

Bid for funding to support cost benchmarking activities in Human Resources and Staff Management in Scotland's Colleges

Introduction

This proposal is submitted by the HR Steering Group (HR Community of practice), a representative group of 13 senior HR professionals from Scotland's Colleges. The proposal is coordinated by Ian Pilbeam, HR Director, Jewel and Esk Valley College, and has the full support of the Steering Group (membership available at www.sfeu.ac.uk/defaultpage131bcd0.aspx?pageID=1575).

Background

Significant HR benchmarking data on staff numbers, ratios, sickness absence etc already exists within the sector. This is provided to the Funding Council through an annual return.

This data collection, whilst valuable, does not allow the sector to easily benchmark itself against other sectors, both public and private. A mechanism for doing this, and therefore forming a benchmarking club that would be part of a much wider, UK wide, benchmarking club, does however exist. The DLA Benchmarking tool has now been adopted by the majority of HEIs, many local authorities, housing associations and a wide range of private sector organisations. Information on the service is attached, but in summary, Data is collected through questionnaires, one for each of the two annual surveys, namely:

HR Performance Indicators - this survey focuses on metrics which relate to the contribution, performance and effectiveness of the HR team, as well as tracking the impact of important HR processes (e.g. recruitment and training). Measures include: HR staffing costs and ratios; HR resource utilisation; HR focus; and cost of recruitment.

Workforce Performance Indicators - this second survey focuses on metrics which relate to the engagement and management of the workforce. Measures include: workforce profiling by age, disability, ethnicity and gender; absenteeism and its management; staff retention; discipline and grievance; performance management; employee involvement and satisfaction.

For each survey, DLA produce All Sector Reports, Sector Specific Reports and also Organisation Specific Scorecards. In the All Sector Reports, they derive the "average" for the data collected. As well as providing a mean or average figure for all contributors, they also present the mean for both Private and Public Sector organisations. Furthermore, the analysis reflects the size (employee numbers) of contributing organisations. Secondly, Sector Specific Reports are provided. These currently include: Financial, Professional & Support Services; Higher Education; Housing; Manufacturing, Engineering & Processing; Local Government; and Retail & Leisure. For these Sector Specific Reports, a quartile analysis (i.e. Lower Quartile, Median and Upper Quartile) is also undertaken.

Proposal

In line with funding already supplied to HEIs in Scotland by the Funding Council, the HR Steering Group wishes to apply for the same provision for FE Colleges who wish to participate in the DLA Benchmarking service and form a FE (Scotland) HR Benchmarking Club as a sector specific sub set of the wider DLA Benchmarking community.

The funding agreed by the Funding Council for Higher Education Institutions in Scotland was:

Year One - full membership costs of £800 per institution along with a contribution of £500 to the admin costs of amending the data collection processes. Year Two - full membership costs.

This bid seeks a similar level of funding per College.

It should be noted that DLA have indicated that Colleges could opt for either a full service at £800 per annum, or, for smaller organisations that might not be able to collect and report on all the data that would be required, a more refined subset of the data could be provided at a reduced fee of £570 per annum. Individual Colleges would decide which option they wished to adopt.

DLA have also indicated that included in the fee would be attendance at a facilitated twice yearly user group forum where the significance of the data collected and the reports would be reviewed. This would be held in Scotland.

Benefits

The benefits would be similar to those identified for Higher Education. A copy of this is attached to this proposal.

Support sought

There is a strong level of commitment for this initiative from the HR Steering Group. In the timescale available, the following Colleges have been able to confirm their intention to participate (with others expected to follow):

Stow College
Jewel and Esk Valley College
Stevenson College
Perth College
Cardonald College
Forth Valley College

Further support from Colleges who do not sit on the Steering Group will be sought should this bid be successful. Funding up to the maximum of £10,000 is therefore sought at this proposal stage. This would allow benchmarking to be implemented in the same way as for Higher Education Institutions in Scotland.