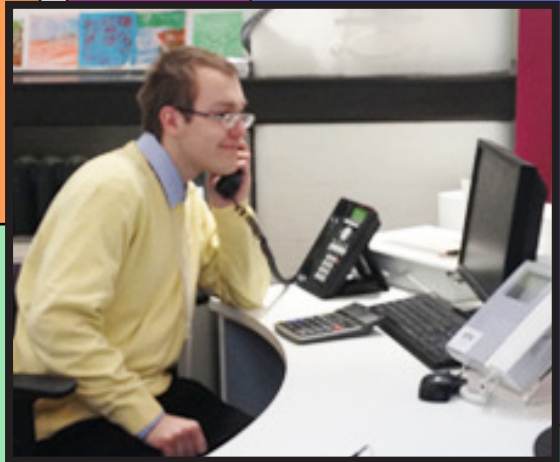




PfA Factsheet: Study Programmes for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities



What is a study programme?

Study programmes are publicly-funded programmes of learning for 16 to 19 year olds, or 16 to 25 year olds where the student has a learning difficulty assessment (LDA) or Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), which are based on a young person's prior attainment and designed to meet clear educational and career aspirations.

Study programmes were introduced from September 2013, and all post-16 providers, regardless of setting, are now expected to offer each student a study programme which is coherent, appropriately challenging and supports the progression of the individual.

The background

The Department for Education (DfE) decided to implement study programmes in response to the findings of the Wolf Report (March 2011) which had identified a number of issues with the existing approach to providing post-16 vocational education, including:

- a perverse incentive to include large numbers of qualifications within a student's programme
- identified achievement of GCSE A*-C English and maths as 'critical importance' for successful progression into employment
- poor progression rates, particularly from lower level vocational qualifications, which often lacked currency with employers.

Design principles

Providers will have a great deal of freedom in the way that they design and deliver study programmes. The content itself is not prescribed, but each student's programme must be consistent with a set of principles, published by the DfE. These principles state that a study programme must:

- Provide progression to a level higher than that of their prior attainment

For students with a learning difficulty and/or disability – progression might be lateral, representing a broadening, generalising or consolidation of skills.

- Include qualification(s) that are of sufficient size and rigour to stretch the student and are clearly linked to suitable progression opportunities in training, employment or higher levels of education.

Learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability can be exempted from this principle altogether if their needs are better met and progression better supported through structured non-qualification activity

- Require students to work towards GCSE A* – C grade in Maths and English (or other qualifications that will act as a stepping stone for achievement of these qualifications in time).

Students with a learning difficulty and/or disability need not have their English and Maths learning accredited but do need to have skills in these two areas included in their programme, as relevant to their individual needs and planned progression

- Allow for meaningful work experience related to the vocational area of the Study Programme, which develops employability skills and/or creates potential employment options.

For many students with a learning difficulty and/or disability, this principle will apply. For a small number where employment is not their progression aim, even in the longer term, this principle can be disapplied. However, study programmes do provide an opportunity to explore microenterprises as well as paid employment and so could cover more creative employment opportunities for this group of students.

- Include other activities unrelated to qualifications that develop the skills, attitudes and confidence that support progression.

The flexibility on offer in terms of content, design and delivery, coupled with the revised funding methodology (see below) means that providers are able to create highly personalised and progression-focused learning programmes for young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability.



Images courtesy of Seevic College.

How are study programmes funded?

The 16-19 funding model

There are significant changes to the funding model to support the implementation of study programmes. Rather than the current 'funding per qualification' arrangements, the new system will fund providers 'per student'.

The programme funding is derived from the formula below:

*Disadvantage includes two elements: economic deprivation (derived from

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{Student} \\ \text{Numbers} \end{array} \right) \times \begin{array}{c} \text{National} \\ \text{Funding} \\ \text{Rate per} \\ \text{Student} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{c} \text{Retention} \\ \text{Factor} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{c} \text{Programme} \\ \text{Cost} \\ \text{Weighting} \end{array} + \begin{array}{c} \text{Disadvantage} \\ \text{Funding}^* \end{array} \right) \times \begin{array}{c} \text{Area} \\ \text{Cost} \\ \text{Allowance} \end{array} = \begin{array}{c} \text{Total} \\ \text{Programme} \\ \text{Funding} \end{array}$$

students' postcodes) and prior attainment (based on attainment below Grade C in GCSE English and/or GCSE maths). This formula equates to Element 1 for high needs students.

Providers will receive from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) on average 600 hours funding a year for each full time student as long as in 2013/14 they study for at least 540 hours. Formula Protection Funding (FPF) will be paid for at least three academic years until and including 2015/16, where the move to a basic funding rate per student would otherwise result in a reduction in funding per student. This will protect good quality provision.

What components of a study programme can be funded through the EFA?

The EFA has advised that in addition to hours spent on qualifications that are approved for teaching to 16-19 year olds under section 96 of the LSC Act 2000, they will also be funding hours within a study programme that are:

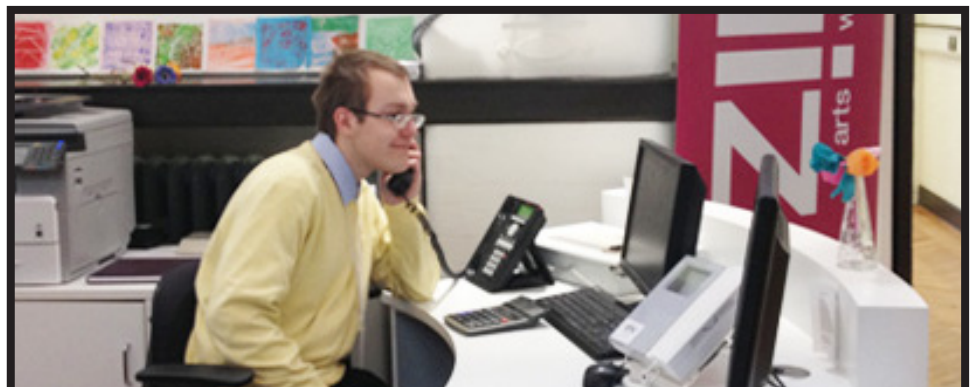
- directly relevant to the study programme
- explicitly planned in the individual learning plan or timetable
- supervised and/or organised by the provider
- quality assured by the provider
- within normal working pattern of the institution.

The EFA has offered the following examples of how these hours might be spent:

- informal certificates
- non-qualification activity
- tutorial purposes
- work experience/work related activity
- volunteering/community activities
- enrichment activities

They have also advised that the following will **not** be funded:

- voluntary extra-curricular activities and clubs delivered during breaks or outside normal working pattern
- study that is homework or independent study/research that is not timetabled
- employment or work experience organised by anyone other than by or on behalf of the provider
- volunteering/community activities that are not organised by or on behalf of the provider



Additional Learning Support

Low level additional learning support is provided through the 'disadvantage' component of the main programme or 'core education' funding. This is known as 'Element 1 funding' and it is provided direct to the college as part of their core funding, without any ring-fencing. This means that it will be important for managers to ensure that they claim from the 'central pot', the additional funding needed to support their students whose prior attainment and social circumstances mean they require additional support.

High Needs Students (those that have support needs in excess of £6,000)

From 2013/14, there will be new arrangements to fund education provision for students who have high needs. These arrangements will apply to high needs students in FE institutions, independent specialist providers (ISPs), or school and academy sixth forms of all types, and will be broadly equivalent to pre-16 high needs funding arrangements. The aim is to create a single funding system for high needs provision in both the school and post-16 sectors. This will underpin the single approach to assessment planning, funding and provision for children and young people which is an important element of the SEN reforms. The Children and Families Bill is currently before Parliament and is due to be implemented from September 2014. These new funding arrangements were announced in March in *School funding reform: next steps towards a fairer system*.

Under these new high needs funding arrangements, students who require more than £6,000 of additional education support will be treated as high needs students. By 'additional education support', we mean the support an individual student needs in order to access and achieve their course of study, over and above the core programme costs of that course. The principle is that, where students have health and social care needs, the appropriate support should be provided by the appropriate agencies. Funding for high needs students will be treated in three parts:

Element 1 – standard 16-19 funding formula based on lagged student numbers, and paid to institutions by the EFA;

Element 2 – this is the first £6,000 of additional support. Numbers are calculated based on information provided by the local authority about the number of places it is going to commission from each institution, and the EFA adds £6,000 for each place to the allocation. This is also paid directly to institutions by the EFA; and

Element 3 – top-up funding – this is any funding the individual student requires above the first two elements, and is negotiated and agreed with the student's home local authority. This is paid directly to institutions by the local authority. The Education Funding Agency's *Overview of the 16 to 19 Funding Formula June 2013* can be found at: <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/funding%20review%20june%2013%20v4.pdf>

Creative approaches to funding

Some providers are beginning to explore creative approaches to funding, for example through use of individuals' personal budgets to enable extra support within a learning programme or for additional enrichment activity to complement the learning. Others are discussing with their local authorities the concept of 'braided' funding, drawing together funding for learning with funding for adult social care and or health services, to create a more holistic offer.

What will study programmes look like for students with LDD?

Many students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be accessing mainstream vocational or academic programmes, perhaps with additional support. Their study programme will follow a standard pattern: a substantial qualification accredited English and Maths, though not necessarily at GCSE level, an element of work experience and some non-qualification activity, such as tutorial time.

For students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are following more personalised programmes designed to increase employment and independent living outcomes, study programmes will vary considerably. Providers are free to design programmes to meet their individual students' needs, provided they adhere to the principles for programmes of study, published by the DfE.



This means that all study programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities must:

- enable students to build on existing skills and knowledge, and represent progression (lateral or vertical) from their assessed starting point
- provide stretch and challenge and support students to progress towards their intended outcomes
- include relevant aspects of English and Maths
- include work experience to support the development of employability skills and create potential employment options (except where this is demonstrably inappropriate)
- enable students to develop the skills, attitudes and confidence that support progression.

Features of effective study programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

The characteristics of effective study programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be familiar to many schools and colleges which are already offering personalised programmes. Providers might find this list a useful starting point in reviewing their current provision and determining where changes and improvements may be needed. The list is not exhaustive and other factors could be added, based on providers' own experience of effective practice. You can download the effective practice resource here: http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/media/309582/feature_of_effective_practice_resource.pdf

Use of accreditation within study programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Since the use of accreditation is not a requirement for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, providers will need to apply their professional judgement as to when to use qualifications to recognise achievement and when to use other means.

Qualifications can be useful when:

- the curriculum is determined by student needs, interests and aspirations and qualifications are then used to provide evidence of achievement
- sufficient time is planned into the curriculum for student-led activity, development and consolidation of skills, and opportunities to transfer or generalise skills which are then evidenced through a qualification
- they are used to structure planned learning, rather than to determine the content of a learning programme
- they clearly support progression to a specific course or job.
- they are designed to be taken by all students, not specifically designed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Qualifications are not helpful if they are likely to
- distort the content or focus of a student's programme, so that it is no longer meeting their needs
- require students to work at a pace which is inappropriate to their learning needs
- prevent or reduce opportunities for student-led activity, creative teaching and learning (such as project- or enterprise-based learning) or learning activity that takes place outside of the classroom.

Where qualifications are not being used or where they form only a small part of a programme, it will be particularly important for providers to adopt rigorous means to recognise and record progress and achievement and to quality assure these processes. The 5-staged RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) process provides a useful approach in these circumstances.

How providers will be held to account for running good study programmes

The 16-19 Accountability consultation document sets out proposals for improving the way in which providers of education and training for people aged 16-19¹ in England are held to account.

The proposals seek:

- sharper accountability to raise standards for all students;
- clear, reliable information for students and parents; and
- incentives for providers to deliver English and mathematics GCSE for those who failed to achieve at least a grade C at age 16.

It is expected that the consultation will be published in early autumn.

¹ And young people with Learning Difficulty Assessments

Ofsted Inspection

Ofsted will inspect study programme provision delivered in school or Academy sixth forms through the School inspection framework. Where study programmes are delivered through FE colleges, sixth form colleges or private training providers Inspectors will use the Common Inspection Framework 2012 for FE and Skills.

Both frameworks provide judgements on:

Overall effectiveness - based on how effective and efficient the provider is in meeting the needs of students and other users, and why

Outcomes for students – evaluating to what extent students achieve and make progress relative to their starting points; achievement gaps narrow and students progress to courses leading to higher level qualifications and into jobs that meet local and national needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – evaluating the extent to which staff use their skills and expertise to plan and deliver teaching, learning and support to meet each student's needs; initially assess students' starting points and monitor their progress, set challenging tasks, and build on and extend learning for all students; teaching and learning develop English, mathematics and functional skills, and support the achievement of learning goals and career aims and other key aspects of teaching and learning

Leadership and management - evaluating the extent to which leaders, managers and, where applicable, governors 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 students, employers and the local and national community and other key leadership and management tasks.

Examples of study programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

The following examples show two contrasting approaches to study programme design, all of which are consistent with the DfE principles.

Seevic College: supported internship programme

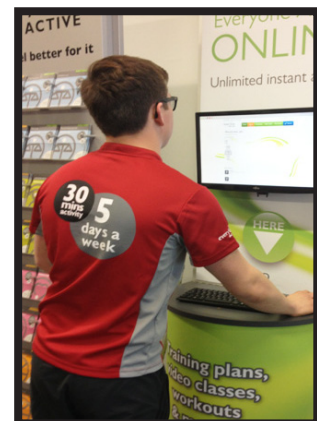
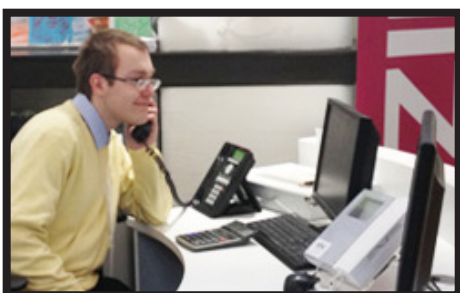
Seevic College is a large sixth form college in Essex. In 2012/3, it took part in the Supported Internship trials.

Student group: 16 students, aged between 18 and 24, all with a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) with prior attainment at a variety of levels, needing support to gain employment

Progression focus: supported employment (leading to open employment in some cases)

Programme content: employability skills, relevant English and Maths skills, specific support to address individuals' barriers to gaining employment (eg travel training) and to enhance employability prospects, developed through substantial time in one or more workplaces, with the support of a job coach, and complementary learning one day per week at college.

Accreditation: Award in Employability Skills (either E3 or L1), Functional Skills in English, Maths, ICT (at an appropriate level and as relevant to planned progression, so not necessarily accredited for all students in all three areas), small role-specific vocational awards for individuals to enhance employability (eg food hygiene for students working in a catering environment)



Leicester College, Frith Outreach Centre: Learning for Living

Leicester College is a large general further education (GFE) college. Through the Frith Outreach Centre, it provides programmes for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

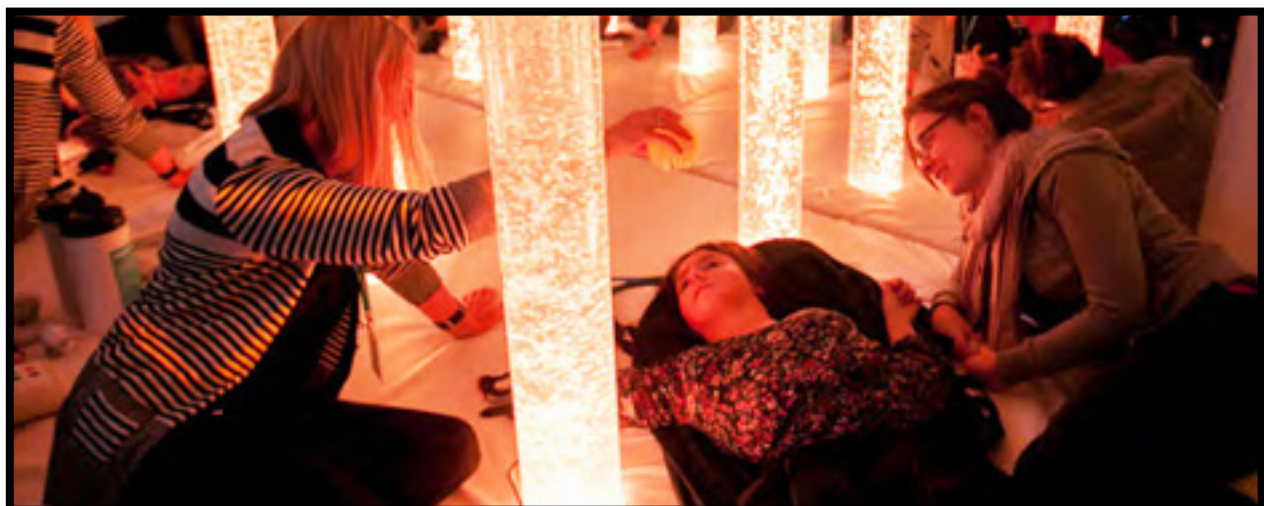
Student Group: 20 full-time and 15 part-time students with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex needs

Progression focus: Increased independence and autonomy

Programme content: Skills development in line with personalised targets through engagement in a range of activities including exploring the environment, creative studies, personal development which includes relevant communication and number learning, enrichment activity and tutorials. Learning takes place through individual and small group sessions, in a variety of settings within the college and through use of local community facilities and trips outside of the local area. Sports, arts, craft, drama, gardening and a range of themed projects provide the contexts for learning.

Accreditation: none

RARPA is used as the means of recognising and recording progress and achievement.



Sources of further useful information

Department for Education information and links to publications on 16-19 study programmes

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/qandlearning/programmes>

Education Funding Agency information and links to publications on 16-19 funding, including for students with high needs

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/executiveagencies/efa/funding/fundings>

Examples of activities being undertaken by LSIS-funded clusters of providers as they prepare to implement SEN Green Paper reforms

<http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/26558>

Information on a new project exploring ways to quality assure the RARPA process

<http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/25745>

Guidance on embedding a supported employment approach into vocational education and training for people with learning difficulties

<http://shop.niace.org.uk/makingitwork.html>

Guidance on implementing person-centred approaches to developing, delivering and assessing learning programmes

<http://archive.excellencegateway.org.uk/pdf/Person-centred%20approaches%20and%20adults%20with%20learning%20%20%20%20%20%20%20difficulties.pdf>

Information about supported internships

<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources/pfa-resources/factsheet-supported-internships>

SEN and Disability Green Paper 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability', plus links to progress reports and other related documents

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send/b0075291/green-paper>

A range of resources produced by the Preparing for Adulthood programme, which is funded by the Department for Education as part of the delivery support for the Green Paper reforms, plus links to wider resources

<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources>

A selection of resources about innovative approaches to learning support

<http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/17215>

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