

# Letter of thanks to the sector from Professor David Westbury

JCPSG

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing as Chair of the Joint Costing and Pricing Steering Group to let you know how the work of the group has progressed, and to thank you and your staff for the support you have given to our work during the last four years. I also want to tell you about the further developments in the area of costing and pricing that are being planned by the funding councils, supported by UUK and SCOP.

In 1998, the JCPSG began a four-year programme of work to promote the development of costing and pricing methods in universities and colleges, and to encourage their incorporation into institutions' mainstream management and decision-making processes. That programme comes to an end in July. The programme has been timely and has been taken up, in one form or another, in all institutions. There is, of course, more to do. Interestingly, the UK seems to be leading the world in these developments, as judged by international visitors and the 'hits' on our web-site.

One year into its programme, the JCPSG was commissioned by the Government to take forward the Transparency Review of Funding in Higher Education. This we were happy to do because even though the review focused on accountability and reporting rather than management development, it was better that the costing methods for the review were developed and implemented within the sector rather than being imposed from outside. The programme of development and implementation across the sector has been very successful, as you know. I am enormously grateful to you and your colleagues for their huge support in what was a challenging programme.

The information developed in the Transparency Review about the costs of activities in universities and colleges has been fed into the submissions to the Government's Spending Review 2002 by the funding councils, UUK and the relevant government departments, especially the Department for Education and Skills and the Office of Science and Technology through the Cross-Cutting Review of Science. The impact has been substantial at all levels and I am hopeful that the very real problems of under-funded activities in higher education will be addressed. The government departments involved are impressed that such a difficult task was completed within a challenging timescale, and recognise the commitment and management capability in universities and colleges that has been demonstrated.

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...Letter of thanks continued

What of the future? Consultation by the funding councils earlier this year showed that universities and colleges recognise that there is more to do in the area of costing and pricing, and they have requested further support. In the last few weeks, the funding councils have formally agreed to sponsor and fund a further three years of work by the JCPSG, principally to support the process of embedding the emerging good practice in costing and pricing into management processes. Of particular importance is the issue of pricing. A new group will be formed over the next few months. I have been invited to continue as chair and am delighted to take this on. Continuity is perhaps important, and a programme of work will be drawn up for the early autumn.

Our second National Co-ordinator for Costing and Pricing, Lisa Blackshaw, returns to Manchester Metropolitan University at the end of July. You will perhaps remember that Sue Delve returned to the University of Bristol last November. They have both been crucial to our work and I would like to record my thanks on behalf of the sector. A new appointment will be made in the coming months to support the work for the future. In the meantime, Lisa has agreed to provide continuity.

Importantly, our web-site ([www.jcpsg.ac.uk](http://www.jcpsg.ac.uk)) will continue and will remain as our principal means of communication.

In conclusion, I would like to repeat my thanks for your support for the work of JCPSG 1, and look forward to working with you and your staff on JCPSG 2.

With best wishes,

***Professor David Westbury***  
***Chair of JCPSG***