



## News Release

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### “Targets Culture” in Further Education Must Change

The current FE planning and funding system distorts the sector’s priorities and hampers its potential to be world class. In particular a widespread “targets culture” encourages a short-term mentality and does not serve the aims of students, employers or the economy as a whole.

These issues are raised by two new reports from the vocational education thinktank, the New Engineering Foundation: “Planning and Funding Cycles for the Further Education Sector” and “Achieving Excellence, Fulfilling Potential”.

Published in the wake of the government’s national skills strategy, “Skills for Growth”, the reports are the result of a series of think tank sessions held earlier this year and attended by college principals, strategic development and funding managers and representatives from the Sector Skills Councils and National Skills Academies.

The NEF welcomes the publication of “Skills for Growth” but states that widespread structural changes are needed if the sector is to fulfil its potential. Key improvements from the reports include improved communication between colleges and government; increased self regulation by colleges; greater awarding powers for colleges, longer term planning and funding structures within the sector and a move towards targeting genuine outcomes and benefits, not numbers.

NEF Chief Executive Sa’ad Medhat said:

*“We welcome the recent national skills strategy, which is an important contribution to the major changes taking place in FE at the moment. However we must ensure that reforms avoid building further complexity into an already Byzantine system. The FE sector is full of talent, but it is compromised by a ‘targets culture’ and a ‘chase the funding’ mentality. We need to simplify the system, and to make sure that the funding and planning structures are aligned with the fundamental aims of the sector, industry and the economy, not working against them.”*

**ENDS**

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