



## Application to the Big Projects Fund

**Project Name:** Employer Engagement in the Creative Industries in Herefordshire

**Project Manager:** Richard Heatly, Hereford College of Arts

**Document Version:** 1

### Document Distribution:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action/Information</i>
Helen Vine	HCA	Progression Manager	For information
Jim Walmsley	HCA	Vice Principal	For information
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## 1 Background

In the context of the need to develop higher level skills (Leitch), employer engagement in vocational education (HEFCE co-funding), the importance and rapid growth of the Creative Industries both nationally (Creative Britain: DCMS 2008), regionally (Regional Skills Survey on Creative Industries: LSC 2007; Talent2Market: LSC/CCS/Skillset 2008) and locally (Herefordshire Creative Industries Questionnaire Report 2006), this project would research employers' needs in the creative and media sector and develop innovative and practical ways of engaging them in work based and related HE learning. It would also suggest models for how the challenging targets for the engagement of employers in the delivery of WBL/WRL in the 14-19 Diplomas could be realistically met in this sector which is recognised as particularly problematic (micro-businesses, graduate / high skills entry level etc) in a way that could support progression into HE vocational courses. Innovative solutions will be needed in both FE and HE in order to realise ambitions for employer engagement in ways acceptable and effective for both parties. There is a need to find ways to address the development of employer co-funded HE provision which is recognised as particularly problematic in the creative industries sector: further research and models of employer engagement coupled with innovative delivery packages will start to respond to this.

## 2 Objectives of the Project

- To research and identify the key needs and skills gaps of employers in the creative and media sectors within the research area (Herefordshire and the neighbouring areas of Worcestershire eg Malverns) and the best ways to engage them in providing relevant learning experiences
- To establish realistic and deliverable models for work experience and employer engagement within 14-19 Diplomas and FE vocational courses (NDs) at FE Colleges
- To develop progression routes and linkages from work experience / placement / engagement at 14-19/FE vocational level to the corresponding aspects of HE level study

- To develop models of employer engagement through WBL/WRL etc in HE courses
- To develop innovative ways of delivering relevant needs through shorter accredited skills based modules or courses that could stand within existing FdA course structures and also be eligible for future credit based funding and encourage progression within a CATS framework
- To outline models for the future development of employer co-funded provision

### **3 Project Approach**

- Delivery of the project would be through the appointment of a 0.5FTE member of staff to undertake the research, produce the report and develop models for delivery working with relevant curriculum staff in HCA. This appointment could also be 6 months FT following an initial review of available data and research, and potential secondment opportunities to the role
- Preliminary mapping of existing data and research on range and types of creative and media industries in the area, economic regeneration priorities and industry needs
- Employer research through email, personal interview, questionnaire and focus groups leading to establishing of employer liaison group(s)
- Development of delivery models for employer engagement and meeting skills needs

### **4 Scope:**

#### **A Key Products from the project**

- A network of employers prepared to work with HCA in a specialist cluster group or groups
- Research findings for dissemination to LLN partners
- Progression partners for higher level study linkages
- Models for employer engagement in the Creative Industries sector relevant to local needs
- A number of credit based skills modules
- A progression agreement for students completing the courses (linking to LLN CATS development)

#### **B Out of Scope**

- Marketing of courses developed
- Validation or approval costs

### **5 Constraints**

- The majority of the local employers are micro businesses
- Participation of employers in developing models of engagement
- It will be necessary to obtain approval from the relevant partner university for any validated awards
- The success of the courses will be dependent on recruitment
- Area of low population which may constrain recruitment and participation in specialised provision
- Delivery as separately funded modules dependent on progress with credit based funding by HEFCE (though they could still be funded as part of part time validated awards)

## 6 Initial Project Case

- The funding will enable the appointment of dedicated staff time to undertake a significant amount of research and development, involving a large number of individual meetings and networking with micro business employers/practitioners.

## 7 Benefits of the Project

Benefits to the student:

- Development of practical higher level skills courses which will be recognised by employers and could lead to employment within the region
- Development of additional vocational learning and progression opportunities within Herefordshire
- Realistic, accredited career development opportunities for employees that could be co-funded with employers, with the potential for progression to higher level of study

Benefits to the employers:

- Input into assessment of skills needs
- Networking opportunities with other employers and college staff
- Development of courses providing practical skills as required

Benefits to the LLN :

- Contribution towards achievement of the targets for development of additional number of students entering HE with vocational qualifications in Sport, Tourism, Heritage, Culture and Media
- Improving quality of research on employers' needs within sector
- Involving employers in the development of specific curriculum
- Supporting FE/HE progression by adding value to non-traditional pathways
- Supporting network development
- Linkages to specialist Skills Sector Groups within the creative industries through HCA membership of NALN (National Arts Learning Network)
- Development of progression agreements in support of CATS

## 8 Key Assumptions

- Availability of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to undertake the research and development work
- Adequate timeframe allowed to complete the project
- Employers are willing and available to engage in research and development

## 9 Costs

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Appointment of Creative Enterprise Officer:     | £14,500                      |
| • On-costs including appointment costs:           | £3,000                       |
| • Expenses (travel, hospitality etc):             | £1,500                       |
| • Teaching staff time for curriculum development: | £2,250                       |
|   | <u>TOTAL</u> £21,250         |
| • <u>Big Project Grant applied for:</u>           | <u>£15,000</u>               |
| • Amount to be supported by HCA:                  | £6,500 (30% of project cost) |

## 10 Project Timescale

(assuming 0.5 appointment; alternative timescale would be 6 months full time, dependent on availability of suitable candidate)

- Appointment: July 2008
- Desk research: August 2008
- Employer research: March 2009
- Course development: June 2009
- Completion: July 2009

## 11 How will the project be evaluated?

- Number of employers engaged
- Employers' group(s) formed and meeting
- Number of employers engaging with WBL/WRL
- Number of students engaging with employers through WBL/WRL
- Number of students studying on and completing courses
- Progression to further study opportunities or employment

## 12 How will the project be sustained?

- Continued consultation with employers' group(s) to provide input to full range of HCA HE courses
- HCA will continue to deliver WBL/WRL on models developed
- Continued delivery of HE skills at HCA either as part of validated courses or as stand-alone CATS modules

## 13 Which aims, outcomes and/or targets will the project achieve for the HWLLN? Please also state which funding criteria this project meets and how.

- HWLLN aims: the project will support the delivery of the following aims:
  1. To increase the numbers of students entering higher education with vocational qualifications (*specialist work-related employer engagement on vocational courses, linked to WBL/WRL in higher level study, will support progression*)
  2. ~~To increase the number of part time students entering higher education whilst continuing employment~~ (*this might be better supported once HE funding by credit is introduced*)
  3. To help the target groups of students succeed in higher education (*through development of employer-related models of WBL/WRL that will lead into career development opportunities by addressing real industry needs*)
  4. To facilitate a change in the design and delivery of curriculum in H & W to meet the needs of the target students (*through innovative models of WBL/WRL actually supported by the industry*)
  5. To involve employers in the development, design and delivery of curriculum where possible (*research and establishment of employer networks leading to innovative curriculum skill delivery models*)
  6. To provide a bridge between FE and HE for students, staff, employers, institutions (*models of employer engagement supported by employers across the FE/HE levels*)
  7. ~~To assist in the provision of clear information for all interested parties in the region~~
  8. To provide a wide-ranging network and infrastructure of communication (*specialist employer networks to be established*)

- Criteria for Big Project Fund:
  1. The fund is open to all members of the network (defined by having signed the Memorandum of Association), although priority will be given to FE colleges in recognition of HEFCE's expectations for the role of FECs in vocational learning and Centres of Excellence for HE in FE. *(HCA is an FE member of the network)*
  2. All projects must meet an identified aim, outcome or target of the HWLLN as published in its delivery plan on the project website. *(see aims above)*
  3. All bids should be linked to curriculum development and create a new programme or new mode of delivery of learning. *(project will deliver models for employer engagement in a problematic and difficult specialist sector, and will develop new credit based short skills modules that are accessible to a variety of routes/modes of delivery)*
  4. All bids should have sustainable outcomes. *(addressing real skills needs and employment opportunities, courses should therefore be attractive and sustainable)*
  5. In addition to the criteria listed 1-4 above, the bids should meet one of the following, listed in order of priority for the first round of awards:
    - Does the project provide new links, or strengthen existing links with employers, resulting in new modules or courses or accreditation of existing training? *(yes – specific focus on employer links leading to new accredited course elements)*
    - Does the project make courses more accessible to students in employment (this might be by, for example, 'chunking up' a course, introducing a revised pattern of delivery, introducing substantial e learning)? *(yes: accumulation of credit on part-time courses through discrete modular packages will be accessible to those in employment; if HEFCE responds to Government calls to fund by credit, shorter accredited modules will be more attractive as stand-alone elements but part of HWLLN CATS development)*
    - Will the project result in more students with vocational qualifications entering HE, by introducing new progression opportunities, or by providing newly developed IAG? *(improved employer engagement at FE and HE will provide better employment/career prospects, and will therefore be attractive to those on vocational programmes)*
    - Does the project enable joint working between two partner institutions? *(this could be possible though not proposed at this point: outcomes will be disseminated to members on HWLLN)*

## 14 Initial Risk Log

The following table summarises the risks that have been identified that may prevent the project being completed to the required quality, budget and timescale. The probability and impact of each risk has been graded as low, medium or high to indicate the relative importance attached to each element of risk.

Risks	Probability	Impact	Containment Plan
Suitable staff unavailable to undertake project	L	H	Re-advertise; offer as secondment opportunity across LLN
Insufficient employer response to support research	M	H	Use of existing networks eg Media Dev developed by Rural Media Company; Creative Industries network

			developed by Herefordshire Council etc.
Insufficient career development routes for graduates within local economy	M	M	Further exploration of progression agreements to higher level study as alternative outcomes; research into wider regional needs and demand
Courses/modules not successfully validated	L	H	Monitoring of course proposal development; pre-validation meetings with link university staff; consultation with external and employer advisors throughout process
Insufficient employers prepared to engage in delivery of WBL/WRL	M	M	Thorough demand research; contingency plan and timescale for course approval; networking and communication to ensure that benefits to employers are realised

## 15 Project Team

- Jim Walmsley – Vice Principal (overall responsibility for curriculum development)
- Helen Vine – Progression Manager
- Creative Enterprise Manager – to be appointed
- Mark Jackson – Programme Manager Media Arts– to consult and collaborate on curriculum development
- Del Done – Programme Manager Art and Design– to consult and collaborate on curriculum development