

**REVIEW OF SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES**

**WORKING GROUP: STAFFING, LEARNERS AND  
LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

**SUBGROUP: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF  
Continuing Professional Development**

**20 November 2006**

**1.1 Introduction**

- The Funding Council has been asked by ROSCO to conduct an audit of CPD activities with the following remit:
- “The Funding Council should work with colleges and other stakeholders to:
  2. undertake an audit to quantify the amount of time spent on CPD activity across the sector;
  3. estimate the resource implications of setting a minimum requirement; and
  4. advise on how this requirement could be implemented.”

**4.1 Methodology**

- We decided to begin by gathering evidence of current practice in colleges. Following discussions with the HR Community of Practice on a pilot questionnaire, a finalised version of the questionnaire was issued to colleges at the start of June, with a completion date of 31 July. We received 33 completed questionnaires.
- The questionnaire evidence was analysed by officers of SFC. We took into account the Scottish Executive's policies on professional recognition and recent comparable statements by DfES in England on future induction and CPD requirements.
- We discussed our analysis of the questionnaire, and preliminary recommendations, with several key groups of stakeholders:
  - HR Community of Practice steering group
  - Professional Development Community of Practice steering group
  - EIS Union Learning Representatives

## 4.2 Analysis of evidence from colleges

### 4.2.1 Methodological issues

- Although we spent time considering how best to define terms in the questionnaire, it is clear that colleges interpreted some of the questions in different ways; this appears to reflect internal practice within each college on what is defined, counted and recorded as CPD. These differences make it difficult to reach definitive conclusions about all aspects of current practice. However, it is clear from the responses that there is a significant volume of training activity in colleges, that this is spread across all staff groups and that this is supported by significant financial resources.
- One key area of uncertainty is that college central records and CPD budgets only record activity which is known about, funded and/or managed by college-level HR or CPD managers. As discussed below, this means that some significant aspects of CPD, may not be well represented in the quantitative aspects of the survey. In particular, some colleges highlighted additional CPD spend by teaching departments through devolved budgets, and most colleges noted that some highly relevant activities, such as self-evaluation, may not be 'counted' as CPD because they are primarily funded through quality assurance budgets.
- Even within centrally recorded budgets, it is clear that some respondents chose to exclude from their CPD returns activities such as health and safety training or equalities training or induction. Others did include this activity. Similarly, some colleges chose not to include travel and subsistence costs in their figures for training costs, others did.
- Colleges also reported their returns for different categories of staff in different ways. This reflects internal structures for recording and managing CPD within each college.
- These factors suggest that there may be value in encouraging the HR and staff development communities to work together on better ways to monitor and benchmark their activities in ways which allow easier comparison between colleges. Benchmarking groups are already at work on this issue but the outcomes of ROSCO may provide useful incentives for the development and use of some sector-wide key indicators.

#### 4.3 Volumes and expenditures on training.

- Despite the above caveats, the questionnaire returns contain much useful information about college CPD activity. In particular:
  - the lowest per capita annual spend figures on training costs per member of staff are above £100 and these can rise to well above £1000 for at least some categories of staff.
  - All staff are engaged in college-wide CPD activities in every college, and at least 50% of staff will experience some form of training each year.
  - Overall, the average of the 'all staff training averages' is 6.3 days of training activity per year. However, this average conceals a very wide diversity, from as little as 2 to over 16 days of training activity per year. It is likely that a significant part of this variation is due to differences in how the data is being reported.

##### 4.3.1 Informal activity

- Respondents considered that informal activity is a significant component of CPD. Estimates of volume vary depending on their perceptions of “informal”; some respondents suggested that the volume of informal CPD was 25% of formal CPD, while others felt it was five or six times the volume of formal activity. The types of activity cited vary widely but membership of committees and contribution to course team meetings are cited regularly. Some respondents cited the recent or intended introduction of CPD logs as a useful method to improve the effectiveness with which informal CPD is recorded; this point is considered in more depth below.

##### 4.3.2 IiP Accreditation

- 30 colleges report being accredited, 2 that they are not and 1 makes no comment. Some colleges commented that recent revisions to the IiP model have made it less useful as a framework for self-evaluation of CPD and staff development, and that EFQM appears to provide a more useful structure for systematic self-evaluation of these functions.

##### 4.3.3 Contractual requirements and entitlement to CPD

- We asked whether colleges defined an entitlement to CPD or set requirements or normal expectations on staff engagement with CPD. The responses indicate that care is needed with the use of these terms. Contractual requirements generally relate to only a subset of CPD, principally in relation to teaching qualifications for academic staff, and/or in relation to induction for new staff and to statutory requirements such as

diversity or equalities training. Some colleges also pointed out that they operate 'CPD days' or 'staff training days', where no classes are held and all staff are required to engage in appropriate CPD.

- All our respondents indicated that their college operated a formal process of staff development and career review based around periodic, (usually annual), review meetings. In some cases a link to a personal development plan was mentioned.
- More generally, many colleges emphasise a broad expectation, which may or may not be formally part of contracts, that staff will take responsibility for managing their own professional development within existing workloads and as part of their normal duties.
- Almost all colleges have some formal policy on remission from normal duties for some aspects of CPD. This includes 'CPD days' as discussed above but the main area in which these policies were developed in detail related to TQFE/PDAs for academic staff. All but three of our respondents cited remission for TQFE study. This varied from 1 hour a week to one day (6 hours). Only two mentioned similar arrangements for taking PDAs in teaching for FE, and for other relevant professional qualifications.
- Apart from TQFE/PDAs, it appears that in most colleges staff do have opportunities to attend external events or training but this is dependent on a range of factors including the priority allocated to this activity by management, the availability of a budget for fees/travel, and operational issues about cover for absent staff. In the case of academic staff, working hours were in all cases greater than teaching hours and the difference is expected to cover a range of activities such as preparation, assessment, private study and reflection; in some colleges this period is clearly also intended to address a significant proportion of CPD activity.
- As a general conclusion, it is clear that colleges operate a wide range of policies on the use of staff time, and on the definition and use of remission from normal duties. And although all colleges appear to have inclusive models of annual review leading to identified development needs, there is variation in how the differing needs of the organisation, the department and the individual act together to determine specific CPD activities undertaken by each individual in a given year. In framing recommendations, we will need to take care not to make assumptions that any particular model is in 'standard use' across Scotland.

#### 4.3.4 Union Learning Representatives

- Union Learning Representatives are a fairly recent innovation to encourage CPD in the workplace. We asked colleges to comment on the contribution which ULRs made to overall CPD activity. Where colleges chose to make a comment on this it was mainly to cite the Representative's involvement in relevant committees. In one case a college did mention that the representative had helped to identify the learning needs of junior staff who do not always engage in career review processes. In two cases the role has been merged with that of the staff development officer. In four cases the Representative was fairly newly appointed and it was too soon to judge their impact. In three cases the college stated that no Representative had been nominated whilst in 11 cases respondents considered that their Representatives have had little or no impact. In discussion with HR/PDN representatives there was a view that ULRs had been set up to change the culture of CPD in the workplace; but Scotland's colleges already had a strongly developed ethos of promoting CPD for all staff, and that there was therefore relatively little scope for significant new development.

#### 4.4 Conclusions and recommendations

##### 4.4.1 'All staff' and 'teaching staff'

- The remit of the audit which the Council was asked to conduct includes CPD for all staff. In some specific aspects of college activity, notably policies and procedures for TQFE/PDAs, colleges clearly distinguished between teaching and non-teaching staff. And clearly, for all categories of staff, the particular types of CPD activity are tailored to the specific responsibilities which individuals hold in colleges. However, the general impression is that college policies and approaches to CPD are applied fairly uniformly across all categories of staff. For example, annual processes of staff development and career review include all staff; all categories of staff are generally incorporated within mainstream college CPD in areas such as diversity and health & safety; and specialist training is made available for professional development in a range of areas including personnel, accounting, libraries and IT. There was strong support from the HR and staff development communities for our recommendations to be as inclusive as possible, and not to create an artificial divide between teaching and non-teaching categories of staff.
- *We recommend that statements arising from ROSCO's consideration of CPD should be framed in terms of all staff, and should not emphasise distinctions between groups of staff with different professional responsibilities.*

- One category of staff who do not appear to be wholly included in mainstream processes are part-time staff. This is mainly because this is a very diverse group. Some sub-sets of part-time staff are wholly incorporated into college-wide CPD activities while for others (such as teachers on evening leisure classes, life models in art classes or visiting professionals for whom the college is not the main employer) different arrangements are made. Care will be needed to reflect this diversity and the model adopted by the Scottish Executive, in applying its policies only to those with a minimum number of hours per week of employment in a college, seems a helpful approach.
- *We recommend that ROSCO should give primary consideration to recommendations on CPD for full-time staff, and should encourage colleges to consider and apply those recommendations in appropriate ways to reflect the diversity of contracts for part-time staff.*

#### 4.4.2 Investors in People

- IIP accreditation is nearly, but not quite universal. There might be appear to be advantage in recognising the widespread take-up of this award within the sector but care would be needed about making any recommendation on this. Colleges which are not accredited have presumably taken this decision for good reasons, and even some IiP accredited colleges have indicated that it is not their sole, or even their main, tool for self-evaluation of CPD.
- *We recommend that all colleges should be encouraged to engage with periodic external review of the effectiveness of their policies on staff development and CPD, but that IiP should, at most, be cited as one example of how this can be done.*

#### 4.5 Union Learning Representatives

- So far there is only limited evidence of a positive impact of union learning representatives on the development of CPD. Learning representatives themselves felt that there was considerable scope to further develop this role, particularly in promoting a better balance in CPD between meeting the needs of individuals and meeting the needs of colleges.
- *We recommend that a review of the role of union learning representatives should be conducted in partnership with colleges in order to identify good practice and promote more effective collaboration.*

##### 4.5.1 Informal CPD and CPD logs

- There is strong evidence from the survey that informal CPD plays a very significant role in colleges. But currently it is not well recorded or integrated into college systems. The Professional Development Network has recently

developed a toolkit for CPD which provides pointers on the integration of informal and formal CPD, for example through the use of CPD logs for all staff. Such logs can bring valuable benefits for both the management and the evidencing of staff engagement with CPD.

- *We recommend that colleges should be encouraged to develop and deploy CPD logs for all staff, and that relevant communities of practice should be encouraged to consider ways of measuring and benchmarking the contribution of informal CPD to the achievement of college CPD policies.*

#### 4.6 Evaluating the impact of CPD

- There is strong evidence, from HMIE reviews and from colleges' own experience, that CPD can have a very positive impact on the effectiveness of colleges and on the quality of students' learning experience. But there is not yet a systematic culture of recording and evaluating the direct and indirect impact of all aspects of CPD. A move in this direction would not only help to identify specific forms of CPD which do (or do not) make a significant contribution to quality, but would promote the identification and sharing of best practice and help to demonstrate, and perhaps quantify, the return on investment provided by CPD.
- *We recommend that colleges should be encouraged to develop and deploy systems for recording and evaluating the impact of CPD on college processes.*

##### 4.6.1 Entitlement

- The DfES in England has announced in a recent White Paper that from September 2007
  5. “all teaching practitioners [will] fulfil, at the very least, 30 hours of CPD a year, with a reduced amount for part time teachers, and with similar expectations of managers and leaders;
  6. teaching staff [will] maintain a portfolio of CPD that shows evidence of industrial/subject updating, including membership of appropriate professional bodies, development of skills in subject teaching, including the effective application of e-learning techniques, application of diversity and equal opportunity principles, and use of learner feedback to improve performance; and
  7. we will introduce a qualification which all newly appointed college principals will be expected to achieve within a three year period. The qualification will provide a nationally recognised standard against which governing bodies can assess potential candidates for positions as college principals. “
- We would like to ensure that Scotland is seen to have at least as strong a commitment to CPD as in England (and that this commitment extends

beyond teaching staff, unlike the DfES approach). The survey suggests that currently the average CPD engagement for all staff is over 6 days per year. Although some college returns gave a lower figure, it seems likely that this is an underestimate of real activity; and even if the actual figure in some colleges is below 6 days, the evidence from the sector is that this is a reasonable expectation for a well-run college.

- *We recommend that all full-time staff in colleges should fulfil, as a minimum expectation, 6 days of CPD a year, and that colleges should determine appropriate proportionate expectations for part-time staff. We further recommend that colleges should work together to collect better evidence on the scale and nature of informal CPD, and that as such evidence emerges this minimum expectation should be periodically reviewed with a view to increasing it towards levels associated with current best practice (up to 16 days per year).*

### 7.1.1 TQFE

- There is considerable variation in college policies on remission of hours for TQFE study. Evidence from other sources suggests that remission policy is not necessarily a factor in determining whether a college has high or low levels of TQFE completion. But anecdotally, this is a topic of some contention when TQFE students ‘compare notes’ on their experience. We propose that no recommendation should be made on this issue on the grounds that this is a matter of implementation not policy, and is best left to colleges.
- The Scottish Executive has rightly given significant emphasis to achievement of TQFE by newly appointed staff. But many college lecturers achieved their TQFE 10 or more years ago, and many such staff perceive that there is no well-regarded route by which they may further develop their professional skills. The recent development of new PDAs and other awards, in areas such as equalities, child protection, quality assurance and e-learning have identified important areas of skill development for experienced lecturers but there may be scope for further development.

### 7.1.2 Statement of goals

- We think it would be helpful to frame our specific recommendations in terms of aspirations and goals, not solely in terms of inputs of time or training. This would help to ensure not only that the recommendations are viewed constructively, but also help to celebrate what appears to be a shared vision of the desired characteristics of Scotland's Colleges.
- *We recommend that ROSCO should contextualise its conclusions on CPD in terms of Ministers' new targets on the timetable for achieving PDAs/TQFE for newly appointed staff, and additionally to addressing backlog issues of TQFE for existing staff as quickly*

*as possible. We further recommend that ROSCO should seek consensus on the following shared goals for the sector:*

- 8. all staff in Scotland's colleges engage in systematic reflection of how they contribute to the work of colleges in supporting learners*
- 9. all colleges provide opportunities for all members of staff to upgrade or improve their professional skills*
- 10. all colleges provide opportunities for members of staff to gain appropriate qualifications relevant for their professional role, including TQFE/PDAs for teaching staff*

#### 10.1.1 Resource Issues

- The survey reported current levels of CPD activity which are already funded from mainstream budgets. Since the key recommendation of 6 days per annum of CPD is already being delivered on average, it will not by itself lead to new budgetary demands on average. However, those colleges which are currently delivering less than this target will either have to review their records to see if they are failing to count relevant activities, and/or review the priority which they assign to CPD as a proportion of college budgets.
- However, the overall implication of this review will be to raise the profile of CPD, which is likely to stimulate further demand. This is also being driven by pressures for continuous quality enhancement of learning and teaching, for example through HMIE reviews and the work of the Council's FE Quality Working Group. Colleges are skilled in managing CPD to achieve good value for money, for example through collaborative delivery of PDAs and the use of college staff as mentors. However, if resources permit, there is strong evidence for concluding that increased investment in CPD will 'pay off' in terms of greater efficiency and effectiveness of staff, and hence a better quality experience for students.
- The Funding Council has had some experience in considering resource levels for CPD. From 1999-2002 we earmarked specific funding of around £3M p.a. for a range of specified staff development purposes. At the end of that period, we were persuaded that this was an overly mechanistic approach which limited colleges' flexibility to invest their resources appropriately. There is also a risk that if earmarked CPD funding were to again be made available, colleges which face a large backlog in (for example) TQFE completion might assume that the funding should address this backlog, thus penalising colleges which have already invested heavily in this area.

- A final observation is that the ability of staff to engage in reflection and professional development is ultimately restricted by the size of their teaching timetable. Comparisons with the HE sector are not wholly appropriate, but the difference in contracted teaching hours between colleges and universities is striking. There is understandably a desire to operate colleges at high levels of efficiency, but this must be balanced by an appreciation of the value provided to the college, and to the sector as a whole, of staff engagement in CPD and in wider forms of development such as networking, Associate Assessor functions, and engagement with subject communities. We do not believe it is appropriate to define a national maximum number of teaching hours, but we think that a good case can be made for increasing the unit of resource in order to provide greater flexibility to colleges in how they deploy their staff.
- *We therefore recommend that if ROSCO concludes that further investment in CPD is justified, this should be done through an overall increase in the unit of resource for colleges rather than through earmarked funding for staff development.*
- *Finally, we recommend that ROSCO should strongly endorse the positive role which CPD can play in achieving broader objectives of quality improvement in colleges, through its impact on efficiency and effectiveness of college processes, on capacity building and promoting flexibility, and on the quality of students' learning experience. We recommend that all agencies with responsibilities for quality should give due consideration to encouraging good practice in the effective deployment of CPD.*

#### 10.1.2

Bill Harvey  
Deputy Director for Learning and Teaching  
Scottish Funding Council  
November 2006