

**Lifelong Learning Network - first meeting of the Steering Group, held on
Tuesday 29th August 2006**

Minutes

Present:

Professor Geoffrey Elliott (Chair)	University of Worcester
Ms Gail Rothnie (for Alex Hughes)	University of Birmingham
Mr Mike Rookes	Open University in the West Midlands
Mr Chris Morecroft	Herefordshire & Worcestershire Colleges

1 Welcome

As Chair of the Steering Group (SG) GE welcomed members to the first meeting of the Steering Group.

2 Chairs business

a. JISC Project on e-learning

Details of this project, to be led by UW, had been circulated to members in June, with a proposal that the LLN be a partner to the proposal. The Chair provided an update. Members endorsed the proposal, in view of the synergy between the LLN's aims and the JISC programme's objective of establishing an on-line learning environment for members of the public in and around Worcester.

b. HEFCE Circular 2 May 2006 – Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for LLNs

The circular was noted, and it was assumed that the normal reporting process in place for the LLN SG would also meet the requirements for HEFCE reporting.

c. LLN Practitioner Group

The H&W LLN has subscribed to the network and will receive details of conferences and events sponsored by the Network, which has HEFCE's support. The notes from the June conference had not yet been received.

d. WMHEA LLN sub-group

A draft paper, to be received for approval by the WMHEA Management Group in October, was circulated. The proposal to establish a WMHEA LLN Group, which would replace the current WP and FD Forum, had broad support from members of those respective groups at their last meeting. The sub-group can act as a co-ordinating group, and will be particularly useful in co-ordinating discussions with region-wide and national bodies such as Sector Skills Councils and Foundation Degree Forward.

3 Year one delivery plan and finance input

Members discussed the delivery plan and finance input and agreed that the model proposed to HEFCE remained valid and appropriate. It was agreed that the current work on HE in Herefordshire, led by UW, should be integrated within the LLN, since the objectives, to broaden opportunities for vocational higher education and progression, were parallel.

ACTION: It was agreed that initial activity for all theme groups should be auditing, followed by agreement from stakeholders on progression needs, and then development of adapted or additional modules to realise the LLN vision. Relevant employment sectors will need to be closely involved. All provision will be cost effective and sustainable.

ACTION: It was agreed that a modular approach should be taken, that did not replicate current provision. Module should be available in a variety of modes including on-line, short intensive and distance learning packages. A module prospectus should be a core outcome of the LLN.

4 Structure and SG arrangements.

ACTION: It was agreed that the SG should normally meet six times a year, at UW, and that until the Administrator is in post, Geoffrey's PA, Joanne Bailey, be asked to Minute the meetings. During this forthcoming important development period, and to avoid unnecessary additional meetings, it was agreed that the SG should communicate as regularly as necessary by email, with Joanne copied into all correspondence.

ACTION: Once the LLN Project Manager is in post, reports to the SG will normally be made before the meeting date, and include at least a work and progress report and a finance profile and report.

It was suggested that the Management Group Structure should be reviewed with a view to including FE and other senior staff of member institutions. It was however recognised that such staff would participate in the LLN through its Theme Groups and Reference Groups.

5 Staffing update

ACTION: National press advertising for the LLN Project Manager post, and the two curriculum theme leads, will be carried out at the beginning of September, and the advertisements will be on the university website. Advertising for the Administrator post will be held back until the LLN Manager is appointed, in order that s/he can participate in the process.

It was confirmed that the LLN finance structure had flexibility to provide funding support to partners in the network for specific contributions in development, curriculum, and promotion. It was also agreed that some of the LLN posts might be re-profiled once key posts were in place, to make best use of skills and experience available.

6 HEFCE ASNs – model choice

Members were previously circulated with details of the two ASN models available. Of the two, model 1 was preferred. Of the two models, only Model 1 allocates numbers as part of an institution's mainstream grant, so the numbers become assimilated in the individual institutions recurrent grant. It was agreed that the numbers should be allocated to UW.

It was confirmed that many LLN learners would be students in partner colleges following new or adapted flexible part-time modules in leadership, management, health and care.

It was agreed that a flexible and accessible module repository should be a key aim of the LLN, and that all partners will be offered the opportunity to contribute to curriculum development.

It was noted that the LLN financial model is dependent upon ASN income to support key LLN posts beyond 2008 / 09. It is unlikely that institutions in the Network other than UW would wish to fund these posts, which would in turn undermine the sustainability of the LLN.

It was felt that University status for registered LLN students will be helpful to recruitment.

It was suggested that FECs would wish to negotiate funding for LLN students recruited within the ASN allocation.

ACTION: The Chair agreed to raise the matter of ASNs and associated funding with the University Executive. CM agreed to consult with the FECs that were directly funded by HEFCE.

It was noted that there is no clear advice yet available on how LLN students should be counted, and that this was likely to be a common issue for LLNs, and one that the Practitioner group is likely to focus upon. To deliver its WP remit, the LLN should target students who would not otherwise have entered HE.

7 Date of next meeting

ACTION: Potential meeting dates during November will be circulated by Joanne.