



**MINUTES OF STEERING GROUP MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 JULY 2008 AT 10AM (UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER)**

ATTENDEES

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| Geoffrey Elliott (Chair) | Director of Regional Engagement, University of Worcester |
| Debbie Lambert | Manager of LLN for H&W |
| Ian Peake | Principal, Herefordshire College of Technology |
| Mike Rookes | Director, Open University (West Midlands) |
| Gail Rothnie | Head of Outreach, University of Birmingham |

In attendance for one item:

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| Viv Bell | Technology Co-ordinator, LLN for H&W |
| Bob Parker | Progression & Learner Support Co-ordinator, LLN for H&W |

1. Apologies

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| Chris Morecroft | Principal, Worcester College of Technology |
| Donna Obrey | Project Officer, LLN for H&W |

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 16th May 2008 were approved as an accurate record subject to an amendment on page 7 that "Skills for University" should replace "Skills For Uni".

The Committee received a paper describing the actions taken following the previous meeting.

3. Wider Horizons Demonstration (Viv Bell)

Viv Bell presented the system which included the following features:

1. A basic course search tool using Google. This could be developed with a bid to JISC for funding to pilot XCRI (exchanging course related information), testing it on different information produced by institutions.
2. Taster courses to promote courses such as HNDs and FDs in a more inter-active way. It was planned that a temporary member of staff would work with colleges over the next academic year to develop tasters for all FDs and HNDs.
3. My Horizons, an area with discussion forums, a CV (which can be shared with a tutor) and an e portfolio.
4. Local information
5. A staff page (to be developed)

It was noted that all the work had been carried out by staff within colleges in the two counties, rather than external consultants.

Viv Bell clarified that this Moodle would be additional to the institutional VLE for current students.

The importance of usability testing was discussed: this would be conducted in the autumn, and would also be discussed by the wider Horizons Marketing Group. This group would also consider the important issue of how a prospective student would find the site (the involvement of connexions and Aimhigher were suggested).

The Group expressed concern that the Open University and University of Birmingham were not currently included. It was agreed that The OU should have a Moodle to set up taster courses, and that Birmingham would supply links to their pre-entry study skills, and student life videos.

Actions: Viv Bell to provide moodle area for Mike Rookes, and to add OU and UoB to map and course search. to check that HCT is Herefordshire rather than Hereford throughout the site.

Gail Rothnie to forward links to appropriate sites

The Steering Group recognised the efforts of all involved in the production of Wider Horizons, which it was hoped would make a positive contribution to the region.

4. Update on Progression Agreements (Bob Parker)

Bob Parker presented his Progression agreements spreadsheet which is circulated to members of the Group prior to each meeting. He explained the range of different models in development including: linear course to course agreements; the complex agreements surrounding the Registered Managers Award which would receive APL against two different qualifications, each of which had a top up; those with enhanced induction and bridging. Each agreement would include the specific requirements and entry status (e.g. guaranteed place, interview or parity). Progression agreements would be produced for 14-19 diplomas (which may require some change in the level 4 provision).

The diversity of the agreements was discussed, and it was agreed that they should be counted by number of options for students.

It was suggested that a generic progression agreement should be developed regarding access with Openings courses, or into the OU.

Action: Bob Parker to discuss OU Progression Agreements with OU staff.

5. Chairs Business

The Chair invited members of the group to nominate themselves as Vice Chair.

Action: Anyone wishing to nominate themselves as Vice Chair to contact Donna Obrey.

6. Budget Update

The group received an update on the budget. The Manager of the LLN drew members attention to the predicted under spend of capital funding and suggested that capital requests should be attached to bids to the Big Project fund in November and May.

Actions: Donna Obrey to establish whether capital funding can be transferred to revenue expenditure.

Debbie Lambert to produce a proposal for capital bidding to be discussed at the next steering group.

7. Projects

The group received updates on current project funding.

Projects for Approval at this Meeting

Working with SSC's to Work with Employers

It was noted that these regional events would be jointly funded by the other West Midland LLN's. The project was approved.

Work Based Learning Conference

The Chair reminded the group that all Colleges would hopefully become involved in this initiative. Mike Rookes asked to attend the event. The proposal was approved.

Action: Donna Obrey to issue an invitation to the Work Based Learning event to Mike Rookes

Mapping Progression Routes in Health and Social Care

Gail Rothnie clarified that the University had identified a part time member of staff with the appropriate knowledge and experience to carry out this work, and had estimated that the work would take up to 20 days. The proposed funding was to cover actual costs that would be incurred by the University, and which they were unable to cover themselves. Mike Rookes suggested that the Open University should become a partner in this project, at a cost of up to £100 per day. This joint proposal was approved.

**Action: Mike Rookes to send details of OU Project Officer to Donna Obrey.
Liz Davies-Ward to facilitate work**

Developing a process to deliver "How To" induction sessions via "Flexible Learning" across a wide range of courses at HCA

The group approved this project subject to evaluation being produced at the end of the project regarding lessons learnt, what students find effective, what students didn't like as well as making the inductions available to other members of the network.

Report from LLN Funded Projects

Debbie Lambert explained that she had asked each member of the team to produce a brief update on the progress of projects in their area to keep the Steering Group informed.

The updates had been kept brief, but the Group should request a fuller report from any project for which they had concerns.

The Group welcomed the report which was considered to be very informative. They had no specific concerns at this time.

It was proposed that this should happen twice yearly.

Action: Donna Obrey to include the Progress of Reports document on the January Agenda

8. Tracking the progression of Level 3 Vocational Learners into HE in H&W (Draft Research)

The Group were made aware of the large amount of work which had been involved in producing this research and thanked Donna Obrey for her efforts. They were content with the focus being on LLN curriculum areas, and noted the difficulties experienced in gathering the data on highest qualification on entry which was not kept by all institutions, and which was made more difficult by the practice of classing a BTEC and A level as A level, masking the vocational qualification.

Mike Rookes volunteered to provide similar data from the OU for comparison. He questioned whether it would be possible to identify numbers of learners with Openings courses from the current data set.

Action: Mike Rookes to contact Trisha Payton and request data to be sent to Donna Obrey.

Donna Obrey to investigate evidence of Openings courses within the data.

It was agreed that it would be useful to follow the progression of students through LLN designated courses as suggested, but also that this exercise should be repeated, possibly in two years time as useful evidence of impact.

9. Delivery Plans with updates on 2008 targets

Debbie Lambert presented an update on progress towards achievement of targets set for 2008. She reported that the team had met to consider more detailed targets for 2009, and beyond, in an attempt to identify what could usefully be achieved which would meet aims of different possible funding sources. It was agreed that it would be important to highlight achievements, record what had become embedded within institutions, what developmental work had been completed and what new activities could take place. It was agreed that the LLN had been a successful catalyst for curriculum development and innovation within the network.

The steering group noted the progress made in each area, accepting that some targets had been produced 18 months ago and had now been overtaken by the revised 'Cross Cutting Themes' Strategy.

10. Verbal Update from Debbie Lambert

The Steering Group were informed of, and approved the following:

1. Journalism students from UW would be paid £50 each for the production of 10 student case studies to be posted on Wider Horizons.
2. Liz Davies-Ward would be seconded to the Institute of health at UW to teach 2 modules next academic year. This would ensure that she maintained her teaching skills should alternative funding not be secured.
3. It was planned that a part time content developer should be employed to work with the colleges to develop a full range of taster courses for all HNDs and FDs
4. The LLN was a minor partner with the other West Midland LLNs in a bid for European funding for a project looking into vocational credit systems. This would not result in any additional income, but would be useful evidence in case of future bids to Europe.
5. The LLN was also involved in developing a regional Employer Engagement bid to HEFCE. This was in conjunction with the other 3 LLNS in the West Midlands. The bid

would continue the work with train to gain, with different HE providers, and with employers.

11. Update on Aimhigher Activities

An update will be presented at the next Steering Group meeting.

12. Any Other Business

None discussed.