



**MINUTES OF THE STEERING GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 16 MAY 2008 AT 10AM (UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER)**

ATTENDEES

Professor Geoffrey Elliott (Chair)	Director of Lifelong Learning, University of Worcester
Mrs Debbie Lambert	Manager of the LLN for H&W
Mr Chris Morecroft	Principal, Worcester College of Technology
Mr Ian Peake	Principal, Herefordshire College of Technology
Mr Mike Rookes	Director, Open University (West Midlands)
Ms Gail Rothnie	Head of Outreach, University of Birmingham
Miss Donna Obrey (Secretary)	Project Officer for LLN for H&W

1. Apologies

None

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record and a written update on the matters arising was provided.

3. Chair's Business

There was no chair's business.

4. Budget Update

The budget update was presented to the Steering Group who noted the balance remaining to fund projects in 2007/8. DO confirmed that any balance remaining from the 2007/8 budget would be carried forward to the next financial year.

DL proposed that the balance remaining from the LSC funding be utilised to fund projects around the 14 – 19 Diplomas. The Group approved this proposal.

5. Projects

The Steering Group discussed the importance of the materials generated from LLN funded projects being shared around the various partners in the Network. It was agreed that funding will only be provided on the condition that the materials and outputs resulting from these projects (e.g. research outputs, curriculum development etc) is shared amongst members of the Network. The only exception to this would be where this is not possible due to third party contracts.

Action: DL/DO to notify partners of this condition for all future projects funded by the LLN

Projects Approved via Email Correspondence

DL noted that the following projects had been approved by the Steering Group via email correspondence since the last meeting:

- 14 – 19 Diploma & HE Alignment
- Employer Engagement in the 14 – 19 Diploma
- Market Research with Current & Past NVQ 4 Students (Ludlow College)

Projects for Consideration/Approval

Re-development of FD Food Safety and Quality Management (Pershore College)

This project involves working with employers to re-design the FD in Food Safety & Quality Management. They are also looking to link this to a progression agreement onto a PGCE. The project funding was approved.

Development of new Foundation Degree in Fine Art Craft (Evesham & Malvern Hills College and University of Worcester)

This project is looking at developing a new FD which focuses on vocational and mature learners, it also incorporates research into demand.

DL advised the group that HCA already do Fine Applied Art and that NEW College have submitted a bid to the Big Projects Fund for an FD in Fine Art. The Group agreed that it was important to ensure that the LLN does not support direct competition between the partners.

It was agreed that a meeting should be held between the 3 FE Colleges (E&MHC, HCA & NEWC) to ensure that each is comfortable that the courses are all different. Where there are similarities, they should work collaboratively and share the writing of modules.

Upon a satisfactory arrangement being made at this meeting, the Steering Group were happy to authorise the funding.

Action: Colin Wood (CW) to arrange a meeting with E&MHC, HCA & NEWC

Developing Performing Arts FdA and Top up (Hereford College of Arts)

This project is looking to develop an FD and Top Up in Performing Arts. HCA already have these courses however they are looking to develop these to make them more vocational and work with employers and sector skills councils.

DL noted that the only other partner running a similar course was WCT who run a HNC.

The Group approved the project.

Research into Sports and Tourism Pathways and Student Needs in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (University of Worcester and LLN)

This research is looking into student needs in the area of sport and tourism to identify whether there are any areas not being covered regionally. The work will be undertaken by Colin Wood and Donna Obrey, the results of the research will be shared around the partners.

The Open University (OU) expressed an interest in this project.

The funding was approved for this project.

Action: CW to contact MR to obtain the relevant contact details to involve the OU in this project.

Enhancing the mutual understanding of FE and HE practice and curricula through learning observation and peer dialogue: A Pilot project (University of Worcester)

This project is based around a pilot of exchanges between FE and HE staff from institutions in the region. The idea was suggested by HE managers in FE to identify whether this method improves understanding.

It was felt that this was a valuable project and the Group noted that without funding from the LLN this initiative may not be possible. The Group felt that this scheme would work better if the exchanges made were with staff working in the same/similar subject areas.

The Group agreed to fund this project, providing 50% of the funding from the Progression & Learner Support project funding and 50% from the LSC funding (due to its link with the 14 – 19 Diplomas). It was felt that the results of this project should be published via CHERI (at the OU) or via GE's journal.

Development of HND provision in Sport Studies at Telford College of Arts and Technology (Telford College of Arts and Technology)

DL informed the Group that there is a low progression rate at TCAT, they are therefore looking to develop a new HND working with employers and vocational learners.

The Group questioned why they had chosen to develop a HND rather than an FD and asked them to identify how employer engagement will be secured by a HND.

The project was approved on the recommendation that TCAT reconsider the award title. MR advised that there is scope for TCAT to work with the OU.

Action: CW to notify TCAT of the OU's interest in this project

Stakeholder Event for Counselling

This event is planned to discuss with employers and stakeholders the appropriateness of developing Counselling courses in the region. It was noted that WCT, HCT and the OU could do some work on this collaboratively.

The OU expressed an interest in attending the Stakeholder Event.

The funding was approved to hold this event.

Action: Liz Davies-Ward (LDW) to include Dominic Upton in the bid documentation distribution and invite the OU to attend the Stakeholder Event

6. Applications to the Big Projects Fund

DL informed the group there isn't any overlap in the Big Project Bids submitted in this round with the exception of Pershore College & WCT who have similar ideas. The only

institutions within the Network that had not submitted bids were Hereford Sixth Form College and Worcester Sixth Form College.

DL tabled a summary of the bids submitted.

Vocational Pathways (including NVQs) into Higher Education (Evesham & Malvern Hills College)

This project is looking to develop new FDs linked to professional qualifications in the area of management. They will be aimed at students in work and will be delivered on a part-time basis.

The Group felt that similar courses may already be available and therefore this should be investigated prior to development. It was also noted that UW may not be able to validate all of these courses due to the subject areas however the OU advised that they may be able to validate these.

The Group approved the funding for this project.

Action: DL to advise E&MHC of the recommendations made by the Steering Group

Employer Engagement in the Creative Industries in Herefordshire (Hereford College of Arts)

This project is focussed on engaging with employers to develop new short courses in creative industries which will be delivered on a part-time basis. The Group requested clarification regarding how they were going to report the results and share their experiences with others.

The Group approved the funding for this project.

Action: CW to seek clarification regarding how they are going to report the results and share their experiences with others.

Development of Accessible Higher Education for the Land Based, Tourism, Sport & Rural Craft Heritage Sectors of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Beyond (Herefordshire College of Technology)

This project is looking to develop new FDs in the management aspects of Sport, Tourism and Rural Media through setting up employer liaison groups. The mode of delivery will be blended learning.

The OU expressed an interest in this project.

The Group approved the project funding.

Action: CW to notify HCT of the OU's interest in this project

MAS Records (Kidderminster College)

This project is looking at working directly with the industry to develop a Level 4 course in Musicianship and Business. There are various modes of delivery planned for outside normal hours by using satellite centres, online with some teaching by industry.

The Group approved the project funding.

Development of Applied Art & Design Foundation Degree (NEW College)

This project is taking the HND programmes and developing them into FDs in Applied Art & Design, with various pathways, to replace the current HND. The Group noted a link with the project submitted by E&MHC discussed earlier at this meeting.

The Group approved the funding on the condition that they talk with HCA and E&MHC (see agenda item 5).

Alternative Format Media Co-ordination for LLN (Royal National College for the Blind)

This project is looking at developing IAG using Alternative Format Media through working with students in employment. The Group felt that this should be made specific to HE whilst still allowing the techniques to be applied to FE.

The OU expressed an interest in this project.

The Group approved the funding for this project.

Action: Bob Parker (BP) to notify RNCB of the OU's interest in this project

Engaging the Busy Employer (University of Worcester)

This project is looking at developing short courses in leadership & management, which will be 1 – 4 day modules. The Group requested clarification of whether funding can be claimed from HEFCE for short courses.

The OU expressed an interest in this project, it was also suggested that the University of Birmingham could be involved.

The Group authorised the funding for this project.

Action: DL to investigate whether funding can be claimed from HEFCE for short courses and share with the Steering Group.

Action: BP to notify UW of the OU and UoB's interest in this project

Growing Learning (Pershore College – part of Warwickshire College)

This project is looking to convert paper based distance learning materials in to e-learning. The OU offered help with the principles of this but were unable to assist with curriculum development in this subject area.

The Group approved this project on the condition that the information is shared.

Action: Viv Bell (VB) to notify PC of the OU's offer of help with this project

FD in Payroll Management e-learning Conversion (Worcester College of Technology)

DL noted that this project was similar to the previous project, submitted by Pershore College, but in the subject area of Payroll.

CM suggested that as this course would lead to a Top Up at UW, a member of UW staff would be invited as either an observer or participant to ensure that the e-learning materials are consistent with those of the FD.

The Group authorised the funding for this project.

Engaging Employers in Diplomas (Worcestershire EBP)

The project is looking at different ways in which to engage employers with the 14 – 19 Diplomas in order to improve their understanding. Whilst this was viewed as a very worthwhile project, it was noted that there were no links with HE which is the remit of the LLN.

It was suggested that in addition to raising awareness of the 14 -19 Diplomas, it was important that employers are also aware of how the Diplomas are linked into HE. It was felt that it could be linked with the Work Based Learning Framework at UW and existing FDs.

Action: DL to feed back to Terry Owens for resubmission to the next Steering Group Meeting

DL advised the Group that the LLN had been working with 3 other LLNs and the regional Aimhigher to produce a booklet on the 14 – 19 Diplomas which will be available for circulation in the near future.

7. Report on Work in Progress

The Group received the reports on work in progress and DL provided a verbal summary with regard to progression agreements. DL informed the Group that the LLN does not currently have any signed progression agreements but are aiming for 12 by the end of December 2008.

Action: BP and VB to attend the next Steering Group Meeting to provide updates on Progression Agreements and Wider Horizons

8. Evaluation & Feedback

The Group received the following documents:

Peer Review Evaluation Report – this report was written by Staffordshire LLN. DL reported that the document also contained a response to the comments in italics where applicable.

Feedback from HEFCE to 18 Month Report – DL noted that following receipt of the comments to the 18 month report, the LLN had invited HEFCE to visit them to address any concerns. GE advised the Group that following the meeting there were no outstanding issues and thanked DL and the LLN Team for their work and efforts in these events.

Interim Evaluation on LLNs – The report contains a number of recommendations for LLNs nationally. DL provided a written response to the recommendations for information.

Key Points from HEFCE/LLN Meeting – LDW attended this meeting in London on 29 April on behalf of the LLN and provided a list of key points from the meeting.

9. Update on Progression Agreements

This update was provided under Agenda Item 7.

10. Update on Aimhigher Activities

The Aimhigher Update was received by the Steering Group.

CM reported that Aimhigher is going to be disbanded with the Regional Office being closed.

DL reported that she has arranged a meeting with Mike Smith regarding the Adult strand of Aimhigher to identify where the H&W LLN may be able to assist.

11. Any Other Business

GR advised that the website address for the University of Birmingham's interactive online study skills information is www.skillsforuni.ac.uk. The link is not yet live but will become live in the near future.