Where we are today

The pilot programme is moving forward rapidly, and the Framework for Excellence team is working hard to resolve key technical issues.

I am delighted to continue the series of visits to pilot providers begun by Henry Ball, the Senior Responsible Owner of the Framework. I intend to use these to continue the dialogue that has already been established, and to discuss the Framework – its history, purpose and content – and the practical changes that providers will have to implement as a result.

As the scope of the programme becomes known, a new structure for its governance has evolved. This has brought in colleagues from the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), Ofsted and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) at the highest level of decision-making, and will make the day-to-day management of the Framework more streamlined and effective – in terms of both policy development and implementation.

In order to achieve this, the Framework team has been organised into five strands at an operational level: policy, build and implementation, business change, stakeholders and the pilot.

If you would like to make your views about the programme known, please email frameworkforexcellence@lsc.gov.uk.

Roger Marriott
Framework for Excellence Policy Director

Written and edited by the Framework for Excellence Communications Team. If you have any news, or comments about the newsletter or the Framework, please get in touch.

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The editor reserves the right to amend or cut submitted copy.
Framework for Excellence diary: mid-pilot events

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<td>Friday 9 November</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Thistle Marble Arch</td>
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<td>Wednesday 14 November</td>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>Marriott Hotel</td>
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<td>Friday 16 November</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>Burlington Hotel</td>
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Development Groups and Technical Working Group

As the pilot progresses, technical issues – often relating to the collection and format of data – are being resolved in the development groups and the Technical Working Group. If you would like to follow the progress of these developments, please refer to FfE Pilot Guidance.

Conferences

Roger Marriott, FfE Policy Director, will be speaking at the forthcoming Association of Colleges (AoC) Annual Conference in November. Paul Martinez, Policy Advisor, will be speaking at both the National Consortium of Colleges (NCC) Autumn Conference and the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) Autumn Conference in October. For more details, see the conference diary to the left.

Frequently asked questions

Answers to many of your questions about the Framework can be found on the FAQ page of the FfE website: http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/faq.

Pilot events

Launch events to mark the start of the pilot programme were held in Birmingham Leeds and London in July. They were extremely well attended by representatives from the providers participating in the 2007/08 pilot.

Mid-pilot events, designed to enable those providers to take stock and share their experiences, are scheduled for mid-November. For more details, see the FfE diary above.

Pilot institutions

We are delighted to welcome VT Training plc, a work-based learning provider, to the group of institutions piloting the prototype Framework. Previously, VT Training was included as part of a work-based learning consortium.

Please forward your views and suggestions relating to the Framework for Excellence to frameworkforexcellence@lsc.gov.uk.

We welcome all discussion and are interested in your suggestions for future articles:
what do you want to read in the next edition?
What do providers need to do now?

What data – new or existing – do colleges and providers need to collect?

The Framework will be operational in colleges and work-based learning providers from summer 2008, and across the whole FE system from summer 2009. The table that follows briefly outlines the performance areas. It also shows the new – or existing – data that will be needed in order to calculate an overall performance rating.
<table>
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<th>Responsiveness</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
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| **Responsiveness to learners: learner views**  
NEW DATA: From 2008/09, providers will be required to undertake a new annual survey of their learners, using a common methodology and standard questions developed by the LSC; initially, the data will need to be returned to the LSC by September 2008. | **Effectiveness: quality of outcomes**  
This performance area is derived from four qualification success rates. All of the data exists on the ILR and the LSC Provider Gateway. | **Finance: financial health**  
This performance area comprises three measures relating to the solvency, sustainability and status of a provider. Colleges will need to submit their finance record and financial plan, while other types of provider will need to submit their financial statements. For the financial year 2007–08, the data will need to be returned by March 2009. |
| **Responsiveness to learners: learner destinations**  
This will largely involve a data-matching exercise by the LSC, using the individualised learner record (ILR). Providers will need to ensure the accuracy of the contact details field on the ILR. | **Effectiveness: quality of provision**  
This performance area is based on Ofsted's current judgement on the overall effectiveness of the provider. | **Finance: financial control**  
This is an LSC-generated assessment of a provider’s financial controls. Colleges will need to submit their financial management and governance review, including the self-assessment report questionnaire. Other types of provider will need to submit the provider control risk assessment and the business environment questionnaire. For the financial year 2007–08, the data will need to be returned by March 2009. |
| **Responsiveness to employers: employer satisfaction** (also known as employer views)  
NEW DATA: A second survey, with questions supplied by the LSC, will be administered and will help providers to ensure that their needs are identified and addressed. This performance area corresponds with the core elements of the New Standard for Employer Responsiveness. The LSC will determine the date by which data should be returned as part of the pilot programme. | | **Finance: use of resources**  
This performance area will assess how effectively a provider manages its financial and other resources. The data will be derived from the ILR, the finance record, the Learner Information Suite, financial accounts, and estates’ data (for colleges). |
| **Responsiveness to employers: amount of employer training** (also known as income from employers and volume)  
Calculations will be made by the LSC, based on providers' financial returns, Train to Gain data, and possibly the ILR. | | |
| **Responsiveness to employers: achievement of the new standard**  
Where providers have achieved the New Standard for Employer Responsiveness, they will also automatically achieve a score of ‘outstanding’ in the ‘Responsiveness to employers’ key performance area. | | |
Important changes to the Learner Achievement Tracker

Important changes to the Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT), available through the Provider Gateway, were introduced on 8 August 2007.

The changes are designed to improve the LAT and have been made following consultation with the sector, DIUS, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and Ofsted. The changes should enable the LAT to be used as a key quality improvement tool and to form part of the self-assessment process. The 2007/08 academic year will be used to pilot the measure further, with a view to its full implementation by Ofsted from September 2008.

The LAT also forms part of the performance areas proposed for the Framework for Excellence.

The new LAT handbook (Implementing Measures of Success: The Handbook) is available at:

The new LAT tutorial is available at:
http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Learner_Achievement_Tracker_(LAT)_tutorial__010807.ppt.

‘Fails’ have been included for qualifications where they were previously excluded. This means that ‘fails’ are included for all qualifications in scope, for both value-added (VA) and distance travelled (DT).

Please note: to make the model work, the LAT uses a re-based QCA points system that allows ‘fails’ to be included, but that retains the scale and validity of the graded scores. However, this is for presentational reasons only. The VA calculation for A-levels, for example, will still increase by 30 QCA points for each grade.

The calculation methodology has been changed to ensure better discrimination. Taken together with the inclusion of ‘fails’ (which itself improves discrimination), the LAT will now have approximately 40 per cent of outcomes that are other than ‘normal’. In effect, this means that about 20 per cent of outcomes will be significantly positive and 20 per cent significantly negative. Adjustments have also been made to the methodology so that higher-level aggregations of the data are more reliable.

Please note: the LAT is primarily designed to provide VA/DT information for each qualification in scope. The LAT is less suitable for the calculation of an institutional measure. The new Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) ‘contextualised value-added’ measure (Achievement and Attainment Tables) is designed for that purpose, and is also currently being piloted.

The weighting of general studies in the VA data has been changed to 50 per cent. This includes A-level and AS-level.

‘Rolling averages’ are being introduced where sufficient reliable data is available. This release will trial rolling averages for DT over two years, with a view to introducing full three-year rolling averages for both measures over the next two or three years.

Please note: the August 2007 release includes independent DT charts for single- and multi-year scores.

While the number of qualifications covered by the DT measure (at this time) is not being increased, the scope has been improved. For example, work-based learning DT outcomes will now relate to when learners start their Apprenticeship – at 16 and 17 years old – and will track them until they finish. This is a major step forward. In addition, the ILR data-matching has improved significantly, as has the quality of the awarding body data.

Please note: the problem lies in part in the identification and recording of ‘fails’.

New colour-coded graphs are being introduced. The LAT summary charts now show one standard deviation from the average, displaying the central distribution of VA scores nationally. This indicates the range within which a ‘typical’ provider score would occur for a given subject or qualification. This is shown on summary and VA national comparison charts in blue.