

**AIMS (Academic Institutions  
Management Services):**

- ◆ a Higher Education management support service, based at the University of Liverpool
- ◆ created more than thirty years ago specifically to serve the higher education sector
- ◆ until recently, use of the service was restricted to its member universities. Those services are now available to non-member institutions, who can take advantage of the specialist skills and knowledge of the AIMS consultants
- ◆ non-member institutions can apply for membership or associate membership of AIMS, or commission individual assignments
- ◆ for more information about the services of AIMS or for details about membership or the commissioning of assignments, please contact:

**Mr Lionel Ross (Director) AIMS, The University, Liverpool L69 7ZU**

**telephone: 0151-794 3132**

**fax: 0151-794 3133**

**email: [jlross@liv.ac.uk](mailto:jlross@liv.ac.uk)**

**website: <http://www.aims.ac.uk/>**

## **Trial Membership Offer: a Second Opportunity**

**If you thought you had missed the boat the first time around - take heart! The offer of cut price trial membership is being repeated by AIMS. Trial membership is available to all Higher Education Institutions situated in Scotland, northern England, North Wales and the Midlands. Two levels of trial membership are again on offer: full trial membership, which provides 40 consultancy days for a subscription of £10,000; and reduced trial membership, which provides 20 consultancy days for a subscription of £6,000.**

As before, trial members will receive all the services and privileges of full members of AIMS, which include the undertaking of reviews; the facilitation of internal reviews; the provision of advice and guidance on an *ad hoc* basis; free access to good practice guides published by AIMS; free access to reports commissioned by other member institutions, subject to their approval; and representation at meetings of the AIMS Management Committee.

Institutions will enjoy the highly professional services of AIMS at a charge rate that is half, or less than half, the fees charged to non-member institutions. Furthermore, while it is our hope and expectation that institutions that have sampled the impressive quality of our service will be attracted towards full membership of AIMS, the trial membership offer is without commitment.

A particular strength of AIMS is our extensive knowledge, experience and understanding of HEIs and relevant best practice. In addition, we are able to provide impartial and objective advice and to act as an honest broker - an increasingly vital commodity amid the polarised stances of resource centres and senior academic and administrative officers, as they compete for ever decreasing funding and facilities.

## Good Practice Guides

We have published a number of good practice guides. Distribution of most of the guides is restricted to our members, but some are available for purchase by non-member institutions.

### Open Guides

Two guides are available to non-members. Our guide on Computerised Timetabling was featured in a previous issue of AIMING AHEAD. It has been widely distributed to delegates at seminars and conferences. It has also been purchased separately by institutions.

The guide discusses the benefits and potential problems of using computerised timetabling systems. Topics covered in detail include:

- ◆ specification development
- ◆ selection of software
- ◆ organisational issues
- ◆ implementation.

There is a detailed case study and five smaller case studies, a glossary of terms and summaries of two surveys undertaken by AIMS, which include the comments of customers on several different systems.

Computerised Timetabling - A Guide to Good Practice: May 2000 - Price: £4.99

The second good practice guide available to non-members relates to the Strategic Review of Administrative Processes.

The guide explains the methodology and conduct of internal reviews of non-academic services, and covers the following issues:

- ◆ management and control of reviews
- ◆ the review process
- ◆ methods of investigation
- ◆ critical analysis
- ◆ process mapping
- ◆ activity value analysis
- ◆ process improvement.

The Strategic Review of Administrative Process: A Guide to Good Practice (February 2001) - Price: £4.99

---

To order copies of either of the good practice guides described above, send a cheque (payable to The University of Liverpool) to AIMS at the address shown overleaf.

### Restricted Access Guides

The other good practice guides are only available for member institutions. However, trial members have free access to all of our good practice guides. A flavour of the contents of another two of our guides is given below.

#### *PC Maintenance*

The publication of this good practice guide was prompted by a review of PC maintenance arrangements at one of our member institutions.

The guide compares the benefits and disadvantages of three options:

- ◆ providing an in-house service;
- ◆ outsourcing PC maintenance to an external organisation; and
- ◆ framework agreements with PC suppliers.

The difficulties relating to fault diagnosis in the grey area between hardware and software is acknowledged and discussed in the guide.

#### *Estates Maintenance*

We have undertaken reviews of the management and control of building and estates maintenance at several of our member institutions.

This guide identifies and discusses good practice in respect of a range of important areas, including:

- ◆ competitive awareness
- ◆ direct labour v outsourcing
- ◆ service level statements
- ◆ help desks
- ◆ job costing and monitoring.