



**MINUTES OF THE STEERING GROUP MEETING  
HELD ON TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER 2009 AT 10.30AM (UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER)**

**ATTENDEES**

Professor Geoffrey Elliott (Chair)	Director of Regional Engagement, University of Worcester
Mrs Debbie Lambert	Manager of the LLN for H&W
Mr Chris Morecroft	Principal, Worcester College of Technology
Mr Ian Peake	Principal, Herefordshire College of Technology
Mr Mike Rookes	Director, Open University (West Midlands)
Mrs Gail Rothnie	Head of Outreach, University of Birmingham
Miss Donna Obrey (Secretary)	Project Officer for LLN for H&W

**1. Apologies**

None

**2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record and the Group noted the Matters Arising paper.

**3. Chair's Business**

DL advised that official confirmation had been received from HEFCE to extend the LLN to December 2010. Staff contracts have already been extended as follows:

- Viv Bell – to July 2010
- Cath McGourty & Colin Wood – to August 2010
- Donna Obrey, Debbie Lambert & Liz Davies-Ward – to December 2010

**4. Budget Update**

DL acknowledged that the Group had not received a budget update as it had not been possible to meet with the Finance Liaison in time for this meeting. The budget update will be circulated to the Steering Group once confirmed.

*Action: DO to circulate budget update to Steering Group Members*

**5. Projects**

Projects for Consideration/Approval

**Draft Review of Bridging Options Prepared for H&W LLN (Stratagia Limited)**

DL highlighted the report that resulted from the small consultancy project awarded in June for Bridging and Progression Agreements. A bid was submitted as a follow on from

this looking at undertaking some pilot work with a number of colleges to try out different types of bridging linked to different types of qualifications.

This project was discussed at length given concerns that it might be giving reluctant students a false picture of the demands of HE, but it was subsequently agreed to fund the £6,800 requested for this project. MR advised that the OU could contribute to this project.

*Action: DL to ask Enda Donnelly to contact Mike Rookes regarding the OU contributing to this project*

### **Producing Student Interviews for Worcester Community Radio (University of Worcester)**

This project is looking to undertake interviews with a range of students to provide information on the community radio about progression. They would like to do short interviews which will be played in a loop on the community radio and also put on Wider Horizons.

CM and GE declared an interest in this project as they are part of the board that oversees the community radio which is known as Youthcomm.

There was strong support for this project and it was suggested that the Project Manager produce a time line to detail when the interviews will be played as their relevance throughout the year will be dependent on the content of the interview.

This project was approved up to £2,392.00.

### **Investigate the APL and APEL processes for Further Education Colleges across H&W (LLN)**

Funding was requested to investigate APL/APEL practices in FE Colleges in order to share good practice and provide more generic information to students on how to make use of APL/APEL.

DL acknowledged that there isn't an APL Officer in many of the Colleges this will therefore seek to raise awareness with students and staff.

The Group approved the £3,000 requested to fund this project.

### **Bridging Programme for Herefordshire PCT Cadet Nurses to Higher Education Nursing Programmes (HWLLN)**

This project is looking to improve the bridging between apprenticeships and HE by developing a specific bridging programme as there is currently a high drop out rate of students from the DipHE Nursing.

The Group discussed different practices in their colleges such as a pre course to an Access course and submitting an assignment before going on to a course.

This project was approved up to £2,500.

### **Mapping & Development of IAG/Careers Content on Wider Horizons Website (Open University)**

DL informed the Group that Wider Horizons is still short on content on IAG and Careers guidance. In response to this the OU submitted a bid to map and develop some content for this following their new award winning careers section on their website. It is proposed that Jane Timms (as Project Manager) will work with Paul Bennett (OU) and Viv Bell (LLN) on this.

The Group agreed this would be sensible and approved the £4,500 requested.

### **Management & Leadership Pathway for Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire (Herefordshire Council/NHS Herefordshire)**

This project was looking to map progression opportunities for their managers in to HE level studies in Leadership & Management.

After discussion it was agreed that the LLN would be unable to fund this as they felt that local HE providers should be commissioned to work with the Council. They were also unable to identify the benefits to any other members of the Network and could not match this against any of the LLN's outcomes or targets. The objectives and outcomes were insufficiently clear.

The funding was not approved.

### **To Develop a Birth Companion University Certificate in Partnership with the National Childbirth Trust (University of Worcester)**

DL notified the Group this project was working with the NCT to develop a University Certificate which would hopefully attract individuals who hadn't previously considered HE.

The Group approved the funding of £1,700 as part of a progression route.

### **University of Worcester & Worcester Sixth Form College Business Students Project (Worcester Sixth Form College)**

DL advised how WSFC have tried different interventions to encourage progression for their BTEC students and were now seeking funding to work with Worcester Business School at UW.

Following a discussion, the Group requested the following clarification:

- That UW had agreed to the possible discount in UCAS tariff
- That the arrangements would be sustainable
- Whether there is a role for WCT as they are only mentioned once in the bid form

Upon receipt of satisfactory responses, this project will be approved by Chairs Action.

*Action: DL to seek clarification on questions raised and report to the Chair*

### **Creativity Using Learning Technologies (University of Worcester)**

DL advised that UW already have a project to get staff to use eLearning properly and they would like to share this with partners by organising and delivering staff development events for partners. DL suggested that if approved then they should consider holding a couple of the events in Herefordshire.

The Group were happy to approve the £2,500 for the organisation and delivery of the events but questioned the cost of the items of technology. The items of technology were therefore not authorised unless the Project Manager was able to provide confirmation that these are essential to the development session. If these items are essential, subsequent approval will be sought by Chairs Action.

*Action: DL to seek clarification for the items of technology and if essential seek clarification by Chairs Action*

### **Developing and Disseminating Good Practice in the Implementation of Work Based Learning in Higher Education (University of Worcester)**

This project is proposing to hold a conference on best practice in Work Based Learning. The Group acknowledged the interesting work already being done around this area at the various institutions.

The Group subsequently approved the funding of £3,000.

### **Development of a Progression Agreement between the Open University and the University of Worcester for K101 Students (Open University & Ludlow College)**

The Group discussed the plan to set up a progression agreement between the K101 module, which is an OU module being undertaken by Ludlow students, to the nursing and midwifery courses at UW.

The Group welcomed the project but could not identify why funding was required for this process to be undertaken. GE asked that they come back if there are costs however they will need to submit a rationale for funding up to £2,500.

The Group supported the project but no funding was approved at this stage.

### **Accessible Social Networking CPD (Royal National College for the Blind)**

This project is looking to train staff to help students with visual impairments to use social networks.

Although there were differing opinions on social networking, the Group approved the funding on clarification of the following:

- they supply a more detailed risk assessment and management plan showing what safeguards will be in place
- they provide confirmation on how they intend to share what they produce.

*Action: DL to seek clarification on the information requested*

### **Transition Toolkit (University of Worcester)**

The idea of this project is to develop research skills to prepare Level 3 students for HE. The Group didn't feel that as presented, this was a sufficiently innovative idea and did not think that the target audience being used for this was representative of typical vocational students. They also agreed that there was no clarification on how this adds value to existing transition materials. GR confirmed that some of this information was already available on the University of Birmingham site.

The project was not approved.

### **Laptops for Vocational Students (Worcester Sixth Form College)**

The Group were unable to approve funding for the purchase of further laptops for WSFC.

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The following 4 bids were submitted by WCT:

#### **Online Assignment Submissions in HE – A Pilot (Worcester College of Technology)**

This first of the bids was looking to develop staff to use an online assignment tool to prevent students from having to go to the college to hand in assignments and pick up marked assignments.

#### **iTunesU in FE (Worcester College of Technology)**

DL advised the Group that this project is aiming to make podcasts look more professional.

#### **Individual Learning Plans for HE (Worcester College of Technology)**

This project is looking at developing an ILP which would bring together information from a number of different sources relating to assignments, activities, profile and grades.

#### **A Web Conferencing Solution to Meet the Needs of Work Based Learners (Worcester College of Technology)**

This project was requesting funding to research different web conferencing products to identify which would best meet the needs of students in work, students at home, tutors at work and tutors at home. This would initially be used for the FD in Payroll but then extended to others, this could also be used for work based learning courses.

The Group welcomed all of the bids and were happy to consider approval for each however they requested the following information before final approval could be given by Chairs Action:

- Produce a delivery plan showing the 4 projects as strands of one bigger project – this should include information on how WCT will work with partners and how the results will be disseminated
  - Seminars are run for each project for attendance by partner college staff
  - The costings should be reviewed in light of the joint Project Management for all of the projects
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## Project Closure Forms

DL gave an overview of the Project Closure Forms and a number of actions were highlighted.

**Development and Validation of the Foundation Degree in Spa and Salon Management (Gloucestershire College)** – should have recruited for 2009/2010.

**Mapping Progression Routes in Health and Social Care (Open University)** – Liz Davies-Ward is meeting with Anne Fletcher to write up the progression agreements.

**E-Learning - Moving from Paper Based to Electronic with Interactive Options (Pershore College, part of Warwickshire College)** - Viv Bell to disseminate the Project Closure Form to her eLearning contacts

*Action: Viv Bell to disseminate the Project Closure Form to her eLearning contacts*

**Development of a Certificate in HE, “Working with People with a Visual Impairment” with two partner institutions (University of Worcester, St Joseph’s Centre for the Visually Impaired, Dublin & Royal National College for the Blind)** – 1 CertHE and 4 College Diplomas have been created from this project and have been validated. Students should already be registered on these courses.

**HND in Sports Performance and Coaching (Telford College of Arts and Technology)** – Students should have been recruited on to this course from September 2009 and a progression agreement has been created for this.

**Access to Online Interactive IELTS Material (University of Worcester, Language Centre)** – the IELTS taster course currently gets approx 300 hits per week.

**Engaging the Busy Employer (University of Worcester)** – the project confirmed how difficult it was to engage with employers. The Group requested clarification on what courses were validated as a result of this project.

*Action: DL to request clarification on what courses were validated as a result of the ‘Engaging the Busy Employer’ project*

**Enhancing the Mutual Understanding of FE and HE Practice and Curricula through Learning Observation and Peer Dialogue: A Pilot Project (University of Worcester)** – they experienced difficulties in finding people to participate. Three people were placed and reported that it was a good experience. The Group requested that the recommendations be strengthened to say how institutions might support shadowing.

*Action: DL to request further information to find out how institutions might support shadowing.*

**Assessing the Impact of a Blended Learning Approach using DVD Films specifically to Enhance Student Learning (University of Worcester)** – the Group praised the detail provided in the Project Closure Form.

**FD in Payroll Management e-Learning Conversion (Worcester College of Technology)** – this course has proved successful and had 532 students enrolled last year.

## Interim Update on Projects not yet Completed

The Group noted the Wider Horizons update.

## **6. Updated Delivery Plan with Achievements Against 2009 Targets**

DL provided an overview of the Delivery Plan noting the updated targets for 2009 and advised that the summary page at the beginning of the document would be sent to HEFCE with the Monitoring Report.

The Group noted that the majority of targets had been achieved with the exception of:

- Progression Agreements – there are more in draft than have been signed however these will be completed by Easter 2010
- Accreditation of modules not currently credit rated has not progressed
- The regional Progression Agreements or Credit Agreements have not been set up across the West Midlands
- There has been limited activity on IAG and learner support

On a positive note, the areas where the Team have achieved well against their targets are curriculum development, projects and collaboration in curriculum development.

## **7. Draft Monitoring Report (Quantitative)**

DL explained the progress to date in completing each section of the Quantitative Report. Once this has been completed it was agreed that the final version be sent to the Steering Group prior to submitting to HEFCE.

*Action: DL to circulate Quantitative Monitoring Report to Steering Group before sending to HEFCE*

## **8. Draft Monitoring Commentary**

GE advised that he had agreed with DL to take an informative approach to the Monitoring Commentary this year therefore providing an account of what has been done rather than evaluating what has been done. This Commentary is currently with the LLN Team who are making additions/amendments.

CM suggested that a statement be included about the FD in Payroll Management in the Equality & Diversity section of the Commentary as this is a good example of getting more people in to HE. The course is attended by people who are employed, the majority of whom haven't had any experience of HE. This course is a good example of where a course has made a significant impact on people who wouldn't normally go into HE.

DL agreed that this was a good example and added that she was also going to populate it with some examples from LLN funded projects.

*Action: DL to circulate Monitoring Commentary to Steering Group before sending to HEFCE*

## **9. Delivery Plan for 2010**

GE suggested that the title of Theme 4 be amended to 'Monitoring & Evaluation for Sustainability'.

## **10. Evaluation Plan for 2010**

The Group received the Draft Evaluation Strategy for 2010.

## **11. Update on Progression Agreements**

DL ran through the update on Progression Agreements and explained the different types of agreements.

## **12. Any Other Business**

GE thanked the LLN Team for their work on the reports and hoped that much of the LLN's work could be carried forward in the future.

**Update on HE Fair:** DO informed the Group that 25 HE providers had signed up to exhibit at the event as well as 16 employers and 4 organisations (including Aimhigher & Connexions) to provide advice and guidance. All 900 visitor places have also been provisionally booked by schools and colleges in Herefordshire & Worcestershire with an even split across the two counties.

**Herefordshire University Challenge:** GE updated the Group on the Herefordshire University Challenge application. He notified them that the bid had been unsuccessful and one of the reasons given for this was due to the success of the Lifelong Learning Network. Other reasons were that they had only partially met the evidence base plus local evidence wasn't strong in terms of demand.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 15 December 2009 at 10am (Room TBA)