

Partnerships and Other Alliances: Case Studies from the Further and Higher Education Sectors

FOREWORD

In recent years there has been major diversification and expansion in the further and higher education sectors. This, in turn, has increased the complexity of institutions' operations and the need to fulfil them both efficiently and effectively. Funding systems have continued to evolve and resources are limited. Therefore, there are strong incentives for institutions to work together and with other partners by entering into partnerships and alliances to assist in meeting their many different challenges.

Partnerships take many forms and raise a whole variety of management challenges. In particular, a new set of skills and competencies are required for those involved in the new organisational arrangements. At the same time, methods of evaluating partnerships and alliances to establish their effectiveness need to be introduced.

Successful partnerships and alliances can be hugely beneficial to institutions and the services to their students, but equally, insufficient prior consideration or poorly operated ones can be extremely costly, have a negative impact on services and become a significant drain on scarce resources.

CIPFA's Further and Higher Education Panel believes that the sectors' institutions could benefit from sharing the experiences of successful partnerships, highlighting the key areas including potential pitfalls and risks. Accordingly, this publication has been developed by describing four very different partnerships and alliances in place in four very different institutions. It also contains a section which develops key themes and provides guidance and advice for institutions that are considering entering into partnerships or alliances, which should be considered alongside the examples shown.

This publication illustrates that universities and colleges are adopting a variety of approaches to forming partnerships and alliances and provides an excellent opportunity for practitioners to learn from colleagues' experiences. We trust it will be of interest and assist with institutions' future developments in this area.

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