A model for a Foundation Degree in post-16 teacher and trainer education - a report for the SSDA on behalf of FENTO

Debbie Betteridge, Fenella Tallon and Jane Burnett

March 2004

To research and present a model for a Foundation Degree in post-16 teacher and trainer education

Debbie Betteridge, Fenella Tallon and Jane Burnett
March 2004

1

CONTENTS

PAGES

To research and present a model for a Foundation Degree in post-16 teacher and trainer education

Debbie Betteridge, Fenella Tallon and Jane Burnett
March 2004

Acknowledgements:

The Research team wishes to acknowledge the help of very many individual staff in a variety of organisations without whose assistance this project would not have been possible, We would also wish to thank these busy people for their positive response and helpful suggestions some of which we hope they will see reflected in this report.

EXCECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The SSDA through FENTO commissioned this research into the development of a model for a foundation degree in post-16 teacher and trainer education within the Learning and Skills Sector. This report sets out the range of activities and findings that contribute to this proposed model.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this project were:

To work in partnership across the UK post-16 sector to develop and provide a Foundation Degree in Post-16 teacher and trainer education. Initial Title: Development and promotion of a foundation degree in post-16 teacher and trainer education

Specific Objectives

- Consult with representatives of the UK post-16 teacher education sector at each stage of the project
- Research and develop a recognition of a range of roles, responsibilities and career pathways of teachers, trainers and learning support assistants in the post-16 sector
- Research and develop a model of a flexible system for gaining an appropriate foundation degree using a variety of approaches
- Present findings to 5 UK regional groups
- Research and develop a foundation degree consisting of modules based on national occupational standards for teaching, training and supporting learning
- Conduct a formative and summative evaluation of the project.

Key Findings

1. When developing a generic model for a sector specific qualification, the plethora of roles that learning support staff have within the sector is an issue.

2. The qualification, as well as how it is delivered will need to be flexible and reflective of this diversity.

3. For the purpose of this research these roles have been identified under two key themes:
   - the pedagogical aspect of teaching and learning
   - the guidance and behaviour of learners

4. Currently this support role also takes place in a wide variety of settings from the workplace through to one to one activity within a provider organization for example a General Further Education College (GFE College) *an example of an Learning Support Assistant Role appendix 2*

5. Currently there are no national standards for this role and this should be taken forward *(though we believe this now is)*.

6. Part of the requirement for validation of a Foundation Degree is ensuring progression. Progression into what and at what level is also an issue and locally brokered plans will need to be negotiated.

7. It is highly recommended that consideration be given by the SSDA that this model forms part of a Skills Sector endorsed Foundation Degree in Learning Support and the Guidelines within report has been prepared with this in view.

8. It is likely that those wishing to undertake this degree will come from a wide range of personal previous learning encounters, and have a variety of qualifications and/or experiences. It is therefore important to ensure the entry and admissions as well as the introductory levels at the point of delivery reflect this.

9. Although this project was to focus on post 16 learners and learning, the development of the 14-19 agenda, with an emphasis on14-16 developments needs to be considered especially as staff are being required to work more flexibility across a wider spectrum of age groups. In addition with this in mind care should also be given to see how this degree would relate to the newly developed Higher Level Teaching Assistant Qualification in schools which is currently being piloted.

10. This degree should also reflect any outcomes of the review of the teacher qualifications along with relating to other qualifications for the sector e.g. The Skills for Life Qualification framework. This is will be very significant to organizations as well as individuals when prioritising who needs to do what and by when.

11. Learning and teaching support staff see the development of a Foundation Degree as a very positive step and welcome the opportunity to gain a qualification for their role at a recognized achievement level. Many see the opportunity to progress as very important but want this to enhance the support role as well as enable entry into teaching.

12. The qualification itself will need to be flexible and probably hybrid in nature, given that there are some common elements of knowledge and skills when dealing with all learners.

13. It is also important to recognize that many learning and teaching support staff spoken to did not necessarily want to progress into teaching / tutoring they valued the opportunity to move on to a higher level qualification within a different specialist area or within learning support in its own right.

14. Most staff would want the qualification offered locally and the mode of delivery varied.

15. As the degree is validated across the country then local progression planning would be essential - Linking this to career guidance would also be very helpful.

16. Funding the qualification would also need to be carefully considered especially as this qualification may enhance expectations of learning and teaching support staff, both for training and for career enhancement.

17. In raising the profile of the role and linking this to a recognized qualification and progression pathway it would be important to consider how this might impact on expectations in the pay and conditions of staff employed in these roles.

18. Work should be undertaken in order to map current and developing qualifications and the Foundation Degree (the development of a career and progression pathway for Learning Support staff in the Learning and Skills Sector).

Methodology

Initially desk top research was undertaken, the purpose of which was to identify:

a) what the role of learning and teaching support included and
b) what a sector specific learning and teaching Foundation Degree should include – as part of this we also looked at what qualifications were currently on offer.

The role and responsibilities of learning and teaching support staff was an important focus, as was ensuring that this role was reviewed across a range of different providers and learning and teaching contexts. A number of learning and teaching support staff and their managers (first line and senior) were interviewed and focus groups organised. The purpose of these was to clarify the role and expectations of those engaged in post 16 learning and teaching support. What emerged from this initial stage and then confirmed via the national focus groups was that the role of post 16 learning and teaching support staff could be divided into Pedagogical support and Behavioural / Guidance support.

> *The Pedagogical included*: Learning Support assistants, work-based coaches/mentors, work-based assessors, specialist support assistants e.g. literacy and ESOL, library/information services, Technicians e.g. Science/ICT

> *Behaviour/guidance services***:** Personnel advisers, learning mentors, counsellors, Individual Adult Guidance IAG workers,

Specific guidance and information on the development of Foundation Degrees has been obtained from a number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the DfES (via their Foundation Degree website), Foundation Degree Forward (FDF – a national body established to support the validation of high quality Foundation Degrees) the Qualification Curriculum Authority (QCA) and UCAS.

From this work a draft model and guidelines was developed, this has been used as part of a wider consultation via the same groups but also now through national focus groups organised and run by FENTO. Specifically from these events we were asked to place the emphasis of content relating to the Foundation Degree on Learning Support as opposed to teaching and from these consultative events and supported by FENTO emerged the working title for the Degree:

To research and present a model for a Foundation Degree in post-16 teacher and trainer education

Debbie Betteridge, Fenella Tallon and Jane Burnett
March 2004

A Foundation Degree in Learning Support in the Learning & Skills Sector.

Finally a smaller group has met specifically to guide the work of the project and this group was made up of FENTO and a number of providers and HEIs including representation from, England, Wales an Northern Ireland. In partnership with a number of these providers developed some outline case studies as included in the report, these case studies identify the diverse needs and working arenas that this Foundation Degree will need to embrace.

From this combined range of methods this final report and model is presented.

The Context

This report and model builds on the changes and further developments that have taken place nationally and locally since the outset of this work. For example the review of Teacher Qualifications and implementing the Skills for Life Framework, are two such developments.
This work is also set in a context whereby many providers are reviewing their curriculum on offer as well as how they are deploying their workforce. This in turn is set against the requirements to meet a much wider range of learner needs and age ranges.
This small-scale piece of work aims to look at the role of learning and teaching support and what model of foundation degree would be beneficial to reflect these different contexts and challenges.

DEVELOPING THE MODEL

Introduction
Learning Support Staff in the Learning and Skills Sector already do make a significant contribution to the learners overall learning and achievement.
The key issue for the sector in developing this degree is ensuring that it reflects the diverse roles and contexts in which these staff works.

Learning Support Staff work in a variety of ways and in a range of settings and in many cases they do have an amount of autonomy. Senior management take responsibility for defining the exact role of learning support with each of their own Learning and Skills organisations and this qualification is aimed at developing staff in the delivery of what can b e a very diverse and demanding role

Some possible role definitions: - [1] *taken from The Skills for Life Teaching Qualifications Framework: A Users Guide*

Supports the teaching process:
[1] This may include direct contribution to the initial assessment of learners, contribution to the development of individual learning plans and contribution to teaching

Supports the learner:
[1] Contribution to the initial assessment of learners, signposting to appropriate provision and supporting learners under the supervision of a specialist teacher.

The context within which these roles are implemented need also to be considered and these include:

- Learning Support of 14-19 Learners in the FE Sector to include looking specifically at learning support for 14-16 learners
- Learning Support in the Adult and Community Sector
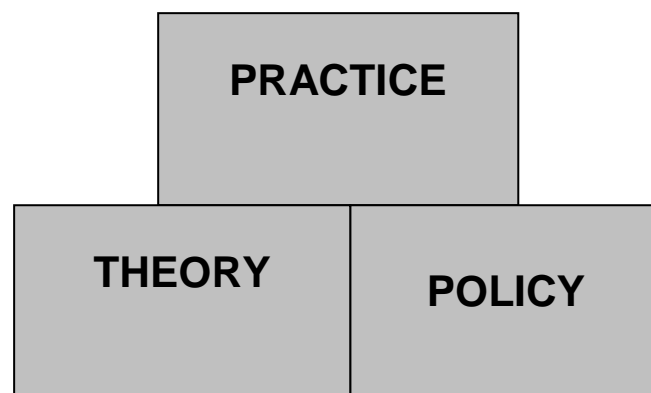- Learning Support in Work-Based Learning

It is recognised that a teachers'/lecturers' professional training, knowledge and experience prepare them for taking the overall responsibility for the actual learning and learner experience but they will draw from the support and expertise of those involved in supporting learning in order to further develop and enhance the learning and the full learning opportunity.

This Foundation Degree must also relate to other frameworks and the specific qualifications that staffs within the sector are being required to achieve (hold). In addition this should open up a qualification and career progression route for those involved in learners support enabling them to take the learning and qualification 'journey' further.

The Model

This foundation degree is based on the concept of 'learning support' as being a key role in learning and learner achievement. This degree aims to fully integrate theory, practice and policy as applicable to this role in order to improve organisational and individual performance.

This is a model of PRACTICE clearly underpinned by the knowledge and understanding of relevant THEORIES and POLICIES.

```
                    +------------------+
                    |                  |
                    |    PRACTICE      |
                    |                  |
          +---------+--------+---------+--------+
          |                  |                  |
          |     THEORY       |     POLICY       |
          |                  |                  |
          +------------------+------------------+
```

A key issue in the development of this degree has been the factor that there are no direct 'National Occupational Standards' for Learning Support thus to ensure that any recommended content and the framework for the degree is truly reflective of the role a range of examples and practices relating to learning support roles have been researched. The following degree is based on the following findings.

THE MODEL OUTLINE

An optional introductory unit at NQF level 3. This would be part of the transition from experience to practice and could also provide 'returning to study skills' and entry into the degree

120 CATS Points at Level 1	120 CATS Points at Level 2
The CONTEXT – the development of module content and assessment should reflect the key contexts in which learning support roles are implemented	

Learning Support of 14-19 Learners in the FE Sector	*Learning Support in the Adult and Community Sector*	*Learning Support in Work-Based Learning*

In order to gain the Foundation Degree Qualification and to develop a generic base it has been defined that all staff employed/involved in Learning Support roles should know, understand and be able to do the following:

Professional values and practice
The attitudes and commitment to be expected from all staff working in Learning Support
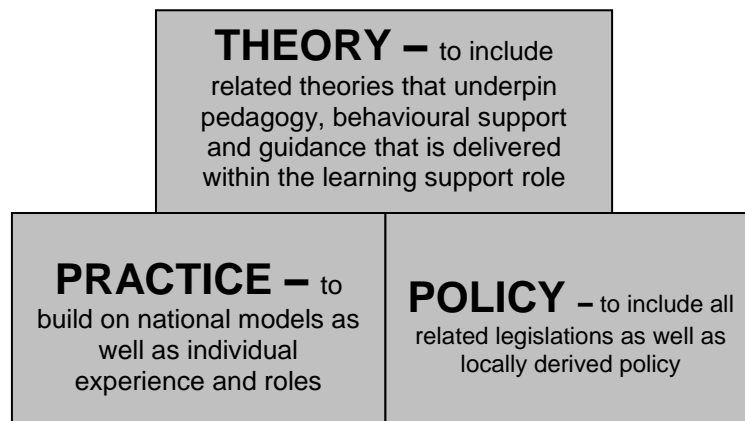
Knowledge and understanding
Learning Support staff will be required to demonstrate that they have sufficient knowledge, expertise and awareness of the learners, the learning content and context in order to operate as part of a professional team.

Learning and Teaching activities
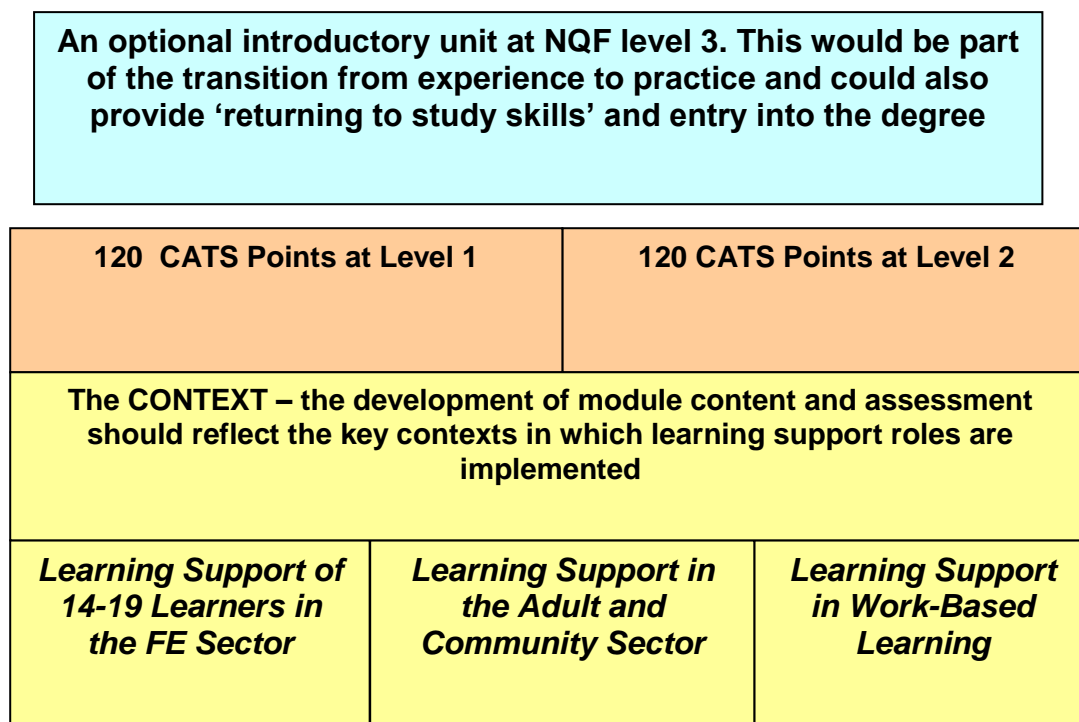Learning support staff will need to demonstrate that they can work effectively with individual learners, small groups and in some cases whole groups contributing to a wide range of learning and teaching activities. In many cases depending on the actual learning support role the will also need to be able to demonstrate skills in planning, monitoring, assessing and learner / group management.

The Foundation Degree Model

This foundation degree is based on the concept of 'learning support' as being a key role in learning and learner achievement. This degree aims to fully integrate theory, practice and policy in order to improve organisational and individual performance in learning support.

THEORY – to include related theories that underpin pedagogy, behavioural support and guidance that is delivered within the learning support role

PRACTICE – to build on national models as well as individual experience and roles

POLICY – to include all related legislations as well as locally derived policy

THE MODEL

An optional introductory unit at NQF level 3. This would be part of the transition from experience to practice and could also provide 'returning to study skills' and entry into the degree

120 CATS Points at Level 1	120 CATS Points at Level 2

The CONTEXT – the development of module content and assessment should reflect the key contexts in which learning support roles are implemented

Learning Support of 14-19 Learners in the FE Sector	*Learning Support in the Adult and Community Sector*	*Learning Support in Work-Based Learning*

To research and present a model for a Foundation Degree in post-16 teacher and trainer education

Debbie Betteridge, Fenella Tallon and Jane Burnett
March 2004

11

An example of the Possible Degree units:

Optional Introductory unit Experience into Practice	Optional Introductory unit Study Skills

A double unit based on the individual work role and this could include supervised practice		30 CATS points
P R A C T I C E	Learning and the learner	15 CATS points
	Self evaluation and review of own practice	15 CATS points
	Equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice	15 CATS points
	Policy in to practice - A small-scale piece of action research relating national/local policy into practice	15 CATS points
	Identifying teaching and training strategies to optimise learning	15 CATS points
	Taking account of learner differences	15 CATS points

A double unit based on the individual work role and this could include supervised practice		30 CATS points
P R A C T I C E	Dealing with and managing change and continuous improvement	15 CATS points
	Integrating ICT in learning and teaching	15 CATS points
	Specialised role contextualised units eg Supporting Literacy, Supporting LLD Learners, Coaching / mentoring learning in the workplace	Up to 30 CATS points
	A double unit on local/action research/practitioner enquiry	30 CATS points

To research and present a model for a Foundation Degree in post-16 teacher and trainer education 12

Debbie Betteridge, Fenella Tallon and Jane Burnett
March 2004

The development of **Professional values and practice**
The attitudes and commitment to be expected from all staff working in Learning Support

The development and assessment of **Knowledge and understanding**
 Learning Support staff will be required to demonstrate that they have sufficient knowledge, expertise and awareness of the learners, the learning content and context in order to operate as part of a professional team.

The development and assessment of **Learning and Teaching activities**
Learning support staff will need to demonstrate that they can work effectively with individual learners, small groups and in some cases whole groups contributing to a wide range of learning and teaching activities. In many cases depending on the actual learning support role the will also need to be able to demonstrate skills in planning, monitoring, assessing and learner / group management.

GENERIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the foundation degree the learner should be able to **demonstrate** appropriate knowledge and understanding and have **demonstrated in the workplace that they can:**

- Understand the theoretical underpinning related to learning
- Apply learning theory to classroom planning
- Understand how learning theory can optimise learning behaviour in students
- Understand the relationship of teaching and learning
- Appreciate the impact of relationships on learning
- Understand the importance of the learning environment
- Appreciate the impact of teaching strategies upon individual learning
- Understand that strategies vary dependant upon a variety of factors
- Begin to evaluate the impact of teaching strategies upon student retention and results
- To begin to develop ways to take account of student differences in the classroom
- To understand the variety of challenges inclusive teaching introduces to the planning of teaching and learning
- To value the use of and impact of whole college policies for inclusive learning
- To begin to develop an understanding of the variety of learning aids and resources
- To evaluate practice and develop new methods of using resources and learning aids
- To appreciate the diverse use of ICT for teaching and learning
- To understand the impact of the use of learning aids and resources upon individual and group learning

- To begin to develop an understanding of the variety of reasons for behaviour problems
- To review the role of the support assistant in behaviour management and modification
- To plan to develop management strategies in day to day work
- To evaluate practice and develop new methods of using resources and learning aids
- To appreciate the diverse use of ICT for teaching and learning
- To understand the impact of the use of learning aids and resources upon individual and group learning

Learning Support of 14-19 Learners in the FE Sector

This requires learning support teams to have a **generic knowledge** of:

- Learning support and guidance within the FE context, and the facilities and opportunities which exist within the organization
- The professional network of specialist services available to learners and how to access them
- Learners' entitlement to educational and personal support services
- National systems for recording achievement
- The organization's procedures for recording learners' achievements
- Ways of matching individual needs to available opportunities
- The educational, vocational, and personal development opportunities available to learners locally and nationally, including employment opportunities
- IT systems and how to use them to access information on guidance and support
- Appropriate stakeholders including colleagues, other specialist professionals (eg student counsellors), employers, parents, guardians and carers
- Review procedures and action-planning methods.

Learning Support in the Adult and Community Sector

This requires learning support teams to have a **generic knowledge** of:

- Learning support and guidance within the Adult and Community context, and the facilities and opportunities which exist within the organization
- The professional network of specialist services available to learners and how to access them
- Learners' entitlement to educational and personal support services
- National systems for recording achievement
- The organization's procedures for recording learners' achievements
- Ways of matching individual needs to available opportunities
- The educational, vocational, and personal development opportunities available to learners locally and nationally, including employment opportunities
- ICT systems and how to use them to access information on guidance and support
- Appropriate stakeholders including colleagues, other specialist professionals

Learning Support in Work-Based Learning

This requires learning support teams to have a **generic knowledge** of:

- Learning support and guidance within the Work-Based Learning context, and the facilities and opportunities which exist within the provider organization
- The professional network of specialist services available to learners and how to access them
- Learners' entitlement to educational and personal support services
- National systems for recording achievement
- The organization's procedures for recording learners' achievements
- Ways of matching individual needs to available opportunities
- The educational, vocational, and personal development opportunities available to learners locally and nationally, including employment opportunities
- IT systems and how to use them to access information on guidance and support
- Appropriate stakeholders including colleagues, other specialist professionals
- Review procedures and action-planning methods.

THE GUIDELINES *appendix 1*

This Foundation Degree 'Model' will be accompanied by set of guidelines (*appendix 1)* these are aimed at supporting institutions when validating such a degree as well as giving a consistency of approach and content across the sector / country. These guidelines would support a Sector Specific Foundation Degree and include:

- ***An Introduction and background to the guidelines***– this section will explain the purpose of the guidance for the content and delivery of the foundation degree. It outlines how the guidance can be used and its benefits to both learners and learning providers.

- ***An introduction to foundation degrees*** - this section reviews the main characteristics of foundation degrees and identifies the main structural and delivery features that must be present in this new qualification. It also identifies the implications and opportunities that this qualification offers to Learning Support across the sector.

- ***Programme Requirements -*** This section will follow the guidelines for programme specifications as agreed by the sector. It identifies the main aims and outcomes that are required of the foundation degree.

- ***Admissions and Case Studies from across the sectors***

Conclusions

This piece of work has been conducted in a period of rapid change but clearly identifies a need for a sector specific Foundation Degree in Learning Support in the Learning and Skills Sector. This degree must be applicable to, and reflective of, a wide range of roles within the area of Learning Support.

This type of development is also a very positive way of bringing together the different roles across a range of private and other training providers.

Further work is needed:
- To develop national occupational standards
- From these to revisit the units and units outcomes
- To develop a progression and career map for Learning Support

Learning Support staff as well as providers reported that this would be a very important development and go a long way in supporting the professionalising the workforce across the sector.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1   **The Guidelines**

Appendix 2   **An example of Learning Support &
                        Learning Support Assistants & how
                        currently they are defined & deployed
                        within a college:**

APPENDIX 1

The GUIDELINES – these guidelines could be adopted if this becomes a Sector Specific Degree.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE GUIDANCE

This section will explain the purpose of the guidance for the content and delivery of the foundation degree. It outlines how the guidance can be used and its benefits to both learners and learning providers.

The purpose of the Guidance is to:

- give learners an insight into the Foundation Degree in Learning Support;
- assist universities, and their FE college and employer partners, to design Foundation Degrees which meet the needs of the sector in terms of both content and delivery and so can be sector-endorsed;
- enable the Foundation Degree to form a progression route to an ordinary or honours degree (and to the proposed FE version of QTS[1] in collaboration with providers of Initial Teacher Education);
- provide information to stakeholders on the scope, content and delivery of the foundation degree

The guidance is a working document which can be amended and updated to reflect the requirements of the new sector. It is recommended that the guidance be available on-line to facilitate the ease of amendment. As the Foundation Degree would be sector-endorsed, it is envisaged that this will provide more flexibility to those working in Learning Support to gain employment across the sector.

Who is the guidance for?

This Guidance is for:

- Learners
- Tutors
- Institutions
- Stakeholders

who are interested in taking, teaching on, developing and employing those having achieved the Foundation Degree in Learning Support in the Learning & Skills Sector. It contains learning outcomes which have been developed as a result of consultation in the Sector and which it is hoped institutions developing the Foundation Degree will adopt. The learning outcomes have been designed with flexibility in mind so that they may be packaged in a variety of ways. The balance between activities may be altered to place greater or lesser emphasis on work-based learning, depending on the particular market being catered for. The learner support arrangements, for example mentoring, may be offered in a variety of ways, and to facilitate e-learning.

---

[1] A Standards Unit consultation is currently taking place on the future of initial teacher education and a version of QTS for the learning & skills sector has been suggested.

The guidance has been prepared in the light of consultations with stakeholder groups across the country and it is hoped will act as the defining document for institutions developing a foundation degree in Learning Support in the Learning & Skills Sector.

How does the guidance benefit the groups identified above?

Learners will:
- know that their Foundation Degree is based upon what is actually required in employment;
- be able to perform at a level recognised by employers;
- be aware of progression routes from the Foundation Degree.

Universities and colleges will:

- have confidence that their Foundation Degree is sector-endorsed and therefore will deliver the achievements actually required in employment;
- know that their graduates will be able to perform at the level required by employers;
- be able to progress those learners who have the potential to a suitable programme leading to an ordinary or honours degree (through to QTS[2] status in the learning & skills sector if desired);
- be eligible to apply for help towards start-up costs to put flexible learner support arrangements in place.

Stakeholders will:

- know that graduates of the Foundation Degree hold a sector-endorsed qualification which is recognised by employers;
- be aware of progression routes from the Foundation Degree.

SECTION 2 - INTRODUCTION TO FOUNDATION DEGREES

The DfES manages and maintains a website www.foundationdegree.org.uk designed to give quick and easy access to basic information about foundation degrees and to help link to other useful information including course information. The following information has been reproduced from the site and is correct as of June 2003.

"An introduction to the foundation degree

The Institute for Employment Research estimates that there will be almost 800,000 new jobs in associate professional and higher technician occupations by 2010. This is a bigger and faster increase than the employment growth expected in most other occupations.

What is the foundation degree?

The foundation degree is a vocationally focused higher education qualification. It aims to increase the number of people qualified at higher technician and associate professional level (e.g. legal executives, engineering technicians, personnel officers,

---

[2] There is currently a Standards' Unit consultation taking place regarding a version of QTS for the new learning & skills sector.

laboratory technicians, teaching assistants). It is located at intermediate level in the *Framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ).* Other intermediate level qualifications include NVQ level 4 and the Higher National Diploma (HND). The next level up is 'honours' level, which covers degrees with titles such as Bachelor of Arts (BA (Hons)) or Bachelor of Science (BSc(Hons)).

All foundation degrees develop:
- work-specific skills, relevant to a particular sector of industry
- key skills, for example communication and problem solving
- generic skills such as reasoning, professionalism, and work process management.

Work-based learning is a major part of any foundation degree but higher level knowledge and understanding reinforces and supports the development of vocational skills.

People with foundation degrees will have the potential to make an immediate contribution in the workplace and early impact on 'the bottom line'.

The balance of skills and the focus of an FD depend on the partnership involved in its design. Each foundation degree is designed through collaboration between organisations with a key interest. Partners vary according to circumstances, but typically involve the following:

- employers in the public and private sectors, often with their Sector Skills Councils or other appropriate bodies;
- employers in the not-for-profit sector
- higher education institutions
- further education colleges

Different foundation degrees have different student audiences. FD programme design reflects students' needs and programme aims. Part-time study is available for those in employment. Distance learning and internet–supported learning can be combined with work-based learning and learning at a university or college in ways that work best. Credit can be given for relevant prior learning or experience, with individual learning programmes building on the student's existing skills and knowledge rather than repeating them.

Studying for a foundation degree currently takes the equivalent of two academic years full-time study, but actual duration depends on mode of study and course design. Students may credit their FD award towards honours degree studies at a later stage if they wish. Where appropriate, they may also progress towards professional qualifications and licenses to practice."

The site also contains detailed information on developing and implementing a Foundation Degree. This is of interest to those employers and employer organisations who want to see FDs designed to develop their current and future workforce, and to those in colleges and universities who want to work with employers to get an FD programme up and running. Information about Foundation Degrees currently available can be found on the UCAS website www.ucas.com

Core features of foundation degrees
'The foundation degree guide to getting started' available on the
www.foundationdegree.org.uk website contains information about core features of a
foundation degree and why it differs from other qualifications. The core features of
foundation degrees are reproduced below.

Employer involvement	in the design and regular review of programmes
	to achieve recognition from employer and professional bodies
	both with local organisations and national sector bodies to establish demand for FD programmes
The development of skills, understanding and knowledge	technical and work-specific skills, relevant to the sector
	underpinned by rigorous and broad-based academic learning
	key skills in communication, team working, problem solving, application of number, use of information technology and improving own learning and performance
	generic skills such as reasoning and work process management
	should be recorded by transcript, validated by the awarding HEI and underpinned by a personal development plan
Application of skills in the workplace	students must demonstrate their skills in work relevant to the area of study
	students should be given enough work experience should be sufficient to develop an understanding of the world of work and it should be validated, assessed and recorded
	the awarding HEIs should award credits, with exemptions for students with relevant work experience
Credit accumulation and transfer	foundation degrees should attract at least 240 credits, 120 at level 1 and 120 at level 2
	individual partnerships should agree and apply credit accumulation and transfer arrangements
	individual partnerships should recognise relevant prior and work-based learning by awarding credits
Progression – within work and/or to an honours degree	there must be guaranteed articulation arrangements with a least one honours degree
	programmes must make clear the subsequent arrangements for progression to honours degrees and to professional qualifications or higher-level NVQs

More information on the general characteristics of foundation degrees can be found in the Foundation degree: qualification benchmark produced by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in England (QAA).

The qualifications & curriculum authority (QCA) and the national qualifications framework (NQF)

QCA maintains and develops the national curriculum and associated assessments, tests and examinations; and accredits and monitors qualifications in colleges and at work. It also established the national qualifications framework (NQF).

The information below has been taken from the QCA website www.qca.org.uk

The aims of the national qualifications framework (NQF) are to:
- promote access, motivation and achievement in education and training and therefore strengthen international competitiveness
- promote lifelong learning by helping people to understand clear routes of progression
- avoid unnecessary duplication and overlap of qualifications whilst ensuring all learning needs are covered
- promote public and professional confidence in the integrity and relevance of national awards.

The NQF sorts national qualifications into three categories and six levels (entry level to level 5) as shown in the chart below.

The NQF is under review, part of a broader review of the regulatory arrangements. A revised NQF and supporting information, including level descriptors, will be published in 2004. The framework is supported by access to the QCA qualifications database which can be found on: www.openquals.org.uk/.

Level of qualification	General	Vocationally related	Occupational
5	higher level qualifications		level 5 NVQ
4			level 4 NVQ
3 advanced	A levels and AVCE	Vocational qualifications	level 3 NVQ
2 intermediate	GCSE grade A*-C		level 2 NVQ
1 foundation	GCSE grade D-G		level 1 NVQ
entry level	certificate of achievement		

Foundation degrees are placed within Level 4 of the NQF.

The framework for higher education qualifications and the quality assurance agency (QAA)

The framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was published in January 2001 by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). This framework applies to degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards (other than honorary degrees and higher doctorates) granted by a university or college in the exercise of its degree awarding powers. For further details please go to: www.qaa.ac.uk/

Level		Qualifications
5. Doctoral	D level	Doctorates
4. Masters	M level	Masters degree, Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas
3. Honours	H level	Bachelors degrees with Honours, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas
2. Intermediate	I level	Foundation degrees, ordinary (Bachelors) degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education and other higher diplomas
1. Certificate	C level	Certificates of Higher Education

Foundation degrees are placed in levels 1 (C level) and 2 (I level) with the first phase of the Foundation Degree normally being at C level (120 CATS credits) and the second phase at I level (a further 120 CATS credits). The QAA has published descriptors of qualifications in the FHEQ at each of the levels above. An outline of those for Certificate and Intermediate level are shown below. Full information can be found on the QAA website.

Certificate level
The holder of a Certificate of Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. He or she will be able to communicate accurately, and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.
The Certificate may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications.
Intermediate level
Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. They will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.
The intermediate level includes ordinary (non-Honours) degrees, the Foundation degree, Diplomas of Higher Education, and other higher diplomas.

The QAA has also produced a qualification benchmark statement for the Foundation Degree. Qualification benchmark statements describe the distinctive character of an individual qualification at a particular level within the FHEQ and can be found at www.qaa.ac.uk

Foundation Degree Forward

The Government's White Paper 'The future of higher education' published in January 2003 set out a commitment to establish a new national body, Foundation Degree Forward (FDF), to support and promote the development and validation of high quality Foundation Degrees. In undertaking its role FDF will work closely with the Task Force and will seek to articulate its policy objectives in practice. The FDF website address is: www.fdf.ac.uk
FDF will provide:

- A Centre of Expertise that will support Further Education Colleges (FECs), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)and other organisations in the development of high quality Foundation Degrees; in disseminating good practice FDF will create linkages with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and with The Higher Education Academy.
- A collaborative partnership with the Sector Skills Development Agency and Sector Skills Councils in supporting the development of sector skills frameworks and the Skills for Business network to inform future Foundation Degree curricula and delivery.
- A high quality validation and quality assurance support service for Foundation Degrees for those institutions and organisations without degree-awarding powers. It is intended that this validation and quality enhancement service will not be disruptive to existing partnerships but will offer supplementary opportunities for Foundation Degree development in contexts where this is otherwise proving to be difficult. As indicated in the White Paper, this validation service will be implemented through a network of participating universities to be established by April 2004.

SECTION 3 - PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS

This section will follow the guidelines for programme specifications as agreed by the sector. It identifies the main aims and outcomes that are required of the foundation degree.

A set of learning outcomes has been developed which are required to be adopted when developing the FD. Each of the learning outcomes in the framework is composed of a number of practical outcomes, together with underpinning knowledge and understanding. These are in the Appendix. It is important that all learning outcomes selected are covered, although providers will exercise their judgement in terms of the appropriate depth of coverage. It is not necessary that the curriculum for the Foundation Degree reflects the order in which the learning outcomes are set out in Appendix 1. Universities and colleges are free to repackage them to suit their own views of the learning process.

In addition, it is important the progression opportunities for FD graduates are highlighted. Foundation Degree proposers will need to specify where graduates can go in terms of:

- employment opportunities:
- progression to ordinary or honours degree:

- progression to Initial Teacher Education[3].

Possible career pathways are indicated in Appendix 2.

Bridging arrangements for the progression to honours degree and to ITE must be specified in terms of:
- learning outcomes required (at the specific level);
- learning and assessment methods;
- duration and delivery arrangements;
- specific entry requirements for a programme of ITE.

Validation Requirements

Institutions have developed their own arrangements for validation and quality assurance. The QAA Review indicates that these systems should be designed to address the following questions:

1. Does the design and content of the Curriculum reflect the core features of the FD qualification?
2. Are the Aims and Programme Learning Outcomes clear and appropriate to the articulation of the core features of a Foundation Degree?
3. Is the Teaching and Learning Strategy effectively designed for achieving the Learning Outcomes and is the strategy reflective of the core features of the Foundation Degree?
4. Are the assessment arrangements clear and systematically related to judging students' achievements and level/programme outcomes?
5. What are the arrangements for providing academic and tutorial support that is responsive to the distinctive experience of students on a Foundation Degree?
6. Is the provision of human and physical resources adequate to meet the achievement of programme outcomes, teaching and learning strategy and the distinctive features of the award?
7. Are there clear arrangements in place for both programme management and for the effective monitoring and enhancement of quality and standards across all aspects and locations of provision?

Admission

The Foundation Degree Forward organisation advises that Foundation Degrees should be developed with the following in mind:

- Clear Admissions processes designed to meet the specific needs of applicants for the new qualification
- Enhancement of good practice in AP(E)L systems
- Local, regional and national developments in entry qualifications such as Advanced Modern Apprenticeships
- Progress deriving out of the Tomlinson review of the 14-19 Curriculum
- Significant enhancement of progression routes for Foundation Degree students into Honours (and other) qualifications.

---

[3] It should be noted that the Standards Unit of the DfES is currently in the process of consultation with respect to the future of initial teacher education in the learning & skills sector. The closing date for receipt of consultation responses is 29 February 2004.

The QAA Review has signalled that further refinement of current practice in a number of these areas is necessary.

For entry to a Foundation Degree it is normally expected that learners aged under 21 years would normally have the following as a minimum requirement:

- An NQF Level 3 qualification such as an NVQ qualification or equivalent.

Some institutions also expect applicants to hold a qualification in English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, equivalent to at least level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework.

Applicants over the age of 21 should normally be required to hold an NQF level 3 qualification, but attention should also be given to the work and other experience the applicant can demonstrate. There should thus be provision for flexibility in entry requirements for applicants over the age of 21. Institutions may wish to develop an aptitude or orientation test or course to assess the ability of applicants without a level 3 qualification. This test or course could include elements such as study skills, ability to engage in discussion and debate and use of oral and written English. OR consider his as part of the degree itself as away of moving experience in to further learning and improved practice.

Because students will complete the degree by a variety of routes to including both full time and part-time programmes the Foundation Degree should allow students to either continue working or access work experience in appropriate settings whilst completing their degree.

Some institutions may require to see written evidence from the employer that they are in support of the learner undertaking the FD. If in the future the degree became underpinned by National Occupational Standards in Learner Support, then advanced standing against the degree may be given.

SECTION 4 – CASE STUDIES - *Scenarios or possible routes through the FD*
It is recognised that students will come from a wide range of backgrounds reflecting the wide range of stakeholders comprising the new sector skills council. The following scenarios, based on actual people and researched through the provider network expected to become partners in the new sector skills council, indicate possible routes through the Learning Support Foundation Degree. They are by no means exhaustive and serve as examples rather than being prescriptive. Where AP(E)L is requested, HEIs are likely to have their own procedures and guidelines for dealing with this.

Case Study A	Case Study B
A is working part-time for some years as a Communications and Support Worker in the Additional Learning Support unit of an LSC-funded College which provides support in basic skills, ESOL, dyslexia and other learning difficulties and for students with disabilities which impact on their learning. Typical tasks include assisting students with classroom activities (but not teaching) and ensuring they can work safely and effectively. In some instances her role is to translate for the student, e.g. signing, reading or note taking. She has a level 3 qualification in an unrelated area. A will be able to use APEL procedures to demonstrate achievements of learning outcomes which she has already covered through professional experience. A will access other necessary knowledge and understanding and professional practice learning outcomes through her normal practice with top-up tutorial support where appropriate. A personal plan must be developed for students such as A to plan which areas of professional practice may need extra 'off the job' tuition.	B is presently employed as Learning Support Assistant for SLDD. Typical tasks in this role would include supporting learning tasks (but not undertaking tasks for the learner), personal care support, and general supervision in out-of-class environments. B would like to become qualified in her present role and would like the possibility of progressing into employment as a qualified teacher in the SLDD area. B would need to complete the modules suitable for progressing to this teaching role. On completion of a Foundation degree would be able to progress on to a Cert. Ed./PGCE in post-compulsory education.
Case Study C C is employed full-time as a trainer in Work-based Learning and is looking for improved career prospects through a Foundation degree. Typical tasks include supporting main tutor/trainer in Skills for Life area; acting as a coach in vocational training; may be undertaking some assessment of vocational skills. He has a D32 or A award. A personal plan must be developed for students such as C to plan which areas of professional practice may need extra	**Case Study D (*An example most applicable to Northern Ireland*)** D is a student on the Diploma in the Teaching and Management of Literacy and Essential Skills (Northern Ireland). She completed the Certificate year of the course last year (Level 4) and has C&G 9281 (Initial Certificate). She was a volunteer supporting two adult literacy learners in an FE college and then began to teach a small group of literacy learners to meet the teaching requirements for the Diploma course.

'off the job' tuition.	She is now employed to teach a literacy class at one of her college's outreach centres. She also offers some educational guidance to her students and is supporting another student with her GCSE English course work.
	D is keen to progress further after she completes her Diploma and obtain paid employment within her college as an associate basic skills tutor.
	D will be able to use APEL procedures to gain exemption from learning outcomes which she has already covered through professional experience and achieving the Diploma. She will access necessary professional practice learning outcomes through her normal practice with top-up tutorial support where appropriate.
	A personal plan must be developed for students such as D to plan which areas of professional practice may need extra 'off the job' tuition.

CASE STUDY E

E is employed as the Salon Manager in the College hairdressing facility and provides, in addition, Key Skills support in IT. Typical tasks include running the salon, allocates clients to students, demonstrating techniques, monitoring student performance and assessing for NVQ awards. E does not provide formal class teaching as such – her role is to support skills learning and development. She has no formal qualifications.

After an orientation course, E will enter Foundation Degree at level C (i.e. from the beginning) and undertake the appropriate mix of units. All work-based evidence will be collected whilst carrying out her normal work activities.

A personal plan should be developed for students such as E to plan which areas of professional practice may need extra 'off the job' tuition

APPENDIX 2

An example of Learning Support & Learning Support Assistants & how currently they are defined & deployed within a college:

Terminology

Learning Support - part of the Student Support department of the College. It offers additional support to learners with a variety of difficulties.*(When learning support is written in lower case, they are referring to the process, rather than the department).*
Learner - the term we use for students. It suggests a more active role for the student and is a reminder of why they attend college!
Identified learner – a person identified by Learning Support as needing support in some form

---

The college works with learners from Entry and Basic Skills up to HND (equivalent to two years of a degree). The groups that need most support are the foundation level courses. These tend to attract school leavers with poor GCSE grades. Many learners have literacy and numeracy difficulties and may have behavioural difficulties. Many have had a negative school experience.

How are learners identified? Learners are asked at every stage of their progress through the application process if they are disabled or have a difficulty with literacy or numeracy. Learning Support contact them for further information about the support they may need. Most learners are identified through Screening. This is an assessment of literacy and numeracy that all full-time learners undertake. It is also open to part-time learners. Some learners will self-refer for support.

Learning Support supports around 500 learners by providing literacy and numeracy classes or other types of provision such as Communication Support Workers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs).

Learning Support also pays for class sizes to be reduced for discrete classes for learners with learning difficulties.

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) work in two ways:

1. Some identified learners will have 1:1 LSA support. This may be because their disability, literacy/numeracy or other difficulty needs intensive support.
2. Some courses have a number of learners who need support within their classes. All full-time Level 1 (NVQ1, GNVQ Foundation and equivalent) courses are offered the LSA service. Other courses may also have LSAs.

Possible learner issues (Level 1 groups)
- Literacy/numeracy difficulties
- Difficulty with theory aspects of course
- Frustration / embarrassment associated with difficulties
- Behavioural difficulties
- Negative experience of Learning Support at school
- 'Stigma' of learning support or wish for a 'clean slate'

- The usual issues of adolescence!
- LSAs are given information on the strengths and weaknesses of your identified learners

Learner issues (disabled learners)

We use the term 'disabled' to describe any learner whose difficulties are covered by Section IV of the Disability Discrimination Act. Students regarded as disabled may have a mobility difficulty, sensory impairment, dyslexia or various other difficulties that may affect their everyday life.

We aim to follow the social model of disability which proposes that a person is disabled by their environment. It is our responsibility to identify and remove barriers to learning so that all services can be accessed by all learners. We may do this through offering support or making reasonable adjustments.

Disabled learners are as likely as any other learner to be affected by the issues outlined for Foundation level groups.

The type of support needed by disabled learners is negotiated by Learning Support with the learner.

The role of the Learning Support Assistant

The LSA is not a general classroom assistant. They work only with those learners identified as needing learning support, allowing for group work and the need to be sensitive to the needs of your learners.

Teaching staff should involve the LSA in planning classes. They should negotiate how LSAs will work with learners and share information with them.

The LSA may, on occasion, need to help the lecturer to prepare materials for the identified learners but usually this will be their responsibility as part of the differentiation they conduct.

It is not the LSA's role to deliver the curriculum. The lecturer's role is to facilitate the learning in the classroom. The LSA will need to help the identified learners in this process, they are not expected to be a subject specialist.

They may support learners in theory sessions by ensuring they are recording and understanding information. In practical sessions they may need to help learners to recall the stages of the activity they are undertaking.

They ensure that lecturing staff are aware of any difficulties the identified learners are having.

It may be appropriate for identified learners to work in small groups at certain points in a session. LSAs are not expected to teach them but to support them with the guidance of the lecturer.

LSAs need to build the trust of learners. They cannot predict the reaction of learners in their presence.

They need to be flexible! As they build a relationship with their identified learners and they need to adapt to their learning styles and their personalities.

If learners are given activities outside of the classroom, such as visits to the Library Resource Centre for research, LSAs may need to accompany them to support the activity. They cannot, however, be left alone in the classroom with learners. The lecturer should always be in the classroom and should not expect the LSA to have responsibility for the whole group.

The LSA role is not to police the learners. LSAs should be sensitive to the needs of the learner to interact within other people in class and to have time to think! They tread a fine line between the need to keep the learner engaged and their right to behave as any other learner in the classroom.