



NFEC REGIONAL SEMINAR – North West

FRIDAY 14th March 2014

Preston College

There is a separate signed attendance list available.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Bob Millington welcomed everyone to the seminar, thanked Scott Cubitt for hosting the seminar at Preston College and gave apologies from Dawn Pierce, who was unable to attend due to current work commitments in a different area of the UK.

Scott welcomed everyone to Preston College and explained that the college is part of Gazelle group and there is a great focus on work skills and employability for their students. A bid has been secured to allow the building of a new dynamic STEM centre, due for opening in September 2015. This will follow the concept of input/process /output to create a holistic approach with science and Engineering built into everything. The building will have an open plan feel with facilities such as CAD, apple computers, science labs, prototypes/modelling and presentation rooms.

2) Current matters

There is concern over losing so many 60 hours /less than 15credits length type of courses, which can only be funded for unemployed or need to be run as full cost recovery. Awarding bodies are being looked at closely but they are trying to work together over this but agree that some areas are being affected more than others. It is also agreed that these types of courses can be helpful for the unemployed and helping them onto a different career path.

Recruitment of English and Maths teachers seems to be getting harder. There are golden hellos to encourage people into teaching with payments being split between the individual and the recruiting institution.

One college reported the following:

“A ‘golden hello’ of at least £7,500 to incentivise mathematics graduates to become teachers in FE colleges. The money is paid in the second year of teaching, and rises to £10,000 if mathematics graduates train to support students who have special educational needs. To encourage the most highly qualified mathematics graduates the base payment rises to £15,000 for those with a lower second class honours degree and to £20,000 for those with an upper second or first class honours

degree. A recruitment incentive scheme involving a bonus of £20,000 paid directly to those colleges who are successful in recruiting a specialist graduate mathematics teacher, rising to £30,000 for those colleges that are prepared to 'share their teaching expertise with nearby institutions'. A 'subject-knowledge enhancement scheme', whereby highly qualified graduates who have the necessary skills and aptitude to teach, but who need to develop some specific mathematics skills before they start to do so, are funded to receive the extra training they need."

Discussions took place on some colleges now offering 3 hours for English and 3 hours for Maths but whether this is too much for students who started college for a vocational course. C&G reported the offering of level 3 core maths which might suit some institutions. Training may be needed to support current FE or Functional Skills staff to be able to deliver GCSE Maths and English. Ofsted are intending to engage English and Maths specialists to observe the teaching during inspections.

3) Trailblazer Updates

Bob Millington is representing NFEC and its members on 2 of the initial 8 panels, using the responses from NFEC members on the Richard Review last summer as his datum. These 2 panels are Aerospace (Aircraft Fitter) and Automotive (mechatronic and maintenance fitters). There are going to be common skills to allow for transfer between branches of engineering. The next new trailblazer panels will be Rail Engineering, Emerging Technologies and Automotive Repair. Bob will also be trying to get onto the Automotive Repair panel when it starts shortly.

The development process is that an Industry standard, a 2 page document, is to be written first; this standard lists what a fitter should be able to do as well as their expected behaviour and attitude (which is also to be assessed). The Employer Occupational Briefs (EOB) are in the process of being developed but as NFEC has predicted in our response to the Richard Review, they will evolve from the current respective National Occupational Standards (NOS) already in place. The Automotive start is due in September 2014 but (given this very tight timescale) will include some old and some new elements within the qualifications whilst the Aerospace programme is due for September 2015 start and should result in a reflection of all changes required by the industry. The Employer Units of Competence (EUC) which stem from the EOB, which are similar to NVQ units, are then developed and then this is used as the basis for the VRQs. NFEC has fought against a synoptic final test at the end of a long and complex apprenticeship, and there will now be summative assessments throughout. There will also not be grades awarded for practical competence, just pass/fail. The technical/academic side will be graded pass, merit and distinction so apprenticeships can be graded based on the technical certificates not the practical competence.

There is a requirement for common grading across awarding bodies so they are working together on producing the qualifications to meet the requirements of the EOB. There has been still little involvement with SMEs. There is still much to be thought through to ensure effective engagement of SMEs. Current industrial requests are for a similar pathway as that in Germany with 1400 hours GLH for mechatronics covering approximately 13 mandatory units, 2/3 choice units and then a VRQ being requested. Will SMEs be able to have an apprentice away for a whole year to do 1400 GLH?

It is thought that apprenticeships which will benefit the Country the most are most likely to attract more funding. Costing models are being formed now to put to Government, including quotes for provider support not wages of apprentices. There will be a Maximum Government Contribution

(MGC) – in other words, a cap. This will vary between schemes depending on GLH. From this Contribution, 80% will be from Government, 20% will be from industry. The 80% from Government will be split 60% upfront and 20% being dependent on end related success. All money will go to the employing company and the company will ask for tenders from training providers/colleges and companies can choose where they send their apprentices. There are queries over the checking of quality in the Industrial companies if they are delivering learning. Decisions on caps should be made by March 24th based on the cost models being developed.

Current information from the SFA states that the 16-18 and 19+ differentiation will no longer apply for Apprenticeships funding. It will not be based on age but on content. ACTION: Bob will check if this applies for 25+ year olds. This funding will change for any trailblazers and then by 2016/2017 probably across the board. The old funding system will cease from July 2017. There will be subsidies for companies to recruit 16 and 17 year olds. The SFA will fund qualifications even if they are not approved by Ofqual if that is what the employer wants.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) will hold the budget for capital equipment and providers will have to bid for it from them.

Private Training Providers currently have to pay VAT and is seen as unfair when competing with colleges. The SFA will look at this issue. The preferred funding model is currently to release money through the PAYE system. NFEC would prefer the current system for funding SMEs with money going to the providers. There is no evidence to suggest SMEs wish to have direct funding from the government. The accompanying administration could well be prohibitive.

There are 2 phases to the apprenticeship, the Foundation section based on the PEO, followed by a Development Phase which includes work-based learning towards NVQs and associated VRQs. EAL, C&G, Pearson and AQA are all strongly involved so far.

NFEC is planning to host specialist Trailblazer update sessions, probably May/June time, to disseminate the latest information but only if there is sufficient information ready on key matters such as curriculum changes, assessment strategies and funding/routing of funding.

4) Implications of reform to level 3 qualifications and Whitehead Review

Tracy Harker stated that there is a lot of information on the Logic website covering Government changes on level 3 qualifications.

Qualifications of 15 credits or less are being dropped. Tech Level qualifications must be approved by industry, at least 5 companies or 1 sector body. It is thought that Applied General qualifications will be used as a learning stepping stone into further and higher levels of education or into employment. It seems that College/HE endorsement will be required for Applied General qualifications.

Pearson stated that the next pending list with news of appeals will be out by the end of March. QCF will not have approvals of below 15 credits so awarding bodies are removing these at the end of the life of a particular qualifications. There is an appeals process to get them renewed, but this will be based on registrations. Unfunded qualifications can remain for full cost recovery and C&G and Pearson will keep heavy subscribed ones alive as long as possible.

New qualifications are being developed ready for September 2016. There will be external assessment for Nationals by 2016. It is also thought that should there be a change in Government, there will not be any major changes to what is going on currently.

The Tech Bac will have 3 components - a technical qualification, an extended project and a level 3 maths qualification. They will not be certificated as a group as such but are just grouped together for performance measurement. The Applied General will be D of E accredited qualification and will count as a performance measurement.

Information is awaited from Government on Post 16 level 2 performance measured qualifications.

There is a review of QCF ongoing by Ofqual, but it looks like QCF is being wound down by 2016 as it has just created more qualifications whilst hindering the development of better qualifications.

Trailblazers will be using NQF qualifications.

5) Awarding Body Updates

- **C&G, Liam McGurk** – there was a presentation followed by a discussion on simulated college environments or enterprise units not counting as work experience when part of the college, even though they have been set up as separate companies. ACTION: NFEC to contact AoC to investigate how to deal with this matter as it affects all areas of vocational programmes that prepare people for employment.
 - Level 1 and 2 2850 (Certificates & Diplomas in Engineering) is now available on Learning Assistant.
 - Level 3 2850 is currently being added to Learning Assistant – a notification will be sent when available.
 - Sample questions are now available for the 2850 Level 1, 2 and 3 e-volve tests. These can be found on the 2850 webpage under assessment materials. Password.
 - Welding 3268 is being updated to include Level 1 & 2 Award & Certificate size qualifications for Fabrication, Cutting and Brazing/Soldering. These will be available for new registrations from 01.09.2014.
 - CAD 7579 is being redeveloped (new number will be 7689). This will include redevelopment of Parametric Modelling, 2D & 3D CAD and Computer Aided Design & Manufacturing. These will be available from October 2014. Again updates will be sent out on a regular basis.
- **AQA, Phillip Bryant** – explained the new qualifications for Applied General and Tech level with the initial focus on 16-18 full time students. AQA are working with colleges and industry to see how things are going and what is needed. If you would like to take part in this or to find out any more please contact Phillip directly on pbryant@aga.org.uk
- Logic certification, Tracy Harker left information for everyone in paper version, please contact her if you have queries, tracy.harker@logic-cert.com

7 High quality work-based experience

Discussion continued on this subject as to what will count as work experience within a college enterprise unit. It was agreed that vocational related experience in college can be much better than one out in Industry. It is sometimes possible to use an unrelated job experience so long as it is supervised by someone from the college. The issues of running 14-16 work experience were discussed.

There can be funding issues if a programme of study falls under 504 GLH if the work experience does not fully comply. Colleges reported that links with employers can be difficult when placing NEETs whilst trying to build up a relationship with them for other work experience opportunities.

York College has a separate work placement department, other colleges have separate co-ordinators. External contractors can be used. There is discussion of 10 colleges in Greater Manchester joining together to help co-ordinate work experience.

8 Plenary

Bob will try to find some working models that are successful in work experience placements to see if they would speak at the next seminar.

There was a discussion about difficulties for colleges filling vacant Engineering lecturer positions with suitable people as even market supplements are now not sufficient in enticing people from Industry into teaching. Lecturers' salary ought to relate to the vocational profession rather than applying a common rate irrespective of vocational area. ACTION: It is thought that the extent of the issue should be measured so NFEC will devise a brief form/questionnaire to send out to its members, collate the responses and talk to the AoC.

9 Next Seminar

The next NW regional seminar will be held on Friday 10th October 2014, 10am for a 10.15am start, at Trafford College, Manchester. Steve Jones (Assistant Principal for STEM) was thanked for his kind support.

Topics will include:

- Simulated work experience or other models which are working
- Update on Trailblazers
- Effective delivery of Maths and English GCSE within engineering and apprenticeship programmes
- 14/16 years Career colleges and UTCs – their role in education, conflicts etc