



Application to the Big Projects Fund

Project Name: Engaging the busy employer

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Document Distribution:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action/Information</i>
Debbie Lambert	UW	Members of LLN steering Group	To approve project

1 Background

Members of the Lifelong Learning Network Steering Group may recall offering their support to a previous application from WBS, proposing the validation of a Masters level CPD framework in conjunction with the Leadership Trust Foundation. This development has continued at a pace and the planning group are currently active in the production of modules (5, 10 and 20 credit) to support accreditation for Leadership and Management Development. It is anticipated that a small number of MDs, key decision makers, owner-managers etc. may accumulate these accredited packages of learning up to an MBA in Leadership & Management, or at the very least, one of the intermediate qualifications (PG. Cert, PG. Dip).

During the planning process, the project manager and other key members of the team, including the Head of School, have been involved in a series of meetings with external organisations to both raise awareness of the framework, and also to pursue alternative routes to market. These organisations include Business Link West Midlands (BLWM), Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce (HWCC), the National Skills Academy for Manufacturing (NSAfM), Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), as well as the Business School Advisory Board [of employers] and individual 'potential' client organisations.

These discussions have convinced the planning group that the CPD development is both demand-driven and also provides a targeted solution to the leadership and management skills gap identified by such organisations as the Council for Industry and Higher Education (NCIHE), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and verified by the Regional Observatory of Advantage West Midlands (AWM). It is of course widely accepted that the Gross Value added (GVA) of organisations both nationally and in the West Midlands could be significantly enhanced with up-skilling of key personnel in the areas of Leadership and Management. The CPD development at Masters level outlined above, coincides with broader developments, both current and planned, within the Business School, concerning University Certificates and Diplomas at UG level, and other 'bespoke' developments involving other partner organisations including the West Midlands Rail Alliance and Business Development Services (Europe).

University Certificates & Diplomas in a range of subject areas, including Leadership, Management, Innovation, HRM, Advertising, Public Relations, Sales, Marketing, Accountancy, Business and Economics have been validated by UW, to supplement the existing business to business (B2B) offer. Certificates can be delivered to staff within an organisation over a three-day block (or three x 1-day inputs, according to need). Associated assessment to provide accreditation, is additional to this input. Similarly, Diplomas, can be delivered over a 6-day block (or 3 x 2days , for example).

Discussions with Business Development Services (Europe) have concerned the validation of one of these University Diplomas at Level 4, for their existing and potential clients in the Automotive sector. Discussions with the West Midlands Rail Alliance have involved a contextualised MBA award for the Rail Sector. Both initiatives will involve working in partnership with non-traditional University partners.

Concurrent with the above developments, WBS is in discussion with key partners e.g. Worcester College of Technology, in the area of new academic developments related to their current professional course offer. For example, WCT's Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) Professional PG Diploma in Marketing course 'could' feed a potential MBA Marketing which WBS has recently begun to scope.

What all of these developments have in common is the potential to engage non-traditional learners (including difficult to reach employers), through flexible patterns of study, designed to promote progression to an award. Much of the associated curriculum development is either in progress (PG CPD framework) or is planned (MBA – Rail Alliance, BDS (Europe) University Diploma, MBA Marketing). Indeed some provision (UG Certs/ Dips) is already validated.

What WBS is seeking in this proposal, is additional resource, via the LLN, to ensure that these developments are steered appropriately and coherently with the planned involvement of a range of employers, providers and other partner organisations to ensure a measurable and sustainable contribution to meeting the skills gap in the area of Leadership and Management.

2 Objectives of the Project

- To extend the previous questionnaire survey undertaken by A. Corcoran (on behalf of the LLN) designed to elicit responses on education and development needs, using the HWCC membership database. Specifically, the questions will be targeted more closely at current WBS developments (undertaken in the light of the initial research project), to evaluate appropriateness, and likely demand.
- Further to the market research activity outlined above, to engage, and maintain a broader group of HE students not traditionally linked to the University of Worcester, or currently engaged in accredited HE.
- To provide progression through existing professional courses delivered by FE partners and others, through the accredited CPD framework (at UG and PG level) towards a higher level award.
- To establish and maintain an effective working relationship between WBS and a range of partner organisations involved in CPD activity e.g. BLWM, NSAFM, CIM, CIPD, ILM, WCT and other FE partners.
- To develop new curricula, designed to integrate professional courses currently delivered by partners e.g. CIM courses linked to a new MBA Marketing (WCT).
- To design flexible provision (via the CPD framework), utilising blended learning approaches, particularly in relation to support for assessment.
- To provide a model of course design, which can be taken into new market sectors where opportunity is identified.

3 Project Approach

The re-design of the employers' questionnaire has already commenced, in discussion with HWCC and the Centre for People at Work (CP@W). Subsequent to the previous survey (Jan 07), some 50-60 respondents indicated a willingness to be involved in follow-up research. Through a process of focus group facilitation (to which HWCC is committed), as well as administration via Chamber events (May – June 08), and via e-mail, it is hoped that an improved response rate to the 12% achieved previously can be assured. The previous questionnaire was particularly influential in informing the design, focus, delivery and pricing strategy of the CPD offer now in progress. Now that a significant amount of development has taken place in establishing the CPD framework at both UG and PG level, the updated and extended market research exercise will allow a more sensitive analysis of market need to ensure an appropriate fit.

In tandem with this market research activity and continued development of the PG framework, discussions will continue with the partner organisations cited above that will offer a route to market, as well as with FE partners and other organisations. The purpose of these discussions will be to focus upon identified progression routes from existing partners' professional courses through the CPD framework to a higher level award. Success of the CPD framework should bring mutual benefits to UW and partners alike.

As part of the project, the intention is to commence work with WCT (and potentially other partners) to plan the development of an MBA in Marketing, incorporating existing professional CIM qualifications offered by the partner.

4 Scope:

A Key Products from the project

- Informed curriculum development, suited to need and meeting a broader skills gap in Leadership and Management across all sectors.
- A model for partnership-working that can be used to inform other similar initiatives elsewhere within and beyond the LLN, and involving Employers.
- A clear progression route through the UG and PG CPD frameworks to facilitate the achievement of higher level qualifications.
- To increase the number of students registered to UW programmes (to support the LLN ASN bid).

B Out of Scope

The detailed development and validation of an MBA Marketing lies outside of the scope of this bid. The initial discussion with the partner in the context of broader CPD developments is however included. This project does not cover any additional marketing of the CPD framework in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, or beyond which the University might wish to pursue. WBS staff contributions covered within the bid will be matched by equivalent contributions financed through the University's resources.

5 Constraints

- The differing culture of the partners, involving different motivations, planning horizons, pricing strategies, cost base, quality management, assurance and enhancement procedures.

- Managing the expectations of the client group according to the academic requirements of Masters level credit (in the case of the PG framework).
- Integration of the professional course philosophy with that of the academic, yet applied approach, of WBS existing and intended professional development courses.

6 Initial Project Case

- Flexible approach to course design and delivery (based upon a CPD framework and accumulated credit model).
- Collaborative project involving a range of different partners, but unified by a common desire to meet identified skills gaps.
- Project makes a significant contribution to LLN student numbers by drawing upon students with non-traditional (vocational – type) qualifications , and is self sustaining in offering continuing professional development beyond initial engagement.
- The proposed project chimes well with the LLN published aims, principles and themes, particularly in the area of curriculum development, progression, and learner support.

7 Benefits of the Project

Benefits to the individual :

- A clear framework for accredited learning in the area of Leadership and Management at UG and PG level. Opportunities will be presented for learners to accumulate credit towards a recognised UW award.
- Flexible learning opportunities (based upon one-four day short courses), to ensure appropriate access to those in full or part time employment.
- A range of topics allied to skills shortage areas as identified by AWM, NCIHE etc. and linked to demand as identified through external engagement (e.g. LLN-funded survey).
- The development of a range of high-level leadership & management skills and knowledge to enhance individual, and organisational performance.

Benefits to the organisation :

- A more effective workforce contributing to the development of the organisation, through enhanced potential in leadership and management.
- Improved recruitment and retention and motivation of the workforce.
- Flexibility in design reduces the amount of time that learners spend away from the workplace.
- Facilitating the sharing of effective practice between delegates, particularly where they are drawn from different organisations.

Benefits to the LLN :

- An interesting model of collaboration between multiple partners, that can be presented as an effective case study to other LLNs.
- A highly developed workforce.
- A less transient workforce.
- Provides a flexible delivery model which recognises the problems associated with abstraction from the workplace.
- To meet Government priorities around the area of workforce development in the area of leadership and management.

8 Key Assumptions

- That the partner organisations (AWM, BLWM, NSAfM etc.) provide an appropriate route to market in order to generate the volume of students necessary to run a significant proportion of the UG and PG CPD package.
- That these non-traditional learners can, with support, engage appropriately with the 'theoretical' concepts and ideas to meet the requirements of accreditation.
- That UW Registry can manage the volume and sporadic nature of these registrants from an administrative point of view.

9 Costs

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

Design, distribution and evaluation of questionnaire survey, inc focus group facilitation in partnership with HWCC	£2500.00
Release of Project Manager from workload (equivalent to 80 hours) to co-ordinate curriculum development/ partner liaison	£7200.00
Release of key staff (e.g. S. Speake, P. Furniss, and partner staff e.g. WCT, HWCC, NSAfM, FSB)	£7200.00
Travel costs (liaison with partners, prof bodies, Employers)	£800.00
Administrative costs to support developmental activity	£500.00
Total	£18200.00
80% of total costs	£14,560.00

NB. Remainder to be covered through WBS resources.

10 Project Timescale

Questionnaire design/ distribution (by HWCC) and focus groups	May – June '08
Questionnaire results analysis/ evaluation	June – July '08
Documentation production/ validation of PG CPD f'wrk	June – Oct '08
Promotion of UG/ CPD framework (with partners)	June – Oct '08
CPD framework launch to SME/ larger corporates (UG/ PG)	Nov '08
Assessment of partner provision appropriate for progression through CPD framework to higher level award	Sept – Oct '08
Partner ship approval UW/ BDS (Europe)	May – Sept '08
Documentation production/ validation of Uni Diploma (BDS)	Sept – Dec '08
Planning meetings with WCT (and possibly others) to design integrated provision/ progression from prof. courses to MBA Marketing	Oct – Dec '08
Evaluation of project (inc effectiveness of CPD framework launch)	Jan – Mar '09
Launch of CPD framework to Public Sector/ non-profit market	April '09

11 How will the project be evaluated?

The effectiveness of the CPD programme launch to the SME/ larger corporate market will be essential to inform the continued effective promotion/ delivery, particularly to new markets e.g. Public/ non-profit sector. It will be important to assess the effectiveness of individual routes to market in generating a sufficient critical mass of students, in order to select and implement appropriate future strategies. In addition, it will be important to evaluate the value added from initial experiences of running selected modules with specific groups. In this way it will be possible to fine tune delivery and focus, the assessment process, learner support, initial impact on the workplace or individual role. The validation of the proposed University Diploma with BDS will fall inside of the proposed project timescale, and as a result will

provide useful learning regarding working with non-traditional partners, and thereby informing the collaborative validation process for the MBA Marketing (WCT) towards the end of 2008/9.

12 How will the project be sustained?

The CPD framework at UG and PG level will be promoted as an accredited training and development opportunity first and only then as a vehicle that 'may' lead to higher level awards. It is anticipated that this credit framework will sustain the interest of existing students progressing through the modules, and generate enough interest to draw new clients and organisations into the framework over time. FSB, BLWM, AWM (via the Leadership, Management and Entrepreneurship programme), and NSAfM have well-developed channels of communication with existing networks of corporate clients, and WBS has a close affiliation with a growing number of SMEs, as well as traditional links with a range of public sector organisations (for later phases of development & promotion of the CPD framework). It is also anticipated existing links with a variety of professional bodies that WBS and its partners currently have e.g. Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM), Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD), Chartered Management Institute (CMI) will allow further discussion to integrate the CPD framework more closely with professional body recognition.

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.

The project matches the following aims of the LLN

- To increase the numbers of students entering higher education with vocational qualifications
- To increase the number of part time students entering higher education whilst continuing employment
- To help the target groups of students succeed in higher education
- To facilitate a change in the design and delivery of curriculum in H & W to meet the needs of the target students
- To involve employers in the development, design and delivery of curriculum where possible
- To provide a bridge between FE and HE for students, staff, employers, institutions
- To assist in the provision of clear information for all interested parties in the region
- To provide a wide-ranging network and infrastructure of communication

In addition to the above, the project :

- Provides new links , and strengthens existing links with employers, resulting in new courses and accreditation of existing training (within LTF)
- Makes courses more accessible to students in employment
- Allows more students with vocational qualifications to enter HE, by introducing new progression opportunities.
- Enables joint working between a number of partner institutions.

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
CPD framework appears attractive to client group, but for un-accredited provision rather than accredited training and development.	M	M	WBS is to charge a standard rate for UG and PG courses (£750.00 per UG module and £500 per day for PG course), regardless of whether the course is accredited or not . Consequently, the economic viability of the proposition is not in doubt, though a smaller proportion of clients seeking accreditation may impact upon the individuals' commitment to further CPD (ultimately to an MBA).
CPD 'learning units' (and MBA qualification) are viewed as 'too expensive' by client group.	M	H	WBS has operated a premium pricing strategy for its MA Management Studies (and more recently its MBA), though not at the rate planned for the intended PG CPD framework. Nevertheless, the intended target market (MDs, CEOs and senior managers), the facilities and resources available in delivery, and the 'bite-size' nature of the provision should all serve to mitigate perceptions of high cost.
Cultural differences between the partners e.g. HWCC, BLWM, NSAFM create an obstacle to effective collaboration.	M	H	Whilst there is agreement on the need for CPD, there are differences in expectations in L & T philosophy, 'assessment' and 'continuing support offered to students' when comparing these partners.

15 Project Team

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 Prof Sharon Turnbull (Leadership Trust)
 Bally Bhogal (BLWM)
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