Shared Services Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Vision
The Learning and Skills sector requires an economic, efficient and effective approach to providing corporate and student information services that fully meets colleges needs and the needs of all stakeholders. Services should set the highest standards for responsiveness and customer satisfaction at a low operating cost and maximise the resources that can be released back into teaching services.

A key part of our vision of shared services within the Learning and Skills sector is that efficiency gains are balanced with improvements in the effectiveness of service delivery, and that the final solution will provide a stable platform for future change.

Background Information
The Department for Education and Skills has been asked to produce an overarching review of shared services within education as part of the Whitehall Transformational Government strategy being coordinated by the Cabinet Office and as an input into the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 process.

The Learning and Skills Council have been asked to lead the development of a strategy and vision for shared services across the Learning and Skills sector. They have also asked the LSC to form a view of what priority activities should be undertaken in order to move towards this vision and to articulate the anticipated costs and benefits of doing so.

The critical success factor for moving towards the adoption of shared services will be to engage with the sector, to promote leadership and ownership of the agenda from within the sector and to affect change on the widest scale. In order to achieve this level of leadership the Learning and Skills Sector Plan recommends the creation of a Learning and Skills Shared Services Advisory Group.

Purpose
The purpose of establishing the SSAG is for colleges and providers to lead the further development of the sector plan and to provide an advisory capacity to the shared services team.
The objectives of the SSAG will be to:

- Promote leadership from within the sector
- Establish a shared vision of shared services
- Communicate and engage across the sector

SSAG will be representative of the full range of college and provider types, sizes and location and a range of professional disciplines such as Finance, Human Resources and ICT as well as Principles and Chief Executives.

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The specific responsibilities of the SSAG will be:

- To review and provide advice on the potential in-sector and cross-sector opportunities for shared services
- To establish a base of knowledge to support the development of shared services
- To highlight knowledge gaps and commission further work to strengthen the evidence base
- To identify and capture lessons learned from examples of successful sharing within the sector and with other sector such as Schools and Higher Education
- To communicate the shared services agenda across the sector

**Composition**

The advisory group will be composed of fifteen permanent representatives as follows (numbers of representatives in brackets):

**FE Colleges**

- Principals and Chief Executives (5)
- Finance Directors (1)
- HR Directors (1)
- MIS Directors (1)

**Other Provider Groups (e.g. Private, Voluntary and LA sectors)** (3)

- The Department for Education and Skills (1)

- The Learning and Skills Council (1)
The Cabinet Office (1)

The Association of Colleges (1)

These members may be joined by specific individuals from time to time either to provide information to the group or to give a view or advice.

**Support and Resource**
The advisory group will be supported by the shared services project office based at the LSC National office in Coventry. Support will include scheduling group meetings, providing agenda and meeting documentation, taking minutes and the circulation of these to group members. Meetings will be held in London.

**Frequency**
It is envisaged that meetings will be monthly in the first instance and will last between 3-5 hours. These arrangements will be reviewed regularly.