

Project Name: Developing and Disseminating Good Practice in the Implementation of Work Based Learning (WBL) in Higher Education

Amendment History:

Version No.	Date	Reason for Amendment
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Document Distribution

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action/Information</i>
Sue Cuthbert	UW	Project Manager and Head of Collaborative Programmes	Project Leader
Tom Rickarby	UW	Project Team Member	Project administration and support
Marie Stowell	UW	Director of Quality and Educational Development	For information
Joe Hodgson	LLN	Conference Steering Group	Advice on conference programme and participants
Colin Wood	LLN	Conference Steering Group	Advice on conference programme and participants
Liz Davies-Ward	LLN	Conference Steering Group	Advice on conference programme and participants
Debbie Lambert	LLN	Manager of the LLN	For information
Geoffrey Elliott	UW	Members of the Steering Group	To approve the proposal
Chris Morecroft	WCT		
Ian Peake	HCT		
Mike Rookes	OU		
Gail Rothnie	UoB		
Donna Obrey	LLN	Project Officer for the LLN	To track and monitor project

Background

The University and its partners (both FECs and organisations) have an increasing portfolio of courses that have, in varying degrees and approaches, work based learning as a core principle. To date, and outside of the commissioned professional courses in health and education, this has been predominantly but not exclusively within Foundation Degrees (FD), with WBL identified as one of the core characteristics in the QAA FD Benchmark Statement (QAA, 2004). More recently, the University in collaboration with the LLN is developing a 'work based learning framework' which is intended to be utilised across the full range of HE awards from Levels 4 to postgraduate and in continuing professional development. Many of

our partners have extensive experience of working with employers and in delivering work-based and work-focussed learning and vocational courses at FE levels, and a number at HE level in collaboration with UW Institutes.

The value of flexible forms of WBL to employers, employees (learners), regional development and the wider economy are well documented (e.g. HEA, 2006¹; HEA, 2008²). Government policies highlight the importance of education in helping businesses become more competitive and in developing higher level skills in the workforce to place them in a stronger position as the economy recovers. The current economic climate and impact on funding emphasises even more the need for educational provision to be designed and delivered in ways that are employer-responsive, demand-led and support employability. However, evidence shows there is still room for improvement both in employer engagement and in WBL programmes (QAA, 2003³; CBI, 2008⁴; fdf, 2008⁵)

Work is already planned within the University and the LLN to support partners, UW Institutes and employers in the integration of WBL in curriculum design, development and approval with the ultimate aim of having a positive impact on course delivery and the student/employer experience.

However, there has been less focus to date on the support and developments in enhancing the on-going delivery of WBL programmes. Some of the most valuable support, opportunities for exploring new initiatives and insight into different ways of working come from the sharing of and reflecting on own and others' experiences; identifying what works well and reflecting on solutions to overcome potential barriers to success. Generating motivation for the development of a community of practice for WBL in HE, which would connect individuals with a common interest and commitment to WBL, could provide a forum for the identification and sharing of good practice, the enhancement of the student and employer experience of HE and ultimately enable the development of new knowledge.

Objectives of the Project

The overall objective of this project is to request funds from the Lifelong Learning Network (LLN) to support the organisation and delivery of a Partner Conference at the University of Worcester that focuses on 'Developing and Disseminating Good Practice in the Implementation of WBL' (i.e. the ongoing staff, employer and student experience in delivering and participating in WBL in courses after initial approval).

Specific Objectives:

1. To provide the opportunity to showcase examples of good and innovative practice in WBL in HE courses;
2. To further develop and enhance people's understanding of, and practice in, the ongoing implementation of WBL in its various forms;
3. To contribute examples to a reflective conference report/'operational guide' to good practice in delivering a WBL programme for new and existing course teams and related employers;

¹ HEA (2006) *Work-based learning. Illuminating the higher education landscape*. July 2006

² HEA (2008) *Work Based Learning: Impact Study*. July 2008

³ QAA (2003) *Overview Report on Foundation Degree Reviews*

⁴ CBI (2008) *Stepping higher. Workforce development through employer-higher education partnership*. October 2008

⁵ Fdf (2008) *Achieving effective practice in the establishment, planning and delivery of full-time Foundation degrees: A guide for universities and colleges*.

4. To generate case studies of good practice which could be hosted on Wider Horizons/ Partner Web Pages;
5. To initiate the creation of a collaborative 'community of practice' for WBL in HE within Hereford and Worcester.

Project Approach

A Conference Steering Group (led by Sue Cuthbert and including members from the HWLLN and Graduate Intern listed above) will be established to plan, organise and deliver a successful event. It is intended to involve the Graduate Intern recently appointed to the Quality and Educational Development Unit (already agreed with the Director of Quality and Educational Development) as part of the project team to provide project administration and support throughout and to draft a conference report. The aim of the conference would be to showcase existing good and innovative practice in implementing WBL in HE courses (with nationally renowned key speaker/s and examples from our own institutes and partners). Ideally this will include presentations/workshops led by (or in collaboration with) employers and students.

Conference planning will benefit from the external links that the HWLLN members of the Conference Steering Group have developed in sourcing key note speakers/identifying good practice examples within our partner institutions and UW Institutes. This conference (aiming for summer 2010) will supplement the staff development event 'Innovations and Developments in WBL' in November 2009 organised by the UW Academic Development and Practice Unit and led by Frank Lyons (Director of Foundation Direct, Portsmouth University)

Scope:

A Key Products from the project

1. A Partner Conference at University of Worcester that focuses on 'Developing and Disseminating Good Practice in the Implementation of WBL'
2. A reflective conference report;
3. Generation of examples of good and innovative practice in WBL that will contribute to an 'operational guide' to good practice in delivering a WBL programme for new and existing course teams and related employers;
4. Further develop and enhance people's understanding of good practice in the ongoing implementation WBL in its various forms;
5. Case Studies of good practice in WBL in HE that could be hosted on Wider Horizons/Partner Web Pages;
6. Initiate the establishment of a collaborative 'community of practice' for WBL in HE within Hereford and Worcester (with the potential for hosting on Wider Horizons).

B Out of Scope

- Completion of the 'operational guide' to good practice in delivering a WBL programme for new and existing course teams and related employers (although it is anticipated that this work will commence during 2009-10)
- Funding arrangements for continued support for the community of practice in WBL in HE
- Setting up a virtual community of practice for WBL in HE on Wider Horizons

Constraints

Availability of staff to form a conference steering group

Availability of key note speakers and partner staff willing to share experiences
 Availability of staff with sufficient interest in WBL (and time) to a) attend the conference, and
 b) form a community of practice for WBL in HE.

Initial Project Case

The case for this project is the evidence to support the increasing demand for high quality, flexible and innovative approaches to WBL that meet the needs of employers and workforce development in the current economic climate combined with evidence to suggest that further work is needed to assure and enhance the quality of delivery and experience of WBL for staff, students and employers (referenced above). Additionally, funding to support the conference for local partners/participants will limit financial barriers to attendance and facilitate the opportunity for scholarly activity, the sharing of good practice, peer support and (hopefully) generate interest in developing an on-going community of practice for WBL in HE provision.

Benefits of the Project

- Raised awareness and sharing of good and innovative practice in WBL, with the capacity to improve the delivery and experience of WBL programmes for new and existing course teams and related employers and students;
- Further development and enhancement of people’s understanding of the ongoing implementation WBL in its various forms;
- Creation of Case Studies of good practice in WBL in HE that could be hosted on Wider Horizons/Partner Web Pages;
- Initiating the establishment of a collaborative ‘community of practice’ for WBL in HE within Hereford and Worcester (with the potential for hosting on Wider Horizons);
- Potential generation of scholarly activity/research opportunities and creation of new knowledge in the good practice of WBL.

Key Assumptions

- There is sufficient interest in sharing and learning about good practice in WBL amongst partners and employers;
- That demand for WBL will continue as a significant component of HE courses.

Timescale

Time Period/Activity	Sept 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	April 10	May 10	June 10	July 10	Aug 10	Sept 10
Meeting of Steering Group to identify roles/responsibilities, draft programme and potential speakers													
Contact speakers and secure date and accommodation													
Confirm programme and publicise Conference (+reminders)													
Confirm arrangements for													

speakers, offer support to 'novice' presenters and generate conference materials													
Commence drafting of template for 'good practice' case studies (in collaboration with presenters)													
Confirm domestic arrangements, catering, etc													
Conference Date													
Write Reflective Conference Report, including evaluation													
Finalise 'good practice' case studies from conference (in collaboration with presenters) for dissemination through Wider Horizons and Partner Web Pages													

Costs

- Funding to cover the cost of staff time in the organisation, administration and on-costs of the conference (including generation of marketing information, programmes and conference packs and production and dissemination of reflective conference report) and for catering for 100 people **[£2000]**
- Funding to cover potential expenses of key note speakers, including fees, overnight accommodation, travel and subsistence **[up to £1000]**

Total = £3000 dependent on potential fees for key note speakers [20% contribution from the University of Worcester through the Director of Quality and Educational Development, includes Project Manager and administrative staff time in conference design and administration and production of reflective report]

How will the project be evaluated?

Conference evaluation forms will be completed at the end of the event and a reflective conference report will be compiled.

How will the project be sustained?

Through good practice examples being embedded in an operational guide to good practice in WBL in HE and through the formation of a virtual community of practice hosted on Wider Horizons.

Implications for Equality & Diversity

None

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
Inability to 'recruit' speakers with examples of good practice in WBL from partners/Institutes	Low	High	Early identification of good practice and experience and contact
Lack of uptake of places on conference	Low	High	Early and intensive marketing activity

Project Team

Sue Cuthbert (Project Lead)
Joe Hodgson
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Colin Wood
Tom Rickarby