Association of Colleges
Beacon Awards

Prospectus 2015/2016

Teaching and Learning, Curriculum Design and Development

Leadership and Quality Improvement

Responsiveness, Partnership and Impact
The AoC Beacon Awards 2015/2016 Sponsors

Innovation in Further Education

OCR Award for Innovation in FE

Teaching and Learning, Curriculum Design and Development

CoLRiC Award for the Effective Integration of Libraries/LRCs in Curriculum Delivery
Edge Award for Practical Teaching and Practical Learning
Jisc Award for the Effective use of Technology in FE
Microlink and AoC Charitable Trust Award for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities
Vtct Award for Sport in the Curriculum

Leadership and Quality Improvement

Association of Colleges Award for Outstanding Leadership of Improvement
City & Guilds Award for Staff Development
Education and Training Foundation Award for Governance

Responsiveness, Partnership and Impact

AQA Award for the Development of Transferable Skills
Association of Colleges Award for College Engagement with Employers
Pearson Award for the Promotion and Delivery of Successful Apprenticeships
UCAS Progress Award for Careers Education and Guidance
Gateway Qualifications Award for Widening Participation in Learning; increasing vocational progression and employability
Barclay’s Print bring a flexible attitude and great service. It is not just delivering great course guides on time, but doing so at the right price.

Jay Sheikh, Head of Marketing, Barking & Dagenham College

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I am delighted to continue the Government’s support of the AoC Beacon Awards. The 2015-16 Programme sees the awards enter their twenty-second year and it is no mean achievement to have an awards programme that continues to retain its popularity and relevance for further education colleges.

I believe one of the reasons why the Beacon Awards are held in such high regard is because all the colleges that apply help to energise not only the awards but also the wider sector by demonstrating imaginative, innovative and responsive ways to support their students, staff and communities.

The sponsors of these awards must also take some credit for the enduring appeal of the awards. Whether they have sponsored an award since they started in 1994, or have just joined this year; all are showing a commitment to colleges which are the engine room, powering this country’s economic recovery.

I would encourage all colleges to review the awards on offer this year and really make time to put in an application so that we can celebrate further successes later in the year.

Nick Boles MP,  
Minister of State for Skills and Equalities
The following bodies have given invaluable support for the programme for 2015/2016 which is greatly appreciated.

Administered by the Association of Colleges
The AoC Beacon Awards were set up by The Partnership Trust in 1994.
Since August 1996 they have been administered by the Association of Colleges.
The AoC Beacon Awards are run through the AoC Charitable Trust which is a Registered Charity in England and Wales (charity number 1040631) and in Scotland (charity number SC039064).

Authorised by Dame Pat Bacon, Chair, AoC Beacon Awards

Images in this prospectus were generously donated by Abingdon & Witney College, Aylesbury College, Barking & Dagenham College, Blackpool College, Burton & South Derbyshire College, East Riding College, Gateway College, Kendall College, Leicester College, Heart of Worcester College, Salford City College, South Devon College.
The AoC Beacon Awards Programme

The AoC Beacon Awards, launched in 1994, recognise and are designed to promote the interdependence of further education colleges, business, professional and voluntary sector organisations to their mutual advantage.

The aim of the programme is to highlight the breadth and quality of education in colleges throughout the UK and increase understanding of colleges’ contribution to UK educational skills policy and economic and social development.

The awards:

• Recognise imaginative and exemplary teaching and learning practice in colleges
• Draw attention to provision which encourages and supports learners to approach challenges positively and creatively
• Support learning and continuous improvement through the dissemination of award-bearing practice
• Promote and celebrate the further education sector’s commitment to pioneering approaches to equality and diversity.

The Programme represents partnership in action by providing significant benefits for the major players involved:

• An award acts as a development grant to help realise the full potential of a project based in a college of further education
• An award serves to promote the business needs and/or interests of the sponsor.

The dissemination of exemplary practice represented by the award-winning projects is a major purpose of each year’s AoC Beacon Awards Programme. Project Profiles of each year’s winning colleges are written up and disseminated to the FE sector after their announcement.

The AoC Beacon Awards Steering Group

The AoC Beacon Awards Programme is operated through the AoC Charitable Trust which is a Registered Charity in England, Wales and Scotland, and is administered by the Association of Colleges (AoC). The AoC Beacon Awards office is offered advice and guidance by the Steering Group for the delivery and development of the programme. The Steering Group is made up of representatives from colleges, funding bodies and sponsoring organisations (Steering Group members as of 1 April 2015 appear on the back page). The Steering Group makes all final decisions about award winners in the light of recommendations from the team of assessors and the Chief Assessor.
The AoC Beacon Awards recognise and commend exemplary initiatives (which can be programmes, courses, projects or other forms of teaching, learning, advice, guidance or support).

**New projects or initiatives which have not completed a full cycle of implementation so that evidence of outcomes is unavailable will not be eligible for consideration.**

Awards take the form of monetary grants of between £2,000 and £5,000 which will be awarded on the clear understanding that the total monies will be set against expenditures incurred taking forward the development of each winning initiative.

Colleges are defined as institutions which were incorporated under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (the Act).

Awards are designed at the discretion of the sponsors as UK awards.

It is a condition of entry that each college gaining an award undertakes to inform its community about its achievement and about the support and interest provided by the sponsor. It should also undertake to inform the sponsor of how the award money was used.

It is expected that within approximately six months of the announcement of the award, the winning college will organise a local presentation ceremony in consultation with the sponsor to allow for maximum media coverage. The AoC Beacon Awards office should be advised of the arrangements.

Winning colleges will be asked to present a breakout session at the AoC Annual Conference on their project and its benefits to learners, the college and their communities.

Award winning colleges are permitted to use the AoC Beacon Awards logo with the year of the programme beneath it on college headed paper, promotional material etc.

A summary list of awards and their sponsors appears opposite.
# The Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPONSOR</th>
<th>FOCUS OF AWARD</th>
<th>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AQA</td>
<td>Development of Transferable Skills</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<td>Association of Colleges</td>
<td>College Engagement with Employers</td>
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<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edge</td>
<td>Practical Teaching and Practical Learning</td>
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<td>Widening Participation in Learning</td>
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<td>Jisc</td>
<td>Effective Use of Technology in FE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microlink and AoC Charitable Trust</td>
<td>Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCR</td>
<td>Innovation in FE</td>
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<td>Sport in the Curriculum</td>
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## The AoC Beacon Awards 2015/2016 Calendar

### 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>AoC Beacon Awards 2015-2016 Prospectus distributed to colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 July</td>
<td>Closing date for receipt of AoC Beacon Award applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>August - September</td>
<td>First stage of assessment (shortlisting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September - October</td>
<td>Second stage of assessment (site visits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Third stage of assessment and final selection by AoC Beacon Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steering Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-19 November</td>
<td>2015-2016 AoC Beacon Award winners announced</td>
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<td>at the AoC Annual Conference</td>
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### 2016

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<th>Month</th>
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<tr>
<td>January - April</td>
<td>Local presentation ceremonies</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 February</td>
<td>AoC Beacon Awards National Presentation Ceremony</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Winning colleges deliver breakout sessions at the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AoC Annual Conference</td>
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The Assessment of the AoC Beacon Awards applications will be the responsibility of specialist assessors co-ordinated by the AoC Charitable Trust Director. Normally two assessors will be assigned to new awards, one of whom may represent the sponsor. Established awards can be assessed by one Beacon Assessor or a Beacon Assessor with a trainee assessor. A Beacon Assessor (appointed by the Director) acts as the Lead Assessor for each award.

The process has three stages – shortlisting, visiting and final decisions

**STAGE 1** Assessment leading to shortlisting will have regard to the general requirements detailed on page 8 of this prospectus together with the stipulations governing the specification of each award. The outcomes of this stage are lists of applicants who best match these criteria. These lists are verified by the Chief Assessor.

**STAGE 2** Assessment by visiting involves matching the ‘evidence on the ground’ at the shortlisted colleges with their applications. In particular, the assessors will be interested in the impact of the project on the experience of students, particularly any outcomes for learning including achievements in terms of skills and/or qualifications gained. Assessors will also wish to explore how the project is managed including its impact on equality and diversity, methods of evaluation, quality assurance, the future development of the initiative and its dissemination to other colleges. The assessors would expect to have discussions with staff, students and other relevant parties in the course of the site visit. Assessors, prior to a visit, may contact the college to request additional information. The outcomes of this stage are the judgements and recommendations for awards.

Sponsors may, with training and the agreement of the AoC Beacon Awards Director, undertake Stages 1 and 2 of the assessment process in respect of their own award(s), in conjunction with an AoC Beacon Award Assessor.

Sponsors who do not undergo training may accompany the Beacon Assessor as a sponsor observer.

**STAGE 3** The Chief Assessor will present the assessors’ reports and recommendations to the AoC Beacon Awards Steering Group which will select the award winners.

All AoC Beacon Awards are awarded or withheld at the sole and absolute discretion of the AoC Beacon Awards Steering Group and those acting on its behalf.

No explanation will be given following the making or withholding of an award.

The Handbook for the Assessment of AoC Beacon Awards is available online for both colleges and assessors at [www.aoc.co.uk/beaconawards/assessment](http://www.aoc.co.uk/beaconawards/assessment).

**AoC Beacon Assessors**

AoC Beacon Assessors are selected from a register of assessors, which is held by the AoC Beacon Awards office. All assessors on the register are given training and all new assessors are mentored in their first year. Winning colleges are invited to nominate someone from their winning team to be trained as an AoC Beacon Assessor to ensure that the register always has individuals with the most up-to-date sector knowledge involved with the Awards. Applications will also be considered from those with suitable experience of further education. If you would like to apply, please contact the AoC Charitable Trust Director on alice_thiagaraj@aoc.co.uk.
How to Apply for Beacon Awards

General Beacon Award Criteria
The Beacon Awards recognise exemplary initiatives. To be eligible for an award, the initiative should show evidence of imaginative yet sustainable teaching and learning practice or other relevant provision. The application can be for an initiative which can be a programme, course, project or other form of teaching, learning, advice, guidance or support.

The application must fulfil the following criteria. It must:

1) meet the specific requirements set out by the sponsors of the award to which the submission relates
2) have regard to promoting equality and diversity in the delivery of the programme
3) be subject to evaluation/quality assurance to influence the continuing development of the initiative
4) have been running for at least one academic year by 31 July 2015
5) have features which actively promote exemplary teaching and learning
6) be of benefit to one or more groups of students or trainees who are identified and described in the application
7) have wider relevance and applicability which would make it of value to other colleges as an example of good practice or innovation

How to structure your application
You should submit one copy of Part 1 of the application form (at the back of this prospectus) which should be signed by the principal and should have the contact details of the person the assessors will contact to arrange a site visit. You should also submit five copies of Part 2 of the application form (at the back of this prospectus).

Parts 2 and 3 of your application should be anonymous and should address all of the criteria. The application should be made by a senior member of staff who has had close contact with the initiative. Written evidence from beneficiaries should be included in the word limit. You may make reference to other materials (i.e. multimedia material, college documents, etc.) which the assessors can request or access, should they wish to do so.

Part 3 of the application should be structured, as far as possible, under the following headings and be no more than 3,000 words:

• Project summary – a brief overview of the initiative including a clear description of target group and the date the initiative started
• Aims and objectives – how they were established, and how they have resulted in the promotion of exemplary teaching and learning
• How the project meets the sponsor's criteria – a section which clearly addresses each of the sponsor's criteria as set out on the relevant page in the awards section
• Project management – describe how the project is managed including how quality assurance is used to improve the initiative, and how the project meets equality and diversity standards
• Outcomes and benefits to learners – show how the initiative has benefited the learners and others involved with the project – this should be supported by written evidence from beneficiaries who may be students, trainees, employers or, in some cases, parents. This section should also include data on enrolment, retention, achievement and progression
• Dissemination and the future – key features of the project should be highlighted demonstrating how it can benefit other colleges and how it will develop in the future

No college which has previously won an AoC Beacon Award will be eligible for consideration a second time for the same award within a period of three years from the previous successful application.

A college may apply for as many awards as it wishes. However, it may submit only one application per award.

A college which has a project which fits into two or more categories may submit that project for only one award.

All applications will be treated as strictly confidential to the Steering Group, assessors and AoC Charitable Trust Director. Material from any application will only be made public with the express approval of the college concerned.

Each application will be sent an acknowledgement addressed to the Principal/Chief Executive via email. Your college will be subsequently contacted only if the project is shortlisted.

You are asked to submit ONE copy of Part 1 of the application, FIVE copies of Part 2 and Part 3 of the application form (including supporting evidence) by Wednesday 8 July 2015 to:

ALICE THIAGARAJ
AoC CHARITABLE TRUST DIRECTOR
AoC CHARITABLE TRUST
2-5 STEDHAM PLACE
LONDON WC1A 1HU

All enquiries about making an application should be addressed to the Beacon Awards office at the above address and NOT to sponsors or assessors.
## The Awards

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<td>Microlink and AoC Charitable Trust Award for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities</td>
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<td>42-43</td>
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OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations) is a not-for-profit organisation focused on the enhancement of education through assessment and has been a proud supporter of the AoC Beacon Awards since they started 22 years ago.

As a leading UK awarding body, OCR engages with four million learners of all ages in over 8,000 centres so that they can achieve their full potential. OCR is also one of the top three providers of vocational qualifications, working in partnership with the sector to develop inspired solutions for further education delivery.

In addition to A Levels and GCSEs, OCR provides an extensive Skills for Employment and Life portfolio – which includes Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Cambridge Progression, Apprenticeships and Functional Skills. It is through collaboration with colleges, industry, HE and government that OCR’s learning programmes are relevant, rigorous and provide progression.

These learning programmes cover areas such as IT and Computing, Science, Business, Languages, Health & Social Care, and core skills development. All programmes are designed to provide the best access to funding and a tailored approach to this promotes efficiency and innovation in curriculum design - and ultimately, progression and employability for learners.

OCR has been at the forefront of the development and launch of skills qualifications, refining them to ensure learners develop the required practical skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT to gain the most out of work, education and everyday life.

Products developed by OCR are designed to enable tutors to get the best from learners - both during the course and in preparing them for whatever they choose to go on to next. Learners are placed at the heart of qualification development, with a focus on seeking new ways to engage with and excite them.

OCR is part of Cambridge Assessment, the University of Cambridge’s international exams group. Cambridge Assessment is vital and integral part of education and training worldwide, operating in over 160 countries.
OCR Award for Innovation in FE

This award is open to all colleges in the FE sector which can demonstrate successful and innovative approaches in any aspect to supporting learning for a wide range of students enabling development of a high level of skills and knowledge meeting the demands of employers and/or progression to FE or HE.

The award will be made to the college which can demonstrate the most successful initiative which transforms the capability of students to successfully achieve their individual aims, gain qualifications and/or progress to employment or FE/HE.

Colleges should be able to provide evidence of achievement of the general Beacon criteria particularly highlighting how the initiative demonstrates:

- effective leadership and management resulting in sustained excellence or significant improvements in quality
- partnership arrangements that support the college in meeting the needs of its community
- the promotion of transformational teaching supporting high levels of achievement and progression to employment, FE or HE
- innovative curriculum provision that meets the range of learning and social/personal needs of students and promotes equality and diversity.

Reminder: colleges may make only one submission for an award and may not make the same submission for more than one award.

For further guidance on applying for this award, please refer to pages 46 - 48 of this prospectus.
Awards for Teaching and Learning, Curriculum Design and Development

CoLRiC Award for the Effective Integration of Libraries/LRCs in Curriculum Delivery

Edge Award for Practical Teaching and Practical Learning

Jisc Award for the Effective use of Technology in FE

Microlink and AoC Charitable Trust Award for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Vtct Award for Sport in the Curriculum
CoLRiC Award for the Effective Integration of Libraries/LRCs in Curriculum Delivery

The Council for Learning Resources in Colleges (CoLRiC) was founded in 1993 as an independent organisation dedicated to enhancing and maintaining the quality of learning resources service in further education colleges throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. It now has a membership of over 250 colleges.

CoLRiC stimulates the enhancement of quality in college learning resources services in a number of ways, including providing and publishing national standards and criteria for service provision, a Peer Accreditation Scheme, publishing 'Working Papers' and guidelines for inspections and initiating research into areas related to the aims of CoLRiC.

CoLRiC also raises awareness and understanding of the learning resources service’s role by contacting college senior managers and governing bodies, making strong representation to organisations that are important to the future of college learning resources services, organising conferences, and being active members of other organisations.
CoLRiC Award for the Effective Integration of Libraries/LRCs in Curriculum Delivery

This award is to promote and encourage good practice and high standards in libraries/learning resources centres (LLRC) in colleges, and to enhance their potential as areas that contribute to the delivery of the curriculum and support teaching and learning. It is open to all further education and sixth form colleges in the United Kingdom.

Colleges should provide evidence of achievement of the general Beacon criteria (see page 8) and demonstrate how the initiative meets the following criteria:

• leadership which promotes the wider use of LLRC resources, and effective cooperation with academic staff to support the integration of the LLRC resource within the curriculum

• effective involvement of the LLRC in contributing to leading the college’s information and curriculum delivery strategies

• strategies which enable the integration of the use of LLRC resources, including flexible and distance learning resources, within teaching and learning across the curriculum

• management of LLRC resources which enhances the students’ experience and results in a beneficial impact on learning

• effective support by the LLRC to enable students to use information and learning technologies (ILT) and information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance their learning.
Edge Award for Practical Teaching and Practical Learning

About the Edge Foundation

The Edge Foundation is an independent education charity. It is dedicated to raising the status of technical, practical and vocational learning. All young people should have the opportunity to achieve their potential and the UK’s future workforce needs to be equipped with the skills to be successful in the modern, global economy. Edge believes that ‘learning by doing’ should be valued equally with academic learning and that all learners should experience a mix of both. There are many paths to success.

Edge’s vision is simple. We aim to be at the leading edge of thinking and best practice in technical, practical and vocational learning in order to help young people develop the skills and expertise vital to a successful career and to meet the needs of the future economy.

Against a backdrop of high unemployment and with skills gaps continuing to emerge in many UK industries, it has never been more important for us, as a society, to take vocational education seriously. Too often vocational pathways are seen as second rate; an option for those who have failed academically. That is quite simply not the case and our mission at Edge is to change these old fashioned views.

To find out more, visit www.edge.co.uk join us on Facebook/UKedge, follow us on Twitter @ukEdge and use our resources on Flickr and YouTube.

We want young people to have experience of high quality practical learning to enable them to develop the skills needed for success at work in a wide range of careers. That’s why we’re again sponsoring this year’s AoC Beacon Award for Practical Teaching and Practical Learning.
Edge wants to recognise, celebrate and promote examples of excellent practical teaching and learning. We believe that practical and vocational learning is vital to young people and the UK economy and that this pathway should be given equal status to academic routes.

We invite entries for this award from colleges which have developed practical teaching and learning approaches that enable learners to have experiences that are:

- **real** – with opportunities for learners to tackle real life problems by learning from people in the know, using the tools of the trade

- **meaningful** – the college can demonstrate that learners can explain why they are working on a particular task, and the benefits to themselves, and others, of completing it well

- **challenging** – with opportunities for learners to work alongside experts and be challenged to perform at new levels of skill

- **stretching** – the college can demonstrate that the learner can describe their new skills and insights and show the distance they have travelled

- **life-changing** – the college can demonstrate the doors that are now open to learners and the way that their learning at the college has re-shaped their future.
Who are we?

Jisc is the UK organisation, of the sector for the sector by the sector, providing digital solutions for education and research.

Jisc is dedicated to advancing your success by ensuring we add value and deliver savings to every university, college and learning provider as well and the sectors as a whole.

All of our work is done through close partnership and engagement with you.

Because we are owned by you and are not-for-profit, we invest every pound we have on the services, solutions and innovation that you need.

What we do

• We use our strength and expertise to negotiate with powerful technology vendors and publishers on your behalf;

• We champion your interests through innovation and new thinking by representing you in important UK, European and international fora;

• We take on leadership mandates to tackle the big digital challenges and opportunities that face the sector;

• We provide you with the infrastructure, digital resources and advice and engagement services and solutions that you need, and use every day;

• We underpin our services and solutions with ongoing research and development carried with you and for you.

Our sole purpose is to help you succeed, by enabling you to make the best strategic and practical use of digital technology and digital resources to achieve your vision. Visit us at www.jisc.ac.uk to find out what we can do for you.
The award is open to all further education, sixth form and tertiary colleges in the UK.

This award aims to recognise where the effective use of technology has had a significant impact on learning and resulted in a more efficient implementation of the curriculum through innovative approaches to teaching.

The assessors will be looking for applications which demonstrate how new models of delivery can have significant impact on both learners and the college workforce, whether e-delivery has been used across the institution or in specific curriculum areas.

Assessors will look for comprehensive evidence (including statistical information and digital evidence) which clearly demonstrates the following:

• innovative use of technology contributing to the development of the curriculum to meet the needs of the community the college serves

• effective implementation of new models of e-delivery enhancing the learning experience and resulting in a significant increase in learner achievement and other outcomes

• the use of technology which has resulted in the improvement in the quality of teaching and enriched the curriculum

• effective use of technology which is built into the development of increased organisational efficiency and has achieved significant quantified savings, in business processes and delivery of learning and other services, and/or released time and money

• effective leadership that promotes and sustains the wider use of technology to support learning and institutional development.
Microlink and AoC Charitable Trust Award for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Microlink is Europe’s largest multi-award winning supplier of Assistive Technology and Inclusivity solutions. For over 20 years our work in education has seen us support in excess of 180,000 students to successfully achieve their true potential through Assistive Technology. In recent years we have done the same for numerous FTSE 100 companies.

Our pioneering work has been recognized through awards including best SME 2012, Disability Champion 2012 and the Disability Standard award 2012, where we were valued amongst FTSE 100 organisations.

We strongly believe in supporting teachers. Our education services through The Learning Access Suite and The Education Profiler provide teachers with the resources to help them empower their students and create an inclusive classroom. Through our Assistive Technology solutions, inclusive classrooms deliver a wider scope for development to students with different learning styles, allowing them to harness their skills and ultimately become more employable in the future.

Microlink welcomes this opportunity to demonstrate its support of the AoC Beacon Awards through joint sponsorship. It is imperative to recognise the exemplary work colleges are doing in delivering inclusive learning, as an important gateway to employment and higher education for their students. We are proud to support them on this important journey, highlighting the profound impact they are making in their community and the country. We would like the opportunity to work with the participating colleges and support them on this important journey.

www.microlinkpc.com | Twitter: @microlinkpc | Facebook: /microlinkuk

The AoC Charitable Trust is a Registered Charity which was established in 1994 to advance the education of members of the public over the age of 16 years. It currently does this through the AoC Beacon Awards and the AoC Gold Awards for Distinguished Alumni of Further Education Colleges. Since 2013, the Trust has held silent and live auctions to raise money to support student grants which will be given each summer to ‘Future Stars’; students who are currently at a nominating college of a Gold Award winner with similar career aspirations. Through these programmes it offers organisations sponsorship opportunities to fund the activities as well as providing them with an opportunity to fulfil part of their Corporate Social Responsibility agenda as well as promoting their brand values and reputation in the sector.

Twitter: @AoCTrust
The Inclusive Learning Award, supported by Microlink and the AoC Charitable Trust, celebrates exemplary practice in further and continuing education for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Assessors would be particularly interested to receive applications from further education institutions which have developed exemplary practice in inclusive learning for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities leading to successful progression to employment or further study in FE or HE.

Applications may relate to provision for those with non-visible learning difficulties or to those with high needs or both. The assessors will look for provision that exemplifies the principles of inclusive learning and the development of skills and attributes leading to progression to employment or to independent living.

Applications should demonstrate the following:

- an inclusive curriculum which includes teaching and learning activities well matched to learners’ different needs, enabling individuals to develop skills and experiences to support successful progression to employment or independent living
- innovative use of resources, including IT, to support the development of knowledge, skills and attributes through an inclusive and personalised approach
- effective multi-agency partnerships, including with employers, making a practical contribution to supporting learner achievement, employment and progression
- effective support for the curriculum through engagement with employers and local communities enabling sustained and successful involvement of learners in the work place
- equipping and empowering learners to have a voice, to solve their own challenges, make their own choices and to participate in community or society
- comprehensive transition planning for each individual, including processes that fully support learners into college, employment and adult life, and which enable them to achieve success and helps them to transform their lives.
Vtct Award for Sport in the Curriculum

Vtct (Vocational Training Charitable Trust) is the specialist awarding organisation for the ‘service sector’. It has awarded world class qualifications since 1962 and has been at the forefront of developing the vocational qualifications in the United Kingdom ever since. Vtct offers suites of qualifications in:

- Hairdressing and Beauty therapy
- Complementary Therapies
- Sports and Active Leisure
- Hospitality and Catering
- Business, Retail and Customer service
- Transferable and Functional Skills

Vtct and its qualifications are regulated by Ofqual, SQA and the Welsh Government and awarded across the UK and internationally by more than 800 approved training centres and colleges. Vtct takes a specialist approach; providing a comprehensive range of qualifications in each of its suites, first class customer service, specialist training and support. Investment in ICT has facilitated electronic registration and certification claims (with next day processing), online and onscreen exams and an e-portfolio, within the price of the qualification.

Vtct has for many years provided a suite of qualifications in the Sports and Active Leisure area in particular in health and fitness and sports massage, including complete apprenticeship packages for the sector. As in other areas of its portfolio Vtct takes a specialist approach and supports the sector more widely, which is why we are delighted to sponsor the AoC Beacon Award for Sport in the Curriculum.

In September 2014 Vtct launched a new suite of Sports Studies qualifications specifically designed for colleges. These qualifications are designed to attract UCAS points and will prepare learners for higher education as well as employment. Vtct also provides a range of awards to sit alongside these qualifications within Programmes of Study.

To find out more about Vtct visit our website www.vtct.org.uk
The Vtct Award for Sport in the Curriculum is open to colleges of further education and sixth form colleges offering coaching, sports and leisure qualifications. The award seeks to recognise high quality teaching and learning that results in positive outcomes and involve a range of community and employer partnerships.

The Assessors will be looking for approaches which:

- include the development of volunteering, teamwork or competitions which encourages students to learn in different ways
- support students in the attainment of relevant industry skills which support access to employment or progression to further learning
- demonstrate approaches which include relevant workplace/community placements enabling students to understand the leisure market and consumer needs
- focus on enabling the students develop an understanding of the needs of the participant/user of sports programmes and the range of facilities in their local community
- include innovative teaching, learning and assessment strategies (such as the use of e-learning or social media), which engage students and enable outstanding achievements
- involve partner organisations such as national governing bodies of sport, County Sport Partnerships, local authorities, clubs and the private sector in delivering the curriculum.
Association of Colleges
Beacon Awards

Leadership and Quality Improvement

Association of Colleges Award for Outstanding Leadership of Improvement
City & Guilds Award for Staff Development
Education and Training Foundation Award for Governance
The Association of Colleges (AoC) exists to represent and promote the interests of colleges and provide members with professional support services. As such, we aim to be the authoritative voice of colleges – based on credible analysis, research, advocacy and consultation with colleges – and first choice destination for guidance and advice for members.

We are delighted to continue our support of this important award which recognizes the significance of inspirational leadership in colleges.
The award is open to all further education, sixth form and tertiary colleges in the UK.

This award aims to recognise the critical role undertaken by leaders and managers in developing capacity for sustained improvement in the quality of provision for students. Applications should provide evidence of significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning to a consistently high level confirmed by significant improvements in students' achievements.

The assessors will look for evidence that leadership and management have been visionary and ambitious for the college and has demonstrated a relentless and uncompromising focus on improving teaching and learning that has produced positive results and a significant impact on students.

Colleges should demonstrate how their provision meets the following:

• effective leadership and management of organisational change for the benefit of its clients, customers, students, staff and community
• a shared and student-focused culture that is supported by clear targets for improvement
• effective management of change demonstrating sustained and sustainable improvements in the quality of teaching and student outcomes
• a curriculum offer that has been developed in response to the learning needs of individuals, groups, organisations and partners in the college’s local community, and that results in consistently high standards of outcomes for all students
• creation of value for the sector by identifying the strategies and key transferable messages that work in securing improvement and from which other providers can learn.
City & Guilds Award for Staff Development in Further Education

*City & Guilds* is the UK's leading vocational skills organisation offering a products and services supporting individuals to get into work, learn while at work and progress throughout their career.

The City & Guilds Group comprises City & Guilds, the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM), City & Guilds Kineo and City & Guilds International. The Group offers a wide range of services including qualifications and accreditation, on line assessment and both printed and digital learning support.

City & Guilds is committed to supporting the professional development of all staff working in further education: teachers, tutors, management, technical, support and administrative. At a time of significant change for the education and development of teachers, City & Guilds is keen to recognise effective and imaginative work to support staff development across the breadth of the sector.

We recognise the role further education staff play in promoting and developing skills across a wide range of learners and we believe it is essential we share best practice within the sector. Through this award we will showcase effective ways of encouraging and motivating staff and schemes that encourage and promote professional development.

We are proud to sponsor an award that shares our passion and commitment for excellence and innovation and recognises outstanding achievement.
The City & Guilds Award for Staff Development encourages applications from all colleges of further education who believe they can meet the criteria.

The award aims to recognise contributions from across the whole range of staff working in further education. The assessors will be looking to reward innovative best practice that delivers identifiable results and benefits. In particular they will be looking for evidence of the following:

• effective ways for encouraging and motivating staff

• schemes that allow and encourage personal and professional development

• effective and imaginative work to support staff development

• schemes that can demonstrate positive outcomes for teachers, other staff and learners.
Education and Training Foundation Award for Governance

Set up to improve professionalism and standards in the further education and skills sectors, the Education and Training Foundation sets professional standards and provides support to ensure learners benefit from a well-qualified, effective and up-to-date professional workforce supported by good leadership, management and governance.

www.et-foundation.co.uk - Follow us on Twitter @E_T_Foundation

For more information, contact enquiries@etfoundation.co.uk
The award will be made to the college which can demonstrate the most successful initiative which is transforming the capability of governors to successfully meet their responsibilities and achieve the mission and strategic objectives of the college. It is open to all colleges in the further education sector, including adult, independent, sixth form and tertiary colleges. Colleges should be able to provide evidence of achievement of the general Beacon criteria and demonstrate how:

- effective governance has resulted in sustained excellence or significant improvement in the financial and academic performance of the college
- effective scrutiny and challenge by governors has resulted in significant improvement in quality and the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting local, regional and national priorities
- strategic partnerships support the college and ensure individual, community and employment needs are met by its educational provision
- the promotion of exemplary teaching, learning and assessment by the governing body enables high levels of achievement and progression to employment, FE or HE
- strategic leadership of educational provision promotes equality and diversity and ensures appropriate measures are in place to protect learners from extremism or abuse.

Assessors will be particularly interested in the development of exemplary practice by governing bodies in one or more of the following:

- the development of innovative processes which have transformed the capability of the governing body to meet its statutory and regulatory responsibilities demonstrated by significant improvement in all aspects of performance
- the development of accountability through effective engagement with the communities served by the college, including employers, ensuring the curriculum is planned effectively to meet local, regional and national priorities
- forging strong and sustainable links with local and regional employers embedding them at every level in the work of the college to co-create provision which fully meets learner's and employers' needs
- the development of a self-critical appraisal of governance which has lead to improved oversight of the strategic development of the college.

Assessors will also take account of the significance of the initiative in the context of the whole college and the communities it serves.

Colleges may make only one submission for an award and may not make the same submission for more than one award.
Association of Colleges
Beacon Awards

Awards for Responsiveness, Partnership and Impact

AQA Award for the Development of Transferable Skills

Association of Colleges Award for College Engagement with Employers

Gateway Qualifications Award for Widening Participation in Learning

Pearson Award for the Promotion and Delivery of Successful Apprenticeships

UCAS Progress Award for Careers Education and Guidance
We are pleased to continue our long-standing support of the AoC Beacon Awards with the sponsorship this year of a new award recognising innovation in the development of teaching and support in transferable skills.

**AQA** is an independent education charity and the largest provider of GCSEs and A-levels in the UK. Our qualifications are internationally recognised and taught in over 30 countries around the world.

Our expertise is now available in the vocational education and training sector following the recent launch of AQA’s new Level 3 Tech-level qualifications in Business, Engineering and IT. These qualifications are ideal for learners aged 16+ who wish to specialise in an occupational area or progress into employment, an Advanced or Higher Apprenticeship or further study within their chosen industry.

We worked with colleges, employers and professional bodies to test the structure and content of our Tech-levels to ensure they offer learners real choice and prepare them for success after college. In response to the needs expressed by colleges and employers, we’ve contextualised essential transferable skills such as communication, problem solving, research and team-working within the units of our qualifications. This close collaboration means our Tech-levels truly reflect the needs of a modern workplace and will provide learners with the technical underpinning knowledge necessary for a career within their chosen industry.

We look forward to continuing our work with the AoC and its members to create win-win solutions for learners, tutors, colleges and employers alike.
AQA Award for the Development of Transferable Skills

The award is given in recognition of innovative and sustained approaches to teaching and support for the development of transferable skills enabling successful progression to employment or HE.

Assessors will look for evidence of high levels of attainment in the following transferable skills: communication; problem solving; mathematics/numeracy; team work; planning and organization; leadership.

Colleges should provide evidence of the following:

- teaching that provides a realistic context for the development of transferable skills and supports successful progression to employment or HE
- a curriculum that enables the development of English and Mathematics to at least level 2 for all learners
- an innovative approach to enabling learners to develop effective skills of working together in teams and exercising leadership
- support for the development of a disciplined approach to problem solving supported by effective planning and organization
- learners who are able to plan and organize their work successfully to achieve high levels of attainment in transferable skills
- a comprehensive programme of professional development to enable teaching staff to respond effectively to the learning and support needs of learners progressing to employment (or HE).
Association of Colleges (AoC) exists to represent and promote the interests of colleges and provide members with professional support services. As such, we aim to be the authoritative voice of colleges – based on credible analysis, research, advocacy and consultation with colleges – and the first choice destination for guidance and advice for members.

The AoC welcomes this opportunity to demonstrate its support of the awards programme through sponsorship of this important award. In these economically challenging times it is essential that colleges are given the opportunity to showcase ways in which they engage with local, regional and national employers, providing skills and training for their workforce, which will enable both individuals and companies to be well placed to drive the country’s economic recovery.
The Association of Colleges Award for Engaging Employers is open to all further education and sixth form colleges in the UK. The award will recognise exemplary practice in the delivery of provision that is both responsive to the needs of employers.

The award will be granted to the college best providing a direct service to employers to meet their skills needs and/or engaging employers to support the development of employability skills within the curriculum.

Applications should demonstrate a clear, long-term vision and partnership with employers, reflected in provision which enables development of a skilled workforce and contributes to economic development in response to identified skills priorities and levels of unemployment.

Assessors will be looking for evidence of:

• a whole college approach to meeting the training, development and recruitment needs of employers reflected in the college’s three-year development plan and investment in employment related training
• responsiveness to key economic and training priorities identified by Sector Skills Councils, Local Enterprise Partnerships or other strategic and systematic analysis of local or regional skills needs
• systematic networking and collaboration with other organisations to provide a comprehensive response to meeting the training needs of employees, those seeking employment and learners
• a successful record of managers, leaders, teachers, trainers and support staff in delivering sustained levels of employer engagement demonstrated by feedback from employers and leading to improvements in the curriculum
• well managed investment in training and development of college staff, and the provision of up-to-date facilities and equipment to industry standards demonstrated by high success and achievement rates for learners
• development and implementation of flexible teaching, learning and assessment methods that overcome barriers to accessing learning, and respond to the needs of employers and learners.
GATEWAY QUALIFICATIONS
... defined by PARTNERSHIP – INTEGRITY – ORIGINALITY – QUALITY

With a heritage in the Open College Network movement, we bring with us over 20 years of expertise in credit-based learning and quality improvement, currently offering more than 500 qualifications on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications as well as the Access to HE Diploma.

PARTNERSHIP
We work alongside our customers, providing each one with a dedicated account team, recognising that like the learners we jointly cherish, each has a unique requirement which needs a supportive, responsive and informed service.

INTEGRITY
By putting the learner at the heart of everything we do we reinforce the ethical status that underpins our work. Together our founding values and operating practices offer value, confidence and peace of mind.

ORIGINALITY
Big enough to champion smart use of technology and original thinking in the development of qualifications, we are reassuringly hands-on and flexible enough to respond to singular needs. Being closer to providers makes us more attuned to individual requirements.

QUALITY
We are advocates for the learners and committed to providing a supportive service that marries input from providers, employers and sector experts to drive standards up. This is why we are proud to sponsor the AoC Beacon Award for Widening Participation in Learning: increasing vocational progression and employability.

www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk
The Award for Widening Participation is open to all colleges of further education and sixth form colleges which have made specific provision to attract those from under represented groups to engage in learning. The award will be given in recognition of effective and imaginative approaches to attract and motivate learners which results in successful acquisition of skills, knowledge or qualifications with the intention of further learning or employment.

Of particular interest are innovative strategies to open up opportunities for vocational progression by enabling individuals to overcome social or personal barriers and enables progression to sustained further learning or employment.

Successful applicants will describe provision that most effectively meets the general AoC Beacon criteria and the criteria below.

Assessors will look for evidence that provision:

- engages individuals in learning, particularly where they have suffered disadvantage or are an under-represented group in that vocation
- works with community partners or employers to support the provision of imaginative opportunities for vocational learning and effectively raises aspirations
- provides comprehensive support to meet individual learners' needs particularly for those who may be experiencing significant barriers to completing their programmes or are in danger of disengaging from the learning process
- adopted innovative teaching approaches to meeting the learning and social/personal needs of learners and uses appropriate and innovative learning materials, technologies and approaches which motivate learners.
- works cooperatively with employers to support the development of employability skills
- enables a high proportion of the learners to gain qualifications and progress to further study or employment.
At Pearson, we take learning personally. We are the world’s leading learning company, providing education and assessment services in more than 70 countries. In the UK, names like BTEC, Edexcel, Longman and Heinemann combine 150 years of experience with resources, technology and expertise that support every learner.

We offer the largest selection of work-based learning related qualifications to learning providers in the UK. Our BTEC Apprenticeships are a fully integrated solution supported by an extensive range of resources, including free sector-specific BTEC Apprenticeship Delivery Guides and Assessment Workbooks.

We are passionate about the training providers, FE colleges and employers we work with, and know how important these partnerships are in delivering the skills needed by the economy and businesses, whilst improving the transition from education to sustainable employment.
The award for ‘Apprenticeships’ is open to all further education and sixth form colleges in the UK. The award will recognise exemplary practice in the promotion and delivery of apprenticeships that is both responsive to the needs of employers and learners.

The award will be granted to the college providing an outstanding service to learners and employers which meets their skills needs and engages employers in supporting the development of apprenticeships including traineeships where appropriate.

Applications should demonstrate effective partnerships with employers, reflected in provision which enables development of a skilled workforce and responds to identified skills priorities.

Assessors will be looking for evidence of:

• A whole college approach to supporting the promotion of apprenticeships and traineeships and meeting the recruitment and development needs of employers

• Productive partnerships with employers providing continuity between college provision and training in the workplace supported by effective management of quality to achieve an outstanding level of progression to sustained employment

• Well managed investment in training and development of college staff, and the provision of up-to-date facilities and equipment to industry standards

• Consistently high levels of retention and achievement rates for learners resulting in successful progression to further study and transition into fully skilled employment roles

• Development and implementation of flexible/innovative teaching, learning and assessment methods that overcome barriers to accessing learning, and respond to the needs of employers and learners

• Effective partnerships with employers and educational institutions to support impartial guidance enabling learners to make informed choices about their progression to a traineeship or apprenticeship.
UCAS Progress Award for Careers Education and Guidance

About UCAS Progress

UCAS Progress is delighted to be sponsoring this award – recognising excellence in impartial careers education, advice and guidance for young people. UCAS Progress interacts with colleges, schools and apprenticeship providers across the country and understands the challenges faced by them in providing comprehensive and impartial information.

ucasprogress.com provides an information and advice portal, together with a searchable database of post-16 courses and training opportunities for young people; but this is just part of providing young people with the information and support they need for them to make informed decisions after GCSEs.

We work with colleges, schools and employers to provide a trusted and comprehensive national resource for post-16 study and work-based learning. We recognise that there also needs to be wider support given at a local level and that this is key to ensuring successful progression.
This award is open to all colleges in the further education sector and will focus on how well colleges engage with schools and employers to provide excellent impartial careers education, advice and guidance for young people. Young people are defined as being aged under 21.

Assessors will be looking for colleges applying for the award to provide evidence which demonstrates the following:

• effective partnerships with employers, schools and other education institutions and training providers, making a practical contribution to the provision of impartial guidance supporting learner progression

• careers education and guidance which enables successful progression to further study or employment

• an innovative approach to careers education enabling learners to make informed choices about their progression to further study and training, including apprenticeships

• effective support to enable young people to assess their own career choices and chances

• effective support for young people to overcome barriers to learning, and progression to education, training or work

• effective use and evaluation of Labour Market Intelligence to enable up-to-date guidance on employment opportunities.
Members of the AoC Beacon Awards Steering Group
as at 1 April 2015

Dame Pat Bacon  Chair, AoC Beacon Awards Steering Group
Charlotte Bosworth  Director of Skills and Development, OCR
Mark Bramwell  Associate Director of Sixth Form Colleges, Association of Colleges
Gill Clipson  Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Colleges
Olivia Dorricott  Director of Leadership, Governance and Management, Education and Training Foundation
Steve Frampton  Principal, Portsmouth College – Sixth Form College Representative
John Graystone  Colleges Wales Representative
Paul Little  City of Glasgow College – Scotland Representative
Rajinder Mann  Director, Black Leadership Initiative, Network for Black Professionals
Roger Marriott  Chief Assessor, AoC Beacon Awards
Jack Martin  Trust and Corporate Services Officer, AoC Charitable Trust
Michael Osbaldeston  Partnership Director, City & Guilds
Linda Rose  Department for Education
Peter Mayhew-Smith  Principal, Kingston College – GFE Representative
Alice Thiagaraj  Director, AoC Charitable Trust
Why apply?

The AoC Beacon Awards offer colleges the opportunity to showcase the many inspiring and innovative ways they are supporting their students, staff and communities.

Now in their 22nd year, the awards have grown to represent the very best approaches that FE colleges from across the UK are adopting to meet the skills needs of their local employers and the career aspirations of their students.

Applying for the Beacon Awards can result in numerous benefits; it gives colleges an opportunity to pause and reflect on the successful approaches they have developed to teaching and learning, to review the positive impact that they are having on their students and the difference they are making to their lives.

All colleges applying for the awards can request feedback on their application which is provided over the ‘phone by the Director of the AoC Charitable Trust. The feedback offers comments against each of the Beacon and the sponsor’s criteria and is intended to help colleges improve their applications by including relevant data to support the work they have described.

Colleges which are shortlisted have a greater opportunity to showcase the ways in which they are inspiring and supporting their students. The site visits are hugely beneficial to both the assessors and the colleges; some quotes from recent visits appear below.

“It was a pleasure to meet [the assessors] and to have the opportunity to discuss and explore issues and good practice.”

“It was a great afternoon and the feedback we received after from learners and employers was tremendous.”

“The assessment visit was very professional and the information requested in advance allowed us to plan the day appropriately to maximise the impact and allow us to best showcase our submission.”

“Excellent feedback given at the end of the assessment – this has been a very beneficial experience for us and gave us as an organisation to put both our teams and our learners into the limelight they deserved for a moment, enabling us to thank them – the visit invigorated us to achieve even more!”

“The visit was a very positive experience, including for our students who felt that the assessors were genuinely interested in their experience and the future of the scheme.”

Winning colleges benefit from the high regard in which the awards are held, which is excellent for their reputation and prestige. We work with the winning colleges to run national online, radio and print PR campaigns, which can reach up to 8.5 million people, to promote the winning colleges and their sponsors.

Each year the awards are presented at a prestigious Beacon Awards National Ceremony, to which Ministers and MPs, as well as college staff and principals, sponsors and assessors are all invited.

There is a further opportunity for winning colleges to showcase their approaches at the AoC Annual Conference, where these colleges run breakout sessions so that delegates from other colleges can hear more about the benefits to learners.
Guidance on how to apply for the AoC Beacon Awards

Submitting your Application

The application should be in three parts: The completed application forms, found at the back of this prospectus, are Part 1 and Part 2 of the application. Part 3 is the specification and description of the project which should not include any information to directly identify the college.

Part 1 of the application form asks you to include the college name and contact details for the project and a statement from the Principal/Chief Executive that the AoC Beacon criteria are met by the project. The college name and contact details should appear only on the application form which will be retained by the Beacon Awards office when the submissions are sent off to the assessors. Once the shortlist has been agreed, the Director will provide the assessors with the college's contact details so that they can arrange site visits.

Part 2 of the application form asks you to include the title of the initiative and to state how it fulfils the Beacon criteria in between 50 to 150 words inside the text boxes. It should not be possible to identify your college from the information included in the statements. Part 2 needs to be copied five times and attached at the front of Part 3.

The main part (Part 3) of the submission should be no more than 3,000 words and explicitly demonstrate how the project meets the sponsor's criteria for the award. The submission should include the following:

- the project summary
- aims/objectives of the project
- how the project meets the sponsor's criteria
- project management including its development and QA
- outcomes and benefit to learners
- how key features of the project have/would benefit other colleges.

The section on the outcomes and benefits to learners should include data on enrolments, retention and achievement and learner testimonials/case studies.

Anonymising submissions

Many submissions will need to refer to college partnerships with local authorities, schools, employers etc. Where these organisations are not area/region specific you need not anonymise the partner. For example, if you are working in partnership with your local Tesco's or have a partnership with a St Michael's Primary school then you can refer to them by name. If however you have a partnership with, for example, Levenshulme High School or Liverpool Football Club – an organisation which could mean the college is easily identifiable – then you should refer to them as a local secondary school or a local premiership football club.

Where you wish to include letters from your partners as part of your evidence from beneficiaries, you are requested to conceal the address on the letterhead if it could identify the college and any direct reference to the college by name within the body of the letter. Please ensure that you remove these from a copy of the letter so that the assessors can still see the original if they request to do so on a site visit.

Submissions will be checked by the AoC Beacon Awards office before sending on to the assessors and if there is anything found that could identify your college, they may be returned for that reference to be removed.
Guidance on how to apply for the AoC Beacon Awards

Eligibility of application
Previously shortlisted colleges are eligible to re-apply for the same award. No college which has previously won an AoC Beacon Award will be eligible for consideration a second time for the same award within a period of three years from the previous successful application.

The completed application form (part 1) and FIVE COMPLETE COPIES of parts 2 and 3 i.e. the details of the project with suitable supporting evidence, must be submitted. Up to three of these are sent to the assessors assigned to the award, one goes to the Chief Assessor and the fifth set is retained by the awards office.

Do not send in original samples of evidence from beneficiaries, students’ course work, letters of support etc. The AoC Beacon Awards office cannot accept any liability if these items are lost or damaged.

Guidance on the presentation of submissions
As stated on page 8 of the Prospectus, your application for a Beacon Award should not exceed 3,000 words. A word count is requested on the application form.

Evidence from beneficiaries and appendices should be included within the 3,000 word limit. Many colleges have numerous examples of evidence from beneficiaries, whether these take the form of comments in learner evaluation forms, feedback from partner organisations e.g. employers, schools, local authorities or via solicited and unsolicited letters. Similarly, colleges are likely to have a wealth of supplementary information contained in various college documents.

There are two ways in which colleges can incorporate the evidence into their submission:

1) To ‘lift’ quotes from the forms, letters etc. and put them in the submission to illustrate points or as part of the ‘Outcomes and Benefits’ section. A footnote can be added to indicate that the original documents can be made available to the assessors, should they wish to see them.

2) To include copies of a sample of feedback forms, letters, documents etc, highlighting which words on the page you are including within the word count and again indicating in a footnote that similar examples can be made available to the assessors, should they wish to see them.

Including evidence from beneficiaries is vital to any submission and its omission is one of the main reasons why an application does not make it on to the shortlist. Whatever form it takes, it adds an extra dimension and colour to the submission, helping the assessors see the direct beneficial effect of the college’s work.

Appendices not included in the word count will not be considered by the assessors at the shortlisting stage.

Applicants are also advised to consider presenting information in table format for example, figures on recruitment, retention, achievement, progression or numbers of partners engaged with etc. This uses a minimal amount in terms of the word count and demonstrates to assessors at a glance how your provision has had an impact over time.

Below you will find some further advice on how to apply for the AoC Beacon Awards, based on assessors’ feedback and on some frequently asked questions.

Feedback from applications in previous years
Each year, the assessors are asked to complete selection analysis forms. These are useful for a number of reasons: it means that the Director can give individual feedback to all colleges that applied for the awards, it means that the assessors can identify key trends within each award and
Guidance on how to apply for the AoC Beacon Awards

it means that the Chief Assessor can have an overview of all of the awards and can ensure that they are each assessed to the same standard.

Some of the recurring themes that the feedback forms identify are as follows:

Overall strengths of AoC Beacon Award applications

- Effective and wide ranging partnership work
- College and senior management support for activities and programmes
- Good attention to equality and diversity
- Determination to improve and widen their current provision
- Good use of ICT as a marketing and information tool
- Technological solutions enabling and encouraging professional development
- Sharing best practice with other providers
- Good dissemination through national and regional groups
- Use of commercial, real working environments in the college
- Regular monitoring to ensure success of the project
- Collaboration with schools, sector skills councils, HE and employer organisations
- Promotion of exemplary teaching and learning.

Submissions were found to have the following general shortcomings:

- Lack of examples to illustrate innovative/exemplary teaching and learning
- Insufficient evidence of how projects promote equality and diversity
- Data on learner success and progression unclearly (or not) presented
- Insufficient evidence on how quality assurance has supported the development of the project
- Inadequate evidence to substantiate achievement of the criteria.

Selection analysis forms on all applications dating back to the 2007-2008 Programme are kept at the AoC Beacon Awards office and any college wishing to receive feedback can contact the office to be given it over the telephone. Colleges that have been shortlisted are also invited to contact the Awards office to receive more detailed feedback on their submission and visit. The AoC Beacon Awards Steering Group and its team of assessors are extremely keen to contribute towards the continuing development of all initiatives that are put forward for the awards which is one of the reasons why this feedback is available.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Our course is 12 weeks long and therefore does not run for an academic year. Are we still eligible to apply?
A: Providing the course itself has been running since September 2013 (for example), it doesn't matter if several cohorts of students have undertaken the course since that time and the time you apply. What is important is for you to be able to demonstrate that monitoring the course over time has resulted in improvements.

Q: Our word count is 3,120. Can we still submit our application?
A: The assessors are not going to be too concerned if you are slightly over the word count; however they are asked to take into account all of the criteria when drawing up a shortlist so if there are two submissions of seemingly equal merit and one is within the word limit and the other is over, then they will select the one that is within the word limit to be shortlisted.

Q: Our Principal will be away when the application form needs to be signed. Will our submission still be accepted?
A: It is important that the form is signed by a member of the SMT, preferably the Principal. Your application will be accepted if it is signed by another senior member of the SMT and submitted with a covering letter stating that the Principal is aware and supportive of the application.
Beacon Award Application Form Part 1
You are advised to read page 8 of the prospectus before completing this form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of college</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of funding for this initiative (e.g. EFA, SFA, BIS, DfE, ESF, LEA etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department/Unit/Team etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postcode</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what capacity have you been involved in the initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College switchboard number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of person the assessors can contact over the summer to arrange a visit:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name: Email: Tel:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Beacon Awards Liaison Officer (where this differs from the Applicant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name: Email: Tel:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Assessors will take into account ALL of the Awards’ criteria when evaluating the applications

Your application must state how it meets the specific requirements set out by the sponsors of the particular award for which you are applying (see relevant page in the awards section of the prospectus) and the Beacon criteria (see part 2 of this form).

I accept the conditions set out in the 2015-2016 prospectus. I have read page 8 of the prospectus and confirm this application is not more than 3,000 words and includes details of:

- Project summary
- Aims and objectives
- How the project meets the sponsor’s criteria
- Project management including its development and QA
- Outcomes and benefits to learners (inc data on retention and achievement)
- How key features of the project have/would benefit other colleges

All five copies of the submission must be ANONYMOUS and anything that could identify your college must be removed. The submissions will be checked before sending on to the assessors and may be returned to you if reference to the college is found.

Word count: _____________

Signed by the Applicant ______________________________ Date ___________________

Name of Principal/Chief Executive ______________________________

Signature of Principal/Chief Executive __________________ Date _____________
Please submit ONE copy of Part 1 of the application, FIVE copies of Part 2 and Part 3 of the application (including supporting evidence) by Wednesday 8 July 2015 to the following address:

(Faxes and emails will not be accepted)

Alice Thiagaraj
AoC Charitable Trust Director
2-5 Stedham Place
London
WC1A 1HU

Application form Part 2 continued on the next page
### Beacon Award Application Form Part 2

It should not be possible to identify your college from this part of the form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Initiative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please name the programme area/course to which this initiative relates</td>
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</table>

| Give a brief description of the initiative’s main aims and objectives |

| How would you classify the initiative? e.g. induction scheme, new course or module etc. |

---

**Please state how your initiative fulfils the Beacon criteria in between 50 and 150 words only in the boxes below:**

| It is subject to evaluation/quality assurance which influences the continuing development of the initiative: |
| It has regard to ensuring that equality and diversity are accounted for in all aspects of the programme’s delivery: |
| It has been running for at least one academic session by 31 July 2015:  |
| (you may use fewer than 50 words to address this criterion) |

| It has features which actively promote exemplary teaching and learning: |
**It benefits one or more groups of students or trainees who have been identified and described in the application:**

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**It has wider relevance and applicability which would make it of value to other colleges as an example of good practice and innovation:**

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**It is supported by written evidence from beneficiaries who may be students:**

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**Please copy this form five times and attach one to each copy of your supporting statement.**