CHOOSING A PROVIDER
INITIATIVE MATCHING ACTIVITY

Version 2 (June 2008)
INITIATIVE 1

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

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

• 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
**INITIATIVE 3**

**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

**INITIATIVE 4**

**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

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  ..............................................................

**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

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

Type: Award

Applicable to: Any public sector organisation

Overview: The UK Governments’ standard for excellence in customer service

Main features:

- Available to all public sector organisations
- Assessed by independent certification bodies

The original standard 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

The new standard 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
INITIATIVE 9

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