

Project Name: Workforce Deanery project: Skills for Health: A Stepped- Approach to Learning

Amendment History:

Version No.	Date	Reason for Amendment
1	25 th August 2007	New proposal

Project Manager

Narvinder Dhillon

Document Distribution

Name	Location	Responsibility	Action/Information
Narvinder Dhillon	NHS West Midlands		Project manager
Liz Davies-Ward	LLN	Curriculum Theme Lead	Proposal author
Geoffrey Elliot	UW	Members of Steering group	To approve project
Gail Rothnie	UoB		
Mike Rookes	OU		
Chris Morecroft	WCT		
Ian Peake	HCT		

Background

This project is led by the Workforce Deanery NHS West Midlands supported by Skills for Health. The project will look at developing flexible (stepped) educational pathway provided by FE/HEIs hence widening access for health care workers onto degree programmes in a staged approach.

The focus of the project is very much led by the needs of the employer. Skills for Health are extremely committed to informing the publication of general guidelines of strategic partnerships between employers and FE/HEIs in the design and delivery of the project. Skills for Health have committed £50,000 to the project and this sum is intended to cover costs of curriculum design and delivery and go some way towards paying for the release of health care staff to undertake the programme.

The project is supported by two HEIs one being the University of Wolverhampton and the other University of Worcester. Each HEI would be allocated £15,000 for design and delivery and the remaining monies to be split between the two PCTs in the Region. The funds from the LLN would feed into curriculum development monies thereby allowing a larger chunk of

the £15000 from the project to go to the PCT in Worcester eg. Worcester PCT would receive £13000 rather than the existing £10000. The PCT would use this money towards paying for the release of staff to go onto the course. The University of Worcester would receive £12000 plus the £3000 allocated by the LLN. This funding would facilitate the development of the new modules and would support the development of a new FD.

Objectives of the Project

- To provide a 'stepped approach' to HE for Health care staff
- To define Health care roles using national Occupational Competencies as the key component in establishing where the most appropriate step on and step off points can be defined along the FE/HE award pathway.
- To establish a process of how accreditation of prior learning could be recognised to enable entrance to the HEI award pathway at any point supporting a more flexible learning environment
- To build an educational pathway for health care staff which differs from current provision
- To build flexible and distributed learning into the curriculum
- To build on existing relationships between HE and Employers
- To provide an employer led learning pathway

Project Approach

The project has been developed to ensure that employers and FE /HE representatives are available to participate in the project to maximise the outcome. A formal steering group and operational group have been established to oversee the project. The project itself is part of a wider 'demonstration project' within Skills for Health and there are nine other similar projects across the country.

The project steering and operational group have met four times. The two university representatives, along with employers from the region have agreed to develop four 'bite-sized' modules which will ultimately feed into a Foundation Degree, thereby providing progression opportunities for health staff to other related degree courses.

The core team will also examine a range of delivery methods which will include an e-learning platform to support the programme.

Scope:

A Key Products from the project

- * A delivery model, fit for purpose and based around the principles set out by Skills for Health
- A model for partnership- working which can be used to inform other similar initiatives elsewhere within the LLN and beyond the LLN
- * A progression route for health care staff into FD
- An opportunity for health care staff to experience HE on a small scale
- An opportunity for the LLN to work more closely with the Sector Skills Council

B Out of Scope

The same new modules would need to be written and validated by two universities.

Constraints

- Awareness of the policies and procedures of the two universities could hinder progression.
- The new modules would not be validated in time for a February start

Initial Project Case

- A 'stepped approach' to learning for Health care staff
- A collaborative approach to design and delivery of modules
- A progression opportunity for Health care staff
- A flexible delivery model which differs from the traditional model

Benefits of the Project

- Partnership and collaboration between HE/FE and Employers
- Collaboration with the Sector Skills Councils and LLN
- 'Bite-sized' chunks of learning to introduce participants to HE
- Improving retention and recruitment of the workforce

Key Assumptions

- The availability of key staff members of the project team
- The stability of the project team
- The project will meet the needs of the employer
- The release of candidates onto the programme
- That the organisations constituting the partnership have a desire to work together
- The modules can be written and validated in time for a February start

Costs

The cost of £2,500 to be offset against the cost of design, delivery and other additional requirements to allow for a successful validation

How will the project be evaluated?

Skills for Health will evaluate the project on recruitment, retention and success. The evaluation will be built into the programme which will allow the students to self evaluate. The students' line manager and mentor will evaluate and appraise both the enhancement of their knowledge and skills and also in terms of the effectiveness of their contribution to the organisation.

The project will also be evaluated on the number of students who progress on to a FD or similar.

How will the project be sustained?

The project has been designed to enable the model to be self sustaining. The project is part of the Skills for Health strategy for Education and Learning and sits within its Higher Education Award Qualifications Scheme.

The level of worker the programme will attract will increase in number of the next few years thereby sustaining the need for such a programme.

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
Release of staff to develop the programme	Low	Low	Further negotiation with line management to release relevant staff
Failure to recruit onto programme	Low	Low	To increase the range of information available to potential students
Failure to successfully validate modules within timeframe	Low	Low	Modules have been included in the university's validation schedule for 07/08
The employer will not endorse the programme	Low	Low	Employers have been fully involved throughout the project.

Project Team

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Jacqueline Miller	Worcester Mental Health Partnership Trust
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