

Project Name: Bridging Support for BTEC Business Students

Amendment History:

Version no.	Date	Reason for Amendment
1	05/04/07	New proposal

Project Manager Michael Kitcatt

Document Distribution

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action/Information</i>
Michael Kitcatt	Worcester Sixth Form College	Manager of the project	Author of proposal
Bob Parker	LLN	LLN for H&W	Co-sponsor of proposal
TBA	WCT/UW	Admissions Tutor/Specialist tutor	Progression
Geoffrey Elliott	UW	Members of LLN steering Group	To approve project
Ian Peake	HCT		
Gail Rothnie	UoB		
Mike Rookes	OU		
Chris Morecroft	WCT		
Donna Obrey	LLN	Project Officer	To track project

Background

In September 2006, Worcester Sixth Form College introduced a bridging support programme called "Professional Programme" for entry to medical and legal professions. Students take these in addition to their vocational courses or A Level and benefit from:

- Focussed careers management guidance
- A programme of visiting speakers from the occupational areas
- Visits to HE institutions to explore the course requirements and meet key staff
- Work experience placements and/or the opportunity to gain first hand experience of a specific career area through visits

Following the success of the first two routes (see student feedback comments attached), the College now plans to introduce a Professional Programme for Business, Accounting, Marketing and Finance.

Objectives of the Project

The project will involve the:

1. Introduction of a Professional Programme for Business, Accounting, Marketing and Finance to run alongside their vocational studies as bridging support.

2. Discussions will take place with Worcester College of Technology and University of Worcester about progression from Worcester 6th Form to undergraduate business courses, to create Progression Agreements from Worcester 6th Form to WCT and UW.
3. Development of an enhancement programme, the components of which will be evaluated by students and the project team. The contents and evaluation of the programme will then be shared around the network as an example of good practice.
4. Evaluation of progression rate of this group of BTEC students, identifying issues associated with progression or not to HE and what helps overcome any issues that are barriers to progression
5. Development of the bridging package element of a progression agreement

This will be attractive to students taking the BTEC National Business course (currently 14 students have shown an interest), as well as students on A Level programmes in these subjects, who are not funded through the LLN.

Project Approach

- Use of focussed careers advice sessions and subject specialist sessions
- Collaboration between the college and employers to enable work experience
- Discussion with Admissions tutors or Specialist tutors at WCT/UW
- Assessment and evaluation of the Business Conferences and activities (e.g. Enterprise for Olympics), through student and tutor feedback
- Discussions with students and feedback on barriers to progression

Scope:

A Key Products from the project

1. An exemplar bridging support package for progression agreements
2. Additional enrolment for approximately 10 students from vocational routes
3. Improved knowledge for students of working in this vocational area and how to achieve entry to it
4. Improved progression into relevant HE by those students who have been involved in the project (currently 25% of BTEC business students go on to HE)
5. A report about the project and its effectiveness will be made available across the network. This will include an analysis of which types of intervention provide the best support, leading to an enhancement programme to support BTEC students
6. Progression agreements from Worcester 6th Form College to WCT and UW

B Out of Scope

The Professional Programme is designed to be run in conjunction with enrolment in other college courses that lead to Level 3 qualifications.

Constraints

The project will need to take account of busy periods for employers and examination periods and holidays for students.

Initial Project Case

The students will get extra support from a range of specialist from the college, HEIs, former or current HE students and employers to enhance their studies and their ability to be prepared for the transition to HE.

The students would also have the opportunity to take part in relevant work experience visits and enrichment activities, e.g.

- Attendance at Business Studies conferences, which will be evaluated to assess their effectiveness
- Participation in 'Enterprise for the Olympics', a whole day event at the College comprising five workshops, focusing on developing students different business and financial skills linked to the 2012 Olympics
- Visits to appropriate businesses

Benefits of the Project

- To students:
 - Greater understanding of employment opportunities within this vocational area and of full-time and part-time HE opportunities and how to access them. Be able to take advantage of the progression agreement
 - Greater understanding of how real businesses operate, which will improve their performance in BTEC National
- To the college:
 - Feedback from the law/medical programme has shown that students on the programme will have a more motivated and focused approach to their studies since their relevance in terms of their final career goal should be clear. A knock-on affect on retention for these students is anticipated (retention over the two years of the BTEC National Business Diploma finishing in July 2007 was 63%, whilst achievement was 100%). The College will also benefit from more opportunities to engage with employers and higher education institutions
- LLN:
 - The project will bring students with this career aspiration together as an identifiable group, thus enabling tracking to be undertaken
 - Targeted work activities will be delivered by HE providers in this vocational area
 - It will provide a sample enhancement package which can be shared with, and adapted by, other colleges
 - Employer involvement will be increased
 - It will develop an 'exemplar bridging support module' that can be used in other progression agreements
 - Production of progression agreements between level 3 and level 4 from Worcester 6Th Form College to HEIs

Key Assumptions

The number of students on the programme will not be known until late September 2007, however, 14 have already expressed during their initial College interview.

Costs

Research activity to evaluate activities through feedback from students, tutors and employers. To produce an Enhancement Package and elements for Progression Agreement support. Provision of the additional activities and visits (eg 'Enterprise of the Olympics')	
TOTAL	£5,500

How will the project be evaluated?

There will be regular meetings of the project team to monitor progress of the project. A report will be written at the end of the project and circulated to other members of the LLN. It will include:

- Feedback from staff teaching in this vocational area and from visiting speakers etc
- Student evaluation questionnaires of the usefulness of the different elements of the programme
- Proportion of students taking the programme progressing to relevant HE or employment (please note that most of the students will be in their first year at College and so this will not be known until the end of 2009). (Figures for students leaving the AVCE Business course – which the College ran before changing to the BTEC National – show only 25% progressing to higher education)
- Identification of elements that could most usefully be applied in other contexts, either as stand alone enhancement programme for BTEC students or as Bridging Support element of Progression Agreements.

Contribution to LLN aims

This project assists the Learner Progression and Support theme by:

1. Contributing to a progression agreement (target 5 draft by 2007)
2. Contributing to bridging package of support target (one for each progression agreement)
3. Providing improved figures for progression of students with vocational qualifications into HE (target rise of 25% by 2009)
4. Providing information about barriers to progression and interventions that overcome barriers

How will the project be sustained?

Provided the project is successful, the College will run the programme in future years. It is hoped that the success of this and other Professional Programmes will lead to an increase in enrolments, hence generating some of the resources for their continuation. The College would also investigate the possibility of employer sponsorship.

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
Recruitment significantly below forecast	M	L	The programme could still be run essentially as planned. There might be some savings on the costs of trips and visits.
Difficulties in getting involvement needed from businesses	L	M	Given the extensive contacts which the Student Services department has, this is not felt to be likely. Most of the proposed content could still be delivered.

Project Team

Michael Kitcatt (Deputy Principal)

Pauline Mason (Head of Student Services)

Jan Whitehorne (Student Services Adviser)

Sybanne King (Responsibility for A Level Business Studies)

Graham Williams (Responsibility for Vocational Business Studies)

Bob Parker (LLN)

John Gardner (HEI admissions/specialist tutor)