



Module 9

Quality and standards

For suggestions on how to get the most out of these self-study materials, see the booklet on 'Using the materials'.

Preface to Governance Training Materials

At the time of writing the Governance Training Modules, the **Education Act 2011** had been implemented. It abolished the Young People's Learning Agency, with funding for colleges now being administered by either the Education Funding Agency and / or the Skills Funding Agency. It significantly reduced the complexity of colleges' Instrument and Articles of Government, giving them greater flexibility to run their own affairs. The details are included in Schedule 12 of the Act which makes a number of amendments to prior legislation. Section 29b of Schedule 12 states that "the governing body of the institution may modify or replace its instrument of government and articles of government". These must however comply with certain requirements set out in Part 2 of Schedule 4, thereby retaining some of the key responsibilities previously enshrined in legislation. In some cases, the statutory provision for sixth form colleges differs from that of general further education (GFE) colleges with the **Department for Education (DfE)** overseeing the former and the **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)** the latter; however all colleges will now be actively considering the changes that affect them and all governors will need to be aware of the implications for their own organisation. At the same time as the Education Act 2011 was passed into law, the Association of Colleges published **The English Colleges' Foundation Code of Governance**.

This voluntary code of practice was developed by the sector following extensive consultation and all GFE colleges have been encouraged formally to adopt it. It has the full support of the government and is seen as "an important milestone in making colleges more locally accountable and in freeing them to respond more effectively to local learners, employers and community partners".

The government's reform plan for the further education and skills system was set out in **New Challenges, New Chances** published on 1 December 2011 and further refined in **Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills** published in April 2013. A **summary of NCNC** is available from LSIS. In November 2011 the final report of the Independent Commission on Colleges in their Communities, **A Dynamic Nucleus**, was published. Alongside New Challenges, New Chances, these two documents establish the foundation for the future development of the further education and skills sector.

The 2013 version of the Governance Training materials incorporate these significant changes to the operation of further education but all governors are recommended to familiarise themselves with and take account of the key documents referred to in this preface. The materials enshrine the six principles set out in the Good Governance Standard for Public Services by the Independent Commission on **Good Governance in Public Services** (2005), to which all governing bodies are referred.

The **Association of Colleges** has also compiled a **Governance Resource Library** which provides a wide range of online resources for governors and which will usefully complement these materials.

The **Learning and Skills Improvement Service** which has produced these updated and much valued governance training modules will cease to exist after August 2013. It is hoped the essential updating of these resources will be regularly carried out by other existing organisations or newly-emerging ones.

Acknowledgements

The first edition of these training materials was published by the Further Education Funding Council in 2000 and further updated and amended in 2002, following the establishment of the Learning and Skills Council in 2002. They were commissioned by LSC in 2002 under the Standards Fund and produced by a partnership of national organisations involved in further education.

This third edition of the training materials has been published by **The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)**, as part of the **Leadership Skills for Governance** programme, and incorporates the changes brought about by the Education Act 2011 and government policy initiatives as at January 2013.

Authors

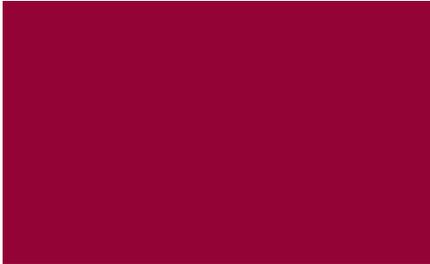
Richard Noah and Cliff Shaw

We would like to thank the advisory group for their input into developing the modules; and the critical readers for their helpful comments on the draft materials.

Feedback on the modules should be sent to fegovernance@lsis.org.uk

© LSIS 2013

Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for non-commercial education or training purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged and the findings not misrepresented. Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.



Contents

Introduction	04
Section 1 Improving quality and raising standards; an overview of structures and processes	06
Section 2 Policy drivers for improving quality and raising standards	09
Section 3 Inspection	12
Section 4 Self-assessment	17
Section 5 Quality improvement planning	21
Section 6 The role of government agencies	24
Useful resources - further reading	27
Module review	28

Introduction

As a governor you have a major responsibility for monitoring the quality of all aspects of provision in your organisation and for raising standards of student attainment. This module explains the policies, structures and processes for improving quality and standards across the whole of post-16 education and training.

The module considers how these various policies, structures and processes will affect the work of providers. It identifies some of the critical issues that governors will need to consider in reviewing their own responsibilities for overseeing and monitoring (but not managing) the quality and standards of provision.

The module will therefore be of interest to all governors, both experienced and new. Providers have the main responsibility for quality improvement. For this purpose they should carry out an annual self-assessment and produce a quality improvement plan that addresses issues identified in the self-assessment report.

Providers are required to ensure that their self-assessment report reflects the **Ofsted common inspection framework** and to ensure that their improvement plan meets the needs of external agencies.

Funding agencies are responsible for monitoring provider performance on a continuous basis and require certain minimum quality standards. Contracts and funding with providers will ultimately be contingent on the outcomes of such monitoring and the provider's capacity to address any concerns outlined by the funding agency.

Ofsted is responsible for the inspection of learning and skills provision against terms set out in the Common Inspection Framework. This framework sets out the judgements inspectors will make during an inspection. Providers should ensure that their self-assessment report reflects the Common Inspection Framework and ensure that their improvement plan meets the needs of external agencies.

Aims

By the end of this module you should be able to:

- describe structures and processes for improving quality and raising standards in the FE and skills sector;
- explain the responsibilities governors have for monitoring standards in the FE and skills sector;
- explain the major policy drivers underpinning these structures and processes;
- describe the scope and purpose of the Common Inspection Framework;
- monitor how well your organisation is meeting requirements for annual self-assessment;
- identify the critical success factors for quality improvement planning; and
- explain the role of government agencies in quality improvement in the FE and skills sector.

Contents

Mark the sections you want to study and tick them off as you complete them.

To do	Done		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 1	Improving quality and raising standards: – overview of structures and processes
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 2	Policy drivers for improving quality and standards
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 3	Inspection
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 4	Self-assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 5	Quality improvement planning
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 6	The role of government agencies

Working on the self-study activities

These materials have been designed for flexible use. You can work through them with other governors in training and development sessions. You can also work through sections and activities in your own time and at your own pace if you find it difficult to attend external training sessions. Governors who have used these materials point out how valuable it is to work on at least some of the suggested activities together with another governor or group of governors, as there is such potential to learn from each other's experience. For suggestions on how to organise this kind of support for yourself, see the booklet on 'Using the materials'.

What you will need

To complete activities in this module you will need to obtain the following documents relating to your organisation:

- the latest self-assessment report
- the latest quality improvement plan
- the last inspection report
- any Ofsted monitoring visit reports
- the strategic plan
- the current business or development plan.

Further documents on quality and standards are listed in 'Useful resources' in the booklet on 'Using the materials' and web references are included at the end of this section.

Where you need to make notes in response to activity questions, we suggest you do this in a notebook or on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper, and store the information you compile along with the module for future reference.

Section 1

Improving quality and raising standards: an overview of structures and processes

The governing body is accountable to its learners, to the wider community that it serves and to other stakeholders for the quality and standards of the provision that is offered. The governing body should receive appropriate information in order to monitor and challenge performance. It should undertake a regular assessment of how effective it is in meeting its targets for improving quality and raising standards.

The government and Ofsted increasingly expect providers to be self-critical in the assessment of the quality of their provision. Where providers have strong performance, external review of their performance will be 'lighter touch' and will be undertaken through remote data checks with longer periods of time between inspection visits. The type of inspection activity by Ofsted will be proportionate to risk and selected according to the provider's level of performance. It is proposed that providers judged 'outstanding' will be exempt from further inspection, unless their performance drops.

Inspections of learning and skills providers have undergone a number of changes since September 2012. These are summarised in Section 3: The 'Common Inspection Framework' summarises the judgements inspectors will make during inspection. The latest framework has an enhanced focus on teaching, learning and assessment and makes judgements in the following areas:

- overall effectiveness;
- outcomes for learners;
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment;
- the effectiveness of leadership and management

Ofsted will continue to inspect sector subject areas and include a grade and text in the report. It will continue to inspect, but no longer grade separately, equality and diversity, capacity to improve and safeguarding.

The primary purpose for inspection is to ensure that students achieve their learning aims and have a positive learning experience. Success rates are the key measure. Success rates are derived from the number of students who were enrolled, were subsequently retained and then achieved their full learning aim. Pass rates, sometimes called achievement rates, are based on those students who achieved their learning aim and who were retained, but do not count those students who withdrew during their course.

Inspection is now more risk-based and there is an increased reliance on self-regulation in the sector where the best providers will be allowed to manage their quality and performance without regular inspection visits. Provider performance is monitored annually and poor performance may trigger inspection, for example: if there is failure to improve; if there are too many years of performance that is only satisfactory; following a steep decline in performance; or if subject areas fall below minimum standards. The current and future approach of inspection emphasises the importance of self-assessment and action planning for quality improvement.

The responsibility for improving quality and standards lies with the provider and governors are expected to set the institutional tone and character to achieve this. Providers are advised to carry out an annual self-assessment to evaluate all aspects of their provision. They are also advised to

produce a quality improvement plan, with clear targets and actions for improvement identified in the self-assessment report. Self-assessment and quality improvement planning must be integrated into the wider quality assurance and planning processes of the provider. It is important that providers make the strong link between quality improvement and business planning. For example a provider may wish to discontinue provision that has poor quality, but this decision may impact on the supply of provision in the local area and future recruitment.

Although the provider produces a whole organisation self-assessment and quality improvement plan, this is normally informed by a subset of self-assessment and quality improvement plans produced by the curriculum areas, often by course teams through course reviews and then by the overarching departments, faculties or sections. Business or service areas also produce individual reports and plans. It is common practice for curriculum area self-assessment to go before an internal panel for validation and approval. Governors are sometimes present on this panel and on occasions a validator from outside the organisation may be invited to attend.

External funding agencies will notify providers where performance is below certain minimum performance standards and issue a 'notice of concern'. Providers have the opportunity to give reasons for this under-performance and propose actions to improve. However, it is possible that funding for an under-performing area of provision can be withdrawn if the mitigating circumstances and reasons are insufficient. If the funding is withdrawn, the provider will be prohibited from further recruitment into this area of provision. Where performance of a provider is poor, either as a result of an inspection or a notice of concern, support may be offered to the provider through a learning improvement agency.

Activity

Understanding the key aspects of quality improvement and assessment.

Work through the following questions to assess how much you know about the following. Tick one of the boxes to answer 'yes', 'no', or 'not sure'.

Do you know:	yes	no	not sure
What the process is for carrying out an annual self-assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What the process is for developing a quality improvement plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How the self-assessment and quality improvement plan are integrated into the wider planning processes of the provider?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What informs the performance targets and key performance indicators of the provider?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If targets are appropriately ambitious and realistic?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How all groups of students are performing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What the views of students and other users are about your organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How and where governors are able to challenge performance to raise standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How your organisation is responding to any external quality requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How your organisation is responding to inspection requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Viewpoint

We hope this activity has given you an initial insight into how your organisation is responding to the structures and processes for improving quality and standards in the FE and skills sector.

As a governor, these are all questions you should know the answers to, so if you answered 'no' or 'not sure' to any of these questions you may wish to consult with the clerk or the senior manager responsible for quality and standards. You may find it useful to look at your college's latest self-assessment report and quality improvement plan and also the strategic plan, from a quality perspective.

If you have any questions or action points that you want to follow up, make a note of them in the 'Action planner' in 'Using the materials'.

In the next section we shall be looking in more detail at the key policy drivers for quality and standards and how they might affect your provision.

Section 2

Policy drivers for improving quality and raising standards

There are a number of key policy drivers relating to FE and skills sector that must be addressed by all providers. There have been a number of changes to policy in recent years but the government has remained committed to the needs of students as a central policy driver.

The needs of students

The government is committed to putting the needs, entitlements and achievements of students at the heart of provision in the FE and skills sector. Strategies for raising quality and standards are intended to ensure that all students receive high quality education and training and are able to succeed in their learning.

Attention is focused on how teaching, learning and other processes enhance the learning experience, contribute to student success and provide value for money. All providers should address the following question underpinning the Common Inspection Framework.

How effective and efficient is the provider in meeting the needs of students and other users, and why?

There is an expectation that governors will take an active role in monitoring, improving and maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of provision.

Providers will also be expected to ensure that learning opportunities are appropriately matched to the needs of prospective students. Appropriate mechanisms should be in place for identifying the needs, expectations and capabilities of new students. Student entitlements and responsibilities should also be clearly defined, including opportunities for students to make judgements (and complaints) about the quality and standards of provision.

Providers are expected to have mechanisms in place which enable students to provide feedback on their learning experience. This is most commonly referred to as the 'learner voice'. It is important that governing bodies monitor and review student satisfaction and also receive reports on the actions taken to address and respond to students' views. Having student governors enables a direct link to be established between the board and the student body.

Equality and diversity

Governors are required to make certain that no particular student groups or individuals are disadvantaged. To this end they should satisfy themselves that the relative performance of different groups of students is monitored and analysed. The provider should set appropriate targets for improvement if such 'performance gaps' exist in order to maximise students' potential.

The most comprehensive recent summary of policy in this area is contained in **'New Challenges, New Chances: Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: 2011'**

Other key areas of policy

The key areas of policy are as follows:

- **Students at the heart of the FE and skills system:**
Learners will be empowered from basic skills through to higher level skills to shape the system using information to inform their choices; government funding focused on supporting students where it can have most impact, including the introduction of FE loans.
- **First-class advice delivered by the National Careers Service:**
Information, advice and guidance will be provided both to inform and to stimulate demand for further education, work-based training and higher education.
- **A ladder of opportunity of comprehensive Vocational Education and Training programmes:**
A system from community learning and basic skills through to high-quality Apprenticeships to clear and flexible progression routes to Higher Vocational Education. The system will fuel individual achievement, power the common good and drive upward economic performance.
- **Excellence in teaching and learning:**
A number of actions will be introduced to develop and promote excellent teaching, including establishing an independent commission on adult education and vocational pedagogy to develop a sector owned strategy and delivery programme.
- **Relevant and focused learning programmes and qualifications:**
Action to ensure that qualifications are high quality and easy to understand, by improving awareness of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, consulting employers on their engagement in qualification development and consulting on the role of National Occupational Standards.
- **Strategic governance for a dynamic FE sector:**
Removal of restrictions and controls on college corporations paves the way for new roles for governors working closely with other educational providers in post-14 learning, and local stakeholders such as Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to take the lead in developing delivery models to meet the needs of their communities.
Module 7 Collaboration and partnerships has more on this topic.
- **Freedoms and flexibilities**
Continuing the programme to free the FE system from central control and building on the successes already achieved, including further work by the Skills Funding Agency with colleges to remove bureaucratic burdens.
- **Funding priorities through a simplified funding system:**
To create a simple transparent funding system that is both robust in ensuring funding goes only to high quality provision that delivers good value for money, while being innovative to respond to local circumstances.

- **Empowered students making informed choices:**
In the place of Government -based quality assurance systems students will be empowered by providing better access to quality information. At the same time, swift action will be taken in relation to failing provision, providing intensive support and, if necessary, intervening to ensure that alternative and innovative delivery approaches are secured for the future. See also Section 6: of this module.
- **Global FE:**
Building on the growing international demand for technician and higher level vocational skills, and the legacy of WorldSkills 2011, there will be continued support for the sector to take advantage of opportunities in the global market.

Activity

Responding to government policy drivers.

Governors need to ensure that the organisation understands and is responding actively to these policy drivers. In this activity you will find out more about how your organisation is responding. You may already have some of this information from your work as a governor. If not, or if there are gaps in your information, refer to your organisation's quality procedure to assess its response to the following questions.

- Does the organisation put the needs of students and a focus on student success at the heart of its quality processes?
- How does the organisation identify the needs and views of students?
- How does the organisation respond to the views of students?
- Does the organisation monitor and report on the relative performance of different student groups and set targets for improvement?
- What measures are in place to develop excellence in teaching and learning?
- In what areas of activity is the organisation unable to demonstrate good and improving performance?

Viewpoint

This activity will help you build up a picture of how well your organisation is responding to the policy drivers that we have outlined in this section. This picture should be consistent with the provider's mission and development plan. If you need to find out more, make a note of your questions in the 'Action planner' in 'Using the materials'. You can then ask the clerk to direct you to whoever is best placed to discuss your questions with you – this may be the clerk, another governor or a manager.

In the next section we shall be looking at the Common Inspection Framework and also examining the implications of the framework for your work as a governor.

Section 3

Inspection

The Common Inspection Framework

As mentioned in the introduction to this module, Ofsted is responsible for the inspection of learning and skills provision against terms set out in the **Ofsted Common Inspection Framework**. This section summarises the key features of the framework and it also examines the implications of the framework for your work as a governor.

Purposes of inspection

The overall aim of inspection is to evaluate how efficiently and effectively the education and training provision meets learners' needs. Inspection arrangements, together with other government initiatives, are intended to speed up improvement in the quality of the further education and skills sector.

The main purposes of inspection are:

- to provide users with information about the quality of provision in England; thus informing them about the providers they use or about the providers they may use in the future;
- to help bring about improvement by identifying strengths and areas for improvement, highlighting good practice and judging what steps need to be taken to improve provision further; and
- to provide the relevant secretaries of state and other stakeholders with an independent public account of the quality of education and training, the standards achieved and how efficiently resources are managed.

How does inspection promote improvement?

The inspection of a provider promotes improvement by:

- setting expectations; the criteria and characteristics set out in the inspection framework and evaluation schedule illustrate the expected quality and effectiveness of the provision;
- increasing the provider's confidence by evaluating its own view of its effectiveness, and its accuracy, and offering a professional challenge (and the impetus to act) where improvement is needed;
- recommending priorities for the provider's future action and, when appropriate, checking subsequent progress;
- fostering constructive dialogue between inspectors and the provider's senior leaders and staff;
- evaluating the provider's self-assessment - its impact and rigour - to enhance its capacity to improve its provision; and
- identifying best practice, both through inspection and survey reports, which can be shared with the sector.

The Common Inspection Framework 2012

The Common Inspection Framework comprises the principal criteria that inspectors must consider when inspecting every education and training provider.

Overall effectiveness

The judgement on overall effectiveness is based on how effective and efficient the provider is in meeting the needs of learners and other users, and why. Inspectors will use all the available evidence and take into account judgements on:

- outcomes for learners
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Outcomes for learners

Inspectors will make a judgement on outcomes for learners by evaluating the extent to which:

- all learners achieve and make progress relative to their starting points and learning goals;
- achievement gaps are narrowing between different groups of learners;
- learners develop personal, social and employability skills; and
- learners progress to courses leading to higher-level qualifications and into jobs that meet local and national needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inspectors will make a judgement on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by evaluating the extent to which:

- learners benefit from high expectations, engagement, care, support and motivation from staff;
- staff use their skills and expertise to plan and deliver teaching, learning and support to meet each learner's needs;
- staff initially assess learners' starting points and monitor their progress, set challenging tasks, and build on and extend learning for all learners;
- learners understand how to improve as a result of frequent, detailed and accurate feedback from staff following assessment of their learning;
- teaching and learning develop English, mathematics and functional skills, and support the achievement of learning goals and career aims;
- appropriate and timely information, advice and guidance support learning effectively; and
- equality and diversity are promoted through teaching and learning.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management by evaluating the extent to which leaders, managers and, where applicable, governors:

- demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all learners can achieve, and attain high standards of quality and performance;
- improve teaching and learning through rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development;
- evaluate the quality of the provision through robust self-assessment, taking account of users' views, and use the findings to promote and develop capacity for sustainable improvement;
- successfully plan, establish and manage the curriculum and learning programmes to meet the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local and national community;
- actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination, and narrow the achievement gap; and
- safeguard all learners.

The key judgements made during inspections

Inspectors will make judgements on three key aspects:

- outcomes for learners
- quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- effectiveness of leadership and management.

In making these judgements, inspectors must evaluate the evidence for each against the grade characteristics. For each one, inspectors will use the following grading scale:

Grade 1	outstanding
Grade 2	good
Grade 3	requires improvement
Grade 4	inadequate

In making their judgements, inspectors must consider which descriptor best fits the evidence available. When evidence indicates that any of the bullet points in the grade characteristics for 'inadequate' apply, then that aspect of the provider's work should be judged inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

Inspectors will finally judge the quality of education and/or training provided – the providers' overall effectiveness – taking account of:

- judgements on the three key aspects
- the extent to which the education and/or training meets the needs of the range of learners enrolled with the provider and, in particular, the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

In judging overall effectiveness, inspectors will take account of the full range of evidence, including the three key aspects, and will then decide whether overall effectiveness is outstanding, good, requires improvement or is inadequate.

Sector subject area grades

In addition grades will be awarded for those sector subject areas chosen for inspection. There are 15 sector subject areas such as 'Health, public services and care' or 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies'. In some cases a secondary subject area or tier may be chosen. For example 'Hospitality and catering' is a tier within the 'Retail and commercial enterprise' sector subject area.

The inspection process

Before the inspection

How are providers selected for inspection?

Ofsted takes a risk-proportionate approach to inspection so that they can focus their efforts where they can have the greatest impact. The risk-assessment process has two stages.

- Stage one is a provider assessment based on an automated analysis of publicly available data.
- Stage two is where further analysis is necessary and the provider receives a desk-based review from an HMI (inspector).

A broad range of indicators is used to select providers for inspection in the following year.

Where available, these will include a college or provider's previous inspection record; self-assessment reports; performance data (including trends over the last three years); change of leader; concerns raised by a funding body, employers, parents and carers or learners; and the views of learners, parents and carers, and employers, gathered for example through online questionnaires. Indicators may also include any information on significant changes to the type of provision and learner numbers.

Other aspects taken into consideration are:

- Providers awarded a grade of satisfactory for overall effectiveness prior to September 2012 will normally be inspected within two years.
- From September 2012, providers awarded a grade of 'requires improvement' for overall effectiveness will normally be inspected again within 12-18 months.
- Providers awarded a grade of inadequate for overall effectiveness will normally be inspected within 12-15 months.
- Providers awarded a grade of good for overall effectiveness at the previous inspection will normally have up to six years between inspections, unless their performance drops.
- Providers awarded a grade of outstanding for overall effectiveness at their previous inspection are exempt from a full inspection unless their performance drops.
- The following types of provision are not exempt from inspection when judged outstanding for overall effectiveness: higher education institutions offering further education; local authorities; independent specialist colleges; dance and drama programmes; and learning and skills provision in prisons.
- Any provider where the above aspects do not apply will be included in the inspection selection process at Ofsted's discretion. In addition, Ofsted may conduct unannounced inspections and monitoring visits at any time.

When are providers notified of their inspection?

Providers will normally be notified up to two working days before a planned inspection. This applies to all types of inspection activity and inspection can take place at any time of the year when learning is taking place. The provider of inspection services will contact the learning/training provider to inform them of the inspection and will email the notification letter to them.

The lead inspector prepares a pre-inspection briefing letter for the provider and the other members of the inspection team outlining the inspection and a list of themes. Part of the preparation for this letter will include:

- the self-assessment report and quality improvement plan;
- data analysis usually over a three-year period;
- feedback from learners, parents/carers, employers from on-line questionnaires; and
- previous inspection reports and visits.

During the inspection

The inspection process can vary depending on the status of the provider and is proportionate to risk. The type and scale of the inspection is based on an assessment of risk. Typically, however, a team of inspectors will come in to the provider headed up by the lead inspector. Some of the inspectors will focus on the Common Inspection Framework aspects which deal with over-arching themes such as leadership and management, or support for students. There will also be some subject specialist inspectors who will inspect agreed subject sector areas. Each inspector should be given a link person from the provider with whom to communicate throughout the inspection.

Teaching and learning observations will form part of the inspection. Inspectors are not tasked with a specific quota of observations but they need to undertake a sufficient number to provide a robust evidence base for judgements. Joint observation between inspectors and the provider's teaching and learning observers are part of the inspection with the purpose of validating the reliability and accuracy of the provider's observation scheme. On occasions inspectors may sample a large number of sessions for short periods of time. These visits to sessions are ungraded and are used to explore, for example, themes such as attendance or punctuality.

Each provider is invited to nominate a senior member of staff to act as the main link with the inspection team. The nominee's role is to represent the provider at the inspection team's meetings, be part of the inspectors' discussions in order to clarify issues, or to gather additional evidence for the inspectors. The nominee role is not about blindly defending the provider 'against' the inspectors; it requires a balanced and constructive approach. However the nominee should be prepared to argue the case for the provider where he or she believes there is a case to be made. The nominee will feed back to the provider's staff on an ongoing basis throughout the inspection. The nominee does not contribute to the decisions on grades for the inspection.

The lead inspector usually agrees to feed back to the provider on a daily basis. Various meetings are arranged throughout the inspection for the relevant inspectors to talk with governors, managers, students and other stakeholders such as employers and parents / carers.

During the inspection, governors may meet with inspectors to explore the leadership and management aspect of the Common Inspection Framework. Normally this will be done through a single key meeting. However, governors with responsibility for quality, curriculum and standards may be involved in further meetings. Inspectors will look at the impact of governance on standards and quality and there is often a focus on how governors monitor and influence performance, particularly in relation to setting challenging targets and performance indicators.

At the end of the inspection

Verbal feedback and judgements are given at the end of the inspection. The lead inspector normally presents the headline findings and judgements on the last day of the inspection. This feedback meeting is normally attended by the provider's management team and governors may also attend this meeting, although it is not a mandatory requirement for them to do so.

Providers have the opportunity shortly after the inspection to comment on a draft report for factual accuracy before publication. The final report is normally published on the [Ofsted website](#) within 25 working days of the end of the inspection. Providers are also given the opportunity to evaluate and give feedback on the process. Providers should then produce a post- inspection quality improvement action plan to take account of inspection findings as part of its self-assessment and quality improvement cycle. If the inspection occurs just after a provider has produced its annual self-assessment and quality improvement plan, it is highly advisable to produce an updated version based on the inspection findings rather than wait a year until the next self-assessment.

Further inspection visits

Following a full inspection, providers are subject to further inspection visits as follows:

- For providers graded as 'requires improvement' in overall effectiveness grade – full inspection 12-18 months after last full inspection
- For providers graded 'inadequate' in overall effectiveness grade – re-inspection monitoring visit 6-8 months after last inspection, followed by a full inspection within 12-15 months.

Activity

Assessing your own strategic and monitoring responsibilities.

The Common Inspection Framework requires governors to play a critical role in the college's strategic direction, to regularly receive reports on performance, and where appropriate, to be enquiring, challenging and ambitious. In this activity you will be looking at how well you meet that challenge. You might want to do this activity with other governors.

Tick a box to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure'.

As a governing body do you...:	yes	no	not sure
...receive quality and performance information which references the Common Inspection Framework?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...have a self-assessment report and a quality improvement plan which use the Common Inspection Framework as a structural template?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...'have a self-assessment report and quality improvement plan which clearly identify the performance headlines but also provide sufficient detail to indicate where improvement is needed and how it will be achieved?'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...have a self-assessment report and quality improvement plan which contain an even balance across all aspects of the Common Inspection Framework?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Viewpoint

Doing this activity may help to clarify your understanding of the key features of the Common Inspection Framework and examine the implications of the framework for your work as a governor, both in taking a strategic overview of your organisation's direction and in monitoring the quality of the provision offered. If you felt unsure about any of the questions, make a note of areas of doubt in your 'Action planner' in 'Using the materials', and follow them up with whoever is responsible for this aspect of your work as a governor.

In the next section we shall be looking at self-assessment in general and at your specific role as a governor in the process of self-assessment.

Section 4

Self-assessment

In Module 8, Section 4 we looked at a number of ways in which you, as a governor, can judge whether teaching and learning in your organisation is effective. In this section we shall be looking at self-assessment in general and at your specific role as a governor in the process of self-assessment.

Section 1 of this module has enabled you to become familiar with the role of self-assessment within the overall process for assessing the quality of provision and your own responsibilities as part of the process. Under the arrangements for inspection, providers are advised to produce an annual self-assessment report and quality improvement plan and be clear about how both have been formulated and how the improvement plan will be monitored.

The self-assessment framework

Self-assessment is primarily about improving provider performance and should therefore be driven by the goals of the provider and the needs of its students and stakeholders. There is no prescribed framework for self-assessment, but it is highly advisable that the Common Inspection Framework is used as the template as it provides both structure and focus. There are six headline conditions that all self-assessment frameworks must satisfy.

1. Self-assessment should deal with all aspects of the organisation's activities, and should focus on the quality of students' experiences and the standards they achieve.
2. Providers should address the quality statements in the Common Inspection Framework.
3. Self-assessment should be responsive to the quality improvement strategies of external funding bodies.
4. Self-assessment should be self-critical and evidence-based using national performance data as reference points.
5. Quality improvement targets should be realistic but also stretching.
6. Self-assessment must consider the performance of all student groups.

Your governing body will also need to consider the key policy drivers for raising quality and standards when considering the approach to self-assessment (see Section 2).

The self-assessment reports will be used by Ofsted and external funding bodies to inform inspection and to monitor the provider's performance on an ongoing basis.

Making self-assessment judgements

Providers should use the Ofsted grading criteria when self-assessing. It is a four-grade scale of:

Grade 1	outstanding
Grade 2	good
Grade 3	requires improvement
Grade 4	inadequate

There is more information on grading in Section 3 which looks at the Common Inspection Framework in more detail.

Providers are advised to monitor and evaluate their provision and performance against the quality criteria outlined in the common inspection framework. Grades and judgement descriptors in the Common Inspection Framework should be used by the provider to make self-assessment judgements as it provides specific criteria and questions around quality of outcomes, provision as well as leadership and management.

In Section 1 we looked at the importance of the performance data on which Ofsted will focus as part of the inspection process and on which providers must also therefore place a significant focus and degree of scrutiny. Learner success rates in providers across the country generate national performance rates against which providers must measure their performance. These are referred to as national rates, averages and sometimes benchmarks. Essentially these are national averages against which a provider can ascertain whether its own performance is below, equal to or above. National averages are available by subject, level, age, provider type, ethnicity, course length / duration. Your quality team will be familiar with these categorisations.

Increasingly providers should also place a focus on the extent to which the outcomes of the provision produce high grades and add value. High grade and value-added data are both available to providers. Value-added is the extent to which students achieve in relation to their expected or predicted performance based on their GCSE outcomes. For example, if a student is expected to achieve a C grade at A-level but actually achieves a B grade, this represents added value. Strong value-added performance indicates that students are stretched and challenged and it is normally reasonable therefore also to assume that teaching performance is strong. Externally produced performance reports which generate this information are available to providers. In addition most providers will have their own performance analysis software and many also subscribe to commercially produced value-added data analysis services.

All qualifications fall into official groupings known as subject sector areas. Each subject sector area contains a group of qualifications that relate to a specific occupational area, so for example engineering has its own subject sector area, as does construction or health and social care and so on. Inspections in providers will typically be based on a selection of subject sector areas, and all of the provider's qualifications which fall within these chosen subject sector areas will be looked at in detail. The selection will be made by the lead inspector and the reasons for the selection will be related to the size and significance of the provision to the provider and previous performance, and will ideally represent a cross-section of performance.

In reviewing and approving self-assessment reports the governing body will need to consider the following points:

- performance data should be available for all the key criteria from the Common Inspection Framework and for all the activities/areas that are subject to assessment;
- data should include performance trends (to confirm year-on-year changes) and performance comparisons against other providers (benchmark data);
- evidence should support the judgements made, i.e. data should be valid, quantifiable, current and accurate;
- reports should be evaluative (identifying strengths and areas for improvement) rather than descriptive. Strengths should represent performance above expected or normal practice; and
- it is advisable that judgements should be moderated to ensure that they are objective and self-critical.

The self-assessment process

Self-assessment should be viewed as an integral part of organisational planning and not as an add-on extra. Earlier we looked at the importance of self-assessment being integrated with business planning. Providers should seek to establish a culture of continuous improvement in which self-assessment is embedded in business processes and is not a one-off event. Governors should also approve the self-assessment report and evaluate the effectiveness and accuracy of the self-assessment process.

It is also important that governors are assured that key stakeholders are involved in the self-assessment process. For example, students, employers and partner schools should be surveyed to ascertain their satisfaction with the services provided to them by the provider.

Governors normally undertake a self-assessment of their effectiveness in various aspects of governance including the impact on quality and standards. Typically this is conducted through the use of an annual questionnaire or through a 'health-check' approach. It is considered good practice to have some form of external verification of this self-assessment in order to ensure that there is an objective evaluation of effectiveness. The outcomes and actions arising from this can be incorporated into the self-assessment and quality improvement plan under the leadership and management aspect, or can generate a separate governance quality improvement plan which is monitored and updated on a similar basis.'

Activity

Evaluating your organisation's self-assessment process

Use the questions below to start to evaluate your provider's self-assessment process. Tick a box to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure'.

	yes	no	not sure
Does your provider have a validation process for its self-assessment before it is taken to the board for final approval?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are any governors involved in the validation process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you sure that all key stakeholders are consulted and engaged in the self-assessment process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all judgements clearly evidence-based?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the self-assessment report reference or follow the structure of the Common Inspection Framework?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your self-assessment driven from the bottom up, i.e. starting with quality reviews at course / programme level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your self-assessment consider high grades, value-added and progression / destination data in addition to success rates?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Viewpoint

If you find that your self-assessment process does not allow you to answer all these questions, you may find it useful to discuss some of them with the senior manager responsible for quality and standards. It may also be useful to ask teachers and curriculum leaders or managers and students what contributions they make to the self-assessment process.

This activity should help you focus on the quality of your organisation's self-assessment. If you answered mainly 'yes', you are probably self-assessing effectively. If you answered 'no' or 'not sure' to any of these questions, you may have more work to do to improve self-assessment. It is important that both the governing body and management approach self-assessment as a positive process. If you have questions you would like to discuss with the clerk, another governor or a manager, make a note of your questions in the 'Action planner' in 'Using the materials'.

In the next section we shall be looking at governors' responsibilities within the quality improvement process.

Section 5

Quality improvement planning

As we saw in Section 4, self-assessment should not be an end in itself but a means for ensuring continuous improvement. As part of this continuous improvement process a quality improvement plan should also be prepared. Quality improvement plans should therefore build on issues identified in the self-assessment report and inform (and be informed by) the overall planning processes of the provider. In this section we look at different aspects of your responsibilities for reviewing and informing such plans.

Remember that your role as a governor is to take a strategic overview of your organisation's planning; you will need to monitor the production and implementation of the plan. The way in which the plan is constructed and monitored and how it is used as part of the quality process will impact significantly upon judgements concerning the provider's capacity to improve.

General requirements

All providers are advised to produce an overall improvement plan with explicit links to issues arising from self-assessment and the most recent inspection. Providers undergoing re-inspection or having received a notice of concern will have to produce a specific improvement plan to address the areas of under-performance. There should be an annual cycle for self-assessment and improvement planning that is informed by a programme of data collection and analysis.

Critical issues that need to be considered and addressed in quality improvement planning are summarised below.

Identifying and prioritising areas for improvement

Quality improvement plans should not only consider clear areas for improvement but may also seek to:

- maintain areas of strength;
- further improve areas which are strong; or
- address downward trends (for example an area that is slipping from outstanding to good).

Identifying and prioritising areas for improvement

Providers are expected to set clear objectives for improvement, with success criteria for judging the outcomes of agreed actions. Wherever possible a measurable target should be associated with each objective. Objectives for improvement should be **SMART**:

S pecific	(Are they clearly defined to specify what the objectives aim to achieve?)
M easurable	(Can they be measured to see if objectives are met or not?)
A chievable	(Is there a high probability of attainment?)
R ealistic	(Can the objective be achieved with the resources available?)
T ime bound	(Have dates/times been set for achievement?).

Statements of broad intentions or aspirations should be avoided. The most important consideration is the impact of the action.

Improvement targets should be set for all key areas of improvement identified in the plan. For

example there should be clear targets for improvements in student success rates, improvements in student and other stakeholder satisfaction ratings, and narrowing any equality and diversity achievement gaps.

Targets should be set in the context of the performance of other providers. This process is known as benchmarking. As well as measuring against externally defined standards, the provider should also have a set of internal key performance indicators and possibly 'stretch' targets for continuous improvement.

Specifying actions and responsibilities for achieving improvements

Improvement plans should provide a sound basis for bringing about improvement, specifying all the activities and tasks necessary to achieve proposed objectives and targets for improvement. A key question to ask is "How is this activity going to make a difference?"

The impact of the proposed actions should always be clear and measurable. The performance target for improvement should be stated, wherever possible, in terms of performance indicators.

Responsibilities and timescales associated with carrying out the plan and monitoring progress should also be identified. The plan should be discussed with all those directly affected by the proposed changes, including partners. The costs (and potential benefits) of the plan should also be estimated.

Arrangements for monitoring and reporting on progress and outcomes

The implementation of improvement plans is the role of the provider's management team. However governors, in order to monitor progress against actions, should expect to receive regular reports and updates. Whilst senior leaders are expected to have an overall view of quality improvement, other managers, such as heads of school or department, will have subsidiary improvement plans which are focused on their areas of responsibility.

In order to monitor progress and evaluate the outcomes of improvement plans, governors should ensure that reports:

- are regular and timely; and
- are consistent from meeting to meeting in order to facilitate clear monitoring of progress with reference to key performance indicators.

in order to monitor progress and to evaluate the outcomes of improvement plans governors should ensure that reports:

- identify under-performance and if targets are unlikely to be achieved (a traffic light system of red, amber and green is a good approach);
- include a commentary alongside statistical data where needed;
- clearly differentiate between targets and forecasts; and
- clearly identify which national averages are being used and when they were published (for example, general and tertiary college benchmarks, specialist college benchmarks).

Activity

Evaluating your organisation's improvement planning

As a governor you will need to monitor carefully the implementation of your quality improvement plan. To do this effectively you will need to answer the following questions. You will also need to refer to the latest quality improvement plan.

Tick a box to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure'.

	yes	no	not sure
Does your provider improvement plan build on the strengths and address areas for improvement identified in the most recent self-assessment and inspection reports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it focus on the needs and attainment of students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are targets for improvement clearly stated and prioritised?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are planned activities, responsibilities and timescales for improvement clearly identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there effective arrangements for monitoring progress and reporting back outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Viewpoint

This activity has given you an opportunity to have a critical look at your provider's quality improvement planning. A good improvement plan is essential for continuous improvement and a key element in demonstrating capacity to improve.

If you have any questions you should note them in your 'Action planner' in 'Using the materials'. You can then discuss them with the clerk, another governor or a manager.

In the next section we shall be looking at the role of government agencies in quality improvement.

Section 6

The role of government agencies

At the time of writing there are two organisations responsible for funding providers of post-16 learning in England. The **Skills Funding Agency** is a partner organisation of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and it exists to fund and promote adult further education (FE) and skills training in England. The **Education Funding Agency (EFA)** is the Department for Education's delivery agency for funding and compliance for all learners from 16 to 19 years of age.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) reports directly to Parliament and is independent and impartial. It is responsible for the inspection of those providing education and skills for students of all ages.

The responsibility for accelerating the drive for excellence in the FE and skills sector and building the sector's capacity to design, commission and deliver improvement and strategic change is currently undertaken by the **Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)**. This service will close in August 2013. A new body called the **Further Education (FE) Guild** is to be established. The FE Guild will be a single body responsible for setting professional standards and codes of behaviour, as well as developing qualifications. Proposals for the Guild's creation currently include training, leadership and management and governance. At the time of writing, full details of the Guild are not yet known although an implementation plan has been published in April 2013. At the time of writing, full details of the Guild are not yet known as it is still in consultation, however, it is expected to be up and running in time for the LSIS closure.

The frameworks and standards used to monitor and measure quality performance are broadly similar. A risk-based approach is used, with any intervention in proportion to the risk to the learner of not progressing and achieving outcomes.

The Skills Funding Agency

The Skills Funding Agency monitors and measures quality and performance using a number of frameworks and standards.

FE Choices

Intervention Policy: Provider Risk Assessment and Management

Monitoring the Quality of Provision: An Update on Assessment Criteria Including Functional Skills

Minimum Levels of Performance

Minimum Standards

Ofsted

Personal Learning Record

Qualifications and Credit Framework

Training Quality Standard

In '**New Challenges, New Chances**', published at the end of 2011, the government set out the programme of work required to take forward the reform of the further education and skills system for adults aged 19 and over in England. It states:

"We want to see the FE sector build on and increase its innovation, responsiveness and its high quality offer to students and employers. By empowering students to make informed choices through better access to information on quality, we create competition and the incentives

for providers to be responsive to students and employers. If we get this right, we can minimise the Government-led quality systems, which divert providers from concentrating on the needs of students and employers. However, we will maintain minimum standards. Where student and employer needs are not being met and performance is poor, Government will intervene quickly and effectively.”

Minimum Standards

Failing provision is identified through three measures of performance and providers are issued with a ‘Notice of Concern’ for:

- an ‘inadequate’ rating by Ofsted following inspection;
- learner success rates below minimum standards; or
- a rating of ‘inadequate’ by the Skills Funding Agency in either financial health or financial control.

The Skills Funding Agency actively reviews the performance of all providers and, in the case of independent training providers, will usually cease funding where they fall below acceptable standards. The process for colleges needs to recognise their community role and the value of their assets within that context. Poor performing colleges will therefore receive an ‘Inadequacy Warning Notice’, giving them limited time to resolve any quality or financial issues, with support from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (or whatever arrangements are in place after August 2013). Typically, that period will be an annual cycle, i.e. once a further set of validated yearly data is available, or once Ofsted has re-inspected.

Although relating to a very small number of colleges, there are likely to be cases where persistent poor performance continues and minimum standards are not achieved even after the Warning Notice expires. Colleges will then undertake a Structure and Prospects Appraisal. Intensive support and direction from a sector-led team of executive and governor leaders, with experience of significant restructuring or innovation in further education, will be assigned to the college during this appraisal.

Education Funding Agency

There will be two triggers that will identify if a school or college delivering education or training to 16- to 19-year-olds is underperforming.

These triggers are:

- receiving an overall Ofsted judgement of inadequate; or
- falling below the national minimum standard set each year.

In addition to education standards there is also a separate assessment about the financial performance of institutions made by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) that may also trigger action.

Apprenticeships are currently an all-age programme. Apprenticeship quality will therefore continue to be assessed against the minimum levels of performance applied by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The Education Funding Agency has a set of minimum standards that set the absolute minimum expected performance for all providers of 16-18 education and training. It is expected that all schools and colleges will strive to exceed the standards.

Activity

The role of government agencies

As a governor you need to be aware of the role of government agencies in monitoring quality and standards at your provider. You should also be aware of any intervention measures being taken by these agencies. Work through the following questions to check your awareness of this area.

Tick a box to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure'.

	yes	no	not sure
Have you seen any reports relating to minimum standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you aware of any areas of performance where your provider may be at risk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your provider currently subject to any Notices of Concern?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you familiar with the performance of your provider in relation to minimum standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Viewpoint

Thinking about these questions should inform you about how these agencies are monitoring quality at your provider and if there is any intervention likely as a result of this monitoring. If it has raised any doubts in your mind or questions that you want to ask, make a note of them in your 'Action planner' in 'Using the materials'. You can then discuss them with the clerk, another governor or a manager.

Useful resources - further reading

[LSIS Excellence Gateway - FE Governance](#)

[Ofsted: Common Inspection Framework \(2012\)](#)

[Ofsted: Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills \(2012\)](#)

[Ofsted: A Good Education for All \(2012\)](#)

[New Challenges, New Chances](#) - Section 9 (page 26) - Quality assurance, transparency and data management

[AoC Governance Resource Library](#)

Module review

This module has looked at your responsibilities as a governor in terms of monitoring the quality of all aspects of provision and for raising standards of student attainment. It has also identified some of the critical issues that governors need to consider in reviewing their own responsibilities for monitoring the quality and standards of provision. If you have worked through the whole module you should be confident that you can:

- describe structure and processes for improving quality and raising standards in the FE and skills sector;
- explain the responsibilities governors have for monitoring quality and standards in the FE and skills sector;
- explain the major policy drivers underpinning these structures and processes;
- describe the scope and purpose of the Common Inspection Framework;
- monitor how well your organisation is meeting requirements for annual self-assessment;
- identify the critical success factors for quality improvement planning; and
- explain the role of government agencies in quality improvement in the FE and skills sector.

If you are not sure that you have achieved a particular goal, look back at the contents list in the introduction to the module. You may find it useful to re-read the relevant section.

Summary of key learning points

In this module you have looked at an overview of the structures and processes used to review performance and raise standards. The responsibility for improving quality and standards lies with the college and governors are expected to set the institutional tone and character to achieve this.

There are certain key policy drivers that underpin all national strategies, frameworks and processes for raising standards in the FE and skills sector. Governors need to ensure that the organisation understands and is responding actively to these policy drivers, particularly areas such as the needs of students, equality and diversity, safeguarding and collaboration.

The inspectorate (Ofsted) makes periodic inspection visits in order to offer independent accounts of the quality of learning, the standards achieved and the efficiency and effectiveness with which

resources are managed by providers. Ofsted is responsible for the inspection of learning and skills provision against terms set out in the Common Inspection Framework. This framework requires governors to play a critical role in the college's strategic direction and to receive regular reports on performance, and where appropriate to be enquiring, challenging and ambitious.

Providers are advised to carry out an annual self-assessment to evaluate all aspects of their provision. They are also advised to produce a quality improvement plan, with clear targets and actions for improvement identified in the self-assessment report. Governors are required to approve the self-assessment report and should be able to evaluate the effectiveness and accuracy of the self-assessment process. In addition governors should also monitor the implementation of the quality improvement plan.

The role of government departments and their agencies in relation to quality improvement is subject to frequent change. As a governor you need to be aware of the role of government agencies in monitoring quality and standards at your college. You should also be aware of any intervention measures being taken by these agencies.

Where next?

You have now completed work on Module 9 Quality and Standards. If there are areas in which you need more guidance or information, they may be covered in other modules. Turn to 'Check your current knowledge and skills' in 'Using the Materials'. This self-assessment questionnaire will help you to decide which modules or sections may help to fill these gaps. Tick the useful sections for further study.

If you cannot find the information you need within these materials, turn to 'Action planner' in 'Using the Materials'. Note down what further information, support or guidance you would like. The 'Action planner' gives advice on who may be able to help, and how.

Putting it into action

We hope that working through this module has raised useful questions, increased your awareness of issues and given you ideas for practical action that you would like to follow up. The 'Action planner' in 'Using the Materials' contains a section where you can note down any questions or action points that you want to follow up within your own college.

Friars House, Manor House Drive
Coventry CV1 2TE
t 024 7662 7900
e enquiries@lsis.org.uk
www.lsis.org.uk