

Paper 4 - Data Standards Framework

Date of issue	25 February 2010
Audience	the <i>information authority</i> board
Publication intent	PUBLIC DOCUMENT

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper has been prepared for *the information authority board* to introduce the FE sector Data Standards Framework.

2 Background

- 2.2 The formulation and use of a Data Standards Framework is the strategic means by which an organisation moves to standardise the representation, format and the definition of data.
- 2.3 Part of the key deliverables for *the information authority* is to provide 'best practice' for collation, dissemination and management of data standards and it is the ambition to further enable this through a Data Standards Framework
- 2.4 In defining and implementing the data standards framework *the information authority* is working toward:
- improving the quality of information
 - reducing the costs of data collection and processing
 - increasing data compatibility
 - improving the consistency and efficiency of data collection
 - reducing data duplication and data redundancy

3 Purpose

- 3.1 Data standards are a process of cascade and development through collaboration with other authority bodies across the education sector.

- 3.2 Partners such as the Information Standards Board are working closely with *the information authority* to:
- Ensure that the right standards are available at the right time
 - Set strategic priorities and facilitating their development
 - Avoid duplication by co-ordinating the development and use of standards around the system
 - Formally recognise the standards approval role of other bodies, such as BSI
 - Provide quality assurance
- 3.3 The Framework is based upon a set of components, which together form the working environment, methods and processes to enable the improvements to be realised, these components are:
- Standards Governance
 - Standards Metadata
 - Reference Data Management, Vocabulary and Code lists
 - The Data Quality Framework
 - Data Stakeholders, Custodians and Data Stewardship
 - Data Modelling

4 Recommendations

4.1 The board is being asked to agree that the secretariat take forward a project to investigate the nature and application of the data standards framework including how the components can be introduced, the format and method of operation and the organisation required to maintain and control this environment in the future. The goal being to eventually create an open and accessible web based system that provides an information portal to the details of data collection, data quality and data usage.

4.2 Data Model

4.2.1 The project will produce a 'proof of concept' data model or ERD (entity relationship diagram) based upon the ILR specification. This process will not only provide valuable insight in to the existing data structures but would be invaluable in any proposed work to convert the collection to XML format.

4.3 Data Standards Metadata

4.3.1 The framework project will also include an investigation of data standards for metadata that includes how the metadata can be populated, maintained and linked. It will also be necessary to audit of the existing metadata and assess the suitability for inclusion within any new environment

4.4 Standards for Reference Data

4.4.1 The investigation will gain an understanding of the existing reference data, coding lists and vocabulary environment and document how reference data

is created and maintained. The investigation will also need to include how the reference data is used and who are the consumers of this data.

4.5 Data Stewardship

4.5.1 The Information Management Strategy and Architecture have produced a Data Management Policy that has opened the debate between ownership, custodian and stewardship. The information authority favours an approach that develops Data Stewards and would wish to incorporate and further this within the Data Standards Framework.

4.6 Data Quality

4.6.1 The Data Quality Framework has already gained board agreement and is also seen to be a critical component of the data standards framework. The information authority is working to deliver the appropriate level of governance and scrutiny of data quality and the project will make available the data quality performance statistics.

4.7 Standards Software Environment

4.7.1 Finally, the investigation will need to address options for a suitable web enabled application environment that is capable of holding and managing the framework components in a coordinated user friendly environment.

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Date created	22 February 2010
Publication no.	
Document ref.	
Version	0.1