



Gastonville College: Exercise Description

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Gastonville College

Background

This analysis and negotiation exercise has been designed to investigate how participants behave in a group discussion to decide how to merge two existing educational colleges into one regional centre called Gastonville College. The exercise is suitable for middle to senior managers and is an 'assigned role' group negotiation exercise where participants are split into two groups, each representing the senior management team of a college.

The exercise tests the capacity of candidates to quickly get to grips with a brief, construct and communicate good arguments and work cooperatively with others to achieve an agreed consensus. The exercise is set in context of further education colleges, but the issues are relevant to any organisational restructure.

The competencies that are relevant to this exercise and can be used as rating dimensions are as follows:

Team Orientation

Strategic Perspective

Organisation

Change Orientation

Users may substitute versions of the competencies above from their own existing competency framework as desired.

A five minute briefing is required in which candidates are provided with their materials and assigned their group roles. This is followed by 20 minute initial meetings (one for each team) to read through their materials and privately agree a strategy for the subsequent discussion. The two groups then join together to hold a 25 minute meeting to negotiate towards an agreed outcome. Participants are required to briefly present the outcome at the end of the exercise. We recommend that the exercise is run with a maximum of 10 participants – but preferably smaller – split into two groups.

Exercise Content

The 7 page participant brief provides all of the background information including extracts for each college's submission to the educational funding committee. This includes location of premises and capacity and details of student numbers across various academic departments as well as performance ratings. The instructions to participants outline the scenario as follows:

“Gastonville College of Further and Higher Education is the name of a new College to be formed through the amalgamation of two colleges..... As part of the process of amalgamation it is necessary to review the current provision and structure of the two colleges with a view to making recommendations about the structure of the new organisation

Your brief is to review the academic provision of the 2 colleges so as to propose a new structure and location of academic departments, and contribute to the accommodation strategy and plan. The Governors have stated that it is vital to capitalise on strength in provision so as to provide a platform for retaining and expanding

In addition, the Governors are seeking advice over both any opportunities arising from the merger, and any particularly difficult issues and how they might be overcome.”

Assessor Brief

The Assessor Brief provides background information (i.e. an Overview, Relevant Competencies, Timing, Exercise Materials and Key Issues). A separate full set of Administration Instructions is provided. General advice is provided on observing and rating the exercises, along with rating guidelines, and details of how to conduct a Post Exercise Review.

Quantities

The Administration Pack contains the following items:

- 12 Participant Briefs
- 2 sets of Admin Instructions
- 12 Observation Sheets
- 12 Rating Forms
- 4 Assessor Briefs

After initial purchase of the Admin Pack, a Refill Pack may be purchased which contains the following consumable items:

- 12 Participant Briefs
- 12 Observation Sheets
- 12 Rating Forms

Current pricing can be determined by reference to <http://www.sr-associates.com/pricing.html>

If desired, further queries as to the exercise demands and content can be made to:

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