



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

# **School business manager learning programmes evaluation**

**Technical annex - review of SBM/D end of  
programme satisfaction surveys**

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## Preface

Since this research was completed and the reports finalised, proposals for how school business management (SBM) programmes will run in the future have changed. They will not move to a licensed approach as set out previously.

This new approach brings the SBM programmes into line with the ambition to create a self-improving, school-led system. It represents an exciting opportunity for the profession to take ownership of its leadership development and ensure that the role of school business managers remains as a critical element of effective school leadership and school improvement.

Content from the Certificate of School Business Management (CSBM), Diploma of School Business Management (DSBM) and Advanced Diploma of School Business Management (ADSBM) will be made freely available with the expectation that a number of training providers will run the programmes independently. NCTL will no longer manage the programmes and accreditation will be overseen by the Institute of Leadership and Management.

NCTL used the findings of the evaluation to further develop the school business manager programmes prior to the decision to make the materials freely available. The reports are now being published in order to share the findings with potential training providers.

## Structure of reports

This document is one of a set of reports from the school business manager learning programmes evaluation.

This report is an overview of the end of programme satisfaction surveys administered by NCTL and training providers, completed by participants of the Diploma of School Business Management (DSBM), the Advanced Diploma of School Business Management (ADSBM) and the School Business Director (SBD) programmes.

We recommend that you read all the reports to understand the research fully. These documents are available from gov.uk. The complete set of reports includes the following:

- **Final summary report**

Reviews the evidence from all the research in the light of 3 key questions: the impact on participant development; the impact on participants' schools, and the delivery strengths and weaknesses.

- **Case study report - School Business Manager Programme**

Three case studies focused on the impact of the programmes upon the participants and their role in school or college.

- **Case study report – School Business Director (SBD) Pilot Programme**

Four case studies aimed at providing a cross-section of early experiences in the pilot SBD programme.

- **Case study report - School Business Directors (SBD) in Schools/ Federations in Receipt of a Primary Partnership Grant**

Four case studies aimed at supplementing the early case studies by focussing on those undergoing development as SBDs but also within school collaborations awarded primary partnership grants.

- **Technical annexe – Primary Partnership Data**

High level analysis of the NCTL survey of recipients of primary partnership funding focusing on the understanding the impact of the primary partnership grants.

- **Technical Annexe – Interim report on the evaluation of the school business management (SBM) programme**

The first of the interim analyses from the research, originally written in 2011 and published now to provide supporting information to the final report.

- **Technical Annexe – Final evaluation report of the school business directors pilot**

The final evaluation of the school business directors pilot, written in 2011, focusing on the experience of the two entry cohorts of the SBD pilot programme.

- **Technical Annexe – Impact Assessment**

An assessment of the impact of the Certificate (CSBM), Diploma (DSBM) and Advanced Diploma for School Business Managers (ADSBM) and the School Business Directors (SBD) Programme on the individuals that had undertaken the learning and on their employing institutions.

# 1 Introduction

This short analysis overview looks at the end of programme satisfaction surveys administered by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and their providers, and completed by participants in the Diploma of School Business Management (DSBM), the Advanced Diploma of School Business Management (ADSBM) and the School Business Director programme (SBD).

The Certificate programme (CSBM) was reviewed in detail in the spring of 2013 to explore in detail how respondents had reacted to the change in delivery mode from linear to modular<sup>1</sup>, and is not included here.

Previous surveys have been analysed and reported on as part of the reports Evaluation of the School Business Manager Programme Third Interim Report March 2012 and an earlier interim report in 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> See report Review of Learner Satisfaction with the Certificate of School Business Management (CSBM) Modular Programme, June 2013, HOST Policy Research.

## 2 Methodology note

The data for DSBM is for the four cohorts 0311, 0511, 1011 and 0512. The response rates (based on numbers of starters on the programme) were respectively 72%, 44%, 69% and 51%. Some bias, particularly around satisfaction with the programme, may exist through non-response from some participants and of course, non-completers.

The data for ADSBM is for the three cohorts 1110, 1111 and 0212. The response rates are 35%, 22% and 32%. There were no responses at all for the 0211 cohort, which may mean no participant agreed to complete the survey, but is more likely to mean that the providers did not send the survey out to participants. With relatively low response rates, it is likely that there is some response bias in the data.

The data for SBD is for two cohorts, Pilot 2 and Cohort 3 and the respective response rates are 60% and 70%. With a small number of programme starts, the resulting data should be treated with a certain level of caution, and of course the responses are liable to include the same sources of bias as for the other programmes.

In order to facilitate comparisons between years and programmes, satisfaction is presented as a mean score rather than a profile of percentages of how many indicated a point on a likert scale. Survey responses are on a four point scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is a high level of something (agreement, impact, satisfaction, efficiency) and 4 is either a high level at the opposite level of a spectrum (disagreement) or nothing (no impact for example). Most questions require the respondent to express their level of agreement with a statement and where this is not the case, this is identified.

The mean score is calculated by multiplying each score (1, 2, 3 or 4) by the number of respondents that gave that score, and dividing the total by the total number of respondents<sup>2</sup>. The mean score is interpreted so that the nearer it is to 1, the more positive the finding (strongly agree, high level of impact or satisfaction for example). Given the generally positive responses to questions by respondents, HOST has assumed that any score larger than 2 warrants investigation and/or action. We have assumed equal intervals between points on the scale<sup>3</sup>, allowing some degree of statistical testing.

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<sup>2</sup> Mathematically  $(\Sigma(1*n1)+(2*n2)+(3*n3)+(4*n4)/N)$

<sup>3</sup> For more discussion of this, see <http://www.spss-tutorials.com/assumption-of-equal-intervals/>!

### 3 Satisfaction with programme

The end of programme survey is developed and maintained by NCTL and is administered by them and their providers. It is undertaken shortly after completion and is able to capture participants' satisfaction with a range of facets of their learning experience. Some questions are particular to that programme while others are common across a number of programmes.

Table 1 shows programme satisfaction ratings for all three programmes - DSBM, ADSBM and SBD.

**Table 1: Satisfaction with aspects of the SBM/D programmes**

On a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly agree and 4 is strongly disagree, how far do you agree with the following statements?	DSBM		ADSBM		SBD
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2013
The programme content has been user-friendly and flexible enough to meet my personal needs	1.85	1.75	1.94	1.61	
The webex presentation was a helpful way of summarising key aspects of my learning and personal development	2.21	2.06			
The quality of the programme materials are relevant and stimulating	1.76	1.75	1.88	1.61	1.58
The case studies have enhanced my learning experience	1.78	1.77			
Facilitators are knowledgeable about the programme content	1.59	1.44	1.80	1.42	1.30
The feedback given by facilitators helped me to meet the assessment requirements			2.22	1.69	
Facilitators clearly explain the different elements of the programme	1.64	1.54	2.02	1.46	1.53
Facilitators have provided good support and guidance to me	1.88	1.74	2.24	1.71	1.48
Information and guidance about the assessment process was clear	1.89	1.68	1.92	1.58	1.58
Face-to-face days have met my personal needs and expectations	1.57	1.59	1.71	1.37	1.50
Overall the programme met my expectations	1.53	1.51	1.65	1.29	1.30
Respondents	291	452	51	59	40

*Source: DSBM cohorts 0311, 0511, 1011 and 0512, ADSBM cohorts 1110, 1111 and 0212, SBD cohorts Pilot 2 and cohort 3, end of programme satisfaction surveys*



For DSBM and ADSBM, comparisons with the mean scores calculated in March 2012 are possible. The fact that many scores are reducing for DSBM is positive as this indicates improved satisfaction with aspects of the programme.

- The greatest improvement was seen for the statement 'Information and guidance about the assessment process was clear'.
- The area with least satisfaction is still 'the webex presentation was a helpful way of summarising key aspects of my learning and personal development', and is the only score above 2.00, however this aspect also demonstrated the second highest improvement.
- The only area where the mean score has deteriorated is for 'face-to-face days have met my personal needs and expectations' which has gone down by 0.02 - this is a very marginal change and is not significant statistically.

For ADSBM, all mean scores have reduced between 2012 and 2013, indicating much greater satisfaction with delivery between the two years. In 2012, three indicators had mean scores greater than 2.00, but in 2013, none had a score above this level.

Variations in scores are greater for the ADSBM group as the number of respondents for each year is rather lower than for DSBM.

- The three aspects with mean scores greater than 2.00 were all related to the quality of facilitators and all have shown an improvement of over 0.50, with the greatest improvement for 'facilitators clearly explain the different elements of the programme'.
- The least improvement was for the statement 'the quality of the programme materials are relevant and stimulating' - one of the more highly rated aspects in 2012.
- The best score is for the statement 'overall the programme met my expectations' with 1.29 - a particularly good score.

There is only one set of data available for SBD programme participants, but it can be seen that there are no scores greater than 2.00 and that the overall satisfaction figure for 'overall the programme met my expectations' is nearly as high as for ADSBM at 1.30.

## 4 Impact on personal development

The end of programme surveys also explore a number of aspects of a participant's learning and how that seems to be affecting their effectiveness at work. Table 2 shows those questions that asked respondents to identify how far they agree with a series of statements. These aspects are not covered in the SBD end of programme survey.

**Table 2: Programme outcomes**

On a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly agree and 4 is strongly disagree, how far do you agree with the following statements?	DSBM		ADSBM	
	2012	2013	2012	2013
The programme has enabled me to evaluate my current role as an SBM in relation to my professional skills and abilities	1.44	1.40	1.45	1.27
Being a DSBM participant had enabled me to develop a network of colleagues for sharing ideas and best practise	1.53	1.65		
Being an ADSBM participant had enabled me to develop a network of colleagues for sharing ideas and best practise			1.71	1.47
The programme has given me an understanding of the importance of strategic planning			1.51	1.29
The tutorial session (during phase 3) offered helpful opportunities for reflection and consideration of future personal needs	2.11	1.96		
The module assessments were a helpful way of summarising key aspects of my learning research and personal development			1.82	1.49

*Source: DSBM cohorts 0311, 0511, 1011 and 0512, ADSBM cohorts 1110, 1111 and 0212, end of programme surveys.*

For DSBM, while two of the indicators have improved since 2012, there has been a slight deterioration in the indicator 'being a DSBM participant has enabled me to develop a network of colleagues for sharing ideas and best practice'. The one area where there had been a score of over 2.00 concerned the tutorial session and the score for this had improved.

For ADSBM, all mean scores have improved between 2012 and 2013. For both programmes, the indicator 'the programme has enabled me to evaluate my current role as an SBM in relation to my professional skills and abilities' scored best.

## 5 Improvements in technical proficiency

Participants are asked how far they agreed with a range of statements that relate to improvements in technical proficiency. Many of these differ by programme, ensuring that the questionnaires are relevant to the aims and content of each programme. Table 3 shows a number that are common to the DSBM and ADSBM programmes.

**Table 3: Improvements in technical proficiency (common indicators)**

On a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly agree and 4 is strongly disagree, how far do you agree with the following statements?	DSBM		ADSBM	
	2012	2013	2012	2013
Improved your ability to make key strategic decisions as an SBM	1.58	1.56	1.65	1.41
Improved your understanding of the role of the SBM in improving efficiency	1.51	1.50	1.92	1.58
Developed your understanding of best value for money	1.71	1.68	2.16	1.88
Enhanced your knowledge and understanding of procurement and risk assessment	1.91	1.81	2.08	1.86
Increased your confidence as an SBM	1.40	1.38	1.67	1.27
Personal achievement	1.35	1.32		1.15

*Source: DSBM cohorts 0311, 0511, 1011 and 0512, ADSBM cohorts 1110, 1111 and 0212, end of programme satisfaction surveys*

DSBM participants showed improved indicators for all of the factors in this table, with best scores for increased confidence and personal achievement. There were improvements in all indicators for ADSBM as well, again with particularly high scores for increased confidence and for personal achievement (no comparative data available). While for both courses the indicators for developing understanding of best value and procurement and risk assessment were poorest, there were improvements in the score for both courses as well.

Table 4 shows the improvement in technical proficiency indicators that were specific to DSBM.

**Table 4: Improvements in technical proficiency - DSBM**

On a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly agree and 4 is strongly disagree, how far do you agree with the following statements?	DSBM	
	2012	2013
Extended your understanding of the management of change	1.46	1.44
Increased your understanding of the importance of organisational culture	1.49	1.53
Enhanced your understanding of the school improvement and effectiveness agendas	1.47	1.43
Enabled you to understand the principles of leading and managing school improvement	1.46	1.41
Developed your skills in evaluating school performance	1.51	1.53
Developed your ability to make decisions with regard to resource allocation	1.77	1.68
Improved your ability to manage change	1.65	1.67
Enabled you to make effective changes in organisational culture	1.88	1.83
Enabled you to reflect on and evaluate your effectiveness in leading school improvement	1.69	1.65
Improved your ability to contribute to the leadership of school improvement	1.62	1.61
Improved your ability to apply the principles of value for money and financial accountability	1.79	1.71

*Source: DSBM cohorts 0311, 0511, 1011 and 0512 end of programme satisfaction surveys*

The differences in indicators between 2012 and 2013 are very marginal - less than 0.1 in all instances and therefore not significant. The indicator that scores the best in 2013 is 'enabled you to understand the principles of leading and managing school improvement' (no change from 2012), while the indicator that scores least well is 'enabled you to make effective changes in organisational culture' - again no change from 2012.

Table 5 shows the improvement in technical proficiency indicators that were specific to ADSBM.

**Table 5: Improvements in technical proficiency - ADSBM**

<b>On a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly agree and 4 is strongly disagree, how far do you agree with the following statements?</b>	<b>ADSBM</b>	
	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Increased your understanding of organisational theory and its application to education	1.69	1.44
Enabled you to evaluate critically current/recent changes in the education system in the UK	1.71	1.56
Enabled you to reflect on the role of the SBM in the context of rapid organisational change	1.57	1.39
Improved your knowledge and understanding of the leadership of organisations	1.69	1.44
Improved your understanding of managing strategic finances	2.02	1.83
Helped you to understand the value of research skills to enhance aspects of your work	1.67	1.42

*Source: ADSBM cohorts 1110, 1111 and 0212 end of programme satisfaction surveys*

All the technical proficiency indicators for ADSBM have improved since 2012, although the indicators with the best and worst scores remain the same - 'enabled you to reflect on the role of the SBM in the context of rapid organisational change' was best and 'improved your understanding of managing strategic finances' was worst.

Table 6 shows the improvement in technical proficiency indicators that are specific to SBD.

**Table 6:Improvements in technical proficiency - SBD**

<b>On a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly agree and 4 is strongly disagree, how far do you agree with the following statements?</b>	<b>SBD</b>
	<b>2012</b>
Deepened understanding of policy context of SBM	1.43
Enhanced ability to provide strategic direction	1.40
Used the programme to raise professional profile	1.55
Enhanced understanding of system leadership	1.40
Empowered to lead further development of SBM as a profession	1.55
Extended expertise in providing consultancy	1.80
Contributed to the knowledge base of the SBM role	1.55
Experience has helped clarify further career aspirations	1.55

*Source: SBD cohorts Pilot 2 and cohort 3 end of programme satisfaction surveys*

There is no comparative data for SBD. The indicator that scored best was 'enhanced ability to provide strategic direction', while the indicator that scored least well was 'extended expertise in providing consultancy'. No indicators had a mean score greater than 2.00, and in no instance did participants strongly disagree with any of the indicator statements.

## 6 Impact within school

It is really too early to gauge the impact that the participant's learning has had on their colleagues and their school on completion of the programme - this is better followed up a year or 18 months after completion<sup>4</sup>. However the end of programme survey does include a small number of indicators of potential impact, the scores for which are set out in Table 7.

**Table 7: Impact on colleagues and efficiency**

On a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly agree and 4 is strongly disagree, how far do you agree with the following statements?	DSBM		ADSBM		SBD
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2013
The programme has enabled me to further develop the internal training of colleagues for who I am responsible	1.88	1.82	2.10	1.66	
Had an impact on colleagues and pupils/students					1.54
Has enabled me to have an positive impact on efficiency within school	1.62	1.60	1.80	1.58	1.50
Organisation that I work for has benefited from this programme					1.58
Numbers of respondents	291	452	51	59	40

*Source: DSBM cohorts 0311, 0511, 1011 and 0512, ADSBM cohorts 1110, 1111 and 0212, SBD cohorts Pilot 2 and cohort 3, end of programme satisfaction surveys*

For all programmes there is a generally positive rating for enabling the participant to have a positive impact on efficiency within their school. The lowest rating for this was for ADSBM in 2012, but the rating has improved for 2013, though not by a particularly significant amount.

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<sup>4</sup> See for example the report School Business Manager Learning Programmes Impact Assessment, October 2013, HOST Policy Research.

## 7 Conclusions and issues for future consideration

Overall participants who responded to the end of programme surveys were satisfied with the programmes as they were delivered. Face-to-face and group activities are particularly appreciated as they help the participants develop a network of colleagues with the same experiences and job roles, which can provide support into the future. Satisfaction with facilitators has improved since the last round of analysis.

Programmes continue to meet participant needs in terms of professional development and giving the knowledge, skills, experience and confidence to undertake the role of school business manager. Both DSBM and ADSBM programmes scored particularly highly on their ability to improve confidence and give a sense of personal achievement. The different technical knowledge imparted by each programme seems to have been well received and taken on board by respondents, however this is an area where the low response rates for ADSBM in particular may involve some bias in response.

The suite of end of programme satisfaction surveys is able to give a good picture of how well the programme met the learners' development needs through its delivery and their personal learning impressions. It is less well suited to assessing the impact of the programme on the employing schools. While there are indications that participants have been able to improve efficiency in their institution, this needs to be explored in more depth, as was done in the graduate impact survey.

There are a number of questions posed that need to be reviewed as the data can be collected more efficiently through the utilisation of categories and drop boxes. The survey for SBD needs to be reviewed to ensure that where drop boxes are used, respondents are not able to change the meaning of those boxes. The open questions need to be reviewed to ensure they do not overlap and do not allow the provision of overly long responses.

There also needs to be consistency between surveys where possible to enable satisfaction comparisons - for example the SBD questionnaire could include questions on confidence and personal achievement. The end of survey questionnaires include very limited information on the participant, which when evaluated in isolation from other NCTL and Department for Education management information, makes it difficult to make any assertions about school stage or type. Either the survey needs to collect this information (and in a highly managed manner) or NCTL need to match responses to management information to provide these analysis variables.

These surveys are an invaluable tool for NCTL, but need to be reviewed and analysed in a very timely manner to ensure that issues are spotted and dealt with early. Shortening and simplifying the questionnaires will facilitate this process, as will the use of more drop boxes for responses that can be pre-coded.





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