evidenced in self-assessment reports, will be one of the foundations of the inspection. The focus of inspection will continue to be the quality of teaching and learning. Inspection reports will note the provider's own judgements of its effectiveness and set this against the inspection team's judgements of the accuracy of the self-assessment. The ability of the provider to demonstrate improvement will be an important contribution to the inspectorates' judgements of the quality of leadership and management. Inspection will concentrate upon the provider's improvement priorities as set out in their LSC three-year development or Jobcentre Plus action plan and, in particular, their success in achieving these.

33

A new feature in the inspection arrangements for specialist independent, sixth form and general further education colleges will be the AAV carried out through a visit to each college by an HMI, and where appropriate a full-time ALI inspector, working on the basis of the college's latest self-assessment report and other evidence for performance. The visit will consider any changes in the college's performance, assess whether such changes have been recognised in the college's self-assessment and the implications for its capacity to offer high quality provision. The Adult Learning Inspectorate's Quality Monitoring Visit (QMV), which takes place about a year after inspection or reinspection, checks on a provider's progress. Providers that perform well at inspection are exempt from the visit.

34

The inspectorates will test the quality of the evidence that underpins self-assessment reports. This will enable them to decide whether these provide adequate justification for the strengths and areas for improvement identified. Judgements will always reflect the volume and range of provision under review. The inspectorates will share their judgements with the planning and funding bodies on both the quality of provision and the effectiveness of self-assessment to support them in managing the risks associated with the delivery and funding of provision.

The Quality Improvement Agency

35

The Department for Education and Skills announced (in February 2005) the decision to establish a new national Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) for the learning and skills sector by April 2006. The agency will provide a national focus to enable providers to learn from others in the sector and to disseminate good practice and innovation. It will take forward work initiated by the DfES Standards Unit, to build capacity for self-improvement in the sector through commissioning support materials (toolkits) and offering expert advice services to support self-assessment. The QIA will work to secure better outcomes for learners, employers, communities and the economy by providing a national focus for quality improvement in the sector.

36

The Quality Improvement Agency will work closely with the planning and funding bodies, inspectorates and other key partners to offer support to providers to improve quality and to respond better to employers' and learners' needs. This is likely to include working with those providers whose provision has been judged inadequate by the inspectorates and which will be subject to reinspection. It may also offer support to providers where significant issues are identified by the funding bodies following the annual review.

Quality improvement

37

Following the annual self-assessment, all providers will consider what actions will be taken to rectify any weaknesses identified and plans for enhancing the overall quality of their provision. The areas identified for quality improvement will need to take account of inspection outcomes, comparing the findings against their own self-assessment to determine what is being well done and what needs improvement. Since the inspection will judge the quality of the provider's own self-assessment, the opportunity should also be taken to improve self-assessment processes in the light of this.

38

The provider is responsible for deciding what improvements are needed and how these will be implemented. It will need to demonstrate to the planning and funding bodies that its plans are robust and are achievable. In particular, the provider will need to demonstrate that:

- weaknesses identified in any inspection report are being comprehensively addressed
- a clear and urgent timescale for action is in place
- responsibility for addressing areas for improvement is clearly assigned
- funding to support improvement is in place
- weaknesses in the self-assessment process are addressed
- strengths identified in the inspection are sustained.

39

All providers will be expected to review and update their plans to take account of inspection findings. Providers are required to set out clearly what actions are needed and to link this explicitly to the inspection findings within two months of the publication of the inspection report.

Reinspection and post-inspection action planning

40

Providers that have any aspect of their provision judged as inadequate (Grade 4) will be reinspected. There are four kinds of reinspection:

- full reinspection of inadequate providers
- partial reinspection of unsatisfactory or inadequate sector subject categories (previously 'areas of learning') in colleges during AAVs
- partial reinspection of an inadequate area of learning by the ALI
- reinspection in colleges when an aspect of the Common Inspection Framework relating to an age group or an aspect of provision, for example work based learning, is judged to be inadequate.

41

Reinspection will apply as follows:

LSC funded providers

They are required to amend the quality improvement plan which is integral to their self-assessment within two months of the publication of the inspection report. If a provider has been judged inadequate overall it is required to produce a new quality improvement plan which comprehensively addresses the issues identified by the inspection, within the same timescale. The actions which address inspection findings and the timescales by which they will be achieved must be clearly identifiable. (This will meet the statutory requirement of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 to produce a post-inspection action plan). The LSC may engage the QIA to support the development of the quality improvement plan. Providers will also need to consider how far it may be appropriate to change their LSC three-year

development plan in the light of inspection findings and changes in the quality improvement plan. The LSC will take account of the quality improvement plan as part of its process for reviewing the provider's progress against its development plan. The provider is responsible for ensuring that the plan is implemented and for bringing about the required improvements. The timescale for reinspection after the publication of the inspection report is one year for those providers inspected by the ALI and within two years for those inspected by Ofsted. Detailed arrangements for reinspection are the responsibility of the inspectorates.

Jobcentre Plus funded providers

They are required to amend the action plan which is integral to their self-assessment within two months of the publication of the inspection report. If a provider has been judged inadequate overall it is required to produce a new action plan which comprehensively addresses the issues identified by the inspection, within the same timescale. The actions which address inspection findings and the timescales by which they will be achieved must be clearly identifiable. (This will meet the statutory requirement of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 to produce a post-inspection action plan). Providers will also need to consider how far it may be appropriate to change their self-assessment. The timescale for reinspection after the publication of the inspection report is one year by the ALI. Detailed arrangements for reinspection are the responsibility of the inspectorate.

42

After reinspection, providers that are awarded satisfactory grades or better will return to the normal cycle of inspections. The decision on whether a provider moves out of the inadequate category rests solely with the inspectorates. If a provider does not obtain satisfactory grades at a reinspection, the planning and funding bodies will consider what further action should be taken to improve the quality of the learner's experience, involving the QIA where appropriate. They may discontinue the funding but they will also ensure that satisfactory arrangements are put in place to protect the interests of the learners. These arrangements will include decisions to close or transfer the provision to other providers or actions to secure the improvement of the provision found to be inadequate. Separate and more detailed guidance on the choice of actions and the routes to be followed will be published shortly.

Annex A

Summary self-assessment reports

The guidance suggests that for larger providers, by which is meant further education and sixth form colleges and large training providers, a summary self-assessment derived from the larger self-assessment will be appropriate. Since the self-assessment is the provider's own document they must determine the nature of the summary.

It is suggested, however, that the summary should contain the following:

- a brief introduction, including key improvements made since the last review of the development or action plan
- information/data on progress on performance measures in the development or action plan
- key strengths and areas for improvement for the institution as a whole, organised by CIF key questions and for each curriculum area where practicable according to the new subject sector categories
- a table of grades awarded to CIF key questions and curriculum areas
- a summary of the grades awarded for the observation of teaching/learning and assessment.

Annex B

Provider Financial Assurance service centre reviews of financial management and governance

Introduction

The LSC's Provider Financial Assurance (PFA) service centre undertakes the following periodic reviews of financial management and governance in parallel with Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate:

- reviews of financial management and governance at colleges
- reviews of financial management at special education institutions and work based learning providers.

Financial management and governance reviews at colleges

The purpose of PFA service centre reviews at colleges is to provide assurance to the LSC that the financial management and governance arrangements at the college are operated in accordance with relevant statutory responsibilities and LSC requirements, and are effective.

The scope of reviews at colleges is determined by a combination of factors, in particular:

- outcomes of reviews undertaken under the LSC business cycle
- discussions with relevant regional and local LSC colleagues
- recent evidence of colleges' financial health and the outcomes of colleges' audit reports.

In preparation for reviews, colleges are asked to complete a self-assessment, prior to the start of the review. This allows colleges to evaluate their own frameworks for financial management and governance. Detailed guidance for the self-assessments is provided on the LSC website and updated annually.

As part of the annual regularity audit, conducted by their financial statements auditors, colleges are invited to undertake an annual self-assessment to evaluate their regularity and propriety in the use of LSC and other sources of funding. The PFA service centre will look to make use of this document and the work of the colleges' auditors to avoid duplication during their financial management and governance reviews. The regularity audit self-assessment questionnaire is provided on the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk) and updated annually.

Financial management reviews at special education institutions and work based learning providers

The purpose of the LSC's PFA service centre reviews of financial management at special education institutions and work based learning providers is to:

- provide assurance to the LSC that the funds paid for learning are subject to effective financial management arrangements
- ensure funds are used for the appropriate purpose and represent value for money from the perspective of the LSC.

The selection of special education institutions and work based learning providers for review is determined by the level of LSC funding received and discussions with relevant regional and local LSC colleagues.

Sharing of evidence between the PFA service centre and the inspectorates

The PFA service centre takes account of the inspectors' judgements in forming its opinions on the soundness, operation and effectiveness of the financial management and, where relevant, governance frameworks at providers. In reaching their own judgements about the effectiveness of leadership and management, the inspectorates will also take account of the outcomes of PFA judgements including, for colleges, governors' compliance with relevant statutory requirements and advice on good practice and, for all providers, the effectiveness of financial management and the appropriate and effective use of public funds.

Providers' self-assessment reports

The preparation of providers' self-assessment reports will therefore need to take account of the scope of the PFA service centre's reviews, in relation to governance for colleges and financial management for all providers. Judgements in relation to those areas reviewed by the PFA service centre should also contribute to overall judgements about and the grading of leadership and management in the self-assessment report.

Further information on PFA service centre reviews of financial management and governance will be available on the LSC's website under: Documents/Subject Listing/Funding Learning/Provider Finance/Provider Financial Assurance (Related Guidance – Governance and Financial Management).

Annex C

Glossary

Action Plans

A Jobcentre Plus provider's own plan to address the areas for improvement, which have been identified through self-assessment, and the means by which improvement will be achieved.

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate inspects education and training for adults and work based learning for all over the age of 16.

Annual Assessment Visit

An annual visit will be carried out by an HMI from Ofsted by arrangement with the sixth form or further education college. This visit will evaluate the quality improvement plan, the self-assessment reports and other indicators, for example learners' success rates. The visit will be an important factor in determining the scope of inspection.

Common Inspection Framework

Originally issued in 2001, the Common Inspection Framework sets out the broad framework against which providers will be inspected. A revised framework was issued in April 2005.

Headline Performance Measures

Measures agreed between LSC funded providers and their local LSC and which form part of the three-year development plan. Measures cover learner numbers, qualification success rates, responsiveness to employer needs and workforce capability. Providers' progress in achieving the agreed measures is assessed through the Annual Planning Review.

Individualised Learner Record (ILR)

This tracks the progress of the learners, recording their retention, achievements and success. It is therefore a crucial building block of overall retention and achievement evidence for providers.

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions. The aim of the department is to promote opportunity and independence for all. The purpose of Jobcentre Plus is to provide work for those who can and support for those who cannot. It is a major government funding body, which supports unemployed and economically inactive people of working age move closer to the labour market and compete effectively for work, providing financial support while they are out of work. Jobcentre Plus works closely with employers, encouraging them to open up more opportunities to jobless people, helping them fill their vacancies quickly, addressing the key skill needs in different parts of the country and sectors of the economy.

Learning and Skills Council

The principal funding and planning body for post-16 education and training, including school sixth forms but not applying to higher education though it does fund some further education provision within higher education institutions.

New Measures of Success

The New Measures of Success are being developed by the DfES, LSC and the inspectorates as part of Success for All. The measures will be implemented over several years. From September 2005, providers and the inspectorates will be able to pilot reformed Qualification Success Rate, Value Added and Distance Travelled, and Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning (RARPA) measures.

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education)

Ofsted is a non-ministerial government department established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to take responsibility for the inspection of all schools in England. Its role also includes the inspection of local education authorities, teacher training institutions, youth work and the regulation of early years childcare, including child-minders. In the context of this guide Ofsted is responsible for the inspection of all 16–19 education and of most learners below the age of 19.

Provider

A generic term to embrace all those fully or partly funded by the LSC. It includes school sixth forms, specialist independent, sixth form and general further education colleges, training providers, Ufi/**learndirect**, adult and community learning institutions, and those higher education institutions which provide further education. Jobcentre Plus providers are organisations in the public, private and voluntary sector, which complement the Jobcentre Plus service to its customers by delivering labour market programmes, for example, the New Deal.

Provider Financial Assurance

This is the name for that part of the LSC which is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of providers' financial management, and in the case of sixth form colleges and further education, governors' compliance with statutory requirements and advice on good practice.

Quality Improvement Agency

A new government body, being established from April 2006, which will work with the inspectorates, the LSC and other key partners and providers to develop and implement a national quality improvement strategy across the sector.

Quality Improvement Plan

The provider's own plan to address the areas for improvement, which is integral to the self-assessment, and the means by which improvement will be achieved. Jobcentre Plus uses a slightly different terminology, in particular 'action plan' in place of 'quality improvement plan'.

Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning (RARPA)

The LSC has developed the RARPA approach to assist providers to do this more effectively for non-accredited learning where learner achievements and outcomes are less clearly defined or comparable. Further information can be found at: www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/PolicyandDevelopment/AdultandCommunity/welcome_rarpa.htm

Risk Assessment

The process by which the planning and funding bodies and inspectorates will evaluate the capacity of a provider to secure improvement. This will determine the assessment of the level of risk, which will then inform the intensity of inspection and of the planning and funding bodies' review of the provider's capacity to deliver its three-year development plan.

Self-assessment

The process by which a provider reviews the effectiveness of all its activities, but particularly teaching and learning, the success of learners and leadership and management. The outcome of the self-assessment will be a self-assessment report with an integral quality improvement plan to carry forward the areas for improvement it has identified.

Success for All

Success for All is a long-term, comprehensive strategy of investment and reform of further education and training for people aged 16 and above. Operated by the DfES and the LSC, *Success for All* sets out to raise standards, improve the responsiveness of provision to meet needs and priorities including those of employers and build the capacity of the further education and training workforce.

Qualification success rates

The measure of the success of a cohort of learners between original enrolment and completion with an award. Both retention on a programme of learning or training and final achievement of a qualification will contribute to success.

Three-year development plan

A three-year development plan is agreed between LSC funded providers and the local LSC. This will set out how the provider will contribute to meeting local, regional and sector needs and priorities, and how it will improve learners' outcomes.

Annex D

Subject sector categories (previously areas of learning)

Area	First Tier	Area	Second Tier
1	Health, Public Services and Care	1.1	Medicine and Dentistry
		1.2	Nursing and Subjects and Vocations Allied to Medicine
		1.3	Health and Social Care
		1.4	Public Services
		1.5	Child Development and Well Being
2	Science and Mathematics	2.1	Science
		2.2	Mathematics and Statistics
3	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	3.1	Agriculture
		3.2	Horticulture and Forestry
		3.3	Animal Care and Veterinary Science
		3.4	Environmental Conservation
4	Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	4.1	Engineering
		4.2	Manufacturing Technologies
		4.3	Transportation Operations and Maintenance
5	Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	5.1	Architecture
		5.2	Building and Construction
		5.3	Urban, Rural and Regional Planning
6	Information and Communication Technology	6.1	ICT Practitioners
		6.2	ICT for Users
7	Retail and Commercial Enterprise	7.1	Retailing and Wholesaling
		7.2	Warehousing and Distribution
		7.3	Service Enterprises
		7.4	Hospitality and Catering
8	Leisure, Travel and Tourism	8.1	Sport, Leisure and Recreation
		8.2	Travel and Tourism

Area	First Tier	Area	Second Tier
9	Arts, Media and Publishing	9.1	Performing Arts
		9.2	Crafts, Creative Arts and Design
		9.3	Media and Communication
		9.4	Publishing and Information Services
10	History, Philosophy and Theology	10.1	History
		10.2	Archaeology and Archaeological Sciences
		10.3	Philosophy
		10.4	Theology and Religious Studies
11	Social Sciences	11.1	Geography
		11.2	Sociology and Social Policy
		11.3	Politics
		11.4	Economics
		11.5	Anthropology
12	Languages, Literature and Culture	12.1	Languages, Literature and Culture of the British Isles
		12.2	Other Languages, Literature and Culture
		12.3	Linguistics
13	Education and Training	13.1	Teaching and Lecturing
		13.2	Direct Learning Support
14	Preparation for Life and Work	14.1	Foundations for Learning and Life
		14.2	Preparation for Work
15	Business, Administration and Law	15.1	Accounting and Finance
		15.2	Administration
		15.3	Business Management
		15.4	Marketing and Sales
		15.5	Law and Legal Services

Annex E

The college self-assessment and quality improvement cycle



Further Information

Visit the LSC online at www.lsc.gov.uk for up-to-date news on the LSC and education and training in England.

There's a lot more here about our policies and activities and you can access online versions of LSC publications.

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The logo for jobcentreplus, featuring the text 'jobcentreplus' in a lowercase, sans-serif font. 'job' is in blue, 'centre' is in black, and 'plus' is in blue.

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ADULT LEARNING
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