



Scottish further education  
funding council

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# **INITIAL AND CONTINUING STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHING STAFF IN SCOTTISH FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES**

**A REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS OF EDUCATION FOR THE SCOTTISH  
FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL**

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# 1. Introduction

This report examines the current position in Scottish further education colleges regarding professional development for those staff whose roles include teaching and the management of teaching and learning.

The report

- identifies general categories of professional development in which it is appropriate for these staff to participate (Section 3),
- describes how colleges identify and meet staff development requirements to enable staff to carry out their professional roles effectively (Section 4),
- explores how effective colleges are in making appropriate staff development opportunities available to their staff (Section 5),
- explores how colleges evaluate the impact of staff development (Section 6), and
- makes recommendations for future action (Section 7).

The report does not address staff development for administrative and support staff in colleges. These staff make an important contribution in terms of both the student experience and the overall effective operation of colleges. In most respects their staff development needs are distinctive and specific to their roles and functions, although some areas of development mentioned in this report are applicable to both teaching and non-teaching staff. There would be value in conducting a similar analysis for administrative and support staff in colleges. This might include the range of appropriate areas of development and identify areas for development which might be common to teaching and non-teaching staff.

Section 2 provides a summary of the report's findings

In preparing the report HMIE drew on evidence from:

- visits to six colleges in October and November 2004, in which we interviewed senior managers and groups of staff and examined documentation,
- evidence from the 13 college reviews which took place in the year 2003-04, and
- Professional Development Award (PDA) reports for 2003-04 submitted to the FE Professional Development Forum.

Recommendations are made throughout the text to assist colleges in addressing particular areas for development as necessary. The main points for action relate to the key findings set out in the summary.

## **2. Summary of findings**

Overall, colleges had robust and effective arrangements for initial and continuing professional development for teaching staff and those managing the teaching process. A substantial number of colleges had well-developed and fully-implemented arrangements. The remainder had at least adequate arrangements and were at various stages of improving them. All colleges had appropriate strategies for developing their arrangements.

All colleges had staff development and career review (SDCR) systems in place. The most effective linked performance evaluation with development planning and generated specific development objectives which were subsequently reviewed. At their best, the systems were constructive and supportive, and staff valued opportunities for discussion focused on their professional development. More than a few colleges had yet to reach these standards. There were a few weaknesses related to incomplete implementation of the review arrangements.

Staff did not generally keep records of their own CPD, except those for whom it was an industry requirement. Those who did, often valued the process. Colleges had not generally explored the potential of CPD logs as an adjunct to their existing SDCR systems.

Almost all colleges had good arrangements for induction and support for new staff but there were a few weaknesses in practice. New staff were given key information promptly, and in their early weeks had extensive support and advice from colleagues and managers with whom they worked. A minority of colleges were not fully systematic in delivering a comprehensive and well-designed induction programme supported by user-friendly information, or in ensuring that good practice in induction was implemented consistently across the college.

All colleges had clear, or developing, arrangements for certificated initial professional development. The most advanced had specified appropriate qualifications and appropriate timescales for achieving them, differentiated according to staff roles and contracts. The programmes offered by colleges and current providers had proved motivating and of great help to participants in developing skills and reflecting on practice. A few difficulties, mainly relating to time management and completion targets, remained to be tackled.

Colleges made a very good range of continuing professional development opportunities available to staff, particularly in areas identified as national or college priorities. Vocational and subject-related development was often good, but this aspect was sometimes addressed too narrowly. Colleges generally addressed corporate matters thoroughly but found difficulty in reaching and influencing all staff throughout the organisation. A majority of colleges did not address career and future skills development systematically enough but awareness of the importance of this aspect was increasing. There was increased emphasis on development related to learning and teaching but more than a few colleges did not promote this area of development actively enough.

Colleges evaluated a range of aspects of staff development through a variety of means, and used their evaluations to inform planning. Evaluating the impact of staff development is not straightforward, but there was scope for many colleges to improve this aspect and make more explicit links between staff development and quality improvement.

### 3. Categories of professional development

This report covers a range of staff development generally provided for teaching staff. The classification below is based on **purpose** rather than content or means. Definitions are provided to indicate the purpose of development in each of the categories. More information on the **content** of each category and the **means** by which colleges provide it is given in later sections.

The definition of *professional* in this context is *relating to the profession of further education*, as distinct from the specific professional or vocational areas in which staff are teaching, for example accountancy or beauty therapy. This distinction is made at the outset to avoid confusion. The term *vocational* is used to indicate such subject-related areas.

This report concerns FE staff whose roles involve teaching, facilitating learning, and managing the process and context of learning and teaching. The categories therefore apply to these staff and have not been extended to include aspects relevant to non-teaching staff.

The term *continuing professional development* is generally applied to development which takes place after the acquisition of the relevant professional qualification, that is the qualification people require to enter the profession. In the case of FE, some staff in the listed roles do not yet hold a teaching qualification and for some a full teaching qualification is not appropriate. The *continuing professional development* category therefore applies to anyone in those roles and can be concurrent with *initial professional development*.

Colleges also provide teaching staff with development opportunities which are personal, for example, health advice and pre-retirement sessions. These opportunities are not considered in the report.

Proposed categories for professional development are set out below.

Category	Areas or activities covered
Initial professional development: uncertificated	Induction Support
Initial professional development: certificated	A range of award-bearing programmes
Continuing professional development	Educational theory and practice Vocational (subject-related) theory and practice Corporate knowledge and awareness Careers and future skills development

The categories, areas and activities are more fully defined as follows.

#### **Initial professional development: uncertificated**

##### ***Induction***

Development which equips the new member of teaching staff with essential personnel information, basic skills in teaching, learning and assessment practice, a knowledge of college systems and procedures immediately relevant to the work allocated, and a knowledge of how to access information, resources and key members of staff.

### ***Support***

Development, often informal, which provides the new lecturer with advice and consultancy from managers and colleagues, and information and resources pertinent to work allocated during the early period after appointment.

### **Initial professional development: certificated**

Assessed and award-bearing development which confirms the competence of lecturers to undertake specific tasks and which contribute to a full teaching qualification for FE. Such development includes:

SQA assessor and verifier awards

Training and development units

Initial teacher training units

Professional Development Award (PDA) – Certificate: Introduction to Teaching in FE

PDA Advanced Certificate: Teaching in FE

PDA Diploma: Teaching in FE

Teaching Qualification in Further Education [TQ(FE)].

### **Continuing professional development**

#### ***Educational theory and practice***

Development which enables staff to understand the learning process, and help students learn most effectively, and managers to make arrangements which promote effective learning.

#### ***Vocational (or subject-related) theory and practice***

Development which enables staff to maintain and develop current knowledge and skills at an appropriate level in the subjects they teach, and managers to have appropriate levels of awareness of current practice in the subjects they manage.

#### ***Corporate knowledge and awareness***

Development which enables staff to implement college systems effectively and to acquire the knowledge and awareness necessary to contribute to the college's achievement of its objectives.

#### ***Career and future skills development***

Development which enables staff to fulfil or prepare for new roles, and which helps to equip them for career progression or change.

## 4. Identifying and meeting staff development requirements

### Strategy

Staff development is a key element in colleges' strategic and operational planning. Almost all colleges intended to maximise the number of teaching staff with appropriate teaching qualifications. Colleges also specified other priority areas for staff development and set targets by which to measure their progress. Common priorities included:

- improving staff competence in using ICT as a means of communication and as a tool for learning and teaching
- ensuring that staff were aware of and acted in accordance with legislation, particularly on disability and race relations
- ensuring that staff kept their knowledge and skills up to date in the subjects they taught.

Other priority areas were often specific to individual colleges, and reflected matters related to the college context or decisions to focus on a particular theme for development in a given year. In all cases, the staff development strategies were appropriate and well implemented. In the 13 HMIE college reviews in 2003/04, all grades awarded for quality element B5 (Staff) were either very good (46%) or good (54%) and the 83 grades awarded for subject review quality element A4 (Staff) were either very good (51%) or good (49%).

Most colleges had up-to-date staff development policies and procedures, most of which were influenced by requirements for recognition for Investor in People (IiP) status. The written policies varied in what they covered and how specific they were, but when taken with associated documents and procedures, generally established clear and comprehensive arrangements for staff development. A typical policy included:

- a general statement of intent to promote staff development to further the college's strategic aims
- information on eligibility and any compulsory elements
- information on the process for identifying staff development needs and requesting staff development, incorporating reference to the college's staff development and career review process
- the criteria to be applied when approving requests and proposals for staff development
- arrangements for evaluating development activities.

A senior manager working in conjunction with human resources staff often provided overall leadership on staff development. This arrangement was a move away from a former common pattern where a personnel function operated separately from an academic member of staff deployed in a co-ordinating *staff development officer* role. It enabled a more coherent, comprehensive approach, especially when there was a clear link with those leading quality improvement initiatives. Not all colleges had adopted such an approach.

- *Colleges should ensure that their structures for leadership and implementation of staff development arrangements promote a comprehensive approach.*

It is obviously important for colleges to communicate information about staff development strategies to staff. Overall, staff were well informed about the processes. In a majority of colleges the information was drawn together effectively and enabled staff to have a clear overview of the process and of what development opportunities were available to them.

### **Identifying staff development requirements: strategic directions**

Strategic and operational planning generated development needs that related to organisational development and change. These needs arose in response to, for example, national policy imperatives, legislation, direction from SFEFC and the college's own mission. Currently, many colleges had strategic objectives relating to teaching qualifications. Other development requirements related to inclusiveness and to the use of technology in learning and teaching. Colleges which were undergoing merger, planning to move to new premises or undertaking restructuring exercises generally planned staff development to facilitate the changes.

### **Identifying staff development requirements: staff development and career review**

All the colleges had staff development and career review arrangements, under various names which reflected the focus in particular colleges. There were some significant variations among them. A few colleges based the process on individual performance appraisal or review, often founding the discussion on self-evaluation by the reviewee alongside evidence-based performance review by the reviewer. Most colleges preferred a developmental approach in which the individual's job role was discussed and staff development needs emerging from changes in the work were identified. In some cases, the emphasis was towards team approaches and team responsibilities. Many staff, established lecturers as well as more recently-appointed lecturers, valued the opportunity to assess their performance, including their teaching practice, and receive feedback, affirmation and support from a line manager. These staff were positive about taking responsibility for their own professional development. However, managers often reported staff resistance to performance appraisal and review. In these cases colleges had nevertheless generally developed alternative systems which were acceptable to staff and enabled them to further their professional development in pursuit of college aims. Overall these systems worked effectively. Within colleges, the effectiveness of the process often varied across departments. In the best practice, there was an open culture in which abilities, ideas and difficulties were discussed, good practice was recognised and reinforced, weaknesses were supported and information from reviews informed appropriate deployment and development. However, a substantial number of colleges had not fully achieved a system of open and constructive discussion which incorporated both evaluation and support and facilitated further development.

- *Colleges should promote open and constructive discussion of performance at SDCR interviews with a view to enhancing performance, supporting weaknesses and capitalising on strengths.*

Most college systems involved all lecturing staff in a review either annually or every two years. In some cases participation was optional for temporary or part-time staff. In a few cases, not all staff participated as planned, for reasons which included time constraints on reviewers, vacant posts, and the voluntary nature of the system. A few staff viewed the systems as cumbersome, but many colleges had streamlined the process and paperwork.

The type and extent of training for reviewers and reviewees varied. Nevertheless the systems were generally well documented and information on the process was readily available and understood by staff. Some colleges had clearly-written guides for reviewers and reviewees.

In a few cases records of review meetings did not reflect an effective discussion of development needs or include clear statements of the development activities agreed. Colleges were sensibly moving towards concise documentation, but records sometimes failed to express development objectives and activities clearly and show how they related to college, departmental or individual objectives.

- *Colleges should ensure that staff receive sufficient training in specifying development objectives and activities.*

Colleges had appropriate practices regarding confidentiality of the records. Usually the staff development requirements were extracted from the records and passed to staff development organisers to contribute to an overall college plan.

### **Identifying staff development requirements: curriculum teams**

In cases of good practice, programme teams and moderation groups identified development needs when planning new programmes or as a result of reviewing existing programmes. Some staff reported that these meetings were key drivers for quality improvement through staff development. Examples from programme teams included developing teaching and learning approaches in preparation for working with school pupils, and gaining additional technical certification to keep abreast of current practice in construction and electronics industries. Moderation groups might recommend, for example, that course materials should be adapted to reflect changes in employment practice, giving rise to a need for vocational updating, or they might recognise potential variation in how criteria for merit awards were applied, and plan to improve consistency through staff development. Such development needs arising from curriculum teams were incorporated into departmental operational planning in many colleges, but not yet all.

- *Colleges should ensure that development needs arising from meeting of curriculum teams and other internal groups are incorporated into overall planning for staff development.*

### **Identifying staff development requirements: ad hoc**

Inevitably, it was impractical to anticipate all staff development needs, and colleges made appropriate arrangements in response to particular situations. The commonest examples were lecturers applying to attend relevant conferences and seminars when these were offered. A more specific example was a lecturer undertaking training to better understand the software used by a blind student joining a class.

### **Planning to meet needs: corporate planning**

Colleges generally planned staff development effectively in response to the needs identified. Some colleges systematically collated development requirements from SDCR and from college and department planning, and used the collation as a basis for overall planning and prioritising. Others were less systematic but nevertheless provided suitable activities and

opportunities. College operational plans generally set targets in terms of numbers of staff and types of training within their priority areas, and reported on the achievement of targets.

Arrangements for initial professional development had changed over the last two years with the introduction of PDAs and units of ITT, and SFEFC's revised approach described in Circular FE 26/03 in July 2003. Most colleges had, or were working towards, clear arrangements for enrolling new or unqualified staff on appropriate programmes. This enabled inexperienced staff to engage in well-supported professional training from an early stage.

All colleges arranged in-house programmes of staff development to meet needs common to all, or a reasonable number, of their teaching staff. Most colleges identified non-teaching days in their calendars, usually in August before students began, and offered a range of topics. These topics were often delivered by a mixture of college staff and people from external organisations. In most colleges, the range of topics was wide and staff could select appropriate sessions. In many colleges, these staff development days gave teams or groups the opportunity to work together on their own developments. This promoted a co-operative ethos and ensured that team members contributed to formulating and implementing team objectives.

A significant number of colleges arranged residential or off-campus events in cases where a more intensive approach was needed. Examples included an all-staff conference covering corporate matters and promoting a corporate ethos, away-days for middle or senior managers, and a good practice day for curriculum leaders.

HMIE reports over the last two years contained recommendations that colleges do more to encourage staff to share good practice. Curriculum teams or departments often worked in a self-contained way and knew little about approaches adopted by other teams. Colleges had responded to these recommendations and facilitated sharing good practice in a variety of ways, including presentations, articles in newsletters and focused time in group meetings for sharing practices and ideas.

- *Colleges should continue to promote the sharing of good practice both as a whole-college initiative and within and across teams.*

Only a minority of colleges made a point of systematically identifying skills of their own staff with a view to their providing staff development to others. Newly-appointed staff sometimes brought skills and knowledge, for example from business, industry or the service sectors, which were useful to others. Staff attending external courses and training programmes were often in a position to inform and advise others.

- *Colleges should identify the skills and knowledge brought by new staff or staff undertaking development, and enable these staff to contribute to the development of others.*

### **Planning to meet needs: individual planning**

Lecturers generally took responsibility for taking forward their individual development agreed through the SDCR system, for example, by applying for places on courses and conferences, often in conjunction with a line manager, or selecting from the college's in-house menu. Almost all staff appreciated the very wide range of development activities

available to them although they frequently reported having inadequate time to participate as much as they would wish.

Overall, planning did not give enough explicit acknowledgement of the more individualised and unstructured ways of undertaking staff development, and tended instead to focus on events. Valuable development opportunities were available through, for example, reading professional journals and papers of professional associations, being in practice in the vocational area, and working with more experienced colleagues to plan learning and teaching. A number of staff had significantly improved practice through participating in experimental action-research type projects.

- *Staff and managers should recognise less structured opportunities for development and incorporate them more explicitly into their planning.*

## **Recording**

Various types of recording were associated with staff development activity. Colleges generally kept records of staff development events and attendances, and used them for financial accounting purposes and for monitoring key targets.

Individual staff in most colleges were aware of their own staff development objectives, but only a few colleges used formal individual training plans. Little was recorded in relation to self-development and unstructured activity that did not involve cost or time out of college. Few staff kept personal training records or CPD logs. Those who did, for example, staff in beauty therapy and veterinary nursing, were generally required to by a lead body. These staff often valued the arrangement, and used their logs as a useful reminder of training undertaken, particularly if they also kept notes on how they had used the training.

## 5. Effectiveness of staff development activity

### 5.1 Initial professional development: uncertificated

#### Induction

Overall, induction was effective and newly appointed staff were provided with essential information and advice to enable them to fulfil their roles. All colleges had induction procedures and set out the areas to be covered, often supported by a summary checklist which was subject to audit. Typically, part of the induction would be covered by the personnel or human resources team, and part by a head of department or curriculum manager. However, there was considerable variation in staff experiences of induction.

Good practice included:

- scheduling time across the first few weeks of employment for informative discussion with key staff from human resources, the curriculum area and cross-college functions such as learning support
- training on lesson planning and delivery, setting out the college's expectations of good teaching practice
- exploring the appointee's existing range of skills to determine the scope of the induction programme, identify any early training needs and identify areas where prior skills and experience could be used to the benefit of the college
- instruction on using college ICT systems for information and communication
- providing a user-friendly staff handbook which set out well-judged information and advice covering personnel matters, key procedures, a *who's who* of key college staff, and advice on teaching, learning and assessment.

A few staff felt that their inductions were too brief and intense. A few were not informed adequately about their responsibilities under legislation. In some cases, staff handbooks were not sufficiently informative about the college's expectations, or were not user-friendly.

#### Support

Almost all staff valued highly the support of their colleagues and managers in curriculum delivery teams. They felt that their help and advice enabled them to settle into their work and perform well. The way this support was provided varied across subject areas within colleges, depending on what was appropriate in each area.

Good practice included:

- buddying, which was used in a significant number of colleges, though often as a curriculum team initiative rather than a college arrangement
- work shadowing, which was used in a few colleges as a means of relaying good practice in learning and teaching

- mentoring
- phased instruction and advice from a readily-accessible line manager
- information and help to access resources, for example web and intranet-based material, and learning and teaching materials and packs.

## **5.2 Initial professional development: certificated**

This provision comprises a range of programmes leading to certification which qualifies staff to carry out particular roles. The requirement for some of these qualifications is determined externally. SFEFC Circular FE 26/03 had given colleges more autonomy to decide which qualifications were appropriate. A majority of colleges had set out the qualifications new staff should acquire, in some cases with set time limits for completion. The range of qualifications matched college requirements well.

The introduction of the PDAs comprising units of ITT and the increased flexibility allowed by SFEFC enabled colleges to make more practical and effective arrangements than was formerly possible. The range of PDAs and the varying approaches of the three current TQ(FE) providers enabled staff to follow a programme that suited their needs. A few colleges had provided good guidance to help staff negotiate the best routes for their own circumstances. However, staff were not always well enough informed. Some found the range of qualifications confusing, particularly as colleges shifted to the new programmes. A few did not appreciate the differences between the TQ(FE) programmes, for example, in academic demand, so did not always enrol on the one which best suited their needs and circumstances.

- *Colleges should ensure that there are appropriate criteria and guidance to inform the selection of TQ(FE) programmes for individual members of staff.*

More than a few colleges had a fully operating and effective system within which new staff enrolled promptly for appropriate qualifications and obtained these qualifications according to planned timelines. Most other colleges were making good progress towards this position. A common approach was to require new staff to undertake the Certificate: Introduction to Teaching in FE soon after taking up post, then progress to the Advanced Certificate: Teaching in FE and progress further to the TQ(FE).

Many participants experienced some conflict between the demands of their programme and their other work in college. This conflict sometimes led to lower than expected completion rates within the anticipated timescales. Participants accepted that teaching duties took priority over the initial training, but felt that teaching demands eroded the time they had planned for study and portfolio preparation. Some participants found portfolio preparation confusing and onerous, especially where there was apparent duplication of evidence requirements across units. The teams delivering PDAs responded well to staff concerns, for example, by improving their recording systems and giving more detailed guidance to participants.

- *Colleges should agree realistic completion targets with participants and monitor progress and completion rates.*

College differentiated their training requirements for particular categories of staff. Most colleges aimed to have all their full-time permanent lecturers holding a TQ(FE) or working towards one, with part-time and temporary lecturers and staff in instructor or learning assistant roles holding or working towards a PDA.

College staff undertaking initial training through ITT units and TQ(FE) programmes were very positive overall about their experience, reporting that the programmes were stimulating, informative, and helped them reflect about and adapt their practices from an early stage. They appreciated the opportunity to engage in professional development soon after taking up post, especially if they had no prior teaching or training experience. Managers welcomed the contribution of the units to preparing part-time and outreach staff, and in some cases prospective applicants, for teaching. The content of the introductory certificate enabled staff to prepare and conduct their lessons with confidence. Staff undertaking the advanced certificate found it very practical and relevant, and valued the theoretical content which helped them to reflect on their practice and its impact on student learning. Carrying out learner evaluation as part of PDA proved effective in helping lecturers improve practice, conduct dialogue with learners and become more reflective. College staff undertaking the TQ(FE) programme run by current providers were equally positive about the programmes. In all the initial training programmes staff were highly positive about the quality of support provided by teaching fellows, tutors and mentors.

Colleges arranged their in-house initial professional development programmes in various ways, in some instances working in consortia with others. Most colleges had evaluated their programmes systematically, and had often improved the flexibility of delivery arrangements to best suit the participants. Good practice included:

- a series of workshops and seminars held at intervals to allow practice to develop
- a residential *introduction to teaching* course
- offering some sessions through direct input and some in seminar style, to accommodate and model different learning styles.

A majority of participants benefited from and were motivated by opportunities to work with groups of others. As well as providing mutual support, group discussion promoted sharing of practice and stimulated reflection on practice. For example, some participants developed links with staff in other colleges, and others held regular meetings and communicated through a virtual learning environment (VLE). A few distance learning participants did not have such ready access to group work, and a few others found that a shortage of time and the logistics of arranging meetings inhibited group work.

Colleges used a range of other certificated training programmes appropriately to provide staff with the skills and qualifications they needed to meet external requirements. These qualifications included assessor and verifier awards, training and development awards and other industry-specific awards, for example the LANTRA award of the Sector Skills Council for the Environmental and Land-based Sector.

## 5.3 Continuing professional development

### Educational theory and practice

This aspect of development relates substantially to elements A5 and A7 of the *Quality Framework for Further Education*. The focus is on improving practice with the aim of providing satisfying learning experiences that help students to develop their capacity for learning and to achieve. The potential **content** of this kind of development is wide, and ranges across classroom learning and teaching approaches, developing students' core skills and confidence, understanding the learning process and barriers to learning, recognising and extending the range of student learning styles, developing resources, using ICT in learning, and evaluating learning and teaching. The **means** by which the development can take place is similarly wide, and effective colleges encouraged their staff to think broadly about ways of developing their professional skills.

Examples of the range of activity include the following.

- learning with and from others in the college context:
  - moderation group meetings where teams meet senior staff and discuss learning and teaching approaches;
  - team teaching;
  - shadowing to develop skills and share teaching approaches;
  - staff working together to adapt course materials for overseas students speaking English as a foreign language.
- external conferences, seminars and speakers: SFEU seminars; other conferences; educationists as visiting speakers to college, (these activities often followed by internal development work.)
- ITT units used as CPD, notably the successful and motivating use of the unit *Evaluate the Teaching and Learning Experience*
- in-house experiential sessions, for example voice and acting exercises and mini-lesson presentations, encouraging participants to experiment to find suitable approaches
- training on ICT in learning including operating interactive whiteboards, identifying suitable web-based material, and incorporating the material and the use of technology into lesson planning and delivery
- developing ICT-based delivery through the Open Rural College of Scotland project
- undertaking further degree programmes in education theory
- self-directed innovation in learning and teaching by individuals and teams, where teachers use a form of action research in developing learning
- individually planned support for teaching and learning practice where a teacher has identified a development need.

- reference to and discussion of educational journals, texts, research and reports
- refresher programmes for staff having undertaken TQ(FE) some years ago.

Overall, there had been a significant increase in the attention given to staff development related to educational theory and practice. Staff generally found it interesting, stimulating and of practical help in understanding and managing the learning and teaching process. Colleges recognised the importance of equipping staff to work successfully with the diverse range of learners to promote their learning skills and maximise achievement. A significant minority of colleges had well-established strategies for this area of CPD, but most had yet to plan and promote it comprehensively enough.

- *Colleges should ensure that staff have appropriate opportunities to participate in a broad range of CPD in relation to educational theory and practice.*

### **Vocational (subject-related) theory and practice**

This aspect of development is also wide and there is necessarily considerable variation across subject areas in how it is implemented. The differences in **content** determine the various **means** by which staff undertake development. Examples include the following.

- In construction, staff update certification in specific skills and knowledge.
- In computing, they attend sessions run by hardware and software manufacturers.
- In hospitality and catering and in beauty therapy, staff extend their range of practical techniques.
- In accounting and psychology, they keep up by attending meetings and reading journals of professional bodies.
- In core skills, they keep abreast of practices recommended by national initiatives.
- In a range of subjects, they have contact with HE staff and current research.

A good way of increasing awareness of current employment practice was to seek placements with employers. Staff often found that placements were productive and had a positive impact on their work in college. However, there were some difficulties in securing appropriate placements. Arrangements were most effective when colleges selected employers known for the quality and currency of their practice, specified clearly the intended outcomes of the placement, including the impact on student learning, and carefully negotiated the activities and timing of the placement in arrangements suitable for both college and employer.

Effective components of vocational development included:

- close links with industry lead bodies
- SFEU and SQA seminars in subject areas
- participation in subject networks and associations
- contact with employers when delivering VQs and monitoring student placements, where the staff member explicitly set out to extend his/her own knowledge
- attendance at seminars and courses run by industry, employers and manufacturers
- a *Chefs' Club* whereby college staff were updated by professional chefs
- site visits (construction, gamekeeping) or hotel visits (hospitality) with staff or student groups

- work experience placements and secondments
- reference to professional associations and journals
- maintaining awareness of current employment practice by undertaking external work related to their subject expertise (accountancy, hairdressing)
- contact with HEIs engaged in research in the subject area
- upgrading academic qualifications in the subject area.

Colleges and staff often referred to this aspect of development as *industrial updating*. This was a useful heading in many respects. However, in a few cases it tended to focus staff development activity too narrowly on practical skills development and employment practice rather than addressing current developments in all the subjects taught across the college.

Overall, staff in particular subject areas where there were lead body imperatives received very good vocationally-related CPD. Vocational development opportunities were also available to other staff, but in a few cases colleges and staff did not identify suitable opportunities across all subject areas.

- *Colleges should encourage individuals and managers to take a broad view of vocational or subject-related development and consider a range of suitable opportunities.*

### **Corporate knowledge and awareness**

The **content** of this aspect of development mainly arises from change and development in the college's strategies, policies and procedures. These changes are sometimes part of organisational development and quality improvement, and sometimes derive from external drivers such as national policy or legislation. In some cases, the need for staff development was identified as a result of internal audit of systems and procedures. Development activities frequently comprised information and training in implementing new procedures. In some cases, they also usefully included an element of consultation and iterative development which enabled staff to contribute to and influence new measures. The **means** by which the development took place was generally through internal training sessions, seminars and meetings, sometimes with the assistance of an external trainer or consultant. Colleges also made good use of the seminars provided by SFEU and of other relevant external seminars and conferences.

Examples of continuing professional development in this area included:

- seminars to inform staff of changes in moderation or quality assurance systems
- updating staff on health and safety procedures
- informing staff of the college approach to race relations and disability legislation and their individual responsibilities relating to it.
- attendance at SFEU inclusiveness seminars, either tailored for in-house delivery or at a central location
- in-house staff training in the operation of electronic communication systems such as e-mail, VLE and intranet
- ECDL training
- working in teams with a consultant towards effective embedding of evaluation and quality improvement processes.
- change management in the context of merger, restructuring or a move to new premises

- seminar on identification and referral for learning support as part of the extended service colleges offer following BRITE training
- involving staff in committee work to broaden perspectives
- training in peer assessment, classroom observation and feedback.

All colleges had improved the effectiveness of internal communication, and in the best practice used such means as newsletters, briefings, intranet, e-mail and staff handbooks. These were useful in providing corporate information to staff and raising staff awareness of particular issues and initiatives. Useful resources were generally available on the intranet so that staff had good access to guidance on procedures. The majority of staff were able to benefit from electronic sources of information, but more than a few either lacked the necessary skills or had limited access.

Overall, colleges had ensured, through a range of appropriate development activities, that staff were well informed about corporate matters and procedures. They were generally aware of any gaps in knowledge, for example, in relation to legislation and in computer skills, and were addressing these.

### **Career and future skills development**

This category covers development activities intended to support career progression and career change, and to provide additional skills to equip the individual for future roles. The development could be undertaken concurrently with a promotion, or prospectively, in preparation for undertaking additional roles or applying for promoted posts. The **content** could address the needs of a group of staff, for example module leaders or heads of department, or it could be specific to an individual. Where a group of staff, either in a single college or in a consortium, had common needs, the **means** tended to be through group training sessions and meetings. Individual needs could be met by a range of means. In some cases, development activities from the other three categories could also be classed as career development where they helped to further an individual's career, but the classification for this report is based on the prime purpose.

This area of development benefited both the individual, in furthering their skills and so contributing to career progression, and the college, in providing a promoted staff complement with the required competencies to contribute to the leadership and management of the college.

Examples of development activities included:

- management development for newly promoted staff, including personnel aspects, planning and decision-making, and interviewing skills.
- management development and succession planning programme which enabled middle managers to reflect on and develop leadership skills and management competencies
- *awaydays* for new heads of department after restructuring, for team building and induction into newly specified roles
- Master's degree in Educational Management
- post-graduate certificate in Management in Tertiary Education
- work-shadowing

- preparation for promoted role through involvement in committee work to broaden experience, and attendance at academic council and advisory groups
- undertaking qualifications in another subject area in response to changes in college portfolio.

Staff undertaking management development generally found it very valuable in terms of adopting new perspectives, understanding team dynamics and finding solutions to problems.

This area of staff development had become more prominent in colleges in recent years. More than a few colleges had comprehensive arrangements, recognising the need for appropriate management and leadership at all levels of promotion. However, others had not addressed it proactively and routinely. Long-term stability in staffing and the resulting lack of promotion opportunities sometimes explained this deficiency. These colleges were generally now more alert to the need for career and future skills development in the light of restructuring, plans for new premises and the need for robust leadership throughout the college.

- *Colleges should ensure that they make adequate provision for career and future skills development, both to develop individuals and to secure good leadership throughout the college.*

## 6. Evaluation and quality improvement

Colleges used several approaches to evaluating staff development activity and using the results to improve standards. These approaches included:

- staff evaluation of the quality and usefulness of the event or activity
- staff reflection and reporting on the impact of development activity on themselves in terms of changes in knowledge, skills and approaches
- assessing the impact of these changes on the work the development activity was intended to influence
- enabling staff to share their learning with others.

It was important to bring these aspects together to enable the staff concerned to answer some key questions about development activity.

- Was it useful?
- In which ways did it improve my awareness, skills, levels of knowledge, attitudes, etc?
- How am I using these improvement skills to make improvements in my work practices, particularly to enhance the student experience?
- How am I using them to help other staff improve their work practices, particularly the student experience?

Colleges generally required staff to complete evaluation forms for events they attended. In most cases, these forms were used purposefully, for example, to inform planning and improvement of in-house events. In a few cases, staff were required to evaluate and report on events they attended but little use was made of their returns. Colleges often encouraged staff to pass on what they learned at external events to their colleagues as appropriate, for example through presentations at team meetings or distribution of papers. However, this did not always happen and there were missed opportunities to share information and ideas.

- *Colleges should select the best ways of using feedback from staff attending development events.*

The two main vehicles for reflection on development activity were tutorials and group meetings in the case of programmes of initial professional development, and the staff development and career review interviews in the case of continuing professional development. The former generally operated well, and participants on initial programmes often reported positively on the new thinking and new ideas they were developing. The latter was less uniformly successful. The extent to which staff reviewed the impact of development activities varied according to the guidelines in the particular college and the quality of the discussion. A further forum for discussion was with a line manager. This could be particularly useful in that line managers could facilitate the sharing of ideas, and could support and encourage their staff to put new ideas into practice.

- *Colleges should promote the role of line managers in helping staff to use their staff development most effectively.*

Only a few colleges had systematically and comprehensively addressed the connection between staff development activity and the impact on performance, particularly in terms of

the learning and teaching and outcomes for students. The initial professional development programmes had been very successful in helping staff to gauge the impact of their developing practices on students. A few colleges had introduced the ITT unit *Evaluate the learning and teaching experience* as a CPD activity. This had been popular with staff and had led to demonstrable improvements. Programme review reports and reviews of operational objectives often contained information on improvements that had been made, but seldom attributed them explicitly to staff development. Student feedback from unit evaluations, *Quality of Learning and Teaching* surveys, tutorials and meetings often provided information which could be linked to staff development. Staff development objectives and targets were more often reviewed in terms of development activities undertaken rather than the impact of the development. One of the difficulties in doing this was that several factors in addition to staff development influenced performance. For example, staff development aimed at helping staff to promote student retention was only one factor influencing actual retention figures, and could not be proved to be causal.

- *Colleges should develop mechanisms for assessing the impact of staff development on performance, particularly where this impacts on learning and teaching and outcomes for students.*

Good practice in making connections between staff development activity and quality improvement often relied on a good SDCR process. In an effective process, the documentation set out individuals' development objectives clearly in terms of proposed purpose and outcome, and adequately recorded the extent to which the purposes had been met and the outcomes achieved. This could be achieved through self-reporting, through evaluation evidence and through peer evaluations if they were used. Although most colleges were working towards this process or had built it into their systems, it was often not fully and thoughtfully implemented in practice.

The potential use of a CPD log to assist planning, recording, reflecting and impact assessment of development activities, and also to assist with CV preparation and staff deployment was not widely recognised.

- *Colleges should explore the potential uses of CPD logs in conjunction with SDCR systems, to assist staff in planning, recording and reflecting on their development activities, and to assist staff and managers to assess the impact of development activities on performance, particularly in relation to learning and teaching and outcomes for students.*

## **7. Main points for action**

Colleges should work towards staff development and review systems that link performance evaluation with staff development planning and that generate specific development objectives which are subsequently reviewed.

Colleges should ensure that their SDCR systems are fully and consistently implemented.

Colleges should consider the potential value of CPD logs linked to the SDCR systems and introduce arrangements as appropriate.

Colleges should implement their induction arrangements fully and ensure that new staff receive comprehensive, accessible advice and information.

Colleges should fully develop and implement their arrangements for initial professional development.

Colleges should take into account the four categories of continuing professional development outlined in this report in their planning, paying particular attention to widening the scope of vocational and subject-related development, addressing career and future skills development, and acknowledging and including less structured forms of development.

Colleges should promote CPD in educational theory and practice comprehensively in order to enhance the quality of learning and teaching and achieve good student outcomes.

Colleges should give further attention to evaluating the impact of staff development, particularly on learning and teaching and student outcomes, and make more explicit links between staff development and quality improvement.

SFEFC might consider conducting an analysis of initial and continuing development for non-teaching staff.

## Appendix: Examples of good practice

### A – Examples of good practice in the colleges visited.

**North Highland College** had established a *Staff Support for Teaching and Learning* procedure. This procedure was implemented when the course monitoring or SDCR systems had identified a development need or when an individual requested it. A support package was agreed with the individual staff member. This could include, for example:

- participation in all or part of a specific programmes such as the PDA
- help with particular aspects, for example. lesson planning, and
- classroom observation with reflective feedback.

**South Lanarkshire College** identified four non-teaching staff development days across the academic year. The programmes for these days comprised a wide range of sessions addressing various aspects of CPD, and also enabled staff groups to spend some time working in their own teams. For one of the days, the *All College Day*, all staff attended a prestigious venue for a programme which included key speakers, discussion of corporate developments, and opportunities to network across teaching and non-teaching staff, developing an ethos of teamwork.

**Barony College** had robust arrangements for induction. The induction scheme was applied to all staff and was differentiated for four categories of staff. Line managers established development needs at the outset in relation to the demands of the post and the individual's previous experience. A mentor was allocated. The induction began with an introduction to the college in the first week, and extended over a year, during which line managers held and recorded quarterly review meetings with the new staff member. After the first year the staff member entered the standard appraisal scheme. The same induction process was conducted when existing staff changed roles to ensure that development needs associated with the changing demands of the new post were identified and addressed.

**Reid Kerr College** delivered the unit *Evaluate the Teaching and Learning Experience* as part of the continuous professional development programme for teaching staff. This programme was initiated to support staff commitment to improving teaching and the student learning experience. Staff from the Business and Management Department, supported by the Quality Unit, delivered the programme. Participants were mainly experienced teaching staff, the majority already holding a recognised TQ(FE) qualification. Staff reported a number of benefits from this unit. They had been able to demonstrate greater competence in evaluating their own teaching and student learning, and could now demonstrate improvements to the student experience.

**Edinburgh's Telford College** had initiated a major training project, *ICT in Learning*, to prepare staff for the move to a new campus. Training was scheduled in three phases over an 18-month period with the aim of helping staff to become confident with the new working and learning environment. The training programme focused on learning how to use new technologies for curriculum delivery. The three strands to the training were: using computer applications, e-mail and Internet; the effective use of the VLE to support learning; and how to use interactive whiteboards to enhance the learning experience. On completion of their training, staff were issued with a laptop.

**Glasgow College of Building and Printing** provided staff with clear and comprehensive staff development information through its Training and Development Directory. This included information on the policy, the staff development committee, the personal development planning process, the arrangements for applying for courses and conferences, and the in-house provision. Additionally, the staff development programme was available on the Intranet and further information was conveyed through the college bulletins.

## **B - Examples of good practice taken from HMIE review reports in 2003-04**

**Aberdeen College** had developed an innovative staff development programme in partnership with the University of Aberdeen for teaching staff whose TQ(FE) was gained more than five years previously. The programme *Beyond TQ(FE)* was designed to promote reflective practice and encourage lecturers to employ up-to-date methodologies such as aspects of ICT and interactive whiteboards to support learning within teaching practice. The programme also addressed good practice in classroom management and promoted awareness of key legislation and its implementation in areas such as disability, inclusiveness and race relations. Lecturers who successfully completed this programme had the opportunity to progress to a BA in Professional Development with the University of Aberdeen.

In **Perth College** the continuing professional development manager met regularly with her counterparts from **Dundee** and **Angus College**, to exchange information and ideas. Each organisation shared its staff development programme with the others and provided opportunities for staff at each of the other colleges to access the workshops offered. Evaluation of the events indicated that in addition to the development and broadening of staff skills and expertise, the opportunity for staff to network with colleagues from other colleges had been valuable and the choice and availability of events had made participation easier.

**Elmwood College** had operated a *Return to Industry* programme since 2001 for both teaching and support staff. The programme provided staff with opportunities to keep abreast of current developments in their specialist field. Participating staff were released from their college commitments to allow them to engage in a short placement with an external organisation or company. Staff were enthusiastic about the programme as it had a positive impact on personal motivation and raised their effectiveness and confidence in performing college roles. The benefits for the college included improved staff competence, an awareness of developments in a number of areas affecting college provision, and the potential to establish collaborative networks.