



in search of fair funding methodology

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Circular 03/15, *Funding: plan-led funding for further education*, proposes fundamental changes to the way further education is planned and funded. Read on to discover ACM's response to the consultation document.

ACM welcomes many of the proposals contained in Circular 03/15. There is much that is good in the Circular and the key aims are laudable. However, ACM believes that there are also still far too many restrictive practices that would be retained by the LSC. This does not seem to take 'trust relationships' in the further education agenda forward. In *Building trust*, a Bureaucracy Task Force Report published in November 2003, it is recognised that the perception in colleges is that bureaucracy has not greatly diminished, and for some there is a feeling that things have got worse rather than better.

This position does not seem to be dramatically improved by Circular 03/15. For example, paragraph 66 of the Circular states that the LSC must reserve the right to intervene and vary funding in exceptional circumstances.

In many ways the Circular proposes even further restrictions on institutional autonomy. While most managers would welcome the removal of the current funding audit, it is to be replaced by a regularity audit. This could be even worse than the existing arrangements.

continued on page 2

also in this issue
acm responds lobbying activities

in search of fair funding methodology

Cause for concern

The need for monthly data to be provided to the local LSC is a major cause of concern. The idea that local LSCs will be able to do anything with the data on a monthly basis is fanciful – they already have difficulty in managing performance review in any coherent or consistent way as it is. Again, it has been suggested that the data provided to local LSCs need not be 100% accurate and that ‘dirty data’ would be acceptable. It is highly unlikely that any institution would be happy to release such data.

Many college managers are sceptical about the changes. They would accept a complex funding methodology provided that it is fair and transparent, that they knew how much they were being allocated before the start of the financial year and what they had to deliver for the funding, that the goalposts were fixed and that they wouldn’t be penalised in-year if they underachieve. Many are not yet convinced that the proposals contained in Circular 03/15 achieve this.

Use FTEs

ACM strongly believes that any new funding methodology should be based on some form of full-time equivalent (FTE) student numbers – a system that seems to work perfectly well with other funding councils.

The report by the Prime Minister’s Office of Public Service Reform, *First stages of the implementation of Success for All in colleges*, states that colleges feel a funding methodology is needed which is no more time consuming than for school and higher education. It is difficult not to conclude that such a methodology can only be based on some form of FTE calculation. It is worthwhile remembering that the overwhelming majority of colleges, and now almost half of all sixth form colleges, have more adult than 16–19-year-old students.

The Circular explains that a move to funding by FTEs has been examined and abandoned as a reliable approach to funding, mainly because of the unacceptable range of changes to institution funding levels – too many winners and losers. However, if using some form of FTEs would produce the simplest and fairest system of funding, then surely a way should be found to make it work.

The sector has undergone a convergence exercise once and, if the benefits were sufficiently substantial, would understand the need to have a phased introduction of a new methodology. It is a model that should at least be investigated in more detail. It seems to work perfectly well in higher education. It is even stranger to dismiss FTEs when local LSCs are in effect using the learner profile (and the FTE from it) as a basis for allocations and for monitoring college performance against funding target.

Download Circular 03/15 from www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/Series/Circulars and ACM’s response from www.acm.uk.com

Enclosed with this issue...

Working time questionnaire

We would be extremely grateful if you could spare a few minutes of your time to complete it and fax it back to us at 0116 255 0548.

MIS publication

We hope you will find it useful and would like to thank the writers, Dave Hull, CIS Manager and John Rockett, Principal of Rotherham College of Arts and Technology, for producing such an excellent publication. We would also like to thank the LSC for providing sponsorship for it. If you have any comments regarding the publication, please email them to administration@acm.uk.com

ACM Council elections 2004–07

Electoral Reform Services, our independent scrutineers, have submitted the following report of voting in the above election dated 9 December 2003 for which nominations closed at 5pm on Friday 28 November 2003. It was not necessary to hold a ballot on this occasion, as the valid nominations were elected unopposed.

As scrutineer appointed in accordance with section 49 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended), we are satisfied as to each of the relevant matters specified in subsection 52(2) with regard to the election.

The independent person appointed under section 51A was Electoral Reform Ballot Services Limited.

Section 49(3) requires the scrutineer to inspect the register of names and addresses of the members of the trade union whenever it appears to him appropriate to do so or when requested to do so under the conditions specified under subsection (3A). It was not deemed appropriate, at this time, to inspect the register and no requests to inspect the register were received.

We would draw your attention to sections 52(4), 52(5) and 52(6). Section 52(4) requires that a copy of this report be published and made available to all members of ACM within a three-month period from today. This does not mean that everyone has to be notified individually.

President Elect 2004 and President 2005: 1 to elect

John Lowe
elected unopposed

Manager category: 6 to elect

Robert Emery
nomination ruled
invalid by Returning
Officer

Efrem Jones
elected unopposed

Jacek Juszczak
elected unopposed

Peter Ryder
elected unopposed

Kim Vaughan
nomination withdrawn
1/12/03

Bob Vesey
elected unopposed

Cyril Wheat
elected unopposed

Alexander Young
elected unopposed

National representatives

Northern Ireland:
1 vacancy
no nominations
received

Scotland: 1 vacancy
no nominations
received

ACM AGM notice

Sixteenth Annual General Meeting of the Association for College Management to be held at 1.45pm on Thursday 25 March 2004 at the Renaissance Hotel, Solihull, Birmingham.

All members are hereby invited to attend the AGM. The agenda for the meeting is outlined below.

If you are able to attend the AGM, please email or telephone the administration office and a copy of the papers and a map locating the venue will be forwarded to you prior to the meeting.

Agenda

1. Record of the AGM held 18/3/03
2. President's report
3. General Secretary's report
 - 3.1 Constitutional amendments
 - 3.2 Council election
 - 3.3 Council 2004–05
4. Honorary Treasurer's report
 - 4.1 Audited statement of accounts 2003
 - 4.2 Approval of auditors
5. Any Other Business

Members' dedication formally recognised

ACM would like to congratulate the following members who were commended in the New Year's Honours:

Ian Graham OBE
Principal, John Wheatley College, Glasgow

Lynne Sedgmore CBE
Principal and Chief Executive, Guildford College

No one asked us!

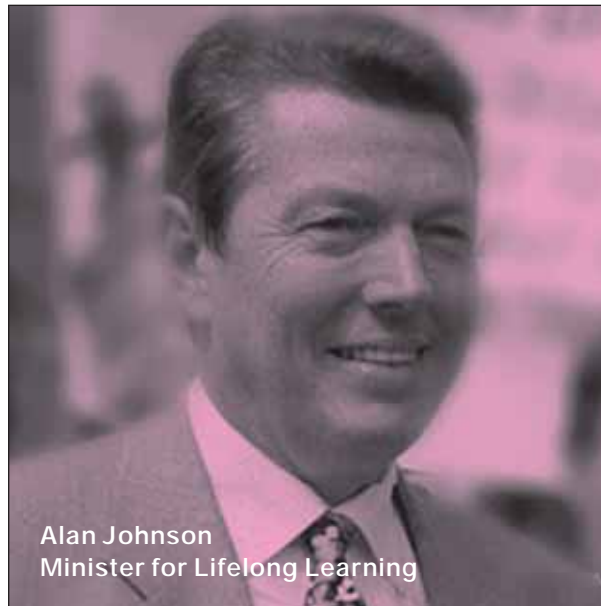
According to the TUC, the most frequent reason people give for not belonging to a trade union is that no one had asked them to join. So potentially there are many college managers just waiting to be given an application form to join ACM. Our membership is more diverse than those on the traditional management spine in colleges. Leaving aside anyone who is a member of another union, any individual who has managerial responsibility for people or resources at any level of an organisation can benefit from ACM membership, for example finance managers, estate managers, HR managers, marketing managers, MIS managers, contracts managers and other business managers.

Whether you know a programme manager or an accounts manager, a systems manager or a head of department, if they are not in a union then please pass them the enclosed leaflet and, if you have finished with it, this newsletter.

lobbying activities

meeting with the minister

On 10 December 2003, ACM met with **Alan Johnson**, Minister for Lifelong Learning, Higher and Further Education, to discuss a range of issues chiefly relating to funding and pay. Here are the edited highlights of that discussion. The ACM attendees were Peter Pendle (General Secretary), Dorothy Jones (President Elect) and Nadine Cartner (Head of Policy).



Both sides recognise that the forthcoming Public Spending Review will be very tight. Aware of those tight limits on public spending, ACM is lobbying for the efficiency savings internal to the LSC to come through to the front line as quickly and as fully as possible. The Minister was in agreement with this request. However, he added that 'you must recognise that the last settlement was a very good one for you, and that three-year plans offer stability and the chance for colleges to concentrate on teaching and learning'.

ACM raised the issue of the adverse funding arrangements for the least successful 10% of colleges. Rather than restrict funding to an inflation-only increase and funds targeted at quality assurance, those colleges should receive the additional funding and be able to spend it how they see fit – providing they produce an improvement plan. The Minister was prepared to listen to this point and ACM will be taking this matter further.

In its response to the funding simplification consultation, ACM will recommend FTEs as the unit of calculation. LSC is unfavourable to this approach on the grounds that it will throw up too many winners and losers. ACM's position is that the simple, most rational system should be adopted, and the transition managed.

Again the Minister was interested in looking at this further and asked ACM to write to him on this issue.

Further points on bureaucracy were made by ACM:

- The monthly data returns proposed by the current funding consultation document would be too burdensome.
- Bureaucracy reduction is not impacting on the front line.
- Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) will necessitate individual returns for each student in receipt of an EMA. This is likely to result in a significant increase in bureaucracy for colleges.

The Minister indicated he was willing to look into this last point and ACM will be taking this matter further. He assured us that he and Mark Haysom, Chief Executive, LSC, are determined to cut down bureaucracy, bring down costs and drastically reduce wasteful activities.

In relation to the current pay deal, ACM pointed out that colleges need additional funds if they are to deliver this, but the Minister was unable to promise any further financial commitment.

acm conference 2004

prosperity through learning: practical skills and policy vision for leaders

This year's conference is approaching fast and you should by now have received a copy of the conference brochure. If you haven't had one, a copy can be downloaded from our website. This is a conference not to be missed!

The conference will commence at 10.15am on 25 March with a welcoming address from the Association's President and Principal of Exeter College, **Richard Atkins**. **Lynne Sedgmore** CBE, the newly appointed Director of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, will discuss the work of the Centre, and **Brendan Barber**, TUC General Secretary, will consider how workers and managers can be brought closer together. The development of management skills will be the main focus for day one of the conference and the following workshops (to be held over two sessions on day one) will be on offer:

- Career progression: how to achieve your ultimate goal
Panel of principals and senior managers
- Discipline issues and grievances: investigating the problem
David Green, ACM Head of Employment Relations and Patrick Boardman, ACM Employment Relations Adviser
- Achieving results through other people
Joan Pennington, Senior Consultant, Hay Group
- Negotiating your role with local LSCs
Reg Chapman, Principal, Blackpool and The Fylde College
- Sector funding issues explained
Julian Gravatt, Director of Funding and Development, AoC
- Course and resource planning
David Watkins, Principal, Carshalton College and Robin Greenaway, Vice-principal Corporate Services, Carshalton College
- A college approach to preventing work-related stress
David Green, ACM Head of Employment Relations and Patrick Boardman, ACM Employment Relations Adviser

Day one will conclude at 5pm and managers at all levels are encouraged to attend. The fee for attendance on day one (25 March) only is £120 for ACM members and £150 for non members. For those delegates wishing to stay, the annual gala dinner will be held in the evening and overnight accommodation is available at the venue (please see website for details).

Full conference attendance is also available (includes attendance at the conference on both days, pre-dinner drinks reception, gala dinner and overnight accommodation on 25 March 2004). The full delegate fee is £375 for ACM members and £415 for non members.

The second day of the conference will commence at 9am and focus on policy vision for leaders. The following speakers will address delegates:

- Chris Hughes, Chief Executive, LSDA
- David Hunter, Chief Executive, FENTO
- Peter Pendle, ACM Chief Executive and General Secretary
- Barry Sheerman MP, Chair, Education and Skills Select Committee
- Janice Shiner, Director General, Lifelong Learning, DfES

There will also be an 'any questions' style panel where delegates will be invited to submit questions to panel members: Sue Dutton, AoC Deputy Chief Executive; Peter Kingston, FE Editor, the Guardian; Ann Limb, Chief Executive, Ufi Limited; Paul Mackney, NATFHE General Secretary; and Ruth Silver, Principal, Lewisham College.

Day two will conclude at 3.30pm enabling delegates to avoid the rush-hour traffic. We very much hope that you will attend and look forward to receiving your booking form soon. If you require any further information, please contact us on 0116 275 5076 or by email at events@acm.uk.com or visit our website at www.acm.uk.com

The ACM conference 2004 will be held on Thursday 25 and Friday 26 March 2004 in Solihull, Birmingham

acm responds

Extracts from ACM's response to the Education and Skills Select Committee on the *National Skills Strategy: 14–19 Education*.

- ACM strongly supports the Level 2 entitlement for adult learners established by the Skills Strategy. However, the need for this remedial policy highlights the importance of developing, through the work of the Working Group on 14–19 Reform, strategies to substantially increase the numbers of teenagers achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications 'first time around'.
- We broadly welcome the proposals produced by the Working Group on 14–19 Reform. We believe that this excellent beginning offers us an unprecedented opportunity to set in place a framework of learning programmes and qualifications that addresses the educational needs of all young people.
- Young people's learning needs are broadly different from those of adults. Of course, there is no magic age at which young people's needs transform into those of adults. The change is progressive and varies between individuals.
- Nevertheless, the broad generalisation holds true. Adult learners are often seeking learning for a specific and explicit purpose. They want to acquire a specific skill (eg with computers, customer care, a child care module) that will help them do their present job better, or help them get a preferred job. Perhaps the demand for their current skill set has declined (maybe owing to the decline in a particular industry) and the individual is seeking a new skill set that enables them to get a different sort of job. Or perhaps they have set their sights on a personal development goal, such as learning a language or digital photography.
- Young people, by contrast, are engaged in a gradual process of self-understanding and analysis of their interests, aspirations and talents. One purpose of young people's educational experience is to facilitate that process of self-understanding and sense of direction on the basis of a broad learning programme that provides a rich context and range of learning within which young people can work out what they are good at, what they enjoy and what kinds of activities they could see themselves doing in the long term.
- We strongly support the proposals in the Working Party's recommendations for all young people's learning programmes to include academic, vocational and enrichment elements. We would propose that these recommendations lead to the establishment of an entitlement curriculum for all 14–19-year-old young people. This entitlement should be monitored and ensured through the Strategic Area Reviews. In this way the lottery of geography, or the persistent misapprehension that vocational education is the natural route for the 'less able', could be combated. A baseline entitlement that ensured that each young person engaged in a good and broad education could be built on and shaped to individual's talents, interests and aspirations. In the latter years of that period, as young people grow in insight into their future direction, a greater level of specialisation lends inspiration and motivation.
- There is no conflict between this model of education for young people and a model for adults which looks to provide just the specific learning the individual seeks. Adults will make better choices on the basis of a broad education and self-awareness of talents and skills, and have a stronger foundation on which to build. This complexity, however, demands that we strive for clarity on progression opportunities from the new 14–19 framework to further learning.
- One implication of this call for clarity on progression opportunities is the need for review and redesign of the post-19 curriculum (including higher education) in synergy with changes 14–19.
- Critical to this reform is the development of high-quality vocational options that are well designed, well delivered and well assessed and exist within an overall framework that everyone can make sense of. At present we are a long way off that ideal, but the hopes of the Working Group on 14–19 Reform will not be realised unless we develop a vocational curriculum that is excellent, motivating and respected by learners, parents and employers.

- We recommend that the new framework should offer a range of diplomas, one of which broadly maps onto Modern Apprenticeships. All routes, including MAs, should be built on a properly identified core and present opportunities for crossover with other routes.
- The diplomas of the new framework should enjoy the same status.
- One step we need to take if MAs are to enjoy the status of other routes is to review and redefine MA levels so that everyone can be confident that an MA achievement at Level 3 *in whatever subject* is a credible entry qualification for a degree. This is not the case at present for all MA vocational areas.
- Poor-quality vocational provision that fails to improve should not be tolerated as it undermines attempts to raise the prestige of this provision and to vanquish the belief that the vocational route is for the least able. An excellent vocational route, well calibrated against the alternatives, will help convince learners and their parents that vocational education is for young people with appropriate abilities and aspirations.
- At present when Modern Apprentices move jobs they usually leave the scheme and are counted as failures. It is essential that a national credit accumulation and transfer scheme be introduced so that such mobility (common among young people) does not present a barrier to becoming qualified (and artificially augment the failure figures).
- Overall there needs to be root and branch reform of vocational and work-based programmes to reduce their numbers radically so that they are more manageable by professionals and more transparent to learners, employers and parents. Fewer qualifications, with a fraction of the bureaucracy, would make the vocational elements of the new diploma structure easier to quality control and easier to ensure their proper articulation (in terms of levels, of status) with other elements of this provision.
- One consequence of the last point – and indeed the whole concept of the new framework – will be to make it easier to enforce proper entry requirements. At present two-thirds of entrants to advanced MAs lack the necessary Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) entry requirement. Of course, they fail – they were not adequately prepared to be studying at that level.
- We cannot over emphasise the vital importance of excellent, impartial and ongoing advice for young people navigating their learning route. Wrong decisions based on partial or poor advice are at the root of many a young person's early departure from education.

ACM staff

Peter Pendle

Chief Executive and General Secretary

Patrick Boardman

Employment Relations Officer

Nadine Cartner

Head of Policy

Sukhi Chana

Finance Officer

Jane Dunn

Membership Administrator

David Green

Head of Employment Relations

Sara McCaffrey

Head of Corporate Services

All the staff can be contacted on 0116 275 5076 or by email at firstname.surname@acm.uk.com

Change of contact details

We would be most grateful if you could help us to ensure that we have your correct contact details. If you have recently changed employer or moved home, please email us at membership@acm.uk.com and we will update our records immediately. Please also let us know if you have a new email address.

Mike Riley, Football Association referee and former college manager will be addressing the ACM conference on Thursday 25 March.



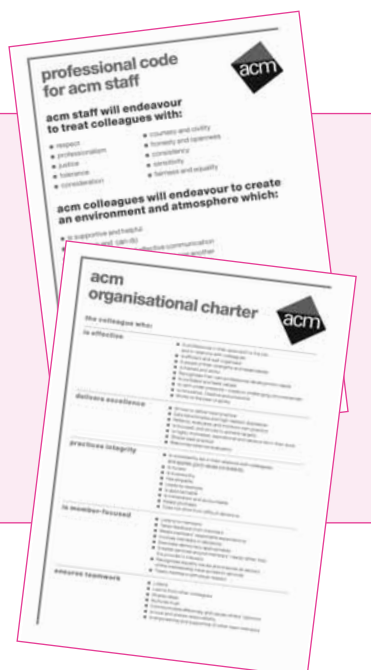
Lynne Sedgmore CBE

ACM member appointed to top post

On behalf of all at ACM, we wish to congratulate Lynne Sedgmore CBE on her appointment as the Director of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership. We very much look forward to working with you, Lynne, and are very proud that an ACM member, and former Council member, has been appointed to this position.

Professional code for ACM staff and ACM organisational charter

In order to ensure ACM continues to provide an excellent service to its members and other stakeholders, it has produced a professional code for ACM staff and an organisational charter. All ACM staff were involved in the production of these documents which can be downloaded from the ACM website.



ACM events

ACM continues to offer managers excellent training and professional development opportunities.

2/3/04 | Birmingham

Bullying at work

27/4/04 | Birmingham

Basic employment law

29/4/04 | Birmingham

Media training

11/5/04 | London

Preventing work-related stress

8/6/04 | Leeds

Disciplinary and grievance training

5/11/04 and 6/11/04 |

Birmingham

Branch networking event

For further details and a booking form for any of the above events, please contact us on 0116 275 5076 or by email at events@acm.uk.com or visit the website www.acm.uk.com

The service was first class'

'Excellent from the first moment of contact.' This was how Maggie, a member from a Midlands college, described the support she received from ACM when her employer overlooked her for a ring-fenced post during a restructuring.

Maggie's experience is not unique. Every day ACM receives calls to its helpline from members with a wide range of problems. Some 1200 members have contacted the helpline since it was set up in November 2001.

In Maggie's case, our helpline staff explained her employment rights and discussed various options for her to consider. Maggie said: 'I received clear information with unambiguous suggestions for immediate action.' After this, Maggie was referred to a caseworker as she also needed representation in the workplace. The result was an outcome that Maggie described as 'excellent'. She said: 'The caseworker was confident, knowledgeable and informed. I couldn't wish for better.'

Around 65% of all calls to the helpline are dealt with solely by one of our two advisers. They are both experts in employment law and best practice. The other 35% of calls will be referred, after an initial discussion, to one of our experienced and respected caseworkers.

If you have a problem at work, contact the ACM members' helpline on 0116 285 4055 or email helpline@acm.uk.com We aim to respond to all enquiries within 24 hours.