INITIATIVE 1: TRAINING QUALITY STANDARD

**Type:** Quality Standard

**Applicable to:** Colleges and private providers

**Overview:** Covers a provider’s employer responsiveness and vocational excellence

**Key information:**
- An assessed Standard
- Focuses on the employer responsiveness of a provider
- Standard developed by the LSC based on the needs of employers
- Covers all employer-facing aspects of a provider’s operation
- Integrated with Framework for Excellence
INITIATIVE 2: CoVE

Type: Vocational Standard

Applicable to: Colleges and some private providers

Overview: Covers vocational aspects of a specialist area

Main objectives:
- To ensure increased participation and achievement on broad and balanced programmes of study for 16 to 19 year-olds and those in work
- To play a leading role in providing the technical and vocational skills the economy needs at every level
- To widen participation in learning
- To provide a ladder of opportunity to higher education with a key focus on Foundation Degrees
- To be influenced by SSC standards
- CoVEs will cease to exist in 2010 having been replaced by the Training Quality Standard
INITIATIVE 3: ACTION FOR BUSINESS COLLEGES (A4BC)

Type: Development tool

Applicable to: Colleges

Overview: Covers strategic planning, management systems and continuous improvement of the college in relation to working with employers

A College achieving this standard will:
- Deliver coherent and responsive programmes to meet sector specific and generic demands
- Customise their offer to meet employers’ needs, seeking feedback to promote continuous improvement
- Increase the volume and breadth of employer investment in training
- Lead partnerships with private training providers and the higher education sector to supply a seamless offer to employers
- Includes mystery shopping and employer validation

INITIATIVE 4: CUSTOMER FIRST

Type: Development tool

Applicable to: Colleges, HE and private providers

Overview: A generic customer service standard

Key benefits to customers:
- The delivery of services for customer wants and needs
- Reduction in the duplication of services
- An improved continuity of service delivery
- Referrals to the most appropriate deliverers of business support
- Providers delivering what they say they will deliver
INITIATIVE 5: emSkills

**Type:** Development tool

**Applicable to:** Colleges and private providers

**Overview:** An assessed development tool which aims to ensure the provider can meet the needs of business

**Main features:**
- Covers market need, planning, delivery, outcomes and evaluation, and the strategic and management aspects of a provider
- Written as a standard specific to employers
- Developed with employer involvement at all stages
- Can be applied to either a part of/ or the whole provider
- Includes mystery shopping and employer validation
- External validation by City and Guilds
INITIATIVE 6: MATRIX

**Type:** Quality Standard

**Applicable to:** Colleges, HE, Local Authorities, training providers, charities and similar organisations delivering IAG

**Overview:** National Standard for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work

**Key features of the standard include ensuring:**
- Customers are aware of the service
- Customers can access the service
- Customers are supported in exploring options and making choices
- The service is planned and maintained
- Staff are competent to deliver the service
- Continuous quality improvement takes place
INITIATIVE 7: LEARNING PROBE

**Type:** Development tool

**Applicable to:** Colleges and private providers

**Overview:** A self-assessment tool with an element of benchmarking

**Main features:**
- Allows providers to analyse their delivery and quality
- Benchmarking is provided in the form of scoring which can be compared with other providers
- Tool covers management style, service culture, staff, understanding the customer, service design and development, delivery, IT, suppliers, effectiveness, improvement, dealing with problems, flexibility/responsiveness, quality, value, customer satisfaction and business performance
- Purely self-assessment, no validation or award
INITIATIVE 8: CHARTER MARK/CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE STANDARD

**Type:** Award

**Applicable to:** Any public sector organisation

**Overview:** The UK Government’s standard for excellence in customer service

**Main features:**
- Available to all public sector organisations
- Assessed by independent certification bodies

**The Charter Mark has 6 forms of criteria:**
1. Set standards and perform well
2. Actively engage with your customers, partners and staff
3. Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice
4. Continuously develop and improve
5. Use your resources effectively and imaginatively
6. Contribute to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve

**Customer Service Excellence includes the following 5 criteria:**
1. Customer Insight
2. The Culture of the Organisation
3. Information and Access
4. Delivery
5. Timeliness and Quality of Service

The Customer Service Excellence Standard has taken over from Charter Mark.
initiative 9: OFSTED

**Type:** Inspectorate

**Applicable to:** FE Colleges and some training providers

**Overview:** Provider inspection covering a set framework which includes employer responsiveness

**Why this is relevant:**
- Employer responsiveness is not a main category for inspection but reports usually cover it
- Reports often comment on employer-focused areas using the same phrases as the grading structure: outstanding, good, satisfactory and poor
- Providers regarded as effective often have this mentioned in the key strengths section of their report
- Providers may include quotes from reports on their promotional literature