

Leadership Skills for Governance: Programme and events

The Leadership Skills for Governance (LSG) initiative, a unique set of development and support programmes specifically designed for college

governors, chairs, clerks and others who are involved in further education governance, is pleased to announce its 2007-08 programme.

Conferences and events

Governance Skills Summits

10 July 2007 Royal Lancaster Hotel, London*
12 July 2007 The Lowry Hotel, Manchester*
18 July 2007 Hyatt Hotel, Birmingham*
19 July 2007 Bath Spa Hotel, Bath
* sold out

The 3rd Good Governance Forum

31 October 2007 Wembley Stadium, London

The 2008 Annual Governance Conference

6-8 March 2008 Midland Hotel, Manchester

Student Governors' Policy Forum

25 October 2007 Tate Modern, London
5 February 2008 SAS Radisson, Birmingham

Workshops

LSG workshops are designed for governors, clerks or anyone interested in FE governance and are available on a range of subjects:

- governance overview
- excellence in governance
- learners, curriculum and standards
- FE finance
- building tomorrow's leaders
- employment relations

- self-assessment
- health and safety
- audit

Watch out for your personal LSG programme guide that will be sent to your college in September with details of the latest workshops, personal training, events and services.

For information on:

Governance and the FE System
visit www.ggpg.org.uk

Alternatively, telephone 020 7654 3377 or email: info@fegovernance.org

The Leadership Skills for Governance initiative visit www.fegovernance.org

The Road to Wembley...

When you think about Wembley, what comes to mind? Is it the 1966 World Cup, Live Aid or Chelsea's recent FA Cup victory at the very first final to be held at the new stadium? Soon there will be another special event to remember! On the 31 October 2007 Wembley will be hosting the 3rd Good Governance Forum.

I doubt whether Sir Bob Geldolf will be there to plead for more money for FE or Jose Mourinho, the self-proclaimed special one, will grace us with his presence but I am expecting the strategic discourse between governors and government to develop as FE Reform and the challenges of self-regulation moves to the next level.

In my last article, I expressed the view that dialogue between governing boards, LSC, DfES and other players has developed over the years. Since then people have reminded me that we cannot have consultation for the sake of it. Outputs have to be acted upon and this has to be fed back to all involved.

Consequently, the Leadership Skills for Governance (LSG) team will soon issue a report to each college outlining the essential messages which resulted from the May

Forum, including statements from key national players in FE regarding how they plan to take forward the recommendations outlined in the report. This report will be used in future events to ensure continuity and accountability. Reporting back to boards is a system that we will develop as we look to build on the dialogue that we have developed over the last few years.

The last Forum produced a number of interesting questions. In particular, discussions regarding the Leitch report raised issues that government needs to consider. Is Train to Gain as successful on the ground as civil servants and ministers believe it to be? Will employers really invest in FE to make the Leitch vision a reality? Who will sell the government's framework to implement Leitch to business?

continued on page 7



DESIGNED AND PRODUCED BY SAGE ASSOCIATES WWW.SAGEASSOCIATES.CO.UK

contents

2006 Consultation on the FE Instrument and Articles

Getting to grips with self-regulation

Good Governance Forum: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) perspective

Self-regulation... the QIA's agenda

What's it like to be a student governor?

Principals' Qualifying Programme (PQP)

Is work shadowing part of your career development?

editorial

Since our last newsletter, it has been an interesting period for all of us on the LSG team. After organising the most successful governors conference to date and seeing the launch of the White Paper's Governance Good Practice Guide (www.ggpg.org.uk), we found ourselves in a new home at the Centre for Excellence in Leadership.

Although the move symbolises the growing importance of governance in the leadership of our FE institutions, the good work of our former host, the AoC, has not been forgotten. We on the team would like to thank the Association for all its hard work and support over the years and look forward to continuing our relationship in the future.

As this newsletter demonstrates, good governance is intrinsic to the success of the FE system. We are currently reviewing our package of support to you to ensure that governing boards and others have all the tools required to take advantage of these opportunities. Look out for our new package in September!

Anthony Smythe
Programme Director, Leadership Skills for Governance, Centre for Excellence in Leadership

2006 Consultation on the FE Instrument and Articles



A letter from **Bill Rammell MP** Minister of State for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning

I am pleased to publish the report of the 2006 consultation exercise with the Further Education (FE) sector on proposed revisions to the Instrument and Articles (I&A) of Government for FE colleges.

The purpose of the consultation was to explore ways in which the I&A could be revised to better support FE governing bodies in fulfilling their role and to take forward the commitment in the FE White Paper to ensure that the governance framework supports greater autonomy, innovation and responsiveness.

The proposals in the consultation responded to a number of themes in the FE White Paper and also took into account views expressed by college governors at networking events and during the previous 2004 consultation. They also built

on the findings in the NAO report, *Securing strategic leadership for the learning and skills sector in England* and Sir Andrew Foster's report, *Realising the potential – a review of the future role of further education colleges*.

Response from the sector

There was a good response from the sector (249 received in total: 241 from colleges; 7 from representative organisations; and one from the Learning and Skills Council). On the whole, the sector welcomed the proposals and the majority were supported, although in some instances this support was qualified. The report sets out the scale of the response to each proposal, the decisions taken and also some examples of specific comments received.

Increasing the number of student governors on the boards of FE corporations was an issue which caused significant comment. However, having considered the representations, I remain convinced that having two student governors on a college corporation will provide an important impetus for increased learner engagement

across the sector. This will, therefore, be one of the changes introduced in the revised I&A.

It will be important for students to be supported as they take on this important role. I have asked my officials to work with others in the sector to ensure that we spread examples of existing good practice and raise awareness of the materials available to support student governor recruitment and individual student governors. I will also look to the recently launched Governance Good Practice Guide www.ggpg.org.uk to play a significant role in this area.

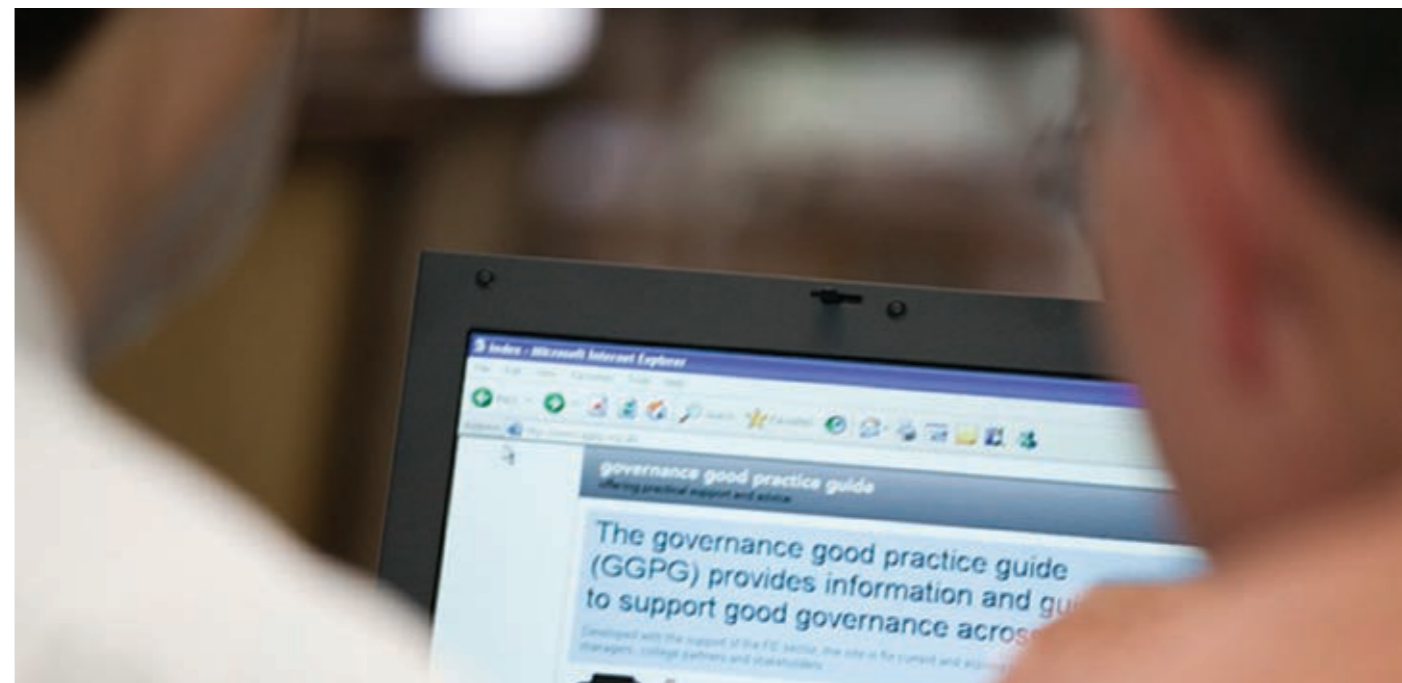
Next steps

Due to the number of linkages between the I&A and the FE & Training Bill and to ensure consistency between the two, the revised I&A will be issued once the Bill completes its passage through Parliament. The precise timing for this is currently uncertain but I expect colleges to receive the revised I&A as soon as possible following the start of the 2007/08 academic year.

Copies of the consultation report can be found at www.dfes.gov.uk/furthereducation



Getting to grips with self-regulation



Stella C Thomas, LSG Lead Consultant, explains how.

Working together

If you have attended any of the recent *Leadership Skills for Governance* conferences, good governance forums, consultation dinners or workshops, you will know that self-regulation across the Further Education system is a 'hot topic'.

Precisely how self-regulation will be implemented, how it will be monitored and by whom, and how it will be judged to be effective, are all part of the ongoing consultation.

In broad terms, self-regulation for FE means that colleges and other providers – individually and collectively – **police their own standards of performance** in all areas of activity, reassuring government and the public that quality and effectiveness of provision will be improved through effective self-assessment and that levels of external

regulation and intervention can, therefore, be significantly reduced.

This would involve **all learning and skills providers sharing collective responsibilities** by:

- defining and signing up to shared values, codes of conduct and operational frameworks
- developing and operating policies and procedures for effective and rigorous self-assessment, self-improvement, risk-based assessment principles, peer review, support and intervention, discipline and sanctions.

Such self-regulation implies a transformational and entrepreneurial leadership style in which all those responsible for policy; strategy and implementation across the whole of the FE system work closely together and optimise their collective expertise for the good of learners.

Governing boards will be expected to meet standards of scrutiny to reassure government agencies that college management is being held to account. With greater autonomy and less external intervention, comes greater responsibility for governing boards which will play a key role in the success of self-regulation across the FE system.

In order to fulfil an effective stewardship and quality role, governors and clerks need to know the self-assessment processes and practices in their college, and of how well they are implemented - at governing board level and college-wide.

continued on page 4

Getting to grips with self-regulation continued from page 3

Are you and your governing board ready for FE self-regulation?

To answer, you need first to look at your in-house arrangements because the success of self-regulation across the FE system will depend on robust, reliable self-assessment at individual college and at provider level

Governing boards play a critical role in monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the performance of the college and the performance of governance, both as a board and as individuals.

In order to fulfil an effective stewardship and quality role, governors and clerks need to know the self-assessment processes and practices in their college, and of how well they are implemented – at governing board level and college-wide.

If a college and governing board use self-assessment simply to prepare themselves for Ofsted inspection and to comply with LSC requirements, they won't be ready for FE self-regulation. There's more you need to do.

Consequently, during the past year, the Leadership Skills for Governance (LSG) team has run workshops, provided consultancy support to colleges and boards, and produced guidance on effective self-assessment for the Governance Good Practice Guide website (www.ggpg.org.uk). The team promotes a proactive approach to self-assessment, embedding it is a powerful tool for ongoing self-improvement that brings both quality and

business benefits, and prepares organisations for FE self-regulation.

Features of effective self-assessment which provide a reliable foundation for self-regulation across the FE system include:

- being led from the top, with strong leadership from governing board, principal and senior management team
- being adequately resourced and supported
- all the college being proactively involved, within a mature, reflective organisation culture
- learners, employers and other stakeholders being routinely, systematically and successfully involved in the self-assessment and improvement process
- colleges sharing good practice – in-house and externally with other learning and skills providers – peer referencing and learning from others
- colleges and governing boards looking outwards as well as inwards and being committed to excellence across the whole of the learning and skills system.

How do your college and board measure up?

When you reflect on some of these features of effective self-assessment, how does your college and board measure up? Do all your governing board members have a shared

The LSG team does not under-estimate the challenges which FE self-regulation brings but meeting those challenges brings opportunities and benefits.

understanding of what constitutes good performance as a college and as a board, and how this is measured and improved? What are the implications of FE self-regulation for your college and board?

To help you analyse your quality position, visit the **LSG Governance Good Practice Guide website** (www.ggpg.org.uk), attend an **LSG self-assessment workshop**, or arrange for **customised support** for your college (or group of colleges).

The LSG team does not underestimate the challenges which FE self-regulation brings but meeting those challenges will bring opportunities and benefits. The various reviews and consequent reforms of the FE system, coupled with the government's intention to deliver value for money, and calls from the FE system to reduce the burden of bureaucracy and 'over-inspection and audit', to show as strong, vibrant and well able to manage its own financial affairs and quality performance.

The LSG team will support you on your journey towards self-regulation. If you would like to work with them or if you would like to know more about the Governance Good Practice Guide, please contact info@fegovernance.org

Good Governance Forum: the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) perspective



Rob Wye, LSC's National Director, comments

I'd like to thank you for inviting me and LSC colleagues to join you at the recent good governance forum. I was impressed as ever by your commitment as a group of volunteers, and your determination that the voluntary nature of your role should be preserved. However the consensus on my table, and I think on many others, was that if there are people for whom financial concerns are a genuine barrier to volunteering then we should do something to enable them to get involved. We agreed that more work is needed to make sure we are drawing on the best talents of all communities and

removing barriers to engagement whatever they may be.

Conversation turned to the balance between the strategic role of governors in developing and leading a vision and their stewardship role in ensuring accountability to the public. I am sure this sort of debate is

I would encourage all of you, if you haven't already had an opportunity to discuss the changes ahead with your LSC Area Director, to invite them to your next meeting and to start thinking now about what a demand-led system means for you.

being mirrored across England as governors begin to discuss the impact of a demand-led system and the potential challenges this will bring.

We and the DfES want to provide as much support as we can to help you respond to the skills imperative and the Leitch recommendations – but we do need to know what support you need. I know some suggestions were made on the event's blog and I look forward to receiving the formal report of the forum identifying these areas.

It became clear during the final session on self-regulation that there is still much work to do to share ideas and engage in debate about what this means for governance. We are supporting the work of Sir George Sweeney's group and through this we are committed to helping develop a model for self-regulation that is owned by you and the rest of the FE system.

The format of the event, with most of the work being done by the delegates and the panel not having an opportunity to set out their stalls before the questions started, meant that the agenda was very much yours. My colleagues and I appreciated the opportunity to hear your concerns first hand.

We will respond to the formal report of the forum in due course with details of how we propose to take forward the dialogue and I look forward to meeting you again at the October forum if not before. ■

Self-regulation... the QIA's agenda

Richard Emmett, QIA's Communications Manager, offers his view of the development and describes an exciting new web portal.

The Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning has planned a series of important conferences at the end of June – unfortunately just as we go to press. These follow a series of QIA regional events on *Pursuing Excellence and Self-Regulation – sharing what works*. We hope to cover the outcomes of the June events in the next edition of this newsletter.

The move to self-regulation in the further education system will be high on the agenda at a series of conferences being held by the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) in June.

QIA has already staged four regional events, entitled *Pursuing Excellence and Self-Regulation – sharing what works*. Governors of further education colleges, sixth form colleges and school sixth forms attended the free, one-day events, along with those people responsible for leading quality improvement, curriculum development and continuing professional development for staff.

Delegates learnt from colleagues and other experts about the latest developments and what is working in teaching and learning. The emphasis was on practical

exercises with a dozen interactive workshops covering effective practice and offering advice on a range of topics including:

- peer review, self-improvement and self-regulation in the further education system
- self-assessment and the Framework for Excellence
- the active pursuit of excellent teaching and learning
- the improvement of learner success rates and embedding literacy and numeracy across organisations
- the New Standard in employer responsiveness and vocational excellence
- how technology will support the 14-19 reforms

Governors found out how *Pursuing Excellence*, the national Improvement Strategy for the further education system, which QIA co-ordinated and launched in January, is having an impact on the drive for excellence, the move to self-improvement and ultimately self-regulation. What colleges and providers need to do to implement government reforms was also explored.

A key principle underpinning the Improvement Strategy is the partnership between all those who work in the further education system, including senior managers and staff, to develop a culture of continuous self-improvement, so governors have a major part to play. The following link will take you to the relevant section on roles

A key principle underpinning the Improvement Strategy is the partnership between all those who work in the further education system, including senior managers and staff, to develop a culture of continuous self-improvement, so governors have a major part to play.

- how to improve apprenticeship completions
- QIA Learning and Skills Beacons' secrets of success
- a demonstration of excellent practice from the winners of the QIA STAR awards.

and responsibilities in the Strategy: www.qia.org.uk/pursuing-excellence/roles/system.html

The Improvement Strategy will run until 2009 and a new National Improvement Partnership Board (NIPB) has been created to monitor its implementation. The NIPB will provide a means of gathering first-

hand feedback on the effectiveness of the agencies' support to providers on quality improvement, further develop joint strategies to address emerging issues and provide a mechanism for the flow of intelligence between and across regions and national partners on improvement needs and priorities.

At its conferences, QIA will also officially launch and demonstrate the Excellence Gateway, a new web portal that will play a major part in QIA's role of facilitating the

transfer of good practice among colleges and providers and encouraging them to learn from each other.

QIA envisages that the portal will be a complete online service for all those involved in the sector – governors, leaders, managers, teachers, trainers, tutors, and support staff. It will provide people with a single point of access to examples of good practice from their peers, networks to support self-improvement, and resources, tools and materials to support teaching and learning. ■

QIA envisages that the portal will be a complete online service for all those involved in the sector – governors, leaders, managers, teachers, trainers, tutors, and support staff.



The Road to Wembley...

continued from page 1

These questions are not unique to the Good Governance Forum. Such matters were raised during the reading of the FE and Training Bill in the House of Commons. Legislation may not provide an answer to these questions but answered they must be.

For our part we have decided to hold four Governance Skills Summits across the country (see back page for details). These summits will provide governors, principals, the Learning and Skills Council, as well as business and Sector Skills Councils, a platform to discuss such matters.

I shall report on these Summits in the next LSG Newsletter in the autumn and we will use the events' findings to help shape a special employer/business engagement Good Governance Forum when we meet at Wembley in October. ■

If you would like details of any LSG governance events please visit: www.fegovernance.org

Anthony Smythe
Programme Director
Leadership Skills for Governance
Centre for Excellence in Leadership

What's it like to be a student governor?

Marieke Collett, LSG programme manager, went to Canterbury College to interview Matt Bromley, currently in his third year as student governor.



Marieke Have you always wanted to get involved in the leadership of your college?

Matt No. I didn't start college with that in mind! In fact I had to be coerced by my classmates to become our first year course representative. Then, in my second year, I was appointed Student Governor and Student Union Vice Principal and it all seemed to follow on naturally from there. In fact, now I've also taken on responsibility as the FE rep on the NUS committee for students with disabilities.

Marieke What's your motivation for all this?

Matt Well, I became a student governor because I recognised that there were issues arising in the college and I wanted to become more involved in making decisions to address these issues.

Marieke As you've been elected student governor three years running, it's safe to assume you've been a popular choice, why do you think this is?

Matt It's great to have their support. I have tried to create close links with the student body generally, principally through personal contact, by talking to them about their issues and by ensuring they all know who I am and what I do.

Marieke What do you see at the heart of the student governor role?

Matt Being able to see the bigger picture is key. Students often have a narrow view of their college experience, only interacting with their own staff and fellow students. The same can be said of the governing board who often don't know what's going on at ground level. The student governor bridges this gap.

Marieke So your role is an essential part of the quality process?

Matt Definitely! The governing board needs what you might call

“customer feedback” if it is going to assess the overall quality of the college's service. My role is to feed in the students' perspective and ensure that decisions are made with the impact on students in mind. I'm in a fortunate position of course, because unlike many of the other governors, I'm on site full time so I can be really proactive in driving change forward.

Marieke How do you react to the idea that all you are there to do is to represent the students?

Matt That's far too simplistic! At times there maybe conflicting issues that arise, such as the introduction of top up fees for further education. However, my role as a student governor is not representing students in any narrow way but rather to provide a student perspective to the board.

Marieke Has being a student governor brought you any benefits?

Matt Yes it has. As you might expect, being a student governor has increased my confidence, especially my public speaking skills and it has given me experience of working with senior members of staff as well. Less predictably, it has helped with my HND. I think I am more objective now and I have had to be a lot more organised to fit in everything I have to do! Even attending high-

level meetings has been great as I now have a real insight into how top levels of an organisation work.

Marieke Would you say that your experience as a student governor is typical?

Matt I'm not sure all student governors are as lucky as I've been. I've had the full backing of the college and the board, including training and resources. This has ensured I'm up to speed with the topics under discussion. I suspect that some student governors feel intimidated and consequently don't always speak out at meetings probably because they don't understand the intricacies of the issues being discussed.

Marieke You mentioned that you had had access to training. Does anything in particular stand out?

Matt One of the most successful training sessions I attended was the student governor toolkit session, run by CEL and the AoC in conjunction with the NUS. In my view, it should be mandatory to attend the toolkit training. As far as I am concerned it increased my confidence and my knowledge level, and most importantly, it was a great opportunity to meet other student governors.

Marieke On the national level, do you think things have changed over the last few years?

Matt Tremendously... I've attended the CEL Governors conference for the past two years and it's noticeable how the learner voice has grown. In my first year I was the only student governor at the event: I felt very alone. This year there were 30 of us, creating a fantastic network.

Students often have a narrow view of their college experience, only interacting with their own staff and fellow students. The same can be said of the governing board who often don't know what's going on at ground level. The student governor bridges this gap.

Marieke So what do you still want to achieve before you finish your term of office?

Matt One of my overarching objectives here at Canterbury is to improve the level of communication from the bottom up. I want to create a student council formed by course representatives, meeting monthly to discuss current issues. Nationally, I would like to see the end of colleges handpicking their student governors because quite frankly this leads to a non representative governing body.

Marieke Have you any advice for anyone thinking about becoming a student governor?

Matt The first thing I would say is that it's a great feeling to know that when you do leave college you'll have had the opportunity to represent other students from the

bottom up and to have made the council think about, and consult with students. However, I would also want to say this; if you do put yourself up for election then it is your obligation to ensure that your voice and other voices are heard. You have to be serious about this role. It's not about quick fix

solutions; it's about long-term strategies to ensure excellence for future learners.

Marieke You're obviously very passionate about the role. It sounds to me that Canterbury has been lucky to have you.

Matt It would be good to think so! And I must admit I was pleased when the college asked me to speak at the celebration of achievement awards, highlighting the importance that the college has placed on the student governor role. It's been hard work but I've enjoyed it and it seems as if others have valued my efforts too.

Look out for our new LSG student governor website, forums and training in the autumn. Further details will be released soon.

Principals' Qualifying Programme (PQP)

Lynne Sedgmore CBE, Chief Executive at the Centre for Excellence in Leadership discusses what governing bodies need to know.

Many Chairs and Corporation Members have expressed to me how keen they are to know more about the PQP and their potential role. Launched in March 2007, the PQP is an executive leadership development programme. Initially commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills and developed by CEL following extensive consultation with the DfES and sector leaders. The programme is one of the key outcomes of FE Reform and is included in the 2007 FE and Training Bill. From September 2007 the PQP will be mandatory for new principals and for those who move to new posts in the 2008/09 academic year. The Bill recommends the PQP for serving principals and intends that all

serving principals will complete the programme by 2011.

The PQP uses the Lifelong Learning UK role specifications for principals, and has been designed to support principals in developing their leadership capacity and potential in delivering the change agenda for FE. The programme has responded to sector feedback

The PQP uses the Lifelong Learning UK role specifications for principals, and has been designed to support principals in developing their leadership capacity and potential in delivering the change agenda for FE.

which asked for it to be flexible and personalised.

It starts with an assessment to enable principals to examine their current practice, their leadership style and their past professional

development and to use this to form the basis of the personalised element of the programme. The group's diverse needs and skills also create learning opportunities as part of a community of learning and leadership practice.

The programme incorporates a rigorous 360° diagnostic tool to help establish an ongoing personal

development plan. It provides opportunities for shadowing and mentoring activities and offers two short residential programmes giving participants an opportunity to work on real life institutional issues where their leadership and

the impact of their interventions on their staff and the institution as a whole system may be examined. We hope that Principals will involve Chairs of Governors both in this and in their longer term personal development.

This work based and personalised approach both encourages reflective practice and facilitates and strengthens a wider understanding of the challenges facing those charged with leading the FE system and exploring opportunities for shaping its future.

Participants on the PQP have access to specially commissioned self-assessed study units which cover the functional areas of finance, funding, human resources, curriculum, equality and diversity, estates management, marketing and governance.

Participants on the PQP have access to specially commissioned self-assessed study units which cover the functional areas of finance, funding, human resources, curriculum, equality and diversity, estates management, marketing and governance. The principal, who is supported throughout the programme by a critical friend, moves through the programme at his or her own pace, constructing the programme according to his or her individual needs and constraints.

Whilst offering support to the principal, a critical friend also gives positive challenge so that opportunities for facilitating leadership-learning, improved practice and reflection are maximised and explored fully.

Participants are coached in preparing a presentation of their leadership development to an assessment panel. Those meeting the requirements of the programme will be awarded a certificate signed by the Secretary of State for Education.

The feedback and suggestions from CEL's first intake of 32 new and serving principals in March 2007 was enthusiastic and positive in tone and will serve to inform the future development of the programme.

The next intake of principals will be in November 2007 and the DfES is providing a £5,000 subsidy for each principal enrolling on the programme. (Each institution is to contribute the remaining £1,000 to the total cost.) We understand that the level of DfES subsidy is likely to be reduced in future years.

If you wish to comment on the PQP and to make suggestions on how CEL can engage and inform you and your Corporation more effectively I am keen to hear from you. Thank you for your continuing support. ■



Is work shadowing part of your career development?

For over twelve years, the Work Shadowing Scheme, part of the Career Development Service programme, has provided invaluable development opportunities for principals and senior managers allowing participants to share ideas and best practice.

The scheme is now open to governors and clerks. Flexible and responsive, the programme is tailored to an individual's needs.

If you're a governor, it's an opportunity to shadow a fellow governor or senior manager within FE, the public sector or the private sector. For clerks or senior managers, it's a chance to shadow fellow clerks or a company secretary within the FE system, elsewhere in the education sector, or a public or private sector organisation.

For more information, contact the CEL Shadowing team on 020 7654 3382, or email: rachel.organ@centreforexcellence.org.uk

