

**Agenda for LLN Steering Group meeting, Friday 2 March
2.00pm, University of Worcester, MB1.55**

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Approval of minutes from meeting of 14th December and Matters Arising
- 3 Chair's Business
- 4 Introduction of new staff
- 5 To receive update on activities
- 6 To receive summary of visits made to partners
- 7 To consider project proposals
- 8 To receive response from HEFCE re monitoring report
- 9 To receive HEFCE update for LLNs
- 10 To receive a financial profile
- 11 Any Other Business

Item 5: To receive update on activities

Indicator	Evidence of Action	Comment
Progress made in relation to specific milestones and targets as set out in the original business case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity update attached • Update sheet for joint planning groups attached 	
Evidence of full partner involvement and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See summary sheet, item 6 	I have almost completed my first round of visits. Once staff are in place they will invite relevant representatives to working meetings
The progress made in establishing progression agreements that operate across the network, and making credit transfer a reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interview for the post of learner support and progression co-ordinator was unsuccessful 	I will look at the candidates for the Impartial advice and guidance post currently being advertised. I will also convene a small meeting of representatives to discuss the role
Progress made in establishing appropriate information, advice and guidance systems, and any arrangements made for tracking and/or re-engaging learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Officer to develop tracking mechanisms appointed for a 3 year period 	We are planning a project to evaluate the progression of learners from FE and vocational learning to HE. See item 7 below
Details of curriculum developments that facilitate progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the network all considering curriculum developments. 	Start of health and social care curriculum lead on 19 th Feb will facilitate this. Project funding will be used to develop some curriculum
Identification of the network 'learner constituency', and how the network reflects learner needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interview for the post of learner support and progression co-ordinator was unsuccessful 	Work will be conducted in identifying learner needs with the involvement of all partners in the network.
A budget summary and update on the use of ASNs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-profiled summary budget submitted 	I am currently holding meetings to determine ASN return for next year

Activity Update 22 February 2007

Staffing

1. Liz Davies-Ward (previously at HCT) started as curriculum theme lead for health and social care on Monday 19th February
2. Viv Bell will start as learning Technology Co-ordinator on 1st March
3. Donna Obrey will start as Project officer on Monday 12th March
4. We interviewed for, but did not recruit, curriculum theme lead for leadership and management, and learner support and progression co-ordinator. We will look at candidates who applied for a post as lecturer in Leadership and Management (interview 22 February) at UW, and Impartial Information advice and guidance Officer, closing date 28th February.

Areas of work

1. **Logo competition:** We will run the logo competition for all students in Herefordshire and Worcestershire in March. The Poster and leaflet have been designed. They should be printed week commencing 26 February, and distributed week commencing 5 March, with a deadline for entries of 2 April. I plan to have a group to produce a shortlist comprising representatives from IT and marketing, and then put the final 10 or so to the April steering group, and let the winner know by 4 May. I would like the prize to be presented in the winner's college by their Principal as well as LLN representatives, and we will invite the press.
2. **HE Fair:** We are developing the idea of a fair demonstrating all the HE available in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. This was suggested by David Blades, arising from a Specialist diploma consortium. 14-19 Aim Higher Strands and UW marketing are working with me to arrange the event which will be held in the autumn, and will involve all the FE colleges providing HE, as well as UW, and the Open university. It may extend over an afternoon (for 16-18 year olds) and the evening for people in employment. We will use this event as the official launch of the LLN. It has been suggested that it be held in Malvern, either at the Theatre or the Showground.
3. **Professional development for FE and HE staff site:** the LLN has agreed to host the professional development site for FE and HE covering FECs and HEIs in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. This will provide all colleges with an opportunity to publicise their cpd offering to others in the region, and (in conjunction with 5 below) to share some events. This will not initially be offered to private training organisations, but their inclusion for a fee might be useful for sustaining the project in the long term.
4. **EU Transnational Funding 2007-2013 workshop:** We have agreed to fund a half day staff development seminar on EU Transnational Funding opportunities (which have a substantial emphasis on Lifelong learning). There are billions of pounds in funding available. This will be open to one representative from each FE college in the network, as well as Birmingham and Open Universities.
5. **Staff Developers Forum:** I would like to establish a Staff Developers Forum across the network, meeting termly to:
 - identify what sessions or courses the LLN can provide
 - link in with the professional development site for Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire
 - identify where events may be shared between colleges
 - share good practice and information
 - feed ideas into the LLN online presence

6. **Tracking progression:** We need to start the project on progression. Initially, I have the following list of questions for the project:

- What is progression rate into HE (out of numbers and percentages of students completing these qualifications) of students with vocational qualifications (need to define vocational qualifications: could it be non-A level route, and split into major qualifications such as advanced apprenticeship, National Diploma)
- What is rate from each type of vocational qualification into HE
- What is the rate from each FE college vocational qualification by type into HE in FE (and what proportion into UW-validated courses)
- What is rate from each FE College vocational qualification by type into HE in HEI (and what proportion to UW, Birmingham and OU)
- What is the rate from each FE college vocational qualification by course into HE in FE (and what proportion into UW-validated courses)
- What is rate from each FE College vocational qualification by course into HE in HEI (and what proportion to UW, Birmingham and OU)
- What is progression rate from A level courses into HE by FE college as comparator
- What is the progression rate of students with apprenticeships into HE
- What are the numbers of people commencing HE in FE colleges in at least part time employment
- What are the numbers of people commencing HE in HEIs in at least part time employment
- What are the numbers of people in HE undertaking work-based learning

Results from the project conducted by Worcester County Council are expected shortly. I will look at what answers that provides, then produce a project proposal which I will circulate to members of the steering group for comment if ready much before the next meeting

Update on the LLN for JPGs February 2007

What are we trying to Achieve?

To get more students with vocational qualifications and more students in employment into the network partners to study and achieve in HE

How are we planning to do this as a network?

Curriculum development

- To review the curriculum (initially for leadership and Management, and Health and Social Care) within the region; to identify any missing qualification levels which might block progression; to develop new curriculum to fill those gaps
- To develop new courses and modules specifically designed to attract the two target groups; and to adapt existing curriculum, so that the delivery becomes more attractive to the target groups (more use of weekend, summer school, e learning)

Progression

- To put progression agreements in place between particular courses to guarantee students places and encourage progression
- To work to increase understanding and acceptability of vocational qualifications by admissions staff around the regional HEIs
- To attach academic credit to some CPD, to any Level 4 qualifications without provided by the partners, and to demonstrate to potential students how existing qualifications fit into an overall credit framework; to validate a general health and well being degree which accepts a range of modules from different partners, and a similar business one, recognising CPD.

Support

- To provide enhanced advice and guidance to potential students
- To provide additional study skills support to LLN students to maximise their chance of success

Collaboration

- To work hard to ensure that a wide range of potential members of the network see a benefit to playing an active role within the network

Outcomes for this calendar year

Curriculum development

- Qualification maps for students in two curriculum areas, translated into accessible information; plans for further curriculum development; development of limited new curriculum
- Development of e learning across the region; and progress towards an online environment

Progression

- A small number of progression agreements
- Identification of current levels of progression from FE to HE which will establish a baseline against which to measure success of the LLN.
- Identification of barriers to progression and action plan to address some of these

Collaboration

- Approval of a number of small projects from across the network, each designed to attract additional target students, or improve support for students, the results of which will be shared across the network
- Regional Conference

- Draft Memoranda of co-operation between partners; participation by partners in various theme groups and smaller projects; commitment to the network
- Staff development sessions put on for and shared by partners within the network

Communication

- Progression prospectus for Herefordshire, and provision of information regarding opportunities in an accessible way
- Fair to demonstrate HE opportunities in Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- A logo competition for students in the region and prize-giving

Strategy for the LLN

In developing our plans, we have taken into account the following principles:

- To ensure that the LLN covers both counties
- To ensure that the LLN operates on behalf of each partner institution
- To limit the cost of a core team
- To fund a number of projects which may address particular concerns of one partner, but which can also assist the development of practice for all partners
- To embed the work within the partner institutions
- To provide open and effective communication regarding all aspects of the project

We have taken the following actions to take into account each principle:

To ensure that the LLN covers both counties	The first curriculum theme lead has requested to be based in Hereford. We have therefore set up an LLN base in Hereford as well as Worcester.
To ensure that the LLN operates on behalf of each partner institution	The manager has set up visits to each partner college to ascertain what they hope that the LLN will help them to achieve, and to identify how they would like to be involved.
To limit the cost of a core team	We have reviewed the proposed staffing and combined the following posts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learner Support and Credit and Progression posts have been combined, with some responsibility going to curriculum leads. This is in recognition that both roles are facilitative and developing what is already in place. • The researcher and administrator posts have initially been combined to reduce costs. • The Learning Broker post will not be advertised until we have clarified potential overlap with the LSC and Train to Gain
To fund a number of projects which may address particular concerns of one partner, but which can also assist the development of practice for all partners	The reduction in the core team will provide additional funding for short term work and projects suggested by network members. The funding of projects will be one way of transferring money around the network.
To embed the work within the partner institutions	This has started with visits to the Principals. Another practical step was to attend the joint Marketing Group.
To provide open and effective communication regarding all aspects of the project	The planned website will have an area for staff to share information about the projects and Steering Group meetings. Different communication

	processes will be identified for each group of people e.g. staff, students in employment, businesses, apprentices. The logo will be designed by a student through a competition in H&W.
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Progress to date

Staffing

- Debbie Lambert started as Manager of the LLN in November.
- Liz Davies-Ward (previously at HCT) will start as curriculum theme lead for health and social care on Monday 19th February
- Viv Bell will start as learning Technology Co-ordinator on 1st March
- Donna Obrey will start as Project officer on Monday 12th March
- We interviewed for, but did not recruit, curriculum theme lead for leadership and management, and learner support and progression co-ordinator.
- We would like to thank Gail Rothnie of the University of Birmingham, Mike Rookes of the Open University, Chris Morecroft of Worcester College of Technology and Ruth Johnston of Herefordshire College of Technology for assisting with interviews

Offices

- We have set up offices at University of Worcester and at Herefordshire College of Technology

Visits

Debbie has started her role by visiting (or arranging visits for) the following partners in the network:

- Aim Higher in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (all strands)
- Evesham and Malvern Hills College
- Hereford Sixth Form College
- Herefordshire College of Art and Design
- Herefordshire College of Technology
- Herefordshire County Council
- Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire CPD Partnership
- Kidderminster College
- Learning Skills Council
- Next Steps
- North East Worcestershire College
- Open University
- Pershore Group of Colleges
- Robert Owen Learning Academy
- Royal National college for the Blind
- University of Birmingham
- University of Worcester
- Worcester College of Technology
- Worcester Sixth Form College
- Worcestershire County Council

Projects

- We have developed a project bidding form and methodology in order to support projects proposed by members of the network.

Communications

- We will run a competition for all students in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to design a logo over the next half term.
- We are planning an annual LLN conference in November
- We are developing the idea of a fair demonstrating all the HE available in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Prospectus

- The progression prospectus for Herefordshire is at the printers.

Reporting to HEFCE

- We have submitted our first six-monthly monitoring report to HEFCE.

Debbie Lambert

16/02/07

Lifelong Learning Network for Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Areas of work/projects arising from meetings

	Curriculum Development	Mode of Delivery & e learning	Marketing	Staff development	Progression Data	Other
Worcester College of Technology facilitator: Carl Flint	Development of bridging modules/courses with generic study skills plus subject specific themes. Some interactive element on VLE	Look at splitting some BTEC modules into smaller chunks	Part time routes and specific marketing for leavers who want to work as well	Session on how to split a course into small modules, then time to do it	Progression data from level 3 to 4	
	Produce single modules at HE level to attract adult learners which could later become part of generic FDs	Mode of delivery: look at designing some modules with attendance start and end, with electronic elements, use of weekends				
Herefordshire College of Technology Facilitator: Ruth Johnstone	Development of generic Management FD with way to contextualise for different groups	Development of e learning offered in Health and Social Care	Resources for additional local marketing	Staff development on e learning		
	Development of FD in ICT			Staff development on curriculum development		
	Development of HE course in counselling					
	Development of common units for FDs offered by the college to reduce costs					
Evesham and Malvern Hills College David Blades	Development of FD for Accounting technicians Training in special needs for support assistants FD in Art and design FD in Computing and E media	E learning in Leadership and management	Consortium suggestion of event displaying opps for HE in the two counties			

	Curriculum Development	Mode of Delivery & e learning	Marketing	Staff development	Progression Data	Other
Kidderminster College Anna Place (Hope to become Health COVE)	Progression from level 2&3 in Sports and Exercise Science, and Sports Management		Research and awareness raising re FD and other HE with local employers			
	Level 4 Music Management feeding from music apprenticeships (ESF funding ends) poss of linking to FD (all in employment)			On curriculum development		
	Level 4 Film making working with employers					
Worcester Sixth Form College Michael Kitcatt			Projects to get more students onto level 3 courses to feed level 4			
	Science training for adults in employment	Develop a route of access course, part time in evenings. Poss link with Openings (OU)	Promotion of vocational courses	E learning and curriculum development		
	Evening classes paid for by employers (languages and computing)					Run basic skills in community venues: not all linked to the internet
	Professional programmes aimed at preparing students for HE in vocational areas					
North East Worcestershire College Mike McCarthy COVE Leadership and Managnt	Bridging modules for apprentices	Looking at more blended learning	Tasters of HE	Staff development in curriculum development and e learning?	Progression data and progression rates	

	Curriculum Development	Mode of Delivery & e learning	Marketing	Staff development	Progression Data	Other
	FD in leadership and Management				Barriers to progression project (low %)	Identification of students as LLN students
Herefordshire College of Art Helen Vine	Collaborative MA with UW on Arts Management		Deliver summer schools		Progression from FD to BA to MA	Incentive if students quote LLN (to identify students)
	BA Arts Management (vocational & linked to work place) Research into demand	Research into time of delivery best for cpd	Resource bus to take around region			
	Developing bridging units with Art LLN		Project on communication about fees and finances			
	CPD for Art teachers					
Hereford 6 th Form College Jonathon Godfrey	Have BTECH in Sports science, vocational a level in Health & social care			Interested in staff developers forum	Have accurate progression data can share	
Halesowen College	Curriculum enhancement module (level 4 module for A level students)					
UW Institute of Psychology, Health and Social Care Facilitator: Jan Quallington	New Work-related courses Assistant practitioner Mental health support work	Partner colleges offer level one over 2 years	Staff visit potential students in FE, linked with progression agreements			
		Colleges running individual UW modules				
		Develop weekend courses with 5 credits				
UW Business School	Audit of provision vs AWM report Deliver business module in schools with Hereford Aim Higher CPD framework	Project on issues surrounding flexible delivery				

	Curriculum Development	Mode of Delivery & e learning	Marketing	Staff development	Progression Data	Other
Learning & Teaching centre, UW John Peters	Masters in HE Leadership			LLN facilitate forum of staff developers		Electronic Portfolios
UW Dept of Humanities Richard Pearson		Have expertise on pedagogic development of pod casts				
University of Birmingham Gail Rothnie	Currently have on-line study skills module and pre-induction support: can help to develop these Involvement in curriculum groups	Can work with groups looking at e learning		Have experienced staff development unit can provide some sessions for network	Progression agreements from degree to masters in 2 key areas	
Open University Mike Rookes	Interested in both curriculum areas	Learning bus?		Leading on IAG in other regions		Could have an LLN number which can go to any institution's IAG, and they represent LLN
		Mode of delivery discussions		Contribute staff developers		
Aim Higher 13-19 worcestershire Matt Clulee			Links with co-ordinators in schools Subject specific taster days for vocational learners		Need to work on progression data	
Aim Higher Work-based Strand Mike Smith and Annette Swaffield	Work in both curriculum areas	Look for Day release mode, summer schools	3000 apprentices		Looking at progression opps for students with vocational qualifications	Database of 6-7000 employers
	Develop bridging courses, apprentices to pilot		Producing HE guidance packs		Progression agreements	
			HE workshop in Easter		Establish how many apprentices go into HE	

	Curriculum Development	Mode of Delivery & e learning	Marketing	Staff development	Progression Data	Other
Aim Higher Community Strand Annette Wright	Would participate in discussions re development of support for learners just before start HE e.g bridging modules and study skills		Have community learning mentors & ambassadors			LLN assist in information exchange
	Have mapped courses in Worcestershire for some areas		Have 5 learning centres			
Aim Higher Community Strand Hereford William Derham			Use of learning Champions to provide additional info , possibly extend their hours			LLN could provide communication channels with FE colleges
Education Business partnerships, Worcester Terry Owens			Employer events to raise awareness re specialist diplomas	Provide professional development , can include FE lecturers		Database with 8000 companies in H & W. Happy to provide some info. Poss short project working with employers in Health & Social care
Specialist Diploma Consortium, Worcester Deborah Andrews		Working on e portfolio	Marketing specialist diplomas to University admissions tutors and parents, and demonstration of progression routes	Schools Need support in ICT, and support for careers staff in schools (conference plus info?)		
Nextsteps Chris Jones	IAG courses			Training within the network on IAG: what happening in HE	Learner Support and progression post to attend advisors meetings	Partners in developing OOE
						Adult careers doesn't include level 4

	Curriculum Development	Mode of Delivery & e learning	Marketing	Staff development	Progression Data	Other
						Computers with LLN website at careers centres?
LSC Sarah Tulk	Share information re mapping and area prospectus		LLN Partner in gateway to help track referrals			Link with Train to gain (share info), and LLN act as link into HE networks
	Specialist diplomas in health in first wave	Links with young apprentices, providing IAG in workplace			Progression rates for young apprentices and Train to gain referrals	Funding a project (s)
						Poss links with ESF programme across region (partially funded places)
Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire cpd Partnership Chris Wilkins, WCT			Professional development site for FE and HE in H & W and Shropshire			
Worcestershire County Council 14-19 Jerry Temple-Fryer		Need to sell/market progression rates for national diplomas and specialist diplomas and apprenticeships	Area prospectus share info on courses and keep up-to-date database			
	Provision of CPD for teachers teaching specialist diplomas	Work jointly on progression data project				
	Provision of HE modules for specialist diplomas					

	Curriculum Development	Mode of Delivery & e learning	Marketing	Staff development	Progression Data	Other
General suggestions	Define each curriculum area		LLN helpline phone number and prospectus showing all modules in region. Set date for first module prospectus	Offer in study weeks and half term, or 4-7 sessions		Produce regular management reports for partners. Consider chart of targets and enrolments per college
			Badge modules designed with LLN funding with LLN badge plus college badge			Need an information sheet/new letter telling staff who is in the LLN, what doing etc
			Tutors in FE work closely with employers			
			Provide launch for employers and community providers			

Issues identified

Need to check with BTEC cost implications re registering for single module	Sustainability of provision (new LLN and existing)	Top slice by UW too heavy to be economic with small groups: will it be the same for LLN student numbers	Need to know fee per student in advance	Can we fund Capital equipment	
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Item 7: To consider Project proposals

- a) Wider horizons
- b) Short Course Market Research (see also results of this project)
- c) Evaluating the impact of LLN

The group approved this at the last meeting. I have included a short project form so that the group can consider whether they would wish to make a token payment to Julie Balsom for doing this work.

- d) Proposed tracking chart

Proposed amendment to the project proposal form

I propose that we add the following two headings:

How will the project be evaluated?

How will the project be sustained?

Project Name: Wider Horizons: an open educational online environment

Amendment History:

Version No.	Date	Reason for Amendment
1	15/02/07	First draft

Project Manager: Viv Bell

Document Distribution

Name	Location	Responsibility	Action/Information
Andrew Rothery	UW	Director of E-learning, UW	Co-author of proposal
Debbie Lambert	LLN	Manager of the LLN for H&W	Co-author of proposal
Viv Bell	LLN	Learning Technology Co-ordinator LLN for H&W	Project manager
Geoffrey Elliott	UW	Members of LLN steering Group	To approve project
Gail Rothnie	UoB		
Mike Rookes	OU		
Chris Morecroft	WCT		

Background

The framework outlined here for an open educational online environment for the LLN (referred to as as *Wider Horizons*) has been developed by Anne Hannaford, Director of Information and Learning Services, Andrew Rothery, Director of E-Learning, in collaboration with Debbie Lambert, LLN Manager and Geoffrey Elliot, Director of Lifelong Learning and Viv Bell, LLN Learning Technology Co-ordinator.

We are proposing collaboration between LLN and ILS since after the three-year lifetime of the LLN project we would expect the university and its partners to take over the continuing support and development of Wider Horizons.

Objectives of the Project

To provide

- an online environment to support the work of the LLN and deliver its online activities
- an online environment focussed on the needs of the individual learner, and provide learners with personal tools, social networking and other services which they can continue to use independently of the courses of study they undertake over the years

- communication channels for members of the network organisations
- a community portal to enable access to lifelong learning opportunities
- facilities for stakeholder organisations to collectively interact with new learners

Project Approach

Stage One: to agree the overall vision and conduct planning with key stakeholders; to produce the project plan and milestones

Stage Two: to build components of the environment, to use and evaluate them and then to build further components, use and evaluate, repeated in a cyclic manner to allow Wider Horizons to evolve appropriately

Stage Three: to incorporate wider community initiatives, and plan for sustainability

Key Product from the project

A Scope:

The key product is the online environment, as described below

B Out of Scope

Wider Horizon's services will complement and enhance the online learning provided by the colleges. They will not duplicate the e-learning activities which individual specific courses will provide for students who have registered. Access will be controlled to ensure that access to "paid" courses and resources is restricted to those entitled to use them.

Constraints

- Must meet the needs of the Lifelong learning network during the three year period.
- Must also help UW develop its strategy to provide an online communication and information environment for learners across the region.
- Must use local expertise and services where possible.

Initial Project Case

Wider Horizons will enable all learners in the region to interact with each other, to use open resources, and gain access to support as they move from one course to another. It will provide learners with a personalised learning experience which will continue during their lifetime. The open online environment is essentially a portal where learners can register and log in to access the services and information. It will be available to students on the LLN courses but also available to any member of the public who is interested. Therefore, as well as having a role in supporting students taking courses and progressing from one to another, it will also have a role in attracting people into education and the courses on offer. It will also play a role in providing resources for staff within the network, in sharing good practice and aiding collaboration.

The following list gives some examples of the information, tools and services envisaged within Wider Horizons to support LLN:

- Information about colleges and courses
- Information about progression ladders
- Links with regional area prospectuses

- Online taster courses – either samples of actual courses, or self-contained mini-courses
- Online discussion areas
- Collaborative tools such as wikis to support the development of online communities around specific topics or themes
- Information for members of the network
- Access to information and resources, collections and repositories
- Links to the virtual learning environments of colleges providing courses
- Personal web space to enable learners to maintain portfolio and other information
- Personal communication tools for learners' use such as blogs
- Information and guidance on e learning and work-based learning for tutors

Benefits of the Project

Benefits to the LLN:

- Electronic means of providing access to current information about courses and modules available within Herefordshire and Worcestershire (and the OU)
- Electronic means of communication for staff in partner institutions to be kept up-to-date about the LLN, to share best practice and information, and to have discussions

Benefits to students:

- Communication with each other
- Development of academic communities
- Electronic means of providing access to, and information about, learning support for students

Benefits to the wider educational community

- Access to library resources
- Access to county council resources
- Access to services provided by the Chamber of commerce

Key Assumptions

The development of Wider Horizons depends on

- the continued support of partner organisations for the Lifelong Learning Network and its activities,
- finding appropriate expertise and funding to provide a secure technical infrastructure and
- the continued support from UW Information and learning services
- gaining support for sustained provision after the end of the LLN project

Costs

It is anticipated that the project will cost approximately £130 000 over the three years. This will cover equipment costs, but the larger part will be payment to companies or to colleges to carry out the technical work needed to create the online environment.

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
Project leader unavailable or leaves the project	L	M	Recruit a new project leader
Unable to find appropriate local expertise for carrying out technical work	M	H	Seek national, commercial organisations
LLN project fails to engage local support for its activities	L	H	Increase promotional activity
A partner institution is unable to contribute enough time and effort for effective involvement	M	L	Involve a large number of partners
UW ILS is unable to contribute enough time and effort for effective involvement	?	?	Meeting with Director planned
Failure to find sufficient partners or sponsors to undertake ongoing management of Wider Horizons after the end of the LLN project	L	M	Involve commercial organisations and charge for some services or participation
Costs rising beyond those estimated	M	M	Regular review of budget and re-prioritise as appropriate
Students, members of the public or members of the network fail to engage with and use the service	L	M	Involve users in planning

Project Team

Viv Bell plus LLN team

Use of an executive group (a team of representatives from key stakeholders who will work together to implement the project)

Project Name: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Short Course Market Research Proposal

Amendment History:

Version No.	Date	Reason for Amendment
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Project Manager

Andrew Corcoran

Business Partnerships Office

Document Distribution

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action/Information</i>
Debbie Lambert			

Background

Purpose

This research proposal seeks to understand the need, demand and value-adding potential for a programme of higher level short courses to be provided by the University of Worcester to the Herefordshire and Worcestershire sub-region.

Background

Delivering a programme of Continuing Professional Development and short courses are specific development objectives as stated through:

- Lifelong Learning Network for Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- UW Strategic Plan
- UW City Campus development
- UW Strategic Course Offer Review
- AWM Regional Skills Partnership

Objectives of the Project

Research Outcomes

- Understand the marketing mix (product, price, distribution and promotion) required to launch, sustain and grow a short course income stream at UW.
- Segment, target and position to serve attractive customers.
- Quantification of demand in target sectors.

Outputs

Plan for a pilot suite of 5 full cost short courses recruiting 20 learners each, running from June to September 2007

Project Approach

Key Products from the project

Research Questions

- Who are our potential customers?
- What do they want to buy now and in the future?
- Who are our competitors?
- How are we different in the eyes of the customer?
- What value proposition is required by our chosen customers?
- How do we secure a customer for life?
- Who are the key purchasing decision makers?
- What service levels will identify us as market leaders?

Sample

We will approach 500 organisations anticipating a 20% response rate. The sample will be representative of the sub-region based on reaching larger sectors and size distribution. Private sector organisations will be identified using *Financial Analysis Made Easy*, a financial database of major public and private British companies administered by Bureau van Dijk Electronic Publishing. Public sector organisations will be identified through the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Economic Assessment.

	Herefordshire	Worcestershire	TOTAL
Public Sector (Health)	2	5	7
Public Sector (Local Government)	2	5	7
Micro businesses (<10)	15	55	70
Small (11-49)	2	6	8
Medium (50-249)	1	3	4
Large (250+)	1	3	4
TOTAL	23	77	100

This sample is representative of the employment base profile of both counties.

Questionnaire

1. Respondent description (organisation, position, age, profession, highest academic achievement) and contact details with a request for permission to contact them.
2. What would be your main motivator for undertaking a short course? (increased job satisfaction, increased professional standing, promotion opportunities, personal fulfilment, update skills)
3. Career aspirations (happy and performing strongly in my job, underperforming, working towards a promotion, looking to change employers but remain in the same field, looking for a career change)
4. When do you expect the next change in your employment/career to take place? (6 months, 1 year, 3 years, 5 years)
5. When in the year would you prefer to go on short courses (summer, Easter, winter)
6. When during the week would you prefer to go on short courses (Saturday, Sunday, weekday evenings, weekday daytime)
7. How long would you expect a short course to last (1 day, 1 week intensive, 4 months part time, all year)
8. Where would you expect the majority of the learning contact to take place (at UW, at your employer's premises, online, a combination of all three)
9. Would you want your short course to lead to a recognised academic award? (yes - immediately, yes – longer term, not necessarily)
10. What next after your short course? (continue with short courses where my interest lies, collect short courses to build a bespoke larger qualification, progress into a formal academic programme)
11. If you want to build up towards a formal academic qualification, how far would you want to go? (Foundation Degree, Certificate, Diploma, Undergraduate Degree, Post Graduate Degree) – answers include description of different levels.
12. If your desired course is intended to enhance your career, what is the anticipated salary increase you would expect to receive over the next 12 months? (£1-3K, £3-5K, £5-7K, £7-10K)
13. How would you best like to inquire, book and pay for the course? (all online, by 'phone, face-to-face)
14. Who will pay for the course? (you, your employer, other sponsorship, joint)
15. Please indicate which of the following short courses might interest you (child care, child development, child health, coaching, communication skills, community development, counselling, customer service, design, digital media, entrepreneurship, exercise, family health, fitness, hospitality, information systems management, innovation, leadership, management skills, mental health, nutrition, parenting, people management, problem solving, project management, psychology, rehabilitation, social care, team working, tourism, young people's services)
16. Which other University services would you use? (facilities hire, professional coaching, consultancy, research and development support, developing a new product, developing a new business idea)
17. How do you know about UW? (press/PR, advertising, as a student, through friends relatives, previously unknown)
18. Would UW be your first choice for career development and short course programmes (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)
19. What other short course providers would you use? (Chamber of Commerce, FE College, private provider, professional body, trade body)

Timing

- Approval of research proposal – September 2006
- Agree questions and response options with UW – September 2006
- Internal questionnaire pilot – October 2006
- Contact desired respondents by telephone to gain permission/agreement and email questionnaire URL – November 2006
- Complete data gather – December 2006
- Analyse results – January 2007
- Report to audience – February 2007

Data Analysis and Reporting

Andrew Corcoran

Scope

What products are we marketing?

- Integrated Children's Agenda
- Leadership and Management
- Health, Wellbeing and Biomedical Sciences
- Culture, Media, Sport and Tourism

What are our target sectors?

High employment growth sectors that match our current and developing capabilities:

	Employees	
	Number	% of Sub-Region
Public administration, education and health	91,200	26%
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	76,288	22%
Manufacturing	65,758	19%
Banking, finance and insurance	36,677	10%

Constraints

Ready access only to 881 Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce members who have previously given permission to be approached for market research purposes.

Initial Project Case

Gaps in Current Research

Economic demand studies published by the Regional Skills Partnership and the Regional Observatory, and by the report to HEFCE by SQW Ltd, *Options for Higher Education in Herefordshire, Powys and Shropshire*, have the following gaps:

- No focus on Worcestershire which makes up 76% of the sub-region by population
- No review of the needs of micro organisations (<10 employees) which make up 93% of the sub-regional business base
- No review of the needs of Public Sector employers which account for 17% of the active sub-regional workforce

Benefits of the Project

Generating more income by reaching new markets* by using existing intellectual and physical assets.

*30% of respondents in Worcestershire who were willing but unable to attend a learning opportunity in the previous year, believed further learning (training, education, study, personal development) would take up too much of their time (source: *Worcestershire County Economic Assessment 2005-2006*).

Key Assumptions

None

Costs

£10 amazon.co.uk voucher for first 100 respondents	= £1,000.00
Payment of CP@W for facilitation of online questionnaire	= £750.00
TOTAL	= £1,750.00

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

Project Team

Andrew Corcoran – Acting Head of Knowledge Transfer and Business Partnerships Office, University of Worcester

Catherine Steele – Centre for People at Work, Worcester Business School, University of Worcester

Project Name: Evaluating the LLN by Julie Balsom

Amendment History:

Version No.	Date	Reason for Amendment
1	23/02/07	

Project Manager

Julie Balsom

Document Distribution

Name	Location	Responsibility	Action/Information
Debbie Lambert	LLN	Manager of the LLN for H&W	Co-author of proposal
Julie Balsom	Holme Lacy College	Undertaking Masters project	Project manager
Geoffrey Elliott	UW	Members of LLN steering Group	To approve project
Gail Rothnie	UoB		
Mike Rookes	OU		
Chris Morecroft	WCT		

Background

This project forms the dissertation for a Masters in Management course being undertaken by Julie Balsom of Holme Lacy College, part of the Pershore Group of Colleges. The aim of this six month project is to explore the interests and expectations of the various stakeholders in the LLN for Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Objectives of the Project

The three key objectives include identifying

- what the stakeholders expect to gain from the LLN
- what are the incentives for collaboration within the LLN
- what are the barriers to collaboration within the LLN

Project Approach

The research methodology will be based on a case study of the LLN itself, with qualitative, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and questionnaires with members of the network.

Scope:

A Key Products from the project

- A monitoring methodology to conduct annual reviews to demonstrate increasing engagement with the network.
- A Masters dissertation providing advice and guidance to the network

Constraints

- The project will take place from January to June 2007 only
- The project is being conducted alongside a full time job as part of a part time masters

Key Assumptions

- Julie Balsom will need access to, and co-operation from the stakeholders

Costs

- It is proposed that Julie should be paid a one-off payment of £500 for her contribution to the network

Item 8: To receive response from HEFCE re monitoring report

Dear Debbie

Thank you for sending in the six month report for the Herefordshire and Worcestershire LLN. It was informative and clear for us to go through.

I am very pleased to see that the first curriculum based lead will be based in Hereford, which will ensure a presence in both counties. We welcome the fact that links are being made with other projects and organisations in the region.

We note that the LLN will be working on research to identify the possible barriers for learners. We would encourage you to contact your regional Action on Access advisor, Pat Rayfield, to discuss work that others (e.g. local LSC, SSCs, Aimhigher) might also be doing in this area to ensure that work isn't duplicated.

The report mentions the progression prospectus to be produced in December. It would be interesting for us to understand more about what is going into this prospectus and the purpose of it given that you won't have any progression agreements completed by this stage that could be publicised. We want to encourage you to continue to prioritise the work on network wide progression agreements.

It would also be helpful to have more detail about the short-term work and projects which are enabled through the release of staffing funding.

I have one concern about the ASNs. In your project plan you state you will recruit 40 ASNs in 2007/08 and 60 in 2008/09. I would remind you that the 100 ASNs were awarded to be used in 2007/08 and if you do not recruit the full number in the first year, you will have 2008/09 to complete recruitment. However, strategic ASNs can not be phased or deferred and after this, you will not be able to recruit any new ASNs. I am happy to discuss this further with you if it would be helpful.

As I said, this is a very helpful update for the first six months of the project. The annual report will need to be a fuller document, with critical self reflection and analysis of the LLN's progress, examples of what has gone well and what has not, and any draft documents such as the progression prospectus. We would also hope to see drafts and final copies of progression agreements as they become available.

I hope this is helpful for you. I am very happy to discuss any queries you have and hope that you will continue to keep me up to date with progress.

Kind regards
Ellie Christmas
Higher Education Adviser
West Midlands Team

01179 317219

Item 9: To receive HEFCE update for LLNs



HEFCE Update for Lifelong Learning Networks

February 2007

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HEFCE Update for Lifelong Learning Networks: February 2007

Section 1: General Information and news

1. Welcome to the latest HEFCE update for LLN practitioners. An apology that it has been such a long period since the last update was published. However, we have maintained contact with many of you throughout this period and have greatly welcomed the role the LLN National Forum have played in taking forward communications and other developments.
2. We were all sad to hear the news that Sheila Soul-Gray passed away on Thursday 7 December 2006. Sheila set up and led the National Arts Learning Network (NALN) in its early phase and managed to combine vision with tremendous energy and organisation. The University of the Arts will be holding a memorial service for Sheila on 7 March at 4pm. The service will be held at St Paul's Church, Bedford Street, WC2E 9ED (Covent Garden area) and colleagues who would like to attend to remember Sheila are more than welcome to attend.
3. If you have any questions, suggestions for future updates, or would like further information on LLNs, please contact Jennifer Allen, e-mail j.allen@hefce.ac.uk, or telephone 0117 931 7054.

Update on current LLNs

4. To date, approximately £99 million and 7000 additional student numbers (ASNs) have been allocated to fund twenty eight LLNs (including one with a year's funding) encompassing 116 HEIs and over 280 FECs. This marks a substantial achievement of partnerships across the country and we have now achieved almost national coverage. Activity is now primarily focused on delivery, and on continued monitoring, evaluation and the disseminating of good practice. Watch out for an article in HEFCE's *Council Briefing* in the next month.

Additional Student Numbers (ASNs)

5. For those of you that aren't aware, a download has been placed on our website (see 9e below) that explains our arrangements for mainstreaming model 2 ASN funding – that is, changing from the 'non-mainstream' model 2 route to the 'mainstream' model 1 route. The guidance is primarily for LLNs intending to mainstream ASN funding in 2007-08 and 2008-09. However, it is relevant to all LLNs following the model 2 route, as they will be required to mainstream their ASN funding at the end of the funding period if they wish to retain it.
6. In addition, we will shortly be writing to LLNs with 2006-07 ASNs to clarify how each LLN will identify LLN ASNs on the HESA/ILR record. Original advice was given in the May 2006 monitoring letter: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/monitoring/monit.htm>.
7. Questions about holdback and mainstreaming of ASNs should be addressed to Thom Brain, e-mail t.brain@hefce.ac.uk, tel 0117 931 7005. Questions about identifying

LLN ASNs on HESA/ILR should be addressed to Tony Ryan on 0117 931 7297 or e-mail: a.ryan@hefce.ac.uk.

Information Sources

8. HEFCE has recently published *Foundation degrees, Key statistics 2001-02 to 2006-07*. This report describes key characteristics of foundation degree programmes and students. It covers the trends in student numbers, the characteristics of programmes, attributes of students, students' feedback, progression and qualification rates, progression to further study and employment outcomes, and support from employers: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_03/
9. We would like to draw your attention to the information available on the HEFCE LLN website <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/>
 - a. Practitioner policy updates: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/updates/>
 - b. Guidance on progression agreements and credit: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/progress/>
 - c. Details and contacts for all LLNs: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/funded/>
 - d. Vocational sector breakdown: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/funded/>
 - e. Monitoring (including information on ASNs, holdback and mainstreaming): <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/monitoring/monit.htm>
 - f. Evaluation: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/monitoring/eval.htm>
10. In addition, the LLN National Forum's website provides further information which will be of use to practitioners: <http://www.lifelonglearningnetworks.org.uk/>.

Contacts

11. Many of you will have been recruiting significant numbers of staff and we are keen to make sure that information is targeted correctly. This update will have been sent (by email and post) to the main contact we have for the LLN which we prefer to be the LLN Director or similar, and copied (email only) to other LLN contacts. In addition, we have contacts listed on our website which may be the same person as above, or an alternative contact. If any of these details are incorrect, or your website entry could be updated, please send any changes to Jennifer Allen (details in paragraph 1). Thank you.

Section 2: Policy Considerations

Research on vocational progression

12. The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) has published a pamphlet on vocational progression, *Vocational A levels and university entry: is there parity of esteem?* There was an article by Kevin Whitston (Head of Widening Participation, HEFCE) in the *THES* on 2 February 2007 responding to some of the questions raised by HEPI. Kevin asks whether it matters that 'vocational learners' progress to higher education at about half the rate of those on academic programmes if, as HEPI suggests, this reflects 'ability' demonstrated in GCSE. On this basis vocational learners could even be over represented in higher education.

13. HEPI believes the problem is parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications, and that parity depends on an 'equivalence of difficulty'. This article argues the problem for vocational qualifications is not parity of esteem but esteem itself. Vocational qualifications will only succeed if they are valued in their own right and if we stop measuring all educational achievement against a one-dimensional A-level standard defined by its 'difficulty'. The important point is not that vocational students have weaker qualifications than academic students, but that they are achieving at Level 3. Therefore there ought to be more and better opportunities for them to build on those achievements in higher education. This calls for changes in the curriculum in higher education as well as in schools and colleges. Further and higher education has to be an open system that can build on different kinds of learning, enabling people to enter and re-enter the system at different points and for different purposes as their needs, interests and abilities develop.

14. The article does not make specific reference to LLNs, but the role of LLNs in tackling the issues addressed is clear. LLNs are welcome to comment to Kevin directly, should they wish (k.whitston@hefce.ac.uk, 0117 931 7013).

Evaluation

15. LLNs received a copy of the evaluation strategy in December 2006: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/monitoring/eval.htm>. To summarise, the strategy will have three stages; each stage is designed to expand on and complement the previous one:

- a. an interim evaluation in 2007. This will combine analysis of information that LLNs submit through their initial end of year monitoring reports with visits to LLNs, including (although not confined to) a number of qualitative case studies. This will help us to assess the progress of LLNs, to identify good practice, and to ascertain how LLNs and other stakeholders can best support future developments;
- b. peer evaluation throughout 2007. We will work with the LLN National Forum to establish peer-led evaluation and the sharing of good practice;
- c. a form of summative evaluation will be undertaken at the end of the funding period (2009).

16. The main themes for the interim evaluation will be:

- a. Key processes for LLNs as set out below (we expect analysis of these three areas to form the core of the interim evaluation report):
 - i. curriculum developments that facilitate progression: alignment that removes barriers to progression and bridging provision that forms part of the HE offer; and new HE curriculum development involving employers;
 - ii. progress made in establishing appropriate information, advice and guidance systems; identification of the network 'learner constituency' and baseline data; arrangements made for tracking and re-engaging learners in the context of lifelong learning; and evidence of how the network reflects learner needs;
 - iii. the progress made in establishing robust progression agreements that operate across the network, and make credit transfer a reality.
- b. Progress made in relation to specific milestones and targets as set out in the original business case (including set up issues and financial targets);
- c. Evidence of institutional commitment (within and across the institutions), partnership working and stakeholder engagement;
- d. Responsiveness to key regional and sector developments (e.g. 14-19 curriculum). In addition, the evaluation should consider whether LLNs have appropriate links and/or a role in associated HEFCE activities (employer engagement pilots and co-funding, Train to Gain etc);
- e. Methods for determining and disseminating good practice.

17. In all cases, evaluators will be expected to take account of: value for money and cost-effectiveness; equality issues and approaches taken to long term sustainability and full economic costing. The evaluation will consider the extent to which particular approaches contribute (most) effectively to enhanced progression opportunities for vocational learners and to establish whether the same or similar outcomes were achieved more cost effectively in some approaches rather than others.

18. We have established an evaluation steering group to provide ongoing advice and guidance to HEFCE. Members of this group are:

- Nick Hammond, Higher Education Academy
- Kully Jones, Learning and Skills Council
- Roger Murphy, Centre for Developing and Evaluating Lifelong Learning, University of Nottingham
- Barbara Stephens (member of HEFCE WP Strategic Committee)
- Claire Newhouse, LLN National Forum Steering Group
- Richard Taylor (member of HEFCE WP Strategic Committee)
- Ian Wolloff, LLN National Forum Steering Group

19. The first meeting took place on 26 January 2007 and it proved to be a lively and interesting discussion. As a result we intend to extend the period for the interim evaluation to cover April - September 2007, with a report published in October 2007. We

are also involving members of the Steering Group in appointing the evaluation team, to ensure that the needs of the sector are met. We hope to award a contract in March 2007 and further details will be sent out as soon as they are available.

20. The LLN National Forum is taking forward the work on peer evaluation and they will be contacting LLNs separately.

Better fewer, but better

21. The commitment in further and higher education to improved progression has generated a range of ambitious and far reaching proposals in LLNs. Precisely for this reason putting the teams, structures, and processes in place to deliver on these commitments has not been easy, and achieving the whole range of promised outputs and objectives will not be easy either. But then, no one ever said that it would be.

22. These observations are not designed to offer excuses for lack of progress - the interim evaluation discussed above will be a challenging one - but rather to reflect on what is of critical importance and how progress can be demonstrated.

23. The evaluation picks out three themes:

- curriculum (and dialogue with employers)
- information, advice and guidance and support for learners
- progression agreements

24. Progression agreements are at the heart of this initiative. We expect agreements to secure institutional commitments to learners in respect of very specific programmes.

25. The quality of information, advice and guidance, and more generally support for learners, is essential for progression in a lifelong learning context. LLNs have the opportunity of putting flesh on the bones of 'personalised learning'.

26. Real and significant improvements in progression are unlikely to be achieved simply by refining existing practice. Curriculum development is a requirement that encompasses the content of learning as well as its delivery and the relationship between different learning experiences (curriculum alignment, bridging, progression). Curriculum development for vocational learners must engage employers. That is why LLNs will be key to developing higher level skills provision and delivering on the targets in the Leitch Review.

27. These evaluation priorities have been derived from the text of LLN proposals themselves. LLNs have different ways of formulating the issues and different ideas about how to deliver on them but all have proposals for progression agreements, advice and guidance, and curriculum. Summarising them in this way also makes plain the extent of the LLN ambition. What kind of progress can we make?

28. LLNs should consider concentrating resources on a limited range of high quality outputs rather than trying to do everything ('better fewer results, but better?'). When we

began this initiative we talked about LLNs as 'demonstrators'. We still think this is important. LLNs will offer different ways of achieving improved progression and we will learn from those differences. Better one progression agreement that is network wide; that really changes the prospects available to learners; that marks new commitments from institutions to learners; that builds durable working links between academic communities in further and higher education; that provides a model replicable in other subject areas and institutions, than half a dozen 'agreements' that consist of warm words and good intentions or agreements that do little more than codify existing progression possibilities set out in prospectuses.

29. Similarly, advice and guidance can break new ground by building on the idea of personalised learning. Can we support engagement with learners across a lifetime, helping people make the choices appropriate for them and at the right time for them? It is enough to show how it can be done well for a specific group to show that it could be done well for many more.

30. Curriculum is the biggest issue of all, making the question of focus more important than ever. A single new programme, or significant adaptation of an existing programme that has really engaged learners and employers, brought in sector skills councils and regional skills partnerships, is better than any number of initial discussions and ambitious development plans.

31. The message is that quality matters most. Progress in depth on a few key things is far more important than limited progress across the board.

32. Some general guidance on progression agreements can be found on the HEFCE website (see later section) and in the second LLN National Forum newsletter: <http://www.lifelonglearningnetworks.org.uk/documents/document23.pdf> which addresses how progression agreements will be developed across different LLNs/regions and the main differences between progression agreements and existing compact schemes/agreements with schools. We are keen for all LLNs to send us any (draft) network wide progression agreements they have established.

Guarantees of progression

33. We are often asked about what is meant by 'guarantees' of progression, questions that are frequently inspired by worries about fairness in admissions. We should say at the outset that all admissions decisions are, in the end, decisions that are made about individual applications. In every case the admissions tutor and the institution must be satisfied that the applicant is properly prepared and able to benefit from the course.

34. We do expect that ASNs awarded to LLNs are used to secure places for the vocational learners targeted by the LLN. This is no different in principle from ASNs that are awarded for foundation degrees or some other specific purpose.

35. ASNs might therefore be used to create 'headroom' for non traditional learners on oversubscribed courses; to create additional places on existing programmes; or places

on entirely new courses. A step towards guaranteed progression is taken if changes are made to the curriculum that remove barriers to progression or positively facilitate progression.

36. More important than the use of specific ASNs is the change in institutional understanding and agreement that creates real changes for the learner. Where this happens there will be measurable changes in the numbers of learners that progress from specific programmes and institutions to other programmes and institutions. Learners will know, and know with the same certainty that an A-level student knows, what programmes are available to them. Network-wide agreements will widen that area of certainty from institution to institution (sometimes department to department) deals to the whole of the higher education offer available in a broad travel to study area.

37. There are of course differences between students on different 'vocational' programmes. AVCE students may already have a pretty good idea of what is available, though we have yet to see what the experience of students on the replacement 'applied A-levels' will be. The opportunities available for apprentices to access HE, perhaps after a period in work, are much less clear. The pattern of progression from foundation degrees is more variable but more than half do progress to honours degrees. There are about the same number of learners on higher level professional programmes and NVQ 4 and 5 as there are on foundation degrees but progression opportunities are much less certain.

Learner Constituency

38. In the LLN update for November 2005 we talked about how LLNs could define their 'learner constituency'. The first step was being clear about the occupational sectors being targeted, and the vocational qualifications (e.g. BTEC) that learners would offer. At the heart of the network however, are the study programmes offered through the network that most clearly meet the needs of these occupations/learners. 'The network's 'learner constituency' includes learners engaged on those programmes'. We acknowledged that defining the 'learner constituency' was to some extent an arbitrary process if only because learners have mixed academic vocational qualifications but it was nevertheless essential. 'The network learner constituency establishes a baseline of provision from which it will be possible to assess progress.'

39. We have provided advice to LLNs about identifying learners for the purposes of returns relating to additional student numbers and we will not repeat that here. The 'learner constituency' is clearly a broader category. LLNs will need to identify the programmes relating to its priority sectors, and the numbers of learners enrolled on them, so that they can, as one network proposal has put it 'map change that will occur as a result of the network's activity'.

Section 3: Related Policy Agendas

Equalities

40. HEFCE has published its equality scheme (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_01/) which explains how we plan to meet our statutory duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. It brings together our race, disability and gender equality schemes and sets out an equality action plan to address these issues. The scheme has been subject to extensive consultation with the sector and other stakeholders.

41. In terms of LLNs, we are committed to:

- a. Promoting the need for LLNs to ensure their materials, processes and procedures are accessible and relevant to people from equalities groups;
- b. Working with LLN National Forum to ensure that curriculum development positively takes into account the needs of diverse students;
- c. Ensuring any national monitoring and evaluation of LLN programmes identifies equality impact;
- d. Ensuring LLNs' own evaluations identify the impact on people from all equalities groups.

42. It is likely that LLNs will already be working closely with equalities staff in their own institutions, and Action on Access is supporting practitioners in this area: http://www.actiononaccess.org/?p=1_3. We do not anticipate that LLNs will be targeting particular equality groups directly, however in terms of impact monitoring, all institutions will need to ensure that these issues are considered.

14-19

43. Probably all LLNs will be working with local 14-19 partnerships on the development of progression opportunities for learners who will study for the new Diplomas. We are working with the DfES on a project to link an LLN with the Diploma Development Partnership for each of the first five Diplomas. These links will focus on how the Diploma curriculum is developed by awarding bodies and how this curriculum relates to HE programmes. The aim is to create progression agreements that guarantee progression for these new learners.

Employer engagement and Higher Level Skills Pathfinders

General information: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/employer/>

44. The funding council is being asked to lead radical changes in HE provision to encourage employer engagement and workplace learning, and to facilitate provision partly or wholly funded by employers. We are addressing this in a number of ways. The employer engagement strategy being led by HEFCE's learning and teaching team includes higher education 'Train to Gain' pilots in three regions (NW, NE and SW), and an invitation to the sector to develop proposals that could increase employer engagement and lead to co-funded programmes. HEFCE also funds projects to enhance the contribution of higher education to the economy and society (third stream as second

mission, HEIF, knowledge transfer etc). LLNs are engaging employers in identifying appropriate curriculum and thinking about issues of delivery. Some LLNs also offer brokerage services. We need to work together to ensure coherence through planning and discussion at the local level, at the point of project planning and delivery.

45. We are keen to ensure that different initiatives are 'joined up', and acknowledge that some LLNs have highlighted concerns in this area in their monitoring reports. As a result, we are working closely with colleagues across HEFCE to provide clarification and we hope to be issuing more detailed advice as part of a circular letter on employer engagement in spring 2007.

46. The Council is working to ensure that funding for projects complements what is already being developed, and that additional funding produces additional outputs. All proposals are expected to show how they relate to commitments that institutions share with LLNs (or other partnerships they participate in). In practical terms, this might mean that the LLN delivers certain elements of a more recently funded employer engagement pilot project. Some LLNs have chosen to expand their own work, by submitting further employer engagement proposals themselves.

47. Different initiatives have their own specific focus. The high level objective for LLNs is to change and improve the coherence, clarity and certainty of progression opportunities for vocational learners into and through higher education. This focus on progression is where LLNs' key tasks and challenges will lie; their engagement with employers will reflect this.

48. We intend to evaluate the relationships between the various initiatives as part of the interim evaluation of LLNs. However, we would be interested in hearing about current experiences, perhaps through feedback to the LLN National Forum.