

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

WORKING GROUP REPORTS

26. The Workshop considered the output of both Working Groups and agreed that the assessments of (i) professional training needs and (ii) administrative and managerial training needs should be combined in a comprehensive analysis of typical training needs for a range of occupations in polytechnics. In order to give guidance to participants and staff engaged in the final design of the model training analysis the Workshop produced a number of agreed conclusions based on the Working Group reports.

27. Staff development should be considered as a dynamic process related to:

- (a) The career needs of an individual
- (b) The corporate needs of an institution
- (c) The social and economic needs of the country

28. Programmes of staff development should cater for the needs of staff at all levels in a polytechnic, including technician and service personnel. At all times staff development should be related to and be directly concerned with the overall efficiency, productivity and smooth operation of a polytechnic.

29. A staff development programme should provide incentives for staff to participate in training processes in a full and positive way. Opportunity for promotion was one important incentive, but it was not always possible to offer a member of staff a more senior post immediately after a period of in-service training, particularly if fixed staffing levels applied. In order to prevent frustration and negative attitudes to staff development it would be advisable to give such staff fresh responsibilities within their present posts until a more senior position became available.

30. The loss of qualified staff to industry was a constant problem in polytechnics. Remuneration and conditions of service in industry and commerce were often irresistible attractions to polytechnic staff, and although a two-way exchange between technical education and industry was desirable, it generally worked to the disadvantage of polytechnics. Staff development programmes could increase this loss of qualified staff to industry unless steps were taken to provide responsibilities commensurate with new skills gained from in-service training. Although it was essential to maintain open recruitment policies in order to attract the best candidates, a vigorous internal staff development programme - linked to planned experience - would assist polytechnic staff to meet external competition.

31. Both Working Groups stressed the importance of resource centres in staff development programmes. In addition to providing learning material for students, such centres could be used to produce in-service training packages for staff development purposes. Training for resource centre staff should be related to the development needs of teaching staff, and in this context the resource centre manager - usually a professional librarian - should be regarded as an educator. In small polytechnics the duties of a librarian were often carried out on a part-time basis and this arrangement created a need for special training programmes for multi-activity posts, which could be extended to other jobs of a dual nature - for example a senior lecturer engaged in part-time industrial liaison duties.

32. The Working Groups also covered common ground on training needs related to participatory activities and a number of special skills used in the processes and conduct of meetings, seminars and training sessions were identified. Training for potential department heads in such activities was given a high priority by both Groups and the model analysis of training needs reflected this special requirement.

33. The need for well designed and executed induction programmes was stressed. Such programmes were necessary for existing staff being transferred to new posts, as well as for new entrants to the polytechnic. The design of induction courses should be based on a phased programme of familiarisation with the institution's organisational structure and work processes, using training inputs such as formal training sessions, internal and external visits, staff handbooks, self-learning texts and counselling sessions with senior staff.

34. The question of staff development for expatriate staff was examined in some detail and the Workshop concluded that as the need to employ such staff was likely to continue for the foreseeable future it should investigate ways and means to include such staff in in-service training programmes. The assessment of training needs of expatriate staff should be made on the basis of institutional and national needs. For example, an expatriate member of staff could attend courses at equipment manufacturers prior to a contract, or during leave periods, in order to gain experience on new equipment being supplied to the polytechnic. Another way would be to grant sabbatical leave to long-term expatriates, to undertake studies or projects of direct benefit to the institution.

35. The special training needs of very senior staff could not be isolated from the mainstream of staff development work, although it was recognised that such needs were predominantly in the area of management and administration. The Workshop examined a selection of training needs identified by the Working Groups, together with a number of suggested training inputs. These included visits to industrial organisations in order to study modern management techniques in planning, financial control and industrial relations, and study visits to other technical education institutions. The Workshop stressed the important role of the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA) in the promotion of regional training activities designed to meet the development needs of very senior staff. For example, CAPA could organise high level conferences for principals and vice-principals, in order to share experience and to enable newly appointed heads to benefit from professional contact with long serving colleagues.