

GROUP 1. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING NEEDS

16. The Group considered the four categories of staff identified in the list of tasks, and concluded that the first category, recently appointed staff, should be sub-divided into three groups.

- (a) Inexperienced, lacking professional training
- (b) Experienced, lacking professional training
- (c) Experienced, with professional training

17. The Group set out four main areas of professional needs for all categories of polytechnic staff.

- (a) Pedagogical
- (b) Education Systems
- (c) Resource Centres
- (d) Career Information

Within each main area a number of the most important training needs were identified and analysed for key elements. It was recognised that the list of training needs within each main area was not exhaustive, but represented a selection with a high priority in most polytechnic staff development programmes. Accordingly, the selected needs constituted a model of a training needs audit which could be adapted and enlarged to suit the particular circumstances of any polytechnic.

18. The Group examined appropriate forms of training inputs necessary to sustain in-service staff development programmes based on the model training needs audit. The facilities offered by a well designed and equipped resource centre were considered to be one of the most important forms of training input. Such centres could provide material for staff training in self-instructional and group-learning formats.

19. Participatory activities, such as staff meetings, seminars and workshops formed an important and constant feature of polytechnic business, and the Group identified a number of special skills required for the processes and conduct of these activities. This area of need assumed a special importance for staff moving into senior posts, for example, potential heads of department. The Group suggested that staff development programmes should encourage the use of understudy methods, so that senior staff could counsel their junior colleagues.

20. In drawing up the list of professional training needs and suitable training inputs the Group put forward a number of important factors that could affect the design and operation of a staff development programme:

- (a) Technical teachers reached a critical point in their careers at the end of a five or six year period of service, and a full diagnosis of their future potential should be made at this stage.

(b) Expatriate staff should participate in staff development programmes if such training provided immediate and long-term benefits to the employing institution.

(c) It was important to regard a polytechnic as a totally integrated organisation and this concept should be applied at every stage of the staff development process - design, implementation, evaluation and revision. In this context it was essential to include teaching and non-teaching staff at all levels in the design and operation of staff development programmes.

(d) In addition to improving the performance of individual members of staff, a staff development programme should also make a substantial contribution to the overall efficiency, productivity and cost-effectiveness of an institution's work, through a constant appraisal of linkages between the training needs of different levels and categories of staff. One example of such linkages could be the need to improve the information search skills in teaching staff. Ways to improve such skills should be examined in conjunction with training assessments of library and resource centre staff, in terms of their ability to organise systematic search procedures and to deliver appropriate training to teaching colleagues.