



Application to the Big Projects Fund

Project Name: Development of three Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts

- Media (Moving Image)
- Music Production
- Technical Theatre pathways
 - Theatre Make up & Prosthetics
 - Set Design and Construction
 - Theatre Costume

Project Manager: Phillip Pywell - Programme Area Manager Expressive Arts

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<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action/Information</i>
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1. Background

Creativity is essential to the development of workforce and the Government's desire to raise profile. North East Worcestershire College has been successfully running HND/C Media and HNC/HND Music Production programmes: Media (1999), Music Production (2003). In addition, the Department of Arts & Higher Education has been successfully running a Foundation Degree in Theatre and the Community, validated by the University of Worcester since 2005. In accordance with the College's HE Strategy 2008 - 11, it is now appropriate to revisit our HND/C programmes with a view to developing further Foundation Degrees. It is intended to research and design three new Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts:

- Music Production
- Media (Moving Image)
- Technical Theatre to encompass three pathways
 - i. Theatre Make up & Prosthetics
 - ii. Set Design and Construction
 - iii. Theatre Costume.

The Worcestershire Creative Industries Growth Plan states: "Research undertaken has estimated that there are around 7,300 individuals employed in the creative industries in Worcestershire, representing 2.7% of the workforce. The County has considerable resources in the creative industries training sector, primarily from education providers, which could play a greater role in supporting sector development.

In-County production is an essential ingredient in a successful creative industries sector. It supports employment and job creation; it impacts directly on the local economy and generates income; it provides products and services for the local economy but also for export; it stimulates creative activity; and it helps to promote the identity of Worcestershire and its creative industries sector. The sector in the County has few sizeable companies and operations and is characterised by micro-businesses. The sector is fragile. There are a number of underlying problems: much of the training available is not tailored to the sector or provided by specialist trainers; it is often targeted at medium-sized businesses; the sector has a poor record in taking up non-specialist training programmes.”

The Foundation Degrees would support the Worcestershire Creative Industries Growth Plan and sustain its four aims to:

- strengthen and expand the creative industries sector in the County in order to support the County economy,
- develop the creative talents and skills of the people of the County,
- enhance the external image and profile of the County through its creativity,
- work with new technologies to increase new economic and creative opportunities for the County.

In addition, the Bromsgrove Arts Strategy states: “There will be opportunities for the Council to work more closely with education providers in the district and NEW College especially, in developing opportunities for people to train and develop local businesses in the creative industries, to retain talent in the district.”

These Foundation Degrees would collaborate with employers in the designing and delivery of a robust curriculum to meet their needs within the industry as identified above. It would replace all current HND/C provision within the Expressive Arts programme area and would provide a clear progression route from the Advanced Diploma in Creative and Media already successfully being delivered in partnership with local schools.

The Foundation Degree programme would equip students with the technical, academic and transferable skills, knowledge and understanding that employers are increasingly seeking. Foundation Degrees are valued qualifications in their own right as well as meeting the Lifelong Learning agenda through providing a route to an honours degree and further professional qualifications. The Foundation Degree would also contribute to widening participation by promoting a route into higher education for those who are not initially confident about tackling a three-year full degree programme or who are unable to travel far because of other commitments. It will also create more part-time opportunities for people already in employment.

Fundamental to the approach taken on the Foundation Degree will be the creation of strong employer partnerships: for the co-funding of projects, and in the commissioning and development of projects. The approach will enable students to benefit from new ways of course delivery through work experience. NEW College has been developing links with employers throughout the West Midlands. The College also has well-established links with various arts venues and businesses for students to have access to real working environments; for example, Artrix, Bromsgrove, Avoncroft, Debenhams, Audio Sound, Birmingham Repertory theatre, Music Live, The Ditch Redditch, The NEC Clothes Show Live link-up with Inkberrow Design Centre to practice skills in an outside broadcast environment.

2. Objectives of the Project

- i. To review the requirements for Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.
- ii. To identify specific higher level knowledge and skills that local employers within the creative industries want to be included within the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.
- iii. To identify and work with local employers in designing and delivering the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.
- iv. To develop criteria for part time modes of study for people in employment to participate in the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.
- v. To identify a formal progression opportunity to the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts from the Advanced Diploma in Creative and Media.
- vi. To research relevant higher education providers with whom to develop the Foundation Degree and who would provide validation and a formal progression opportunity to Honours Degree.

3. Project Approach

Structured interviews will be arranged and conducted with a significant number of local employers within the creative industries. The objective of the interviews is to gather information on the specific higher level knowledge and skills that local employers require within the creative industries, and to gauge the demand for new a Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.

Structured visits will be arranged to meet with relevant higher education providers with whom to develop the Foundation Degree and who would provide validation.

Using the research findings, the programme development team will prepare initial ideas on curriculum content and delivery modes, and produce a draft programme specification for the new Foundation Degree.

A meeting will be held to review the proposed programme specification and aspects of the curriculum with local employers and the validating university. Following this meeting interested employers will be invited to join an 'Employer Advisory Board'.

Using employer and university feedback, the programme development team will finalise the programme specification for the new Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.

4. Scope

A. Key Products from the Project

- Newly designed Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts offering a range of vocationally relevant pathways, supported by a programme of visiting lecturers and student projects based on live work in art and design with a wide range of employer engagement in a variety of ways. This will also include theatres, film studios, music venues, schools, education authorities and other organisations.
- A model for employer involvement in the design of Foundation Degrees, which can be used to inform other similar initiatives elsewhere within and beyond the Lifelong Learning Network.
- Recruitment of an 'Employer Advisory Board' to support future development and sustainability of the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.

- The development of part time modes of study for people in employment to participate in the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts .
- The development of a formal progression opportunity to the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts from the Advanced Diploma in Creative and Media.
- The development of a formal progression opportunity to Honours Degree.

B. Out of Scope

The later stages of the Foundation Degree programme development process are beyond the scope of this project, for example; the use of blended learning to enhance access.

5. Constraints

As many local employers within the creative industries are small scale businesses there could be reluctance from them to engage with this project. This constraint is compounded by the fact that only 30% of employers within Herefordshire and Worcestershire who train their staff use further education colleges.

6. Initial Project Case

- The design of a 'demand led' Foundation Degree, which will offer opportunities to increase and widen participation in higher education locally through vocational progression.
- A collaborative project involving a university, a further education college and a range of local employers.
- To develop progression from the new Advanced Diploma in Creative and Media.

7. Benefits of the Project

Key benefits to the learners:

- This project will develop opportunities for students by providing a sustainable and responsive progression route from Level 3 programmes, including the new Advanced Diploma in Creative and Media being delivered in partnership with local schools from September 2008.
- These Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts will equip learners with a combination of technical and creative skills, academic knowledge and transferable skills that are valued by local employers.
- The Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts will equip learners with the intellectual independence to acquire their own critical vocabulary with which to develop as creative practitioners.

Key benefits to employers:

- Availability of Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts which have been designed to develop the skills and knowledge of the local workforce.
- An increase in the number of part time students entering higher education whilst continuing employment through a flexible curriculum design and programme specification.

- To involve employers in the development, design and delivery of the curriculum of the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts to support progression into the creative industries.

Key benefits to NEW College:

- Collaborative involvement with employers to build on the College's long term employer engagement strategy.
- Increased enrolments on to the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts from existing HND/C programmes.
- Improved progression opportunities for its Level 3 students.
- An important contribution to the College's three-year Higher Education strategy.

8. Key Assumptions

- i. The availability of key members of the project team and their associated release from other duties by the College.
- ii. A significant number of local employers will engage effectively with the project.
- iii. University partnership.

9. Costs

- i. Staff secondment for Project Leader and other Project Team members: 2 days per week @ £210 per day, over 40 weeks = £16,800
- ii. Travel and other expenses = £2000

Total costs estimated at £18,800 (to include the College's commitment of 20% of total costs)

It should be noted that project funding will contribute to the costs of developing the Foundation Degrees pathways only, it will not cover validation costs.

10. Project Timescale

One year.

11. How will the project be evaluated?

The success of this project will be evaluated by measurement against outcomes identified as 'key products' from the project; measures will include:

- Comparison of curriculum content and delivery models between the existing HND/C programmes of study and the proposed Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts, with a focus on increased employer involvement.
- Comparison of student enrolments between the existing HND/C programmes of study and the proposed Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.
- Monitoring and review of the activities/outcomes achieved by the Employer Advisory Board in relation to the newly designed Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.
- A model for employer involvement in the design of Foundation Degrees formulated, articulated and available for dissemination via academic journals, good practice events and events.

12. How will the project be sustained?

If successful this project could also be used as a model of good practice and could set the benchmark for future joint projects between the College and partner universities.

The establishment of an Employer Advisory Board will be the mechanism which ensures that local employers will remain actively involved in the future development of the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts

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.

- To increase the numbers of students entering higher education with vocational qualifications by completing a Foundation Degree.
- To increase the number of part time students entering higher education whilst continuing employment within the creative industries.
- To help the target groups of students succeed in higher education within the creative industries.
- To involve employers in the development, design and delivery of curriculum of the Foundation Degrees in Expressive Arts.
- To provide a bridge between FE and HE for students, staff, employers, institutions within:
 - Media (Moving Image)
 - Music Production
 - Technical Theatre (3 pathways Theatre Make up & Prosthetics/Set Design and Construction/Theatre Costume)

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
Release of staff to implement the project	Low	High	Rationalisation of project objectives and key stages to match staff availability
Lack of sufficient employer involvement	Medium	High	Involvement of relevant Sector Skills Councils and Chambers of Commerce to assist in recruitment of suitable employers
Sustainability via Employer Advisory Board	Medium	Medium	Other employer engagement methods would be pursued if the Employer Advisory Board failed – e.g. employer satisfaction surveys
Identifying partner institution collaboration	Low	High	Preliminary visits to relevant HEIs

15 Project Team

Phillip Pywell (Project Manager) Programme Area Manager, Expressive Arts, NEW College

Geoff Moore - Programme Area Manager, Art and Design, NEW College

Colin Smith - Head of Department Arts and Higher Education, NEW College
Shelley Phelan - Head of Quality & Professional Development, NEW College
Roger Smith - Course Leader HND/C Music Production, NEW College
Sean Macreavy - Course Leader HND/C Media, NEW College
Karen Nutton - Course Leader HND Fashion & Textiles, NEW College
Chris House - Course Leader HND/C Three Dimensional Design, NEW College
Sue Hunter - Course Leader Theatre Make up, NEW College
Jane Oakley - Course Leader Theatre Make up, NEW College
Annette Gambino - Course Leader HND/C Interior Design, NEW College