

Driving the “collect once, use many times” philosophy

Issue 6 , May 2004

Data Sharing Framework

The Framework is being developed to facilitate effective data sharing between MIAP stakeholders. All stakeholders have been invited to contribute to the development of the framework. Recent comments are being used to revise the framework to make it more user-friendly with a view to publishing it later in the summer with logos and signatures from all those committed to its principles.

National Register of Providers

The feasibility study has assessed that a National Register of Providers (NRP) could bring together a range of data about providers to deliver a number of benefits:

- Employers and learners will have access to information on courses and also to the quality of provision that organisations provide;
- Employers will also be able to identify providers who can develop courses that meet their needs;
- Providers will be able to promote their services and the NRP will help reduce the bureaucracy involved in applying for funding as funding bodies can access information direct from the NRP;
- Planners will have access to more accurate and timely information enabling them to analyse and plan more efficiently.;

The study confirmed that a NRP is feasible and that one option might be to extend the learning directory operated by Ufi to meet the wider needs of stakeholders.

The consolidation phase provides an opportunity to develop the case for an NRP and gain the commitment of funding agencies to work towards an NRP.

MIAP Group Meetings - 13 July 2004

A further update will be provided following the MIAP Group meeting in July.

MIAP – Working together to support the delivery of excellent services to our learners, our communities and the UK.

Electronic Sharing of Achievement Information

This project is exploring how to streamline and standardise the way in which awarding body data on assessments and achievements passes between providers, DfES and its partners and awarding bodies.

This study is still underway and is due to report soon. Emerging themes cover duplication, format variation, lack of common coding, and communication and data tracking difficulties. The final stage of the study is primarily focusing on improving electronic data interchange availability, reducing format variation, harmonising data requests from DfES and its partners, and rationalising qualifications coding.

Consolidation Phase progress update

A core consolidation team led by DfES and supported by expertise provided by HESA, LSC and QCA, are reviewing the suite of project feasibility studies and are using this information to compile a Consolidation Report. This will include a Business Case, which will set out a number of options for consideration by Ministers in the Summer.

An important focus of the Business Case is the extent to which options will support and enhance the Department's strategies, including the Skills Strategy, the 14 – 19 Agenda and Success for All.

Our aim remains to develop arrangements whereby data can be more effectively shared across the post-16 community, enabling learners to experience a better service and to accumulate credits and at the same time, streamline the collection of learner and provider information so that bureaucracy is reduced.

Forthcoming Meetings



Programme Board Meeting – 27th May 2004

DfES options testing workshop – 4th June 2004

MIAP Stakeholders options testing workshop – 11th June 2004

Supporting Delivery options testing workshop (with schools, colleges, universities and other learning providers) – 14th June 2004

If you would like to comment on / discuss any issues raised in this update, or if you would like to know more about the programme please contact john.olivera@dfes.gsi.gov.uk, ext 0114 259 4255. Your feedback will be welcomed!

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Welcome to the 6th MIAP Update. Thank you to all who have contributed to the MIAP work programme to date, either through meetings or the series of consultation exercises and events. We are now half way through the "Consolidation Phase". This edition provides final updates on the individual projects and outlines the purpose of this important phase of the work programme.

Unique Learner Number (ULN)

There is broad support for the concept of a UK wide Unique Learner Number (ULN) which could be used to access and share learner records and ultimately provide a national learning database. However, the recent consultation highlighted concerns amongst some respondents about the strength of the case for such a service in the light of developing work on a national identity number and the European Union learner number, and also about the relative costs and benefits associated with some of the options.

In summary, respondents viewed the Level 1 ULN service as offering only limited savings and benefits. Level 2 was viewed as an essential progression from Level 1. Level 3 was believed by some to be the optimum level where the potential for benefits for learners and providers began to offset costs. Level 4 was generally considered a step too far.

Notification of public response to the consultation was issued and a summary of responses can be accessed via the link below.

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conResults.cfm?consultationId=1237>

A range of other issues have been raised. These are being considered as part of the consolidation phase and include; What number? A single number? Different sector needs, Security, accessibility and Data Protection?

We are currently exploring the scope to test our developing thinking on how a unique learner number might operate in practice. We are in discussions with colleagues taking forward the Adults Skills Pilots in the North East (possibly using the national insurance number) and also with JISC about a project in the South West, and a JISC/ DELNI project in Northern Ireland, which together will help us to consider different and relevant scenarios and situations.

This MIAP Update is produced as a concise update on recent developments and assumes prior knowledge of the programme. Previous issues (one to five) are available from John Olivera at john.olivera@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Data Warehouse

The project looked at the feasibility of introducing a data warehouse - exploring the benefits, costs and risks for a range of options. The work was not restricted to "post-16 learning" - although that was the main focus. Options for including school, FE, HE and other learning data were also developed and assessed. It is clear that the balance lies between optimising usability and maximising benefits, whilst minimising disruption, risk and costs associated with changes to existing data collections.

The report recommends a technically feasible data warehouse that supports a range of administrative, operational and analytical purposes and represents a good balance between costs and benefits, which;

- draws together existing data collections,
- improves accuracy and usability by having a ULN,
- sources some data (particularly qualification achievement data) more directly and efficiently.

"The pursuit of efficiency also includes reducing bureaucracy, which both cuts administration costs and frees up the time of front line professionals to respond better to the needs of their customers." Gordon Brown - Chancellor of the Exchequer - March 2004

Common Data Definitions

This project looked at developing and introducing common definitions across a range of post-16 learning data collections. The report concludes that the problem is challenging and complex - identifying and listing many different definitions used in many different systems. Clearly this has implications for the cost of wholesale and radical changes.

The report highlights the vast amounts of money spent by learning providers on "administration", and suggests that even small administrative savings might deliver significant cumulative savings across the sectors which would go some way to justifying the costs involved.

The report suggests that implementation would require an initial phase focusing on priorities and developing and agreeing common data definitions for these and concludes that a phased approach is preferable as this would minimise disruption and costs.

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