This paper sets out a summary of the findings of the review of delivery models, activity levels and activity costs for the Communications Technologies frameworks.

**Background**

The review of activity costs is based on a standard methodology and modelling tools that are being applied consistently across all sectors in scope.

The approach is based on:

- Access to LSC data to inform the review
- Dialogue with the sector body on apprenticeship issues
- Interviews with effective providers (i.e. those providers with good or above average inspection grades and apprenticeship success rates), to establish activity levels
- An expert panel meeting to review data and evidence on activity levels
- Modelling of activity costs against provider data and panel advice
- Consultation with the sector on the panel advice and issues emerging
- Moderation of panel advice by an LSC project group

**LSC Data**

LSC data from 2004/05 ILR data used to inform the review were:

**Numbers in Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Starts (Monthly Average 2005)*</th>
<th>In Learning (July 2005)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 - 19</td>
<td>19+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ILR 2004/2005

*Average taken from quarterly reports (January/April/July/October 2005)
Funding Rates for NVQs and Apprenticeships

Success Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>NVQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ILR 2004/2005 Period 12

Average Length of Stay in Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non completion</th>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>NVQ Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ILR 2004/2005 Period 12 and LSC Data

Provider Interviews

A sample of effective providers was identified in discussion with e Skills UK.

These providers were interviewed in June 2006 and August 2006 through a series of visits to provider locations. The surveys were based on providers in the independent sector.

There was no meaningful evidence on apprenticeship delivery. The apprenticeship model was a specific model for the provider and employer and could not be seen as representative of the sector.

A completed survey form was shared with each provider to review and update. A summary of the activities and issues emerging was shared with the providers in the interview sample for comment and feedback.

Models of Delivery

The advanced apprenticeship model was based on a significant programme of group based activity for the chosen technical certificate along with work based assessment and support in the development of skills and portfolio evidence.

Employer training on specific features of the telecommunications systems is integrated into the learning programme and augments the overall activity levels beyond the generic requirements of the framework.

Two of the providers that were interviewed contract out the technical certificate training. The third provider has extensive and specialist resources for residential group based training activities.

One of the providers in the sample was an employer led model with dedicated employer staff providing substantial levels of support and mentoring to learners.
Activity Levels and Activity Costs

Advanced apprenticeship

Activities

There were significant variations between the providers interviewed in their pattern of activities. The following summary represents some common features:

- Time to complete between 27 and 36 months
- Group based learning between 570 and 700 hours over a two year period depending on the technical certificate route
- Employer led and specific training on telecommunications systems
- Key skills exemptions for many entrants
- Work based assessment based on regular visits every 6 to 8 weeks
- Regular review every 12 weeks
- Learner support and advice throughout the programme
- A system of internal verification including joint visits, portfolio sampling and learner interviews

Expert Panel

e Skills UK convened an expert panel with representatives from:

- e Skills UK
- Adult Learning Inspectorate
- Awarding body representatives
- A provider nominated by the Association of Learning Providers
- An FE College
- The consultant to the project
Expert Panel Meeting and Advice

The panel met on 11 October 2006 and reviewed the data and evidence from the LSC and provider surveys. The panel used this evidence to formulate advice on activity levels for effective delivery.

The panel agreed to provide advice on the advanced apprenticeship delivery models and activity levels.

ALI stressed that framework achievements and quality of provision in the communications technologies sector were at excellent levels and that these achievements reflected the level of resources and quality of support being provided for learners.

The panel discussed some of the known delivery models and agreed that employer led schemes were significantly enhanced by employer contributions in terms of high quality training facilities and dedicated staff to support and mentor learners.

The panel reviewed the data and evidence from the sample of providers that were interviewed and noted that each provider had a distinctive and context specific model of delivery that integrated provider and employer resources.

The panel debated how they might formulate advice for the LSC based on the profile of providers in the sector and the data and evidence from the sample that were interviewed.

The panel took the view that they should provide advice on a delivery model and activity levels that represented an effective model of delivery and reflected the essential attributes of the data and evidence from the sample of providers that were interviewed.

The panel advised that learners would enter directly on to the advanced apprenticeship and that a programme of 36 months of learning and assessment would be required to support the development of the Skills UK and knowledge for the framework.

The panel noted that there was a range of technical certificates that enabled learners to enhance their knowledge and understanding to support those learners planning to progress to higher education.

The panel agreed that the core level of underpinning knowledge would be delivered through a National Award in Telecommunications with 360 QCA recommended guided learning hours.

The advice from the panel was circulated to panel members after the meeting for their further comment and approval.
Funding Rates for NVQs and Apprenticeships

Expert Panel Advice for Advanced Apprenticeship Delivery

The expert panel set out their advice as a basis for establishing the costs of a model 'of effective delivery. *This is not intended to be a ‘recipe’ that providers should follow.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Panel Advice 2006</th>
<th>Notes and Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned Time to Complete</td>
<td>36 months</td>
<td>Estimated time for effective delivery based on provider interviews and LSC data with direct entry to an advanced programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group based knowledge and skills</td>
<td>470 hours</td>
<td>Based on series of 2 week block sessions every 3 months over the first two years of the framework including 90 hours for key skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work based knowledge and skills</td>
<td>8.0 days</td>
<td>A programme of regular visits to the work place with most visit time allocated to knowledge and skills development and work based observation and assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVQ assessment and support</td>
<td>9.0 days</td>
<td>Lead internal verifier time per learner for joint assessor visits, portfolio sampling and moderation meetings and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVQ quality assurance</td>
<td>3.0 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group based key skills</td>
<td>90 hours</td>
<td>Delivered through a programme of 90 hours of group based sessions and a further 1 day of 1:1 assessor time in the work place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work based key skills</td>
<td>1.0 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular review</td>
<td>3.0 days</td>
<td>At least 12 regular reviews of ¼ day per review with additional time for learner support and advice delivered as part of the programme of work based visits by assessors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner support</td>
<td>3.0 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry activities 1:1</td>
<td>2.0 days</td>
<td>An enhanced entry programme: an interview (1/2 day), assessment (0.5 day) and a work based induction (1 day) all 1:1 time with an assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group based induction</td>
<td>14 hours</td>
<td>A two day induction programme as part of an effective model of delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Certification</td>
<td>£ 153</td>
<td>Based on costs of NVQ, Key Skills and sector body certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The allocated time for work based assessor activity is equivalent to a *full-time* assessor caseload of 1:25 with assessors responsible for some key skill support in the work place.
Activity Costs for Advanced Apprenticeship Delivery

The activity costs model has been set up to compare the LSC funding in 2005/06 to the reported activity levels with the following costs assumptions:

- Group based classroom activity weighted at factor C¹
- Assessor employment costs weighted at factor C² based on independent research on salary rates and employments costs
- Registration and Certification costs of £153 based on information collected from awarding bodies

The model includes a factor for success rates and this is based on the reported 2004/05 success rates of 71% maintained at this level into 2007/08.

The activity costs emerging from the review were:

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & 16-18 Funding & Funding profile & Provider A & Provider B & Provider C & Provider D & Panel Advice \\
\hline
Employer Contribution & 0% & 20% & 40% & 60% & 80% & 100% & 120% \\
Funding or Activity Costs & 100% & 80% & 60% & 40% & 20% & 0% & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

This suggests that activity costs for effective delivery below the current rates based on a planned time to complete of around 36 months and assessor case-loads of around 1:25. The activity costs are close to the current LSC funding before any assumed employer contribution.

¹ This is based on the LSC programme weighting factors for guided learning hours
² A separate report on employment costs provides more details of the bands and methodology used to map sectors to employment bands
Funding Rates for NVQs and Apprenticeships

Moderation and LSC Data Modelling

The LSC has established a moderation group with representation from the Association of Learning Providers to review panel advice and activity costs.

The advice from the e Skills UK expert panel was reviewed at the moderation meeting in October 2006. The panel advice on activities was used to model the activity costs and the funding rates for the apprenticeship and the advanced apprenticeship.

Funding Rate Changes

The LSC is implementing changes to the funding rates based on the review and the advice on activity levels and activity costs and the decisions of the moderation group.

The changes are:

**Apprenticeship**

- No changes to NVQ rates

**Advanced Apprenticeship**

- A reduction of 10.9% in the NVQ rates phase over 2 years