

Shared services and Collaboration – Reducing the costs of awarding services

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Audience details: External

Introduction

As you are aware, shared services and securing efficiencies is an important agenda item for us all. The Coalition Government has made this clear in recent letters to the sector and this was also a theme that the Chief Executive of Skills Funding highlighted in his speech at the national conference of the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) in the early summer.

A key area where greater efficiencies can be delivered is the area of awarding organisation services to colleges. This is also an area where new types of relationships can be built through enhanced freedoms and flexibilities across the sector and use of shared services.

This note intended to do two things: to remind providers now of the need to ensure that awarding organisation services are procured efficiently and in line with existing regulations. Secondly, to inform providers that the Agency, the Association of Colleges and 157 group are taking forward a joint work in this area as part of the wider programme of collaboration and shared services.

Skills Funding Agency Requirement

As part of securing efficiencies across the sector, the Agency wants to remind all providers of the need to ensure that when awarding organisation services are being procured that it is in line with relevant UK and EU regulations and requirements. Awarding organisation services are an area of significant spend for providers and we want to ensure that we drive up best practice as well as begin to lever efficiency savings in the procurement of awarding organisation fees and services.

We want to make complying with this duty as simple as possible whilst ensuring value for money and efficiencies can be achieved. Both the Association of Colleges and the Association of Learning Providers have already undertaken valuable work in the area of procurement and awarding organisation and examination services and information and good practice guides are available on their respective web sites.

Joint Work on leveraging greater efficiencies and reducing the costs in purchasing awarding services

The Association of Colleges (AoC), the Association of Learning Providers (ALP), 157 group and the Agency are taking forward an important joint programme of work in this area under the auspices of the Board for Collaboration and Shared Services. There will be updates, across the sector of the work that AoC, ALP, 157 group are doing collaboratively and in tandem to drive up shared services and efficiencies in this area.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification please contact Rosemary Carter at the Agency (Rosemary.Carter@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk)

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