

Project Name: Tracking the progress of level three students through their complete studies across a range of courses in Further Education Colleges and Sixth form College

Amendment History:

Version No.	Date	Reason for Amendment
1	November 2007	New proposal

Project Manager Bob Parker

Document Distribution

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action/Information</i>
Noreen Moses	KC	Lead staff member from colleges involved	Involved in project
Pauline Mason	WSFC		
Ruth Johnson	HCT		
Peter Robinson	WCT		
Stella Reeves	WCT		
Colin Smith	NEWC		
Bob Parker	LLN	Lead for Progression and Student Support	Involved in project
Debbie Lambert	LLN	Manager of the LLN for H&W	Information
Geoffrey Elliott	UW	Members of LLN steering Group	To approve project
Gail Rothnie	UoB		
Mike Rookes	OU		
Ian Peake	HCT		
Chris Morecroft	WCT		
Donna Obrey	LLN	Project Officer	To undertake data collection and track project

Background

At present there is limited information about the destination of level three students from the colleges. The information available is of a 'snap shot' kind and, whilst useful, could be enhanced to assist both the colleges and the aims of the LLN to increase the numbers going on to Higher Education (HE).

Institutes involved: Kidderminster College (KC), Worcester 6th Form College (WSFC), Hereford College of Technology (HCT), Worcester College of Technology (WCT) and North East Worcester College (NEWC).

The final destination of students is likely to be influenced by a variety of factors, which range from pre-level three experiences and perceptions, through issues directly associated with provision and support, to issues to do with transition to HE/employment. The opportunity exists to 'track' a cohort through the learning process, which would create data on 'pre-study' factors; delivery, structure and learner support issues; as well as 'transition' issues faced at completion of level three. It also gives the opportunity for 'pilot groups' as the LLN project develops and ideas are generated e.g. Study skills modules.

Although there will be common issues and actions in the colleges, it also will give the individual colleges the opportunity to assess and test out interventions. All of which will add to the potential learning from the project.

Objectives of the Project

1. Establish base-line data to assist the planning and preparation of level three learners:
 - a. Previous learner history to level three study
 - b. Student perceptions about final destination
 - c. Socio-economic factors
2. Identify the key issues effecting final destination choices and the factors that effect the choices
3. Undertake a timed exercise to track the progress of student, enabling periodic data collection
4. Create data about progression through FE and from FE to HE, which will assist the FE college, as well as inform the LLN
5. Make comparisons with existing data, both locally and nationally

Project Approach

- Communication to the cohort of the objectives of the project and how it will impact on them.
- Initial data collection from the students through questionnaire, interviews and/or focus groups.
- Monitoring the progress at specific milestones and providing progress information for the LLN and wider distribution
 - Initial survey
 - At completion of first year
 - Beginning of second year
 - In addition to intentions, experiences of the UCAS system can be assessed
 - Middle of second year
 - On completion of study
- Establishment of a small core group to manage and oversee the project. This group will meet periodically to assess the results, consider lessons learnt and decide further actions
- Project Manager to meet regularly with the representative from the colleges
- Respond to issues identified and, if appropriate and practical, take actions to deal with them.
- A variety of cohorts will be identified, some with good history of progression to HE others with poor history. This will serve to enhance the learning and provide a balance to the project.
- Involvement of appropriate HE staff in the later stages of the project

Scope:

A Key Products from the project

1. Progress reports at various stages on the project
2. Information about the reasons and factors effecting progressing or not progressing to HE
3. Identification and, if appropriate, creation of 'good practice' actions
4. Developing a model to assist progression from level three to HE
5. Identify transition issues that may require the development of 'bridging support' to ensure transition to HE
6. Additional information to assist the Information Advice and Guidance practitioners

B Out of Scope

Constraints

- Observer effect, results may be effected by the attention the cohort is getting from the college through their involvement with the project. Use of data from other groups not involved should assist in minimising this effect
- Data protection issues
- Time to collect data and follow up with focus groups
- Any resource issues that develop as a result of project activity (these might result in sub-project proposals being taken to steering committee for funding approval)

Initial Project Case

Support has been gained from the partner colleges for this project and a meeting held to discuss the broad principles and approaches. It is recognised that there will be 5 individual projects within the broader project, but there will be commonality of data and issues, which can be compared between partners and cohorts.

The project manager will liaise with representatives of each college to develop the project further, drawing information together and sharing across the partners.

Each college has identified cohorts and will gain agreement from course leaders and students for the data collection to begin.

Benefits of the Project

1. Provides information about student movement to HE from non 'A' level sources for the LLN
2. Will give the college information for their provision and support strategies for students at level 3.
3. The information gathered can be shared more widely through the LLN
4. It is a longitudinal study as opposed to a 'snap shot' in time, allowing intervention to be assessed and tested

Key Assumptions

- Availability of staff in colleges to undertake any project related activity.
- Student willingness to participate.

Costs

The LLN will provide both the Project Manager and Project Officer, who will carry out data collection and survey focus groups.

Additional costs may be generated, if development work is needed during the project on interventions to be tested or staff time to collect, evaluate and analyse data.

In order to respond to these needs as they arise during the course of the project the following costs are requested:

- To cover staff replacement time for associated projects: £5,000

How will the project be evaluated?

Against the project objectives;

- Through the periodic reports.
- Also the usefulness of information to inform the local and wider actions.
- Comparison of rates of progression from historic data.

How will the project be sustained?

Relevant actions will become embedded into the design, delivery and support of level three courses. Modelling could be rolled out to other areas of college delivery. Through links forged with staff in FE and HE during the life of the project.

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
Student involvement	M	H	Will be managed by the college representatives, to encourage student involvement as part of the process of level three study
Staff availability	M	M	Once process started the project manager/alternative college staff could be utilised
Data collection process	L	H	Agreement reached at first meeting to use a Moodle platform in each college – allow for sharing of data, but also allow customising for each college

Project Team

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 Noreen Moses
 Pauline Mason
 Ruth Johnson
 Peter Robinson
 Stella Reeves
 Colin Smith
 Donna Obrey