



spending review special

The 2004 Spending Review will determine departmental expenditure for 2006–07 and 2007–08. Again, the government emphasises that resources are targeted at areas it considers to be priorities and that resources are matched with reforms. In its submission to the 2004 Spending Review, ACM makes a number of recommendations on behalf of its members:

- The college sector needs significant new resources to improve pay levels, improve staff recruitment and retention, and to modernise pay arrangements and employment practices.
- Sufficient resources are needed to make good progress towards the national targets for the trained and qualified teacher workforce essential for consistently excellent provision, and to provide the ongoing professional development vital to maintain high standards of delivery.
- Additional investment is necessary to secure excellent training for the present and future leaders of the sector.
- Additional resources are required to support the learning, for personal and economic purposes, of older learners.

A regional approach to casework In-house training

This month sees the appointment of an ACM regional caseworker. Patrick Boardman becomes caseworker for London and the south-east for a trial period during the summer term. The aim is to provide members with a wider and more proactive level of support.

Presently, all ACM caseworkers are freelance consultants. As a directly employed caseworker, Patrick will provide the same high standard of support, but members in London and the south-east will be able to contact him directly to discuss workplace problems rather than through the ACM helpline. ACM branches will be informed of the telephone number soon. Based in London, Patrick will also visit colleges in order to recruit new members and develop ACM's branches in the south-east. A crucial part of his work will be early intervention when a restructuring seems likely.

A former college manager and a qualified barrister, Patrick brings valuable legal knowledge to ACM. This expertise remains available to ACM members nationally, so members based outside of the south-east will see no change in the service and all our current caseworkers will continue their important work for ACM.

Commenting on his new appointment, Patrick said: 'This is an opportunity for ACM to become more proactive. I hope the support I provide to members and branches will bring many benefits and help to raise the profile of ACM in the region.'

The introduction of a regional caseworker in the south-east is only a pilot, but, if successful, it will eventually be rolled out across the country with the appointment of other directly employed regional caseworkers.

ACM can provide in-house training to colleges at a very reasonable cost. Our current portfolio consists of training on basic employment law, preventing work-related stress, disciplinary and grievance, media, performance management, emotional intelligence, coaching and mentoring, and strategic skills for middle managers.

For further information on any of these topics please visit our website.

Our survey said...?

We have had an overwhelming response to our survey on working time and related issues, and would like to thank all those members who completed the questionnaire and sent it back to us. We are in the process of examining the data and will publish a detailed analysis of the survey outcomes in the next edition of ACM news.

ACM website

Visit **www.acm.uk.com** for up-to-date information on member services, forthcoming events and details of the latest news on pay and funding.

Request for an ACM information pack and application form

I am considering joining ACM, please provide me with further information.

Full name

Job title

Name of organisation and address

Please return to: Membership Department, Association for College Management,

10 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GG

Tel 0116 275 5076 Fax 0116 255 0548

Email membership@acm.uk.com Web www.acm.uk.com

lobbying activities

Speaking to influence

ACM continues its lobbying activities. Recently representatives have met with Ken Boston, Chief Executive, QCA; John Brennan, Chief Executive, and Sue Dutton, Deputy Chief Executive, AoC; and Heidi Adcock and Barbara Roberts of the DfES Standards Unit. Areas for discussion at these meetings were the Skills Strategy and the need for appropriate Level 2 qualifications, the 14–19 framework, progress that has been made on the awarding body convergence project, the Public Spending Review, the work of the DfES Standards Unit, pay and funding issues, the Sector Skills Council and the governor consultation.

Further meetings are planned with Chris Hughes, Chief Executive, LSDA; Caroline Neville, Director of Learning Group, LSC; David Hunter, Chief Executive, FENTO; Lynne Sedgmore, Director and Chief Executive (designate) of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership; and Francis O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary, TUC.

Pension age campaign continues

Plans to increase the normal pension age to 65 in the Teachers' scheme and to abolish the 85-year rule in the Local Government scheme are still on the table. Indeed, it looks likely that changes to the latter could be in place as early as April 2005.

ACM members have been voicing their opposition to these plans for some time. An e-mail for forwarding to the minister responsible was circulated to branches, and a model letter that can be sent to MPs is still available on our website.

To keep up the pressure, ACM has joined a group of 20 education and civil service unions under the banner of Quality Public Services, Quality Public Servants, Quality Pensions. The aim is to support joint lobbies of local MPs in an effort to win concessions from the government. Information packs about the campaign have been sent to branches and further details are available on the ACM website.

Pay negotiations in Wales

Negotiations on the pay increase to take effect from 1 April 2004 are continuing. It is hoped that the National Assembly for Wales will provide up to £11m to fund a settlement. The employers' current position for management spine staff is as follows:

'Management spine staff should receive at least an inflationary increase. This will help ensure the preservation of differentials and the recognition of additional responsibilities carried out by management spine staff. A more detailed analysis should be carried out during the year into responsibilities and appropriate allowances. The WNCC should emphasise strongly to the Minister the need to review responsibilities and allowances for lecturers and managers to be implemented in Year 3 – 2005/06. Management spine staff with teaching duties, and those managers with responsibility for managing teaching staff, should be entitled to earn at least the level of the UP1. As a general principle, no manager should be paid less than the staff they manage.

As part of discussions on Year 3 (2005/06), a working party should be established to consider responsibilities and allowances, and should aim to complete its task by August 2004.'

A further meeting between the employers' representatives and the trades unions is scheduled for the end of the month and further updates will be available on the ACM website. A separate newsletter for Wales, covering the pay negotiations and the reorganisation of ACM in Wales, will be distributed to members shortly.

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equal opportunities striving for equality

David Sorensen, Solicitor, Morrish & Co, reports on the finer details of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Most employers and employees are aware of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. To be entitled to the protection of the Act, an employee must have a 'physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. The adverse effect on the ability to carry out 'normal day-to-day activities' must be more than 'minor' and 'trivial'.

An impairment is to be treated as affecting an employee's ability to carry out 'normal day-to-day activities' only if it affects one or more of the defined 'activities'. The defined 'activities' are mobility; manual dexterity; physical coordination; continence; the ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; and the perception of the risk of physical danger.

Lastly, the substantial adverse effect of an impairment has also to be 'long term'. The effect of an impairment is 'long term' only if it has lasted at least 12 months, is likely to last at least 12 months, or is likely to last for the rest of the life of the employee affected.

Currently disability discrimination can occur in two ways:

- Where an employer, for a reason which relates to a disabled employee's disability, unjustifiably treats that employee less favourably than an employee to whom that reason does not or would not apply (a non-disabled employee).

For example, it is unlawful for an employer to unjustifiably discriminate against a disabled employee by refusing the disabled employee opportunities for promotion, training or other employment benefits.

- Where an employer unjustifiably fails to comply with a duty to carry out reasonable adjustments to prevent a disabled employee from being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments may include: transferring an employee to fill an existing vacancy, allowing an employee time off during working hours for rehabilitation or treatment, assigning an employee to a different place of work, changing an employee's duties, or supplying new work equipment (such as a special chair or computer equipment).

Forthcoming amendments

The law in this area is constantly evolving. Legislative amendments are to be made to the Act and these are expected to come into force on 1 October 2004. Of particular importance is the introduction of specific protection from harassment for disabled employees, in instances where it can be shown that the harassment is for a reason relating to a person's disability.

Accordingly, it will be unlawful for a person to subject a disabled person to harassment where, for a reason which relates to the disabled person's disability, the person engages in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the disabled person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the disabled person. Technically, such protection from harassment was already contained within the duty of an employer not to unjustifiably treat a person less favourably, but it is expected that this further change will simplify and widen such protection for disabled employees.

Lastly, there is also a proposal to widen the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act, to classify more people as 'disabled' under the Act. It is expected that this would cover more people diagnosed with progressive conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cancer and HIV.

Morrish & Co represents ACM and its members. The company is able to offer a range of legal services to ACM members and their families. Personal injury and road traffic claims can be dealt with at no cost, and other services, such as will writing, inheritance tax advice, conveyancing and family breakdown, are offered at a special discount. For more details please contact the ACM helpline 0116 285 4055.

special feature

the 2004 spending review:

A submission from the Association for College Management

Key points

The college sector makes a distinctive and substantial contribution to the prosperity of the economy and the flourishing of individual lives. Sixty per cent of all 16–19 year olds in education are studying in colleges. Each year over 4m young people and adults study in colleges.

This Association supports the government's reform agenda and is confident that colleges can deliver policy priorities provided we have the necessary resources.

ACM fully supports the Association of Colleges' (AoC) submission to the 2004 Spending Review. The purpose of this paper is to highlight issues of particular concern to ACM's members.

Key recommendations

Sufficient and additional new resources are required to:

- improve pay levels, staff recruitment and retention, and to modernise pay arrangements and employment practices
- make good progress towards the national targets for the trained and qualified teacher workforce essential for consistently excellent provision, and to provide ongoing professional development to sustain high standards
- invest in excellent training for the present and future leaders of the sector
- support the learning, for personal and economic purposes, of older learners. The needs of older learners are substantial in volume, significant to the economy, yet seriously neglected.

Introduction

This Association welcomes the Success for All framework. We hope and believe that it provides a strategic, stable, long-term agenda for change and improvement. This is a welcome contrast to the parade of changing policies that characterised the 1980s and 1990s. We support this government's priorities of:

- radically improving the curriculum framework and qualifications available for 14–19 year olds
- radically improving the skills and qualifications of under-skilled adults in ways that meet the needs of employers and the economy
- increasing the participation of young and adult learners, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- increasing the volume of HE-level vocational training
- improving the skills and qualifications of the sector's workforce
- modernising pay
- improving the physical infrastructure of teaching and learning
- improving access to high-quality and impartial advice and guidance
- reducing bureaucracy
- embedding a culture of community-focused public service.

We appreciate, too, this government's recognition of the centrality of the college sector to the delivery of education and training programmes essential to a prosperous forward-looking 21st-century economy. In addition to its economic function, further education enriches and expands individuals' opportunities for personal development and fulfilment.

special feature

the 2004 spending review

Delivery and resources

The government has recognised that for many years the college sector was starved of resources as a result of a relentless efficiency savings policy. During the 1990s the quantum of resource made available to sector colleges was driven down, while at the same time colleges were required to increase the numbers of students they educated. The key elements of 1990's policies emphasised low cost, high numbers and the market. The current government has substantially improved resources to the sector, particularly in last year's settlement, and has replaced the low-cost and market-driven policies with a welcome emphasis on quality, area planning and a thorough review of the curriculum and qualifications.

One opinion, many voices

We make the point about the long period of starvation in order to highlight how even a generous settlement, such as that of last year, goes only some way to make up for the long period of serious under-resourcing. About 80 of our 400 plus colleges are financially weak, and a third made a deficit in 2001–02. Twenty-five per cent of colleges are having difficulty implementing the current year's recommended pay offer, though they would all wish to. The sector has not yet been equipped with the resources to deliver on our shared priorities. And that is the central point of this paper: colleges certainly share this government's priorities and have the will, the commitment and the creativity to deliver on those priorities. However, as yet, we do not have the resources we need. Comparatively speaking, colleges still do not enjoy the resource levels of other areas of education such as higher education or schools. We believe this is also the central point of the 2004 Spending Review submission by the AoC, and we would like to express our strong support for AoC's paper in principle and in detail: it voices the collective views of the college sector.

Without additional resources, managers in sector colleges will not be able to be as responsive as they would wish to the government's priorities. We are pleased to learn that the Department and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) are looking to diminish the cost of central administration in both of those organisations, and thus increase the proportion of the budget that flows through to delivery. We would be interested to know the official estimate of these potential efficiency gains.

Direct resources to the students

We believe there is a good deal of duplication of function (and, therefore, wasteful expenditure) at the centre and that significant resources could be freed up for the front line. Consider, for example, the quality functions (policy, support, standards setting, analysis, training) of the following organisations: the LSC, the Standards Unit, LSDA, Ofsted, the Adult Learning Inspectorate, the incipient Sector Skills Council and its FE precursor FENTO. A moment's reflection and one recognises a good deal of overlap and duplication here, which not only has a tendency to obfuscate quality issues but also absorbs substantial resources that could otherwise be directed towards students.

On a related point there is the potential to free up further resources if the unnecessary bureaucracy associated with audits and with the over-assessment of learning were reduced.

A final point: too often it is assumed that the authorised funding increase coming to colleges from the LSC represents a percentage increase on colleges' total income. It does not. For some colleges as little as half of their income comes from mainstream LSC funding; the rest of their income comes from contracts to deliver, for example, prison education, work-based learning, higher education etc. Recent increases in these funding streams have generally been no higher than inflation – significantly lower than the increases in LSC funding. But the benefits of the increase in LSC funding cannot reasonably be restricted to the delivery of mainstream LSC work: it must be spread across the whole staff, the whole facility. Thus a 6.5% increase in LSC income does not represent a 6.5% income overall, though our experience is that sometimes this appears to be the perception of ministers and officials. On average, LSC funding constitutes about 75% of a college's total funding.

The priorities of ACM

The AoC paper makes trenchant arguments for additional resources for sector colleges for a wide range of activities. In this paper the Association for College Management highlights priorities of top concern to our members.

1. Pay

The government, the trade unions that represent the sector's workforce, and the sector's employers are committed to the modernisation of pay arrangements and employment practices. Specifically our shared objectives are to promote a professional and well-rewarded workforce; performance management; job evaluation, and a nationally recognised pay spine. Updating pay and employment practices will improve staff recruitment and retention, diminish the potential for industrial unrest and build the capacity of the sector to deliver the government's priority objectives for post-16 education and training.

The demographic profile of the sector's teaching workforce is well evidenced. A significant proportion of our workforce will retire within the next decade. For the future, if we are to achieve a successful post-16 sector well synchronised with a prosperous and dynamic economy, we must ensure that employment in the post-16 education and skills sector is attractive to bright, committed, ambitious young people. Such people will be looking for interesting, well-rewarded, publicly valued jobs that carry status and opportunities for promotion. That is not the reality at present: starting salaries in colleges are projected to be about £2800 below school teacher starting salaries; lecturers at the top of the scale will earn at least £5400 less than their counterparts in schools. A number of colleges find themselves forced, reluctantly, to pay below the national rates. Research by the General Federation of Trade Unions, commissioned by this organisation, suggests that college managers' earnings are, on average, about £6000 less than those of managers in other sectors. Yet good leadership is, we all agree, critical to world-class service: the sector must attract the best if we want to deliver the best.

Modernising pay and employment practices is one important strategy for ensuring a first-class workforce today and for the future.

The college sector needs significant new resources to improve pay levels, improve staff recruitment and retention, and to modernise pay arrangements and employment practices.

2. Workforce development

Theme 3 of Success for All is titled 'Developing the leaders, teachers, trainers and support staff of the future'. This Association believes that a skilful, qualified workforce is the sine qua non for the delivery of excellent education. However modern the capital infrastructure, or good and relevant the curriculum and qualifications frameworks, we will fail learners if our teachers and managers are not equipped with the skills, knowledge and qualities to perform their jobs well.

Teacher qualifications

We welcome the target of 90% of full-time teachers being qualified by 2006, 60% of part-time teachers. Also welcome is the consultation about Initial Teacher Education and the forthcoming reforms, whose purpose must be to develop training and qualifications that provide a consistently reliable indication that through their training and qualification the individual has gained the necessary skills, knowledge and qualities that equip them to carry out their job to high standards, and to continue learning. (This sector's raison d'être is to enable individuals to gain the training and qualifications that 'kite-mark' them as possessing particular capabilities for a job or for further education. It is unacceptable – and ironic – if initial teacher qualifications in further education cannot fulfil that function. Reliable and appropriate training and qualifications – those for doctors, midwives, gas fitters provide good examples – are vital to maintaining high and trusted standards of practice.)

Colleges wish to manage their teacher qualification programme seamlessly within a whole-college view of improving teaching and learning.

Sufficient resources are needed to make good progress towards the national targets for the trained and qualified teacher workforce essential for consistently excellent provision, and to provide the ongoing professional development vital to maintain high standards of delivery.

special feature

the 2004 spending review

Management training

The Centre for Excellence and Leadership marks a step change in the provision of training for the sector's future leaders. We believe the decision to accord such emphasis to nurturing world-class leadership in the sector is correct and necessary. We concur with the Office for Public Service Reform's point (first stages of the implementation of Success for All in colleges: conclusions and recommendations) that work on public service values and public service reform should be included on the curriculum of the College for Excellence and Leadership.

However, many colleges are unable to afford the cost of the Centre's training courses; and in some cases these may be the colleges most in need of the training. We believe that the offer of the new college is too expensive for the staff development budget of many colleges, unless further resources are made available.

Additional investment is necessary to secure excellent training for the present and future leaders of the sector.

3. Older learners

This Association was proactive in calling for the Level 2 entitlement for adult learners announced in the National Skills Strategy and we commend the government's wisdom in following through on this policy. However, we are concerned that the requirement to deliver this policy within existing resources (perhaps augmented in a limited way through increased fee revenue) might exclude other groups of learners whom we should also be prioritising. We will illustrate our case with particular reference to older learners.

The needs of older learners have an astonishingly low profile in the education firmament. They rarely make it to the agenda in spite of this Association's efforts at TUC conference, in a range of other fora, and in our responses to government policy consultations.

We believe the government may underestimate the economic returns on improving older people's participation in learning (and the economic cost of failing to do so). The benefits of participating in learning for older people are far from negligible especially as the proportion of the population in that age group expands (in 16 years time 40% of the population will be over 55), and as changes to pensions lead people to anticipate longer working lives. About one-third of unemployed people over the age of 50 would like to be in work. Finding work benefits not only those individuals, but also transforms them into net contributors to the economy. But at present there is an absence of policies, incentives and resources targeted at updating the skills and knowledge of older learners.

Furthermore there is a good deal of evidence that continuing to learn in later years is positively correlated with better health, both physical and mental. Self evidently, continued good health and independence are beneficial to the individual, but they also reduce the cost to health and social services of caring for unhealthy or dependent people.

Additional resources are required to support the learning, for personal and economic purposes, of older learners.

Conclusion

We hope you have found our arguments persuasive. The Association would be delighted to engage in further analysis and debate, and to provide further evidence and ideas to support our contribution to the 2004 Spending Review.

special feature

financing further education



John Brennan, Chief Executive, Association of Colleges, looks at the implications for the FE sector of the 2004 Spending Review.

Colleges may yet come to see the outcome of the 2002 Spending Review as the highpoint of the present government's commitment to improvement in post-16 learning. With overall real terms increases of 6% per annum for the period 2003–04 to 2005–06, investment in further education is growing at an unprecedented rate. Although many of the benefits of that investment have yet to be felt, by 2006, total expenditure on further education will be double that at incorporation in 1993.

Moreover, the funding increases are embedded in a new policy framework that gives colleges a crucial role in the delivery of key government social and economic goals.

Colleges are at the leading edge in policies as diverse as:

- enhancing individual opportunity through widening participation in learning
- tackling the scandalously low levels of basic skills and vocational capability of too many of the adult workforce
- enhancing productivity, business competitiveness and national prosperity through raising skill levels
- broadening learning opportunities for 14–16 year olds
- aiming for the target of 50% participation in higher education among those under 30 by 2010.

So what of the prospects for further education in the 2004 Spending Review? The omens are not propitious. The economy is in less good shape now than two years ago, with public sector borrowing rising much too fast for comfort. Reflecting this, ministerial statements aimed at damping down expectations have flowed thick and fast. Leaving aside the NHS, the best that can be expected for other public services are increases in line with the growth of the economy – about 2.5% in real terms (or 5% in cash terms) in each of 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Would increases at that level be sufficient for post-16 learning? The answer must be a resounding no. Not only would it leave further education seriously disadvantaged as compared with schools and universities, it is already clear that the resources currently in the system will not support realisation of all the ambitious policy goals ministers have set.

A few illustrations will suffice.

Many colleges are already facing difficult choices in determining patterns of adult provision because funding is insufficient to meet existing demands, let alone accommodate the new Level 2 entitlement. Expansion of the Increased Flexibility pilots for 14–16 year olds will simply be impossible without a proper funding model, reflecting the necessarily higher costs involved in delivering a wider curriculum. And the drive to improve quality of learning provision and standards of attainment can only be at risk if further resources are not available to carry through the pay modernisation reforms already in train, to lift skill levels of college staff, and to invest in resources and accommodation to match the requirements of employers.

In its submission to the Spending Review, AoC has set out an assessment of the funding needs of the sector up to 2007–08. It believes the real cost of delivering all the current government's ambitions will amount to some £1.9b on top of existing plans. Without an increase at this level, current government aspirations are unachievable, and the promised better future for post-16 learners simply unattainable. AoC will be campaigning to ensure that these needs are fully understood and properly reflected in the outcomes of the Review. It will be looking to all its partners in the sector – including ACM – to give their support to the campaign to achieve a fair deal for all post-16 learners.

New employment relations leaflets

Six new leaflets relating to different aspects of employment can be downloaded from the members' area of the ACM website. Alternatively, copies can be requested by sending an e-mail message to helpline@acm.uk.com

The leaflets are as follows:

ER21 Lesbian, gay and bisexual workers
ER22 Paid adoption leave
ER23 Disability discrimination
ER24 Religion or belief discrimination
ER25 Flexible working
ER26 Whistleblowing.

Recruitment matters

Recruitment materials, including posters and information packs, are now available from ACM for you to circulate to colleagues and display at your college. Please contact Jane Dunn, Membership Administrator, on 0116 275 5076 or by e-mail at membership@acm.uk.com for your supply and help us spread the word about ACM.

Don't forget that any individual who has managerial responsibility for people or resources is eligible to join ACM. This includes finance managers, estate managers, HR managers, marketing managers, MIS managers, contracts managers and other business managers at all levels, as well as those on the traditional management spine.

ACM launches associate member category

ACM's associate member category offers support and guidance to aspiring managers seeking to secure their first management position. An existing ACM member will need to sponsor the application and membership is open to any employee in the sector who can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the ACM General Secretary, that they have the potential to be appointed to a management position in the foreseeable future. Associate members will receive:

- training, development and guidance on management issues
- self-assessment materials
- career guidance and interview training
- mentoring scheme
- best practice guidelines
- access to the ACM helpline*
- employment relations leaflets
- ACM publications
- e-information service
- discounts on insurance and financial services
- tax relief on subscription
- free TUC/GFTU courses
- discounts on ACM seminars and conferences
- access to the members' only area on the ACM website.

*Associate members are not entitled to support or representation from the ACM caseworker service.

If you know of any colleagues who are looking to become managers in the near future and who would like some assistance in achieving their goal, refer them to the ACM website www.acm.uk.com for further information and joining details.

acm responds

ACM's response to *Measuring success in the learning and skills sector*.

- The college sector is happy to be judged on valid, necessary and consistent success measures. They should be valid because their claims should be accurate; consistent because they should enable comparability across institutions and sectors; and necessary because there is already far too much bureaucracy in the sector and we should not be collecting any data other than that which will add substantial value to the service to learners.
- The introduction of Strategic Area Reviews brings additional urgency to the need for measures that give us transparency, consistency and comparability. Good planning is evidently impossible if there are no reliable yardsticks by which to compare and consider different provision.
- However – a word of caution. Data should never be collected for the sake of collecting it nor for the reason of controlling providers. Additional bureaucracy is only justifiable if it adds substantial and significant value to the service to learners.
- This Association has long advocated the development of value-added measures, and we are heartened to see their inclusion in the proposals in this document.
- ACM believes that consistency is of critical importance and will help to replace the current jungle of data with comparability, equity and transparency. We fully support the proposal for a common framework across all types of provision. At present there is substantial inconsistency in how success is measured (indeed if it is measured): comparatively little data is collected about adult and community provision; data on school sixth form provision is patchy; and data on work-based learning is non-comparable.
- Learner satisfaction measures are helpful and a valuable tool. They are relatively easy to administer. Well designed they lend themselves to consistency and comparability, and they can be used to embrace aspects of provision for which it is difficult (or difficult without convoluted bureaucracy) to develop indicators that permit comparability with other areas of the offer.

- In the view of the Association, government and other bodies tend to underestimate the engagement of colleges with employers and we would welcome a neat and efficient measure of this activity.
- Measuring the capability of providers' staff is very important, since the quality of service delivery depends critically on the skills, knowledge, qualities and qualifications of those who deliver and manage learning. At present, however, the staff individualised record does this inadequately and there are other overlapping initiatives in this area. We would urge that a single framework that collects data efficiently and accurately is developed and implemented in place of the existing processes.

The consultation paper can be downloaded from the LSC website. Visit www.lsc.gov.uk and click on 'Documents'.

Responding to a bomb scare

We'd all like to think that last month's horrific events in Madrid will not be repeated. But in the current climate how should a college deal with the threat of a bomb on its premises? Although colleges must have emergency evacuation procedures, questions have been asked about the role of managers in searching premises during a bomb scare.

Advice from the Home Office is that searches should be carried out by people who are familiar with the buildings and grounds affected; and that for practical reasons, searches cannot be carried out by the Police. Certainly if there are any doubts about roles and responsibilities then perhaps now is a good time to review college security measures. A policy and search procedure for dealing with bomb scares should be clear and set out exactly who will do what in the event of a situation.

Advice on dealing with potential threats and developing procedures can be found at the Home Office website www.homeoffice.gov.uk by following the link on terrorism. You should download the booklet Bombs: protecting people and property. Further advice can be obtained from your local Crime Prevention Department contactable through the Police, and from the Health and Safety Executive. Clearly, as it would have a direct impact on staff, we would expect colleges to involve ACM and other unions in developing such a policy.

acm news

events

ACM's training and development portfolio 'Enabling managers to meet the challenge' commences with the following events throughout the summer term. For further details on any of these events and a booking form, visit the ACM website or telephone our events office on 0116 275 5076.

Emotional intelligence masterclass
20 April 2004 | Central London | £299

ACM and the Hay Group are offering managers the opportunity to gain an understanding of the principles of emotional intelligence (EI). Having a high level of self-awareness of the effect that you have on others is essential if you want to have a positive impact, be a successful manager and get the best out of your team. Identify which EI competencies are essential for your job, find out how you compare to the outstanding leadership benchmark, and discover the EI competencies you already use effectively and those that you could develop further.

Basic employment law
27 April 2004 | Birmingham City Centre
£70 ACM members | £100 non-members

Well-motivated staff and managers, good communications and recognising achievement are all steps in developing good employment relationships. But another useful tool can be some knowledge of employment law. This course is aimed at anyone wanting to understand the basics of employment law. It will look at issues such as employment contracts, laws relating to pay and conditions, and unfair dismissal.

Media training
29 April 2004 | Birmingham City Centre
£245 ACM members | £265 non-members

This very practical and participative course offers advice and techniques on every aspect of interviewing including: how to prepare for a good interview, identifying aims and objectives, understanding the audience, developing and supporting your messages, dealing with questions, creating a positive and powerful style, and body language and clothing. The number of delegate places available is limited to a maximum of 10 to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to undertake a television and radio interview, and take home a video of their performance.

Preventing work-related stress
11 May 2004 | Central London
£70 ACM members | £100 non-members

Work-related stress is a significant cause of occupational ill-health. According to the HSE, of the 40.2 million days lost to UK business in the 2001–02 period, a huge 13.4 million were lost to stress, anxiety or depression. Book a place on this ACM training event in order to identify the hazards that might lead to stress in the workplace, consider the organisational and practical steps that can help to prevent work-related stress and consider the legal implications of this problem.

Coaching and mentoring masterclass
13 May 2004 | Leeds City Centre | £299

Increasingly, retaining and developing talent is a major challenge for organisations in the post-16 learning and skills sector. Coaching develops individuals' talents and enables them to maximise their effectiveness and to realise their aspirations. Attend the ACM/Hay Group masterclass workshop and learn how to enable career transitions and progressions, cope with change or stress and develop new behaviours or skills.

The benefits and working practices of CMIS
17 May 2004 | Birmingham City Centre
£120 ACM members | £150 non-members

This ACM training event will demonstrate how to promote an organisational culture and management which supports and enables a college's management information system (CMIS) to produce relevant, useful and accurate data and information efficiently and effectively. This session is not about the technicalities of CMIS; rather it is about how to secure staff ownership and commitment to CMIS procedures such that all feel they have a stake in CMIS working well and that they benefit from its efficient operation.

Grievance and disciplinary
8 June 2004 | Leeds City Centre
£70 ACM members | £100 non-members

This training event will look at best practice in dealing with grievances and disciplinary matters. It will cover issues such as the law, the use of procedures, investigations and the conduct of hearings. It is aimed at anyone wanting to develop their awareness and skills in these important matters whether in their role as a college manager or as an ACM representative.

acm responds

initial teacher education

ACM's response to the DfES consultation *The future of initial teacher education for the learning and skills sector – an agenda for reform.*

Excellent delivery depends on a workforce who can do that job well. However good the capital infrastructure or the qualification and curriculum arrangements, their value is lost where teaching and learning are not up to scratch. A well-trained, well-qualified, valued and well-rewarded workforce is the sine qua non of achieving the Success for All agenda.

Teacher qualifications should be a kitemark that the individual has the skills and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities well. The perception of the present qualifications is that they do not perform this function. The *raison d'être* of the learning and skills sector is to train people and prepare them to gain qualifications that indicate their ability to do a job or pursue advanced study. It is ironic that that vital function of a qualification as a kitemark is not satisfactorily fulfilled by our own teacher training arrangements.

Critically important, too, is the presentation of the sector as a place where bright, talented and enthusiastic young people might want to make their career. That is not the situation at present and given the demographic profile of staff in the sector, recruitment problems are worsening each year. A well-trained, well-qualified workforce whose members are accorded due status and value is one important strategy for addressing this issue.

Further education is an enduring phrase with good public recognition. Politicians may be blind to further education, but most ordinary people recognise the idea of the local FE college. Learning and skills, on the other hand, is a new and rather odd phrase – a random duo: learning is a process, and skills a possible (but not the only) outcome of learning. It is unlikely to establish itself in the public consciousness precisely because of its lack of clear meaning. For these reasons we consider that the new qualifications should bring the status QTFE.

We support the model for initial training (often in-service) followed by a period of workplace development which would include further observation, support, mentoring and additional training. We also seek recognition that professional formation is a career-long process.

The Association supports the development of a national professional development journal and is working with the Institute for Learning on this project. We would like to see this practice adopted across the sector, integrated into the existing processes that enable individual practitioners to reflect on their practice, their learning and their development needs and goals. We propose a lean and simple system based on common standards, sufficiently flexible to support the diversity of practitioners and their particular environments.

A review of our language might be helpful. Does the 'continuing' in CPD lower the status of these activities? Should we think about a new language: *professional practice development* or *learning and practice development*?

Flexible entry criteria

Entry and entry criteria for FE teaching is more complicated than entry into school teaching. This is because FE colleges must attract into teaching a more diverse population with varying levels and patterns of prior attainment if they are to recruit the teachers they need to cover the remarkable curriculum range they offer. Entry criteria need to be a good deal more flexible than entry into school teaching.

Initial assessment is vital in order to create a learning programme appropriate to the needs of the trainee teacher. Training programmes should, therefore, recognise different starting points with appropriate programmes and support.

However, this entry flexibility does not mean that entry should be an open door. Flexible entry does not have to imply that we don't have standards. We should still be stringently assessing applicants for commitment and the potential and the capacity to become an excellent teacher.

Observation of teaching practice should be a main element in teacher training; it should be developmental and offer the trainee plentiful support and feedback.

Seeking excellence

We strongly endorse the introduction of a national framework for the training and development of teacher educators. Excellent initial teacher education is vital to the Success for All agenda and for the attainment of the ultimate purpose of those reforms, which is to offer more people world-class education and training relevant to their personal development needs and to the demands of a thriving economy.

Excellent teaching depends on excellent teachers: thus the standard of initial teacher education is vital. So the same argument applies to our teacher educators. Without skilful staff who deliver teacher education to high standards, we will not develop teachers of the quality we need.

ACM considers that the revised FENTO standards should be covered during stages 1 and 2 (initial training and workplace development). Trainees will have individual learning plans so the pattern of learning for covering the standards will vary from individual to individual. There should be sufficient flexibility for this.

The development of the FENTO standards was a critically important milestone for the sector. It marked important progress towards a more systematic, rigorous and demanding approach to the development of excellent practice. We have learned a good deal in the few years since the development of the standards and now is a good time to use our experience and practice to improve the original design.

In the view of the Association the endorsement process originated and developed by FENTO has moved the sector forward very substantially. Responsibility for endorsement currently lies with FENTO. This function may now be carried over to the new Sector Skills Council (SSC).

A leaner infrastructure

In any event we do not need a new body or bodies set up to do this. The learning and skills landscape is already awash with organisations with responsibility for aspects of quality. Consider, for example, the quality functions (policy, support, standards setting, analysis, training) of the following organisations: the LSC, the Standards Unit, LSDA, Ofsted, the Adult Learning Inspectorate, the incipient SSC and its FE precursor FENTO. A moment's reflection and one recognises a good deal of overlap and duplication here which not only has a tendency to obscure quality issues but also absorbs substantial resources that could otherwise be directed towards students. This is not a criticism of the work and contributions of the people in these organisations but rather a thought that the structural infrastructure could be leaner, clearer and more focused.