



**UCU guidance to branches on the FE
White Paper, *Further Education: raising
standards, improving life chances***

September 2006

This guidance needs to be read in conjunction with the branch briefing on the White Paper which gives information on what is being proposed in the White Paper and what is UCU's policy and reactions to what is being proposed. Additional briefings and guidance may be issued to branches as a result of the actual implementation of the White Paper and any legislation or regulations that may flow from this.

Branches are urged to take up all the points below that are appropriate to their local circumstances with local management:

Role and mission

- Find out if there is any intention to change the college mission? If this is to be changed, ask management how it is to change and what processes will be gone through to change the college mission?
- Ask management what are the implications of any changes in mission and purpose for:
 - staff
 - students
 - courses.
- HE in FE: if your college is delivering HE programmes, ask management what is likely to be the impact on the college if the White Paper proposals are implemented?
- Adult and community learning: if your college is providing adult and community learning courses with or without a local authority contract, ask how the White Paper proposals impact on the college?

Specialisms

- Ask if the college is contemplating taking on any new specialist roles? If so in what areas?
- Ask management if other colleges are taking up more specialist roles, what may be the impact on your college?
- Ask management how might the White Paper proposals for National Skills Academies affect your college?
- Ask management if your college envisages being part of 'hub and spoke' arrangements around specialist subjects/areas? What other colleges could it see joining up with in such arrangements?

Responsiveness

Level 3 entitlement

- Ask management what is the likely impact on your college from the implementation of the level 3 entitlement to those adults up to the age of 25?
- Ask management what affect will the current range of cuts to adult learning have on the college's ability to respond to the new entitlement?

14-19

- Ask management if the college is hoping to deliver specialist diplomas? If it is, when and in partnership with whom? How will this impact on existing provision? What staff development is planned for delivery of the specialist diplomas?
- **16-19 Competitions:** ask management if there are of these any taking place or about to take place, that may affect the college? If there are what may be the likely impact on the college, especially course delivery and staffing?
- Ask management know of any plans to open new 16-19 provision and/or new school sixth forms? If it has what are likely to be the impact on the college, particularly in terms of programmes and staffing?

Learner Voice

- Ask if the college has plans to increase student representation on the governors in line with the White Paper proposals? If so how will this be achieved? Will this impact on the numbers of staff governors?
- Ask if the college planning a local learner satisfaction survey and panel? And if so how is it planning to use the results of these? Also if they are planning such survey and panels, how will adult learners and part-time learners views be captured?

Employers

- Ask management if the college has bid for Train2Gain programmes? What are the results of that bidding process? What will be the impact on programmes and staff of the college's application for Train2Gain funds
- Ask if the college have an employer engagement strategy? How is this impacting on staff, especially in terms of conditions of service? For example will staff be required to work off-site? Will they be paid for travel off-site? Will their timetables be adjusted to allow for work off-site?

Quality

- Ask management what is the college's last inspection grade and how the college will be scored under new system of balanced score cards? Ask if the college regarded as a failing or coasting college? What are the consequences of this?
- Ask if any curriculum areas/departments regarded as failing or coasting? What are/will be the consequences of this?
- Ask what the concepts and practices of 'personalized learning' and the 'expert learner' as outlined in the White Paper mean and will there be any impact on the college's delivery of programmes and staff?
- Ask whether the college have plans to improve information, advice and guidance to students? If so how will this affect staff?

Workforce development

- Ask management how the college is assisting unqualified new staff to obtain the requisite teaching qualification? What support is there for these staff in terms of time off for study, mentoring and coaching, classroom observation and feedback, smaller teaching timetable during the process of training?
- Ask if the college has policies around workforce development? If not will the college be drawing these up and will they be negotiated with staff unions?
- Ask if the college intends to introduce the requirement that all lecturers will have to undertake 30 hours CPD? How is this going to be logged and monitored?
- Ask when is the college going to draw up a staff development plan as per the proposal in the White Paper? Will the unions be consulted? Will the college either establish a learning committee or if there are no union representatives on a similar existing committee, introduce them to such a committee?
- Ask if the college have plans for staff development in 14-19 and in terms of the new directions, delivery and new students in adult learning?
- Get from management the current figures for full-time and part-time staff by gender and ethnicity?
- Get from management the breakdown of existing staff both full and part-time and their existing qualifications?
- Ask management if the college is using agency or third party part-time teachers? If so, are these staff properly qualified, and will they be part of college staff development plans?
- Get from management the college's rate of staff turnover? Is the college satisfied with this and if not what does it propose to do? Ask what are the subject/vocational areas the college has problems recruiting and retaining staff?

Why and will the college be using any of the new schemes around recruitment of staff outlined in the White Paper?

- Ask management what plans it has to measure the diversity of the workforce and if necessary what plans does the college have to improve the representation of the diversity of the areas and communities it serves in its staffing profile?
- Is the college using the Race Equality in Employment Standard? If not why not and does it plan to do so?
- Ask if the college is conducting race impact assessments as per the Race Relations Amendment Act for its major policies and changes in policies and their implementation? If not why not and does it plan to do so?
- UCU advises branches that creating branch learning representatives can assist the branch in negotiating and talking to management around the issues in workforce development. If the branch does not yet have learning reps, contact the Regional Office for advice and help including access to training programmes for these reps.

New models of delivery

- Ask management if the college planning to utilise any of the new models of delivery that are outlined in the White Paper such as joining or establishing federations of colleges, formal and informal collaborative arrangements between colleges, and colleges and schools: voluntary trusts and/or sharing services eg finance, procurement and estate management. If it is, how will staff be consulted and how will the impact of such policies be assessed in terms of quality issues? How might staff be affected by such changes?
- Ask whether the college is classed as 'excellent' and if so it is planning to make use of the presumption that 'excellent' colleges can expand and compete for 16-19 provision? If so what will be the impact on the college and its staff?

Funding

A series of questions to ask management:

- **New set of 14-19 funding principles:** how might these affect the college's finances?
- **Adult Learning:** how will the move to more 'demand-led learning' and a fee assumption impact on college provision and staff?
- **Fee increases:** are fees increasing? If so by how much and what is the impact on this on student numbers and consequently on course provision and staffing?
- **Fee remission:** what remission is now being offered? What is the impact on student numbers?

Accountability

- Ask management who the LSC link person to the college is?
- Ask management if it knows who the LSC personnel are in the partnership team for liaison with the local authority? What do college management think will be the implications and impact of the local authority being given strategic leadership of 14-19 developments?
- Is the college consider to be high performing? If so what are the implications of this?
- Ask management if the college intends to make use of the Education and Inspection Bill cl 147 which allows colleges (and schools) to collaborate formally as equal partners, share personnel, procurement and estate management? If so what will be the implications of this?
- Education Act 2002 gave schools 'power to innovate' is to be extended to colleges. Colleges would then be able to apply for exemptions and relaxations and modifications to legislation for limited period to pilot specific initiatives. Ask if the college intends to make use of this? If so how and what are the implications of this?

The above points and questions are designed to assist branches in their dialogues with local management. If branches need help and guidance with the questions or answers, they should contact Dan Taubman at Head Office on dtaubman@ucu.org.uk telephone 0207 520 3230. The answers to these questions may mean that branch will take some action to follow up the implications of the answers. For advice and guidance branches should get in touch with their Regional Offices and/or Dan Taubman.