



making it work

making it work



The FEDA board and I were delighted when ministers decided to extend our remit to embrace all areas of post-16 education and training in the new learning and skills sector to be established in April 2001. As part of its contribution to this exciting development, FEDA has been asked to increase its research capacity, working in partnership with other organisations, to enable it to provide robust research evidence to underpin policy developments. Ministers have also asked FEDA to make work-based training a priority.

The extension of FEDA's role is a great credit to our chief executive, Chris Hughes, as well as to the FEDA board and all our staff, and it recognises all the hard work put in over the past two years to revitalise FEDA. To reflect this new role, FEDA is changing its name to the Learning and Skills Development Agency.

The Learning and Skills Development Agency will be a leading player in the new sector. It is therefore crucial that we use all of our resources, particularly the creative skills of our staff, to help the new learning and skills sector meet the needs of learners and employers successfully. Only if this is achieved can we hope to ensure the continuing prosperity of all our citizens.

The board and staff of the Agency look forward to the challenges ahead; we are confident that we can meet them.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Terry Melia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Terry Melia

Chair

Learning and Skills Development Agency

Our new remit from the Government is both exciting and challenging. We have been asked to become the strategic national resource for the development of policy and practice in post-16 education and training. I am committed to ensuring that the Agency fully meets this remit.

In our new role, we shall work across the learning and skills sector and do our utmost to make the new system a success. We will have a clear emphasis on the development of work-based learning, at the same time as maintaining a strong focus on colleges. We are extending our working relationships with organisations that specialise in adult and community learning. Other priorities include improving our capacity to support school sixth forms, building on relationships established through our GNVQ and key skills programmes. We will also make sure that wider social policies inform our work in order to maximise the contribution of education and training to Government priorities.

We were particularly pleased to be given the brief to support policy development at a national level. We already work with the Government, offering a specialist view to support the delivery of new initiatives. To move this on, the Agency will establish, with partners, a research centre for post-16 education and training. The centre will provide ministers with substantial research evidence to shape future policy.

At the same time, the Agency will continue to define and develop professional practice for managers, teachers and trainers – now working right across the learning and skills sector.

Above all, we are committed to helping every provider offer quality learning experiences, whether for work or for pleasure. Throughout the transition, and beyond, the Agency will help to make the new sector work for everyone.



Chris Hughes
Chief Executive
Learning and Skills Development Agency



The way people live and work is changing profoundly, and we will need a more adaptable, self-reliant, highly skilled and motivated workforce to sustain economic competitiveness. This calls for a radical rethink of the knowledge and skills that employers and employees will need.

It is important that people from all backgrounds can make a contribution. Widening participation and combating social exclusion are closely linked to skills development. High level technical skills, as well as better basic skills, key skills and competence in information and communications technology (ICT) will be needed.

The challenge for the planners and providers of education and training is to stimulate the demand for learning and, at the same time, develop a responsive delivery system to meet emerging needs.

The skills agenda will be central to the Agency's work over the coming years. We will work to develop the effectiveness of post-16 education and training to support economic competitiveness, with an emphasis on skills development at 16–19, and work-related learning for adults.

Training standards

The Agency's research suggests that the quality of some work-based training could be improved, and we will work with partners on a range of projects designed to raise standards.

Modern apprenticeships

It is crucial to ensure that young people entering the workforce receive a solid foundation, which links on and off the job experience with theory and practice.

Developing the workforce

A priority identified by the National Skills Task Force, it will be essential that those in jobs keep their skills and knowledge up to date. We believe it is particularly important to engage with all employers, regardless of size. The Agency is working with businesses, national organisations such as the Small Business Service, employer and employee representatives.

Developing and sustaining employability

Education and training enable people to develop the skills they need to find work, keep working and build careers, particularly young people and the long-term unemployed.

A new focus on vocational education and training

There is an urgent need to improve the image and status of vocational education and training (VET) in England and Wales, and for a consensus that recognises it as both vital and distinct. The Agency will undertake comparative international research on VET systems to learn lessons from other countries.

Centres of vocational excellence

We are currently developing models for focused, specialist VET in further education colleges. The Agency will engage with colleges to explore how some might become 'centres for vocational excellence', alongside institutions that specialise in academic study or adult community education.

Matching education and training with skills needs

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will work to improve the match between skills needs and provision. We will offer guidance to providers on how to interpret information about skills needs, and turn this into appropriately designed and delivered learning programmes.

Basic skills

The national drive to improve literacy and numeracy underpins social inclusion and economic prosperity. The Agency is supporting the Government's Adult Basic Skills Strategy and playing an important role in implementing key recommendations of the Moser report *A fresh start – improving literacy and numeracy*. One example is a major programme, funded by the DfEE, to support people with learning difficulties and disabilities, run jointly with NIACE and partners including the Basic Skills Agency (BSA), the Disability Consortium, MENCAP and other major national organisations.

We are helping to develop policy and practice relating to other Moser recommendations, including the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) curriculum, teacher training and work-based basic skills. We have also been closely involved with the FEFC's Basic Skills Quality Initiative.

Current research includes a joint project with BSA on the relationship between basic and key skills; work on recording and validating learning outcomes, and achievement in non-accredited basic skills; an analysis of the findings of research into work-based basic skills, and the effective use of ICT in basic skills.

Other projects include: a teachers' guide for a set of exciting OU/BBC maths programmes; activities in support of Number Day; a conference in conjunction with NIACE for LEA basic skills providers; and the establishment of an e-mail group for ESOL providers working with refugees and asylum seekers.

Key skills

The Agency is running a major programme of work for the DfEE, supporting the introduction of the new Key Skills Qualification in schools and colleges. This includes projects, networks, information and promotion, a national training programme, a helpline and one-to-one support services, and research. The programme helps managers and teachers in schools and colleges to promote and deliver key skills. Our first concern has been Communication, Application of Number and IT, but we are also working on the wider key skills, which are crucial for employability, lifelong learning and active citizenship.

The Agency has recently been commissioned to roll out key skills support to schools and colleges in Wales.

participation

We need to find ways of growing demand and widening participation that bring in new groups of learners

The targets are challenging: 700,000 new learners into further education by 2002, announced by the Secretary of State in 1998; the long-term Moser report targets of lifting 3.5m out of low literacy, and the same number out of low numeracy, by 2010 and the target for 16–19 year olds achieving Level 2 as a particular priority up to 2004.

The Agency's work to widen participation includes: a research project for the DfEE, exploring effective working with disaffected young people, which is due for publication soon, and will be followed by a practical handbook; research to identify best practice in colleges' arrangements for childcare, essential to attract learners who would not otherwise enter education; and an international seminar series, planned for 2001, to draw on the experience of other countries in stimulating demand. This will inform strategic research into 'what triggers participation'.

The Agency will support the LSC nationally and locally, for example by working with Learning Partnerships to analyse needs and stimulate demand among key target groups. We are also researching models of consortia and intermediary bodies to support voluntary and community organisations to meet the quality and audit requirements of the LSC.

The Government strategy for neighbourhood renewal has profound implications for education and training providers. The Agency will support providers to deliver the education dimension of the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy and work with partners such as the Learning Cities Network.

Equal opportunities

Despite much progress, some groups of people remain under-represented in post-16 education and training. The Agency will continue to engage with stakeholders and policy-makers across the new sector to help everyone gain equal access to learning. Through our work with the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education, for example, we are investigating whether recruitment practices tend to discourage black applicants to colleges.

The Agency will continue to facilitate a National Equal Opportunities Network to enable black and ethnic minority colleagues to support each other, and engage at local, regional and national level to inform policy and practice. We will also open membership of the network to the full range of providers of post-16 education and training.

With changes in legislation, we will support providers in understanding the legal framework for equal opportunities and their responsibilities. For example, working with City law firm DLA, the Agency will be running a series of national events to explain the impact of developments such as the new Human Rights Act.

and offer high quality learning experiences.

Transition for young people

Our research shows that young people tend to drop out of education and training at common points. Working with stakeholders, such as LEAs, personnel advisers and youth workers, we are developing models to support a smooth transition from school to further education or training. We need to offer a wider range of academic and vocational subjects within a flexible framework. The Agency is currently helping providers to devise models of entitlement. In the future, we will work with higher education partners and employers to take account of their requirements. We will also support the DfEE's Excellence Challenge to increase participation in higher education.

To maximise the chance of young people staying in learning and achieving their potential, the Agency's work will complement the role of Connexions to ensure quality of choice and support; helping teachers at Key Stage 4 to understand the value of work-related learning and supporting learners through the new vocational routes, especially the introduction of the vocational GCSE; and developing progression pathways and learning profiles from NVQ Level 1 to 2, and Level 2 to 3 for all learners, regardless of mode of study.

Community learning

Not all learning leads to qualifications. Exams and formal assessment can discourage potential learners. More workplace and community learning that does not lead to formal qualifications will be supported by the new arrangements. In collaboration with NIACE, the Agency is investigating how best to measure, record and celebrate learners' achievements; looking at this important issue from the viewpoint of policy-makers, funders and the learners themselves.

Bringing providers together

Adult, community and voluntary sector providers have a new and key role in post-16 education and training. The Agency will develop models of collaboration for all post-16 learning providers. Building on the successful partnership models that already exist, we aim to bring colleges and other providers in the new sector closer together, focusing on organisations jointly accessing funds, and quality improvement.

Developing communities

The Government has emphasised the importance of local communities in stimulating demand for learning. Learning can enrich family life, support local economic regeneration and promote social renewal. The Agency is working with leading think-tank Demos, to examine how community participation is developed and strengthened in practice and what this implies for the ways in which LSCs should operate.

Active citizenship

Active citizenship is important to create a more inclusive society, and to encourage more young people to make an active contribution to their communities. In the wake of the Crick report, the Agency is helping the DfEE and QCA with the development phase of the Citizenship agenda.

The new ethos in post-16 learning and skills, the new inspection regimes and the LSC's Raising Standards agenda all point to the need for teaching and learning to take centre stage in coming years.

When we consulted stakeholders on our research plans for this year, teaching and learning was rightly the top priority. The Agency will research Effective Teaching, Successful Learning, to inform classroom teachers, managers and policy-makers on best practice and wider strategies for the new sector.

In addition, the Agency has a key role in the Economic and Social Research Council Teaching and Learning Programme's post-16 project, Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education'.

Young people

Raising the achievement of all 14–19 year olds is a priority for the Government, as exemplified by the focus on young people at the heart of the LSC. The overriding Government policy, from the literacy strategy to Curriculum 2000, is 'get it right first time'.

The Agency will work with a range of new partners, for example the new Connexions service.

Entitlement

The Agency is working with a group of colleges focusing on full-time learners aged 16–19, and their access to new opportunities through Curriculum 2000. The Agency will undertake further support work for part-time learners and those undertaking modern apprenticeships.

Graduation

The Government is still considering proposals for an overarching award for young people, to be called 'graduation'. The Agency believes that a flexible award at a number of levels, recognising different types of learning and skills, could provide a motivating goal for young people and adults. We will continue to support work with colleges, started two years ago, to develop models of such an award.

Young people and adults working together

The Agency is working in collaboration with higher education institutions to research practice and identify whether, and in what context, there are benefits for young people and adults from learning together. This is particularly important given the increasingly separate policy focus for young people and adults.

Qualifications

Supporting policy and practice in the development of Curriculum 2000 is a key priority. The Agency will examine the impact of the new, flexible advanced curriculum in schools and colleges, focusing on issues of entitlement, take-up, and integration with the wider curriculum.

Curriculum 2000

We will continue to support schools and colleges in implementing Curriculum 2000, building on the groundwork of the Agency's long-running GNVQ Support Programme. A current priority is to examine and explain the frameworks that underpin the new vocational A-level and vocational GCSE, and which will affect thousands of learners.

Aware of the particular development needs in relation to Level 1 and Level 2 provision, we are engaged in projects with schools and colleges to raise achievement and enhance the curriculum offer.

The Agency is also working to increase the flexibility of qualifications for adults and work-based learners, in partnership initiatives in Wales, Northern Ireland and the English regions on credit frameworks and unionisation.

Higher education

A major Government priority is to widen participation in higher education, with the emerging Foundation Degree as a powerful vehicle to achieve this. The Agency is involved in work at the Institute for Public Policy Research to examine and make policy recommendations on the development of the longer term relationship between further (LSC-funded) and higher education, with reference to aspects such as curriculum, funding and regionalisation.

Information and communications technology

The Agency is a key partner in the rollout of the new £74m National Learning Network for FE colleges. We are running a two-year programme of innovative ICT projects, working with Becta on the ILT Champions Programme, and with FENTO and NILTA on a new, standards-driven staff development programme. We are running a similar programme for the Funding Council for Wales.

The Agency is also undertaking the evaluation of the whole National Learning Network initiative on behalf of the DfEE.

Technologies are transforming teaching and learning, with major investments notably by Becta, Ufi Ltd and the BBC. There is a clear need for long-term studies to evaluate different e-learning approaches and styles, and find the best ways to use new technologies for learning, whether in the classroom, at home or in the workplace.

The Agency is planning a major research project, in partnership with a higher education partner, on how people learn best with IT. The focus will be on the ways in which ICT has a positive impact on how people learn, and what combinations of technology and teaching and learning styles work best.

M-learning

Technologies for learning are developing fast. The new generation of mobile devices may be able to reach people currently not participating in learning, such as adults with basic skills needs and the alienated young. The Agency is leading an international research consortium to look at 'm-learning' – how to mobilise demand for small chunks of learning using hand-held devices, including games, mobile phones and computers.

Learning centres

Learning centres are the new way to bring learning close to communities. The Agency has published guidance on how to manage them; encouraging good practice, benchmarking and collaboration. We are keeping close track of developments so that we can inform Government strategies.

Multimedia bilingual project

This major project to support learning through the medium of Welsh is now in its third year, and focuses on providing materials in both English and Welsh. It includes translations of learning resources in the Further Education National Consortium's *Big catalogue* and other sources such as the Agency's Key Skills and GNVQ Support programmes, with materials accessed through the Digital College website.

In addition, the programme provides training and facilitates college projects to produce new bilingual resources and develop good practice.

professional development

To help learners achieve their best results, a culture of continuing professional development (CPD) among teachers, trainers and managers is crucial.

For senior managers, the Agency, together with Hay McBer and university partners, has developed the Principals' Programme. This focuses on enhancing leadership and strategic thinking, and promotes 'emotional intelligence' as a key aspect of leadership. So far, 100 principals in England have been through the programme and a further 160 in England and Wales are enrolled for 2000/01.

Also in partnership with Hay McBer, we are providing a programme for up to 100 college senior management teams. The focus here is on team effectiveness and further improvement of the organisational climate.

Professional qualifications

Recent announcements have confirmed the Government's intention to ensure all unqualified teachers who are new to further education will be required to obtain a qualification. Newly appointed college principals should also obtain a recognised principalship qualification.

The Agency will support these changes by providing training programmes for principals and professional development programmes for teachers and principals. In addition, we will provide support for organisations developing CPD action plans and targets, as specified by ministers.

The Agency will also continue to offer specialist management development courses.

Quality

The Agency has a clear brief to support the drive to raise standards across the whole of the new sector. We have a solid track record in quality improvement to build upon, having run the Raising Quality and Achievement Programme for colleges since 1999. As members of the DfEE's external partners group, we have helped to shape policy on quality improvement, and the new inspection framework.

National standards

We have worked closely with QCA, BSA and other key national organisations to advise on national standards and detailed curricula for basic skills and ESOL. On behalf of FENTO – the national training organisation for further education – we have developed standards for both teaching and management, and provided development programmes to back up those standards.

Funding

The Agency's work covers funding systems for individuals and providers. The balance of contributions between the Government, employers and individual learners will become an increasingly important focus of research, in the context of the twin policy drivers of widening participation and encouraging people to take responsibility for their own learning.

We have completed an initial assessment of the new Education Maintenance Allowances which provide financial support to learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, and will monitor developments in 2000/01. Recent projects have explored important issues of inequality in the provision of student transport, and the potential role for loans in further education. A current and future focus for research is the impact of Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs).

To inform future funding methodologies we are investigating the real costs of provision for hard-to-help groups. In Scotland, the Agency is supporting the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) in its investigation into the national funding methodology for Scotland.

Developing excellence

On behalf of the Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership, we are evaluating the contribution of post-16 education and training to the development of world-class managers and leaders in business and industry.

Diversity and leadership

The Agency is running a diversity and leadership programme which includes research, conferences and workshops, initially for women principals and senior management in further education. The programme will also explore leadership in relation to race and disability.

Benchmarking

Comparing strengths and weaknesses, and learning about best practice, will help providers to drive up quality. To facilitate this, the Agency has developed, together with the CBI and the University of Northumbria at Newcastle, a benchmarking tool for use in colleges – Learning PROBE.

Adult and community organisations

The learning and skills sector includes many providers who previously had little access to help with improving quality. This is why the DfEE has asked us, in collaboration with NIACE, to deliver quality improvement support for all LEA adult and community education providers. We will work with practitioners to offer training and networks and we will develop a quality improvement strategy.

research

Our new remit identifies research as a key role for the Agency.

This mission is fuelled by the recognition that post-16 education and training have not been adequately researched, and policy-makers will need help to deliver the key national objectives of widening participation, raising standards and developing a skilled workforce.

Research will form the basis for the Agency's activities. From longitudinal studies to action research, we will introduce new methodologies to investigate 'what works' in post-16 education and training, and make sure that research has an impact on policy and practice.

We are already analysing and interpreting baseline data to ensure that we can research, analyse and track changes in key areas as we move to different systems and datasets.

The Agency's research manifesto

Extend research capacity

The Agency will play a leading role in new research to provide policy-makers with more substantial evidence to inform policy. This will involve partnership: programmes of research skills training, secondments and developing effective networks for the research community and research-oriented practitioners to work together. We will build on the experiences of the successful FE research network.

Researching work-based learning

An early priority will be the work-based sector, which is particularly under-researched.

Establish a centre for post-16 education and training research

The Agency will establish a research centre that combines quantitative and qualitative research, with systematic reviews and databases of existing research. This centre will organise long-term studies to explore deeper issues and future trends. Through this centre, the Agency will ensure that research contributes to new learning and skills policies and helps to inform teaching and learning.

Partnership

The Agency will increase its research work in collaboration with others. It will work with leading university researchers and with other research organisations in the UK and beyond.

Worldwide perspective

Placing a strong emphasis on international comparative studies, the Agency will bring a worldwide perspective to the learning and skills sector.

Support practitioners

The Agency will continue to develop its support for practitioner-based research. Its networks will bring the higher education and the learning and skills sectors closer, and help practitioners develop their research skills and methods.

Raise the profile of research

The Agency will lead a national drive to increase the capacity and raise the profile of research across the whole new learning and skills sector.

Create baseline data

A strong information base is needed to support the transition to the learning and skills sector. As we move from the separate worlds of further education, TEC-funded training and community-based learning, to a single learning and skills sector, we need to record baseline information so that the effects of changes can be analysed. To this end, the Agency plans to analyse data and evidence in key areas.

Draw on practical knowledge

Effective solutions come from combining research knowledge with practitioner knowledge. The Agency will combine the activities of its new research centre with the practitioner-focused work of its regional managers and national support programmes.

Breakdown of estimated income for 2000/01



a leading player

The Learning and Skills Development Agency is already established as a leading player in post-16 education and training. The Agency has teams of specialists working on research, policy and development, as well as professionals in communications, corporate support services and administration.

A sure sign of the Agency's health is how it has grown, and we anticipate further growth in the future. Turnover rose from £11m in 1998/99 to £17m last year, and an estimated £22m in 2000/01. Most of this (over 80%) is derived from contracts to deliver programmes that support the development of teaching and training. The Agency receives core grants of £4m from the FEFC in England, and £240,000 from the Welsh Funding Council.

New business won in 2000 includes:

- Development and delivery of a training programme for senior management teams
- Basic skills for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities
- M-learning, a European-funded research project
- Key Skills Support Programme for Wales
- Quality improvement for voluntary and community providers.

FEDA Cymru

This year, an advisory group has been established to ensure that FEDA Cymru, the Agency's operation in Wales, is informed by national views from a range of different perspectives across the education and training sector. In this way, the programmes and services we provide will be responsive to needs in Wales, while making the most of synergies with England.

English regions

We have a network of offices in the English regions. Regional managers are the main links with partner organisations at a regional level, and raise the Agency's profile with teachers, trainers and managers. This presence means that research, projects and events can be disseminated and promoted effectively, and, in turn, the Agency's programmes are informed by local needs.

Major programmes currently run by the Agency include:

Key Skills Support Programme

funder DfEE
partners CfBT, AoC
value in 2000/01 £4.0m

Raising Quality and Achievement Programme

funder DfEE
partners AoC
value in 2000/01 £2.5m

Training Programme for Senior Management Teams

funder FEFC
partners Hay McBer
value in 2000/01 £2.3m

GNVQ Support Programme

funder DfEE
value in 2000/01 £1.7m

Basic Skills for Adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

funder DfEE
partners NIACE, BSA, Skill
value in 2000/01 £1.5m

Principals' Training Programme

funder FEFC
partners Hay McBer, Universities of Surrey and Warwick
value in 2000/01 £1.5m

National Learning Network

funder FEFC/Becta
partners NILTA
value in 2000/01 £0.7m

Programmes for Wales:

Key skills, ILT Champions Programme, Multimedia bilingual project

funder FEFC(W)
partners Becta, The Digital College
value in 2000/01 £0.6m

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Board meetings are currently attended by
Observers from the DfEE and funding councils
in England and Wales.

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