



Application to the Big Projects Fund

Project Name: Development of accessible Higher Education for the land based, tourism, sport and rural craft heritage sectors of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and beyond

Project Manager: Rob Dunn

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Document Distribution:

Name	Location	Responsibility	Action/Information
Fazal Dad	HCT	Deputy Principal	Information
Ruth Johnston	HCT	Assistant Principal, Community Studies, HE Co-ordinator	Information
Adrian Morris	HCT	Assistant Principal, Technology	Information
Rob Dunn	HL	Assistant Principal, LBS	Project lead

Steering Group

Geoffrey Elliot	UW	Steering Group	To approve proposal
Chris Morecroft	WCT		
Ian Peake	HCT		
Mike Rookes	OU		
Gail Rothnie	UoB		

1 Background

HCT is the main provider of vocational further education for the county of Herefordshire and we are now seeking to develop our higher education provision using the staff and physical resources based at the newly acquired Holme Lacy Campus. Holme Lacy is a long established provider of education and training for land based studies, tourism, sport and rural craft heritage. Our aim is to found a comprehensive portfolio of HE programmes at Holme Lacy with one or more of our HE partners, for the people and businesses of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and beyond.

Our current FE provision at Holme Lacy is comprehensive covering 17 occupational areas between levels 1 and 3. We have much experience in FE curriculum development and as such are currently working with Herefordshire Council and schools across the county having taken a lead on development of the new “Diploma in Environmental and Land Based Studies”.

However, our current involvement in HE is limited and as such we are requesting financial assistance to support the development of the HE curriculum to:

1. Ensure progression opportunities for all our level 3 students

2. Widen participation to those who for a variety of reasons have yet to “aim higher”

2 Objectives of the Project

- To support the development of distinctive HE qualifications
- To establish innovative and accessible higher education opportunities for all
- To equip participants with the skills needed by industry and employers
- To increase participation in higher education
- To establish a systematic team approach to HE curriculum development at Holme Lacy
- To maximise potential of the college estate, the rural craft centre, the equine and animal care facilities at Holme Lacy for the benefit of all

3 Project Approach

A small project steering group will oversee the work of a project development team comprising course tutors, link tutors and specialists, tasked with development of a new suite of modern Foundation Degrees in a range of subjects to include land based, tourism, sport and rural heritage crafts. The project will pay particular attention to maximising the benefits of knowledge transfer from research carried out in the following areas:

- HE in the FE environment
- Accessibility/ flexibility in delivery and blended learning methodology
- e-learning to access information and to support delivery & distance learning
- Employer and other stakeholder engagement to establish priorities for content, modes of delivery and work experience opportunities
- Additional learning support
- Retention of HE students

4 Scope:

A Key Products from the project

- A new suite of foundation degrees in land based studies, tourism, sport and rural craft heritage, to advantage the people and businesses of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and beyond
- Curriculum that can be aligned with elements of other HCT HE provision for example research, work based learning, business, tourism, and science units
- A curriculum that places emphasis on sustainability of the environment
- Employer liaison groups for each of the occupational areas
- Partnerships with other stakeholders for example HEIs, FdF, and SSCs
- A well informed and responsive HE curriculum development team
- Dissemination of experiences to HWLLN partners through networking/consultancy
- Registered students to count towards LLN targets
- Articulation agreements with HEIs

B Out of Scope

- None

5 Constraints

- Self imposed time constraints for the introduction of new programmes
- Capacity of a small teaching team to dedicate time for curriculum delivery

6 Initial Project Case

- A successful bid would be used to fund the release of staff to carry curriculum development work, to 'buy in' consultancy expertise to support the developments and to fund the direct running costs of employer engagement events

7 Benefits of the Project

Herefordshire is a sparsely populated rural county in which the land based, tourism, sport and rural heritage sectors play an important part in the maintenance of a healthy local economy. In line with Government priorities we plan to increase participation in higher education by improving accessibility. In particular we aim to provide a service to a range of private business and public sector organisations that include and encompass agriculture, horticulture, forestry, countryside and the environment, rural craft heritage, equine, tourism and small animal industries including veterinary nursing. For the majority of programmes an emphasis will be placed upon the leadership, management and business skills needed by these sectors.

Our HE programmes will offer progressing level 3 16-19s and adults the opportunity to acquire modern qualifications, occupational expertise and independent learning skills that will benefit local employers, businesses and the labour market. In the context of the land based, tourism, sport and rural craft industries Herefordshire is a rich county and as such we anticipate a healthy demand for modern, accessible HE qualifications.

8 Key Assumptions

- Employers and other stakeholders will be available and willing to engage and contribute to the development of new programmes
- There is adequate intellectual capacity and creative endeavour within the current staff of Holme Lacy to establish innovative programmes
- Financial support will be available to help a new team of staff to utilise and benefit from the knowledge transfer of available research and to develop the very best HE curriculum

9 Costs

(This should include the commitment of the organisation to pay 20% of the costs)

- Project co-ordinator: 2 hours per week for 60 weeks at £50.00 per hour = £6,000.00
- Project team: 3 HE course tutors remitted for 60 hours at £50.00/hour = £9,000.00
- Consultancy: 10 days at £300/day = £3,000.00
- Employer engagements events: £750.00

Total: £18,750.00

LLN Support 80%: £15,000.00

HCT 20% commitment: £3,750.00

10 Project Timescale

- To span two academic years (60 weeks)
- Start: July 2008
- Finish: July 2010

11 How will the project be evaluated?

- Measured against milestones agreed in the planning phase
- Qualitative and quantitative information will be used to inform judgments
- The HEI validation process will provide commentary on the quality of the submission
- HCT self assessment processes will report on the effectiveness of the project

12 How will the project be sustained?

- The products of the project will be long lived and self perpetuating through the validation and programme review processes
- The newly established curriculum development team will maintain a momentum of planned validations for 4 years – 2 years beyond the initial 2 year project
- HE curriculum development will be a dynamic process i.e. established as routine and ongoing practice

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.

All HWLLN stated aims within the development plan will be achieved upon successful completion of the project.

Contribution to HWLLN targets: (sequential to outcomes/outputs listed in the development plan)

- Increased student numbers: 40 FTEs for 2009-2010 (20 in heritage, 20 in Leadership and Management), of which 25 16-19s will be progressing from L3 (2009-2010)
- Staff development: 8 HCT staff engaged in HE curriculum development/validation
- Additional courses: 2 new courses in 2009-2010, 2 new courses for 2010-2011
- Existing courses revised: 1 programme to be revised for 2009-2010
- 2 new programmes to include study time during holiday and weekend periods
- Improved communication between partners: Publication of project materials to partners and dissemination of experiences
- New provision in heritage, sport, tourism and leadership & management
- 30 employers to be invited to future HE Fairs
- 5 progression/articulation agreements with partner HEIs by the end of the project
- Curriculum map to demonstrate progression opportunities between all the levels to be published electronically
- HEI link tutor(s) invited to participate in development meetings for the Environmental and Land based Studies Diploma
- Progression opportunities will be made available for those engaged in Train to Gain
- E learning will have a high profile within course design
- Blended learning will be a feature of all newly validated programmes to ensure accessibility and diversity of learning opportunity

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
Time constraints of project team	M	H	Effective planning and project co-ordination
Cannot find the appropriate 'in house' person for project co-ordinator	L	H	Establish job role, invite expressions of interest and appoint. Advertise externally if necessary. Set clear targets and hold regular progress reviews
HE growth is rapid and we are not prepared or equipped with the facilities and resources, including accommodation, to provide a high quality service	M	H	Ensure the project encompasses a more detailed risk assessment and that HCT is responsive to growth
We underestimate the impact of HE in the FE environment	M	H	Fully embed our HE strategy in to the college strategic plan

15 Project Team

Project Steering Group

- Rob Dunn, Project Leader
- Ruth Johnston, HE Co-ordinator
- Project Co-ordinator (TBA)
- Consultant (TBA)
- HE Link Tutor(s)

Project Development Team

- Project Co-ordinator (TBA)
- Charlotte Gibb, Agriculture, Forestry, Horticulture
- Julie Balsom, Tourism, Sport and Outdoor education
- Adrian Legge, Rural and Heritage Crafts
- Lucy Jones, Animal Care
- Charlotte Churchill, Tourism
- Emma Ball (ILT Co-ordinator)