

vice-chancellor or holding a comparable educational post but this is not necessarily the only appropriate background for the post. Our recommendation is that the successful candidate is likely to be an educational leader of international stature who combines international experience with knowledge and understanding of the application of distance education in development, excellent interpersonal skills and demonstrated ability in government relations, management and fund-raising. The successful candidate will require the energy, initiative and innovative ability to launch the new organisation.

38 In addition to the president the Agency will require two groups of staff: professional and educational staff concerned with the Agency's main functions (information, training, research and evaluation, communication technology and course development); and administrative, technical and support staff. A proportion of the staff will be on secondment. Beyond the staff of the Agency there will, of course, be many personnel working under contract for specific projects.

39 Where staff are employed at a regional unit, appointment to these posts will be the subject of appropriate regional consultation and of agreement between the host institution at which the unit is housed and the Agency.

40 Staff policies generally will apply the criterion agreed for the Commonwealth Secretariat that, 'the paramount consideration in the selection of staff and in the determination of conditions of service will be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, due regard being paid to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible within the Commonwealth'. The Agency will offer equal opportunities to men and women. Current practice at the Secretariat and at UN agencies is generally to appoint staff on fixed-term contracts and the Agency will also follow this practice.

41 As the Agency headquarters will be in Vancouver we recommend that, following international practice, salaries should be related to salary levels for academic and public service posts in Canada. Actual salary costs to the Agency will need to take account of the tax-exempt status to be sought for the Agency and of the employment of staff on short-term contracts. Where staff are recruited from outside Canada it will be necessary to provide expatriation allowances, passages (including leave passages) for the staff member spouse and children, and transport of personal effects.

42 Where staff are seconded to the Agency headquarters, with their salaries in Vancouver paid by the Agency, a working principle is that there should not generally be marked discrepancies between their net pay and the net pay of core staff. Where staff normally based at the headquarters are employed elsewhere, the principle is that they should not be disadvantaged because of this fact. Where, however, services are provided under contract to the Agency by another institution, we assume that salaries of staff concerned will relate to local conditions and will be of no direct concern to the Agency.

6 SERVICES AND FACILITIES

43 In considering the accommodation and services needed we have assumed that the activities of the Commonwealth of Learning will be decentralised as far as possible. Where the Agency is developing or commissioning materials, much of the work will be undertaken at locations away from the headquarters office. As far as possible it will promote direct exchange between Commonwealth institutions. It will generally buy in production services rather than set up its own facilities.

44 The government of British Columbia has generously offered to provide to the headquarters of the Agency up to 15 000 square feet of office space in central Vancouver for the first five years of the Agency's operation. As far as we can foresee, this will provide ample space and would allow for the employment of up to about 50 staff members. The cost of renting whatever portion is utilised, as the headquarters staff increases, will be part of the proposed contribution in kind from the British Columbia government to the establishment of the Commonwealth of Learning. The Government of British Columbia is prepared to add to its intended cash contribution to the operational budget of the Agency monies realised from the sub-letting of that portion of the total allocated space which is not utilised by the Agency. Canada has also offered to provide communication equipment for the Headquarters office and selected regional units.

45 The headquarters of the Agency will need easy communication, by whatever channels are most appropriate, with all parts of the Commonwealth and facilities to enable it to make use of information and teaching materials communicated to it in any form. These will include telex, electronic mail and facsimile, and facilities for reviewing audiovisual materials and computer software in a variety of formats and arranging for their copying and reproduction. Its communications and audiovisual centre will need to be equipped so that it can handle communications and materials in various different formats (e.g. floppy disks of the main standard sizes and standards; video recordings for PAL, NTSC and possibly SECAM). Facilities will also be required to allow it to take part in exchanges of voice and data with co-operating agencies. Any location where decentralised activities are undertaken for the Agency will similarly require communication facilities on a more modest scale.

46 The Agency will require normal office services including some facilities for printing and reproduction of documents including desk-top publishing. Appropriate arrangements for audit and for legal services will be needed as specified under the headquarters agreement with the Government of Canada.

47 The British Open University has confirmed that it will accommodate the information service of the Commonwealth of Learning. The University has adequate computer facilities and communication links for this service.

48 For a centre in Malta ample accommodation is available in the University of Malta's original building in Valletta which already houses the University's Foundation for International Studies and the International Ocean Institute.

49 Free physical facilities for regional units offered by India and Nigeria will be used for regional co-operative activities that are consistent with emerging policies for future developments of the network.

7 PRIORITIES

50 The Agency's programmes will derive from its purpose and functions, and the priorities they entail (see section 2). In the light of these we are led by the assessment of human resource development needs reported by the Briggs committee, and by our own experience, to suggest certain important activities on which the Commonwealth of Learning could usefully embark. We believe they meet the criteria of appropriateness to socio-economic conditions, considerations of sustainability, relevance to the development priorities of member countries and the existing state of their communication technology, the need to develop institutional capacity, and the enhancement of impact through