

innovations digest



preparing students for the
world of work in the 21st
Century – an overview of
the Innovations initiative

Innovations digest

published by the Innovations Team (2003)

The Innovations initiative ran from 2000 to 2002. It was funded by the then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and managed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The Innovations Team that ran the initiative comprised of representatives from the following co-ordination teams:

- **Action on Access**
Website: <http://www.brad.ac.uk/admin/conted/action/>
Tel: 01274 233215
- **The National Disability Team**
Website: www.natdisteam.ac.uk
Tel: 01245 607508
- **The QEF National Co-ordination Team**
Website: www.ncteam.ac.uk
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An electronic version of this document can be found at the Innovations website www.innovations.ac.uk

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Foreword

This digest seeks to both recognise and promote the valuable work that was undertaken through the Innovations initiative that ran between 2000 and 2002. This was an initiative which sought to assist the higher education (HE) sector in meeting a number of the key challenges it faces in the 21st century, namely to secure greater social inclusivity and to enhance the fit between individual graduate capability and the world of work. The progress towards these challenges made by some 49 projects, which made up the initiative, is detailed in this publication. They are a radical and innovative set of projects that have taken forward the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) agenda and reflect much of the thinking behind the White Paper – The Future of Higher Education (2003).

The Innovations initiative was launched in 1999 by the then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) inviting bids from universities, colleges and other key players to try out new ideas, focusing on problem solving and demonstrating that they had a “real prospect of leading to significant and widespread improvements” (DfEE 1999). The DfEE identified three broad themes with which the projects should seek to engage, namely:

- **Equal Opportunities** to complement the work supporting widening participation, as a means of developing equal opportunities policies and practices, looking both at participation in HE and in enhancing graduate employment
- **Meeting the Need** to support universities and colleges in developing their responsiveness to the changing employability market and how this matched with graduates’ preparedness for work and ability to contribute to global competitiveness
- **Making Change Happen** to further disseminate the work of a previous DfEE Innovations Fund (1998 to 2000) initiative. The objective was to create projects that would disseminate the findings and lessons learned from an earlier programme thus maximising its impact.

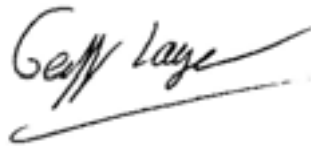
Each theme was allocated a provisional amount of money, with the first having an indicative fund of £3 million, the second £4 million and theme three having a smaller amount. A bidding approach comprising of a two stage process was introduced. The crucial first stage looked at how a project would add value to existing or previous work. It included an outline of the project aims and a description of how they would be achieved and the estimated costs. Once a proposal was accepted a detailed discussion was held with the DfEE to develop a comprehensive bid for stage two, with the indication that 75% of those submitting in stage two would be supported. Of the successful bids there was a mixture of single institutional bids, consortium proposals and proposals from bodies outside the immediate HE sector.

The Innovations projects covered a range of activities that represent stages of the student lifecycle, reflecting the different aspects of engagement a university has with a student. The lifecycle focuses on supporting students, from before they engage with higher education through to helping them prepare for employment. The first stage of the lifecycle concentrates on raising aspirations and priming for admission to higher education. The Innovations projects focussing on this theme ranged from working with young people to develop an expectation of progressing to higher education, to projects that looked at how to develop fair access criteria and at targeting disabled students. The second stage consists of support to students in their study and progress through their course. A number of projects in this digest undertook developmental work on key skills, progress files, addressing diversity among the student body and different approaches to learning and teaching, particularly eLearning. Thirdly, a range of

projects looked at helping to make students more entrepreneurial, supporting work experience, targeting pre-employment interventions reflecting student diversity and developing employability skills in the curriculum.

Produced to ensure that the lessons learned from the initiative might be widely disseminated across the sector and beyond, this digest provides a summary of each of the individual projects yet also reflects the sum of the initiative's parts. Many of the projects have also produced their own reports and they are available from the project contact given with each entry. Although begun in 2000, many of the projects have a focus which is inextricably linked to the Government's White Paper - The Future of Higher Education (2003). This is particularly the case in preparing the ground for the new centres for excellence in business links through Knowledge Exchanges. Each Exchange will receive funding to develop linkage between universities and business. A significant proportion of Innovations projects were specifically linked to this theme of employment, business links and global competitiveness. Similarly, the development of the Government's widening participation agenda is partly based on some of the Innovations work. A number of these projects have clearly been able to influence the formulation of Government policy. This is a theme which will become more evident in a sister publication, due in September 2003, which will analyse the impact of the initiative in depth.

The project teams are to be congratulated on the amount of work they put in to this initiative, often burning the candle at both ends to make sure they succeeded, and the impact they have made.



Geoff Layer
Director of the Innovations Co-ordination Team
Professor of Lifelong Learning at the University of Bradford

Impact

Host organisation
University of Bradford

Contact details
Roy Christian, email:
r.christian@bradford.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
Universities of
Huddersfield,
Leeds and Leeds
Metropolitan

Web address
www.brad.ac.uk/
admin/impact/

Timescale and level of funding
£214,399 over two years

Purpose of project

The Impact programme was designed to provide learning and guidance to enhance the employment skills of ethnic minority students and improve equality of access to graduate jobs. The main objectives being firstly to collate and analyse local and national graduate employment data. Secondly, to establish a Supporters Club of graduate employers, committed to the project, who would design and deliver, with employers, a multi-dimensional programme of learning, personal development and guidance for ethnic minority students to better prepare them for entry into the labour market. Finally, to critically evaluate the outcomes of the project with a view to producing models of good practice in supporting the learning and development of ethnic minority students.

Outcomes

- the project provided a high quality service to students and built strong links with employers
- support to over 500 students across the four institutions
- establishment of the Supporters Club engaging employers to promote positive action initiatives

Main Successes

- the target set for student participation in the scheme was achieved twofold
- the student centred approach offered focused, needs led provision
- 53 local and national employers became, and continue to be, members of the Supporters Club
- influence over changing attitudes to employer recruitment
- demonstrable effective collaboration between four institutions
- effective dissemination and awareness-raising locally, regionally and nationally

Unanticipated Outcomes

- scale of the take up of the project

Deliverables

- 815 students participated in Impact activities
- 1,555 one-to-one appointments held with students
- 135 workshops run, many with employer involvement
- a pilot mentoring programme successfully completed consisting of 27 partnerships
- 53 employers recruited to Supporters Club
- creation of an Impact website
- Impact newsletters produced

Paving the Way

Host organisation

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Contact details

Jill Johnson, email:
j.johnson@ucas.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Universities of Birmingham and Central Lancashire, Queen Mary University of London and York St John College

Web address

www.ucas.com/candq/paving/index.html

Timescale and level of funding

£287,916 over two years

Purpose of project

The project focussed on the successful progression to higher education of currently under-represented groups. To achieve this the project worked with four very different HEIs across the country to support and trial more inclusive practice. The project sought to influence the ways in which HEIs and UCAS respond to the needs of under-represented groups in the future and have an impact upon retention rates. It aimed to identify barriers and work with the target groups to overcome them, whilst also identifying the key determinants which support successful transition into HE.

Outcomes

- partner institutions were all able to develop new approaches, procedures and activities. This included the opportunity and the willingness to share practice and strategies to embed successful activities
- production of detailed recommendations connected with admission, retention, outreach and the institutional policies and procedures which can promote or hinder success
- production of recommendations for changes to UCAS procedures, to make them more 'user friendly' for under-represented groups
- development event for senior managers of the partner institutions in which the managers focussed on the project findings and committed to securing change
- high profile dissemination strategy which included a combination of key national conferences, seminars, press articles and linkage with other projects
- confirmation of the causes of, and some new insights into, under-representation
- greater understanding of the methodological issues involved in reaching and identifying the under-represented and analysis of the contribution of social class to this

Main Successes

- commitment of HEI partners
- dissemination strategy

Unanticipated Outcomes

- inclusion of two additional HEIs
- data on postcodes and social class was too complicated to access and utilise
- difficulty in identifying target groups of potential students as the sample was small
- differential ethnicity profile
- established statistical package for the social sciences expertise in UCAS

Deliverables

- comprehensive report
- action plan for UCAS

Law Graduates Employability Network (LAGREN)

Host organisation

London Guildhall University (LGU) (now merged with the University of North London into London Metropolitan University)

Contact details

Ray Wilkinson, email: ray.wilkinson@londonmet.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

None

Web address

www.lgu.ac.uk/careers/lagren.html

Timescale and level of funding

£116,541 over two years

Purpose of project

The aim of the LAGREN project was firstly to enhance the employability of law students from disadvantaged groups both in and outside the mainstream legal professions. It also sought to address the initial barriers to entry to the profession and to develop pathways to alternative job opportunities in which legal skills can be deployed.

Outcomes

- achieved an increase in work experience and mentoring opportunities for law students
- many students found the mentoring scheme a positive experience, even if the scheme helped them realise that they did not want to spend their careers working for a City law firm
- developed work shadowing opportunities for a pilot group of students
- developed a skill-based customised training programme. The programme, funded by the City Fringe Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and the HEFCE, comprised of four days of group work delivered by an external trainer and a fifth day organised by LGU and legal practitioners on finding work and workplace behaviour
- law students received an increased advice service from the university's careers service
- published a casebook to help students gain experience and give information about alternative careers for law students (available in hard copy and as a PDF version on the web)
- institution has funded, as part of their continuation strategy, a full-time LAGREN Project Development Officer on a two-year contract to continue the process of increasing work experience opportunities

Main Successes

- skill-based customised training programme
- mentoring scheme with the international law firm, Simmons and Simmons. The major benefit identified by the students participating in this scheme was the ability to discuss their legal careers with a peer in an informal setting
- casebook of careers for Law students called 'Experience Matters'
- broker involvement by practitioners in the mainstream menu of the Department of Law

Unanticipated Outcomes

- an email careers advice service was introduced following the realisation that careers advisory interviews were too time consuming to be practical

Deliverables

- casebook of careers for Law students
- advice to other careers advisers working with law students
- model for providing targeted and effective careers advice to students hoping to achieve success in City related professions
- mentoring scheme for students with mentors drawn from the legal staff of a large City Law firm

Institutional Racism Toolkit

Host organisation

University of Leeds

Contact details

Ian Law, email:

i.g.law@leeds.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

None

Web address

www.leeds.ac.uk/cers/toolkit/toolkit.htm

Timescale and level of funding

£48,524 over one year and nine months

Purpose of project

This project aimed to stimulate and promote debate about how institutional racism can be effectively challenged in higher education institutions. It sought to place this task firmly on the agenda of British HEIs and to provide a developing toolkit for the assessment and management of intervention in institutional racism.

The team examined the main areas of organisational-wide activities at the University of Leeds in order to assess the extent to which structures, policies, processes and practices result in fair, appropriate and professional treatment of minority ethnic groups. It also developed a transferable framework for the assessment and management of institutional racism in higher education and a proposal for a toolkit of good practice.

Outcomes

- a web-based institutional racism 'toolkit' for HEIs
- 1,500 toolkit executive summaries produced in hard copy
- national conference – Institutional Racism in Higher Education
- contributions to news and media inquiries regarding the project and issues of racism in the workplace
- advice and presentations of findings to HEIs at conference and seminars
- advice and input to the development of race equality strategy in the host institution
- case study (University of Leeds) published and distributed
- a seminar series researching racism

Main Successes

- the user friendly web-based toolkit including a reader's guide, which will give HEIs information and support in the identification and eradication of institutional racism
- the project addressed long standing concerns about the issue of institutional racism in higher education in a practical way
- the toolkit covered the 'big picture' of institutional activity, providing guidance on areas such as purchasing, contracts and external affairs (including outreach activities) rather than being limited, as previous studies have been, to employment and/or student recruitment issues
- the toolkit was intended to be an organic web-based resource and has been updated regularly in the light of user feedback
- a well used, extensive bibliography and a comprehensive list of useful links to other relevant organisations and resources centres

Unanticipated Outcomes

- interest in the project came from other sectors and national interest was higher than anticipated
- an email database of interested academics and administrators was established
- timeline of the project was particularly timely in relation to HEI and Equality Challenge Unit's (ECU) responses to the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000

Deliverables

- web-based institutional racism 'toolkit'
- hard copy executive summaries
- national conference and papers – 'Challenging Institutional Racism in Higher Education', Leeds, July 2002
- research papers from seminar series
- web-based network for academics and administrators
- advice and consultation service regarding ethnicity and race

Recruiting from a Wider Spectrum of Graduates

Host organisation

Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE)

Contact details

Richard Brown, email: cihe@btinternet.com

Partners (if any)

Employment Studies Research Unit (University of West of England)

Web address

www.cihe-uk.com

Timescale and level of funding

£75,846 over one year and five months

Purpose of project

This project was designed to identify leading practice in graduate recruitment. It focused on employers who have consciously developed strategies to recruit effectively, avoiding discrimination amongst the 'non-traditional' candidates now coming through universities and colleges. The aim was to discover and disseminate information about actual and potential mechanisms to develop and promote better synergy between the graduate supply and employer demand. In order to achieve this goal the project looked at two areas of apparent graduate under-utilisation not caused by anti-discrimination legislation, age and socio-economic background.

Outcomes

- conducted over 100 interviews in 87 organisations across seven sectors of industry all seeking to increase graduate employment
- findings across the different sectors were:
 - *finance* - sophisticated and well thought out approaches to graduate recruitment
 - *large retail* - aware of the importance of diversity recruitment
 - *public sector* - open and accessible
 - *not for profit* - tended to be reactive recruiters
 - *manufacturing* - the fit between graduate supply and demand was not satisfactory
 - *hi-tech manufacturing* - tended to be SMEs and have recruitment difficulties
- in the larger organisations there was clear graduate labour market segmentation, but recruits were able to move from one graduate entry level to another as they developed professionally. Graduates recruited to 'non-graduate' posts also had the opportunity to demonstrate that they had the ability to move to 'graduate' occupations
- employers who engaged with diversity issues had four main reasons for doing so:
 - external drivers such as legislation or cultural alignment
 - business case through seeking graduates from a wider pool of talent and increasing customer links
 - commitment to equal opportunities
 - commitment to employment diversity and changing the current employee mix

Main Successes

- the contribution and willingness of employers to focus on the issues
- the identification of good practice

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the impact of the changing economic position on some employers' ability to participate
- the similarity of issues and commitment facing different sectors

Deliverables

- production of guidelines to support employers

Extending Education and Career Opportunities for the Deaf Community

Host organisation

University of
Wolverhampton

Contact details

Diane Peacock,
email:
d.peacock@wlv.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

None

Web address

www.wlv.ac.uk/sad/deafprojects

Timescale and level of funding

£189,798 over two
years and three
months

Purpose of project

The project sought firstly to expand opportunities for the deaf community in higher education and employment. Secondly, to enhance the language skills of deaf students with particular reference to language concepts, written English and specialist higher education vocabulary in art and design.

Outcomes

- production of an interactive website which uses current art and design students and deaf practitioners to promote positive role models for deaf students wishing to enter higher education
- bespoke level 0 introductory English for deaf learners' curriculum
- research and production of a 'specialist' British Sign Language (BSL) glossary to support undergraduate art and design study
- production of a good practice guide for staff teaching deaf students in art, design and communication
- wide ranging staff development programme for teaching and technical staff

Main Successes

- development of a specialist BSL glossary website
- development of five accredited level 0 English for Deaf Learners modules and three accredited level 0 Art and Design modules specifically for deaf learners
- production of a good practice guide for academic staff in art, design and communication
- development of a careers website for deaf people wishing to seek employment in the creative arts field
- implementation of a dissemination strategy promoting the skills and potential of deaf students to the wider academic community and employers

Unanticipated Outcomes

- glossary website was originally targeted at deaf students and/or potential students. However, feedback suggested the website had utility for a wider range of stakeholders
- glossary website led to a successful bid under the HEFCE funding programme, 'Improving provision for disabled students 2003-05', to extend the model to both science and engineering subject disciplines

Deliverables

- careers website for employers and deaf graduates
- on-line BSL/English glossary for art and design education
- English for Deaf Learner course, with specialist subject orientation in art, computing or science
- guidance booklet for lecturers teaching art and design to deaf students
- staff development events on teaching, learning and assessment for deaf students in art and design

Head Start

Host organisation

Royal National Institute for Deaf people (RNID)

Contact details

Rachel Wight,
email: rachel.wight@rnid.org.uk

Partners (if any)

Universities of Central Lancashire and Westminster, Bristol University and Manchester Metropolitan University

Web address

www.rnid.org.uk/html/services-employment-head-start.htm

Timescale and level of funding

£288,138 over one year and nine months

Purpose of project

The project was committed to ensuring more deaf and hard of hearing people gain entry into university, achieve their full potential and graduate employment. Specific goals included developing progression routes for deaf and hard of hearing people into higher education and securing a deaf aware, inclusive higher education environment. The project sought to demonstrate its potential for application across HE.

Outcomes

- target number of students undertaking training, job search activities and obtaining jobs
- deaf awareness training undertaken in participating universities with 140 university staff evaluating this as having a significant impact towards change
- companies undertaking deaf awareness prior to involvement in work experience and volunteer activities
- production of the publication, 'Deaf Students in Higher Education - How inclusive are you?' This is a self-assessment tool for higher education institutions to check their implementation of the QAA Code of Practice for students with disabilities, and is closely cross referenced to the Special Education Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)
- University of Westminster identified 12 'disability tutors' working with deaf and hard of hearing students. Fourteen text phones have been installed
- the London Graduate Fair had a good number of interpreters for the first time, while project staff offered specialist advice to deaf and hard of hearing students on careers and job search skills at the event
- Manchester Metropolitan University hosted a job preparation workshop for British Sign Language (BSL) users which was attended by 11 students
- RNID and staff at Bristol University took part in a joint open/social evening at the City of Bristol College. This provided an opportunity for students to network and find out about admission into university
- many achievements in the universities have been made in the background, such as changes to learning and teaching materials
- the RNID has gained much more knowledge and experience in working with undergraduates and graduates, by tapping into the experience of the universities. This has led to an extension of the support offered to this target group. Forty four undergraduates or graduates from universities, other than their partners, benefited from the charity's services over the 20 months of the project

Main Successes

- impressive numbers of staff in the participating universities received deaf awareness training
- 'Head Start' Partnership conference held at the end of the first year raising sector-wide awareness of the project
- production of the 'Deaf Students in Higher Education - How inclusive are you?' publication

Unanticipated Outcomes

- although the focus of the project was on deaf and hard of hearing students, the majority of the work had a pan-disability application

Deliverables

- production of the 'Deaf Students in Higher Education - How inclusive are you?' publication

21st Century Women: Raising Aspirations of Women in the Digital Economy

Host organisation

e-skills UK

Contact details

Liz Stroombergen,
email:

liz.stroombergen@e-skills.com

Partners (if any)

Universities of
Cambridge and Surrey

Web address

www.e-skills.com/itcompass

Timescale and level of funding

£192,200 over two years

Purpose of project

The project sought to improve the understanding of women undergraduates about careers available in IT services and of the skills required to be successful. It also aimed to build the confidence of women in their ability to be successful in IT services, create new, effective linkages between employers, university staff, alumni and students and ultimately increase the percentage of women undergraduates gaining jobs in IT services.

Outcomes

- 'IT Compass' website, a comprehensive site guiding individuals into the very different aspects of IT careers. The site incorporates a 'Women in IT' section which provides links, motivation and role models to encourage women to consider a career in IT
- improved understanding of the labour market - on-line research was undertaken at the beginning of the project to understand the needs of female undergraduates, and the impression held by women of the IT industry
- video role-models and case studies developed
- 'Women-Just do IT' workshops held at different universities throughout the sector
- IT industry visits for women
- 'Women in IT' conferences
- extensive press coverage

Main Successes

- the website, 'IT Compass', achieved over a million hits during the project life cycle

Unanticipated Outcomes

A particularly successful event was organised for all those who participated by providing role models and case studies. Emerging from this event was 'Women of Influence', a networking forum created to put forward a voice to employers, policy makers and the media. Also emerging from a second conference was an employer's champions group with a remit to focus on the retention issues of women in IT and related sectors. The 'Women in IT' conferences are now an annual event in their third year supported by the DTI, Intellect and e-skills UK.

Deliverables

- 'IT Compass' website
- 20 video role-models located on website
- 100 'IT for non-IT' case studies about women in IT located on website. Provided in conjunction with the sister project, 'Understanding The Future'

Mature Students Careers Project

Host organisation
University of Warwick

Contact details
Kate Dodd, email:
k.c.dodd@warwick.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
None

Web address
www.warwick.ac.uk/careers/students/matureindex.shtml

Timescale and level of funding
£97,811 over two years

Purpose of project

The primary focus of the project was to enhance mature student employability through work experience, training and advice, and to promote the benefits of recruiting mature students to employers. In addition, the project provided mentoring opportunities for graduates and brought together the three project partners in the development of a holistic approach to improving the employment prospects of mature students.

Outcomes

- a series of workshops to identify the needs of mature students
- a work experience workbook intended to support work placement activities, and mature students
- a series of mentoring relationships have been established, and some useful less formal liaisons with alumni
- engaged successfully with both the local mature student community and careers guidance professionals at Warwick, via development, production and dissemination of a case study booklet

Main Successes

- one day workshop event for mature students (available upon graduation)
- inclusion of the work experience handbook into the induction events for mature students
- level one APEL module in the part-time degree programme
- development of a mature student focus to the Warwick Skills Certificate
- input from the careers service to staff publications and training events, with a focus upon mature student employment
- successful dissemination conference which focused upon transition - held in November 2002 in collaboration with two other similar projects
- establishment of an interactive website

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the conversion of workshop materials to web-based resources
- the growth of interest in the careers service

Deliverables

- Reports:
 - 'Improving the Employment Prospects of Mature Students'
 - 'Mentoring for Mature Students'
- Database:
 - alumni contacts and details of their employment status
 - mature student typology

Publications

- 'How we did it' - a case study booklet

Student Support Mentoring Project (for students with a disability)

Host organisation

Staffordshire
University

Contact details

Grant McNair, email:
g.mcnaair@staffs.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

None

Web address

www.staffs.ac.uk/ssmp

Timescale and level of funding

£63,978 over two
years

Purpose of project

This project sought to firstly provide disabled students with access and support to professional knowledge and experience of relevant careers. It also sought to increase confidence, empower students and increase employer understanding of disability issues. A final aim was to provide work experience opportunities, promote participation and retention of graduates within the local economy.

Outcomes

- delivery of disability awareness training for mentors
- production of a mentoring scheme resource pack
- production of a mentoring model
- a final conference and awards ceremony
- production of an email discussion list for mentors and mentees
- the project is to continue for another year, initially as a scheme, with a view to becoming embedded permanently within the university

Main Successes

- produced an excellent 'tried and tested' mentoring model for the wider sector
- comprehensive mentoring scheme resource pack

Unanticipated Outcomes

- social network of students and mentors with the students forming their own mentoring network
- ongoing mentoring partnerships
- bi-monthly newsletter

Deliverables

- mentoring scheme resource pack
- project website

Mentoring and Associated Support Systems for Disabled Graduates

Host organisation
Coventry University

Contact details
Sally Evans, email:
s.evans@coventry.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
University of Central Lancashire, London Metropolitan University and University College Worcester

Web address
www.crpdpd.coventry.ac.uk/maps/index.htm

Timescale and level of funding
£190,776 over two years and two months

Purpose of project

The aim of this project was to promote opportunities for disabled graduates to enter the labour market at levels appropriate to their skills, qualifications and individual aptitudes. It achieved this through the development of innovative national systems of mentoring and peer support, based on the use of email as the main communication medium.

Outcomes

- following an initial period of needs analysis and development, students with disabilities from each of the four partner institutions joined an email discussion group
- the project's recruitment base broadened to include students and mentors who were not disabled
- the team was successful in establishing a number of mentoring partnerships that worked well
- the main factor in recruitment seems to have been the desire on the part of disabled students not to be segregated from other students

Main Successes

- a discussion group of 35, including two students who became permanent facilitators
- 25 students enrolled on the mentoring scheme, 15 of whom had been paired with a mentor and six of which continued with the mentoring relationship after the life of the project

Unanticipated Outcomes

None

Deliverables

- a manual: 'Mentoring: A Good Practice Guide'
- website hosted at <http://www.worc.ac.uk/services/equalopp/innovations.htm>

Widening Access to Experience Works

Host organisation

University of
Newcastle upon Tyne

Contact details

Iain Nixon, email:
careers@ncl.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

None

Web address

www.careers.ncl.ac.
uk / academics

Timescale and level of funding

£186,518 over two
years

Purpose of project

The main purpose of the project was to improve the employment prospects of the students at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and encourage them to be lifelong learners. This was achieved by creating and enhancing opportunities for students to undertake and learn from work-related activities prior to, during and after their higher education experience. These opportunities were created through developing the students' key skills and assisting them in producing evidence of such development. In parallel, employers, particularly public and voluntary sector organisations, were involved in curriculum design and were also made aware, through working with the students, of the skills and abilities available to them as potential employers of these graduates.

Outcomes

- the developments and opportunities funded through this project continue as mainstream activities of the careers service and the Centre for Academic Practice at Newcastle
- work-related learning opportunities have been provided for years 11 and 12 students at pre-entry summer schools and to main stream students through curriculum developments in 28 different departments
- work opportunities are advertised on the 'Vacancies on-line' website for both full time employment and shorter work experience opportunities. Over 1100 organisations are present on this website
- students' key skills have been developed through engaging with work-related learning opportunities, including short term placements and project-type work within the curriculum. An online key skills module for graduates and key skills framework for pre-entry students have been developed
- employers have been involved in 25 departments in developing the curriculum
- alumni volunteers have contributed to careers fairs and pre-entry summer schools and they are part of a professional contacts network system for graduating students

Main Successes

- extent of the involvement of departments across the university
- the return of departmental staff for more support because some kind of activity had been successfully supported by the project team
- integration of the activities into main stream of the university
- leveraging of additional external funding which enhanced the work of this project
- the project team has been central to the development of a work related learning strategy informed by the university's teaching and learning strategy
- involving the alumni with pre-entry summer school activities

Unanticipated Outcomes

- opportunities to lever in funding from other sources to support similar kinds of work in the university, for example, Science Enterprise Challenge and Northern Cultural Skills Partnership
- the willingness of the alumni to participate
- the engagement of the project director in national initiatives, for example the National Council for Work Experience, thus providing a platform for further dissemination of this project's findings and methodologies

Deliverables

- website with description of support offered to academic colleagues to develop work related learning opportunities to students (www.careers.ncl.ac.uk/academics)
- paper on the LTSN Generic Centre's website about the strategic development of employability within a university
- article in Exchange magazine (No 2), 'Developing Employability Strategically in a Research led University'

Integrated Support System; Higher Education Mentoring Scheme

Host organisation
Peterborough Higher Education Project Company, Loughborough University at Peterborough

Contact details
Jan French, email: j.french@lboro.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
None

Web address
www.lboro.ac.uk/pboro

Timescale and level of funding
£186,146 over two years

Purpose of project

The project aimed to target groups under-represented at university and to offer an innovative approach to increasing access, progression and completion by bridging the gap between school/college and HE. It was also unique in offering support to both students and their families and including them in the mentoring process. Specific goals included establishing an integrated student and parent mentoring scheme targeted at ethnic minority and lower socio-economic groups. Also, encouraging access to HE, progression of students through the first year and completion of HE qualifications among under-represented groups. Two further goals were to produce publicity materials and resources for students and parents available in appropriate languages, a handbook on setting up and running a student mentoring project and a website.

Outcomes

- developed regional and national links
- membership of the Cambridgeshire Social Mentoring Consortium
- gained the National Mentoring Network's Approved Provider Standard (a new benchmark quality standard for mentoring services)
- established a video-conferencing link to allow access to other Loughborough University support services, such as Careers, Students Union Advice and the Learning Support teams, for use by the mentor team and student mentees
- recruited and trained a pool of volunteer mentors to provide additional mentoring support to the team of professionally trained mentors
- website to disseminate the mentoring scheme resource materials and the user guide online
- recruitment of over 150 mentees during the life of the project

Main Successes

- embedding of mentoring scheme into mainstream activities of the external relations section at Loughborough University
- a publication entitled 'A Handbook of Mentoring; Guidance on setting up and running a mentoring scheme'

Unanticipated Outcomes

- membership of the National Mentoring Network (NMN)
- attending local/regional network meetings in order to identify and exchange information with other mentoring based schemes
- awarded the Approved Provider Standard in recognition of good practice by the NMN

Deliverables

- 'Guidance for Volunteer Mentors' publication available in hardcopy
- 'A Handbook of Mentoring; Guidance on setting up and running a mentoring scheme' - available in hardcopy and online via links on www.lboro.ac.uk/pboro
- guidance leaflets for students and for parents printed in English and Urdu
- website

Instilling a Culture of Equal Opportunities into the Graduates of Tomorrow (No Quality without Equality)

Host organisation

National Union of Students (NUS)

Contact details

Sophie Holmes,
email: sophie@nus.org

Partners (if any)

NUS Services Limited (NUSSL),
Association of Managers in Student Unions (AMSU),
NUS in Ireland (USI)

Web address

www.nusonline.co.uk/nslp

Timescale and level of funding

£71,028 over one year and five months

Purpose of project

The aim of this project has been to promote knowledge of, and practical commitment to, equal opportunities amongst students, student officers and student staff in the higher education sector. It sought to firstly fundamentally change the approach of students' unions to the service they provide, thereby creating cultural change and new equal opportunities environments within students' unions. Secondly, to enable stakeholders to critically analyse the provision of equal opportunities in the HE sector, including within institutions, and empower them to recognise and grasp the impact that equal opportunities practice will have on the economic and cultural stability of their students' union and society in general. Finally, to empower stakeholders to change their personal perceptions and approaches to equal opportunities, and recognise that this commitment to equal opportunities practice is fundamental to their future employability and personal success.

Outcomes

- application of project to the National Student Learning Programme (NSLP) model whereby students are trained at three-day residential 'Training The Trainer' schools held across the country. The NSLP trainers are given the required skills, knowledge and confidence to deliver training to their peers
- production of guide called 'Equal Opportunities in your Union', a result of extensive research of equal opportunities provision in students' unions, equal opportunities legislation and local policies and strategies across relevant voluntary and public organisations, including the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). 'Equal Opportunities in Your Union' is a unique, groundbreaking, comprehensive and interactive tool for use by any students' union
- the value of the processes and outcomes of this project is being widely recognised
- training resource packs, briefings and campaign material have been produced
- the project outcomes will continue through embedding within the NSLP

Main Successes

- development and production of 'Equal Opportunities in your Union' - a practical guide
- equal opportunities materials now an integral part of other NSLP and NUS training
- project has had an impact within the NUS, as well as nationally
- learning that took place not just within the project team, but also within the Development Projects Department of the NUS
- provision of a substantial amount of equal opportunities training
- additional continuation funding has been secured for retention of staff and further development of this work

Unanticipated Outcomes

- project reached a far wider audience than originally anticipated especially through the further education unions
- interest shown in the project by outside organisations in the educational, voluntary and business sectors

Deliverables

- 'Equal Opportunities in your Union' - a practical guide
- training resource pack with five elements

Mapping Higher Education into Children's Landscape (UniWorld)

Host organisation
Keele University

Contact details
Sarah Hatfield, email:
s.j.m.hatfield
@keele.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
None

Web address
www.keele.ac.uk/
uniworld

Timescale and level of funding
£157,678 over two years

Purpose of project

The purpose of the project was to create and disseminate a model of HEI engagement with the compulsory education sector from Year 8 through to Year 13. This included the development of pathways that enabled school-aged young people to make the transition from school to university. The project worked actively with participating schools and across the University to develop its approaches to the problems identified.

Outcomes

- the development of a significant partnership between the University and targeted schools
- the creation of the UniWorld website and a range of leaflets targeting young people, teachers and parents
- the creation of the UniWorld CD Rom which is a multi-media, interactive, differentiated disk that directly addresses the most frequently asked questions and misinformation perceived by young people about higher education
- the UniWorld web club
- creation and dissemination of a model of HE engagement with the compulsory education sector
- development and delivery of a systematic strategy for widening participation at cultural, strategic and operational levels
- increase in the number of young people wanting to attend higher education from the UniWorld cohort
- a framework of flexible arrangements has been built across academic schools and partner schools

Main Successes

- development of the multi media CD Rom which was differentiated, fully networkable, compatible with IT provision in schools and appropriate to the needs of Key Stage 3 pupils
- the good practice identified in the project has been embedded within the University and supported at the highest level
- project staff have been involved in developing key policies within the University and their expertise harnessed to lead and develop the 'Race Equality group' at Keele University
- the UniWorld team has become mainstream and expanded to form the Widening Participation Department at Keele University. This has enabled widening participation to be embedded into the admissions and recruitment process

Unanticipated Outcomes

- methods to achieve the objectives of the project evolved to include a greater emphasis upon delivery through ICT
- strategies to engage boys in education were identified and tested
- close working arrangements with target groups of pupils in inner city schools re-inforced the need for appropriate market research
- the development of an interactive prospectus for Year 8 pupils
- a CD Rom has been developed for Key Stages 4 and 5

Deliverables

- CD Roms for young people and a DVD for parents to access information through video players and PlayStation 2™
- UniWorld website and leaflets
- interactive prospectus for Year 8 pupils
- mentoring programme for Years 8-11 pupils

Fair Enough?

Host organisation

Universities UK

Contact details

Amalia Holman,
email: amalia.holman@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Universities of Leeds,
Manchester,
Southampton,
Sussex, Kingston
University and St
Mary's College

Web address

www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/projects/fairenough.asp

Timescale and level of funding

£209,729 over two years and three months

Purpose of project

The aim of the project was to improve the process of determining whether to offer applicants a place on an undergraduate course. In order to achieve this the project worked with both admissions tutors and HEI administration. It sought to make the admissions process more transparent and informed by objective criteria related to potential academic success. To achieve this the project worked with six HEIs in different subject areas to obtain an appropriate balance in the development of criteria and processes. Implicit within the aim was the goal of widening participation to increase the acceptance of applications from young people from lower socio-economic groups.

Outcomes

- identification of objective criteria linked to success on courses in 15 subject disciplines. The criteria assists the assessment of borderline candidates and can be used to support both the development of a framework for interview questions and the recording of the interview performance for non-traditional applicants
- the criteria are being used across institutions in the development of UCAS Entry Profiles, providing further transparency to the admissions decision-making process
- the criteria are being further used by the partner HEIs in a number of ways. This includes:
 - disseminating the criteria to partner feeder institutions in order to develop potential applicants
 - dissemination to referees to support the production of evidence against the criteria
 - development of an admissions pack for departments
 - further investigation of psychometric testing as a means of supplementing the process
 - using the criteria to train admissions tutors
- considerable interest in the development of Fair Access proposals
- the final report was launched at a major conference

Main Successes

- the development of objective admissions criteria relating to subjects
- the 'buy in' from academic staff
- establishment of criteria that can be utilised by HEIs for targeted developmental purposes

Unanticipated Outcomes

- original project aim appeared to particularly fit the needs of selecting courses. These courses tended to attract applicants with high predicted grades and such candidates usually met the criteria. The criteria were more useful in identifying those borderline applicants with the potential to succeed

Deliverables

- set of objective criteria to process admission decision-making
- staff development materials

Career Focus

Host organisation
Windsor Fellowship

Contact details
Afua Yeboah, email:
afua.yeboah@
amosltd.com

Partners (if any)
AMOS Recruitment
and Training Ltd

Web address
None

Timescale and level of funding
£177,050 over one
year and three
months

Purpose of project

The purpose of the project was to deliver a series of pre-recruitment skills training workshops entitled 'Career Focus'. The programme targeted black and Asian final year undergraduates and recent graduates, to enhance their success at securing employment through a number of means. Firstly, by providing insights into the recruitment policies and practices of specific public and private sector organisations and identifying employment opportunities currently available. Also, by creating peer mentoring opportunities and by building practical assessment and personal skills, and developing these to successfully gain employment in the targeted sectors.

Outcomes

- identification of 'champions' from a range of sectors to support the process
- links built with public and private sector employers who hosted and co-presented specific events
- delivered 'Career-Focus' events
- invited black and Asian penultimate and final year undergraduates and recent graduates to participate in the events
- hosted career evening for leading organisations
- development and delivery of employability skills workshops

Main Successes

- succeeded in engaging high profile, private sector companies to take practical measures to address the difficulties faced by black and Asian graduates when seeking employment
- engaged private sector companies in disseminating their recruitment and selection practices to both new and undergraduates
- each workshop and open evening programme comprised of a variety of interactive elements
- attracted coverage of events by the minority ethnic media

Unanticipated Outcomes

- networks developed with other Innovations projects with similar aims and objectives
- joint dissemination events with other Innovations projects
- development of practical models by a private sector company to break into, and work with, the higher education sector
- conducting the evaluation was problematic. The project found it difficult to identify the range of skills, knowledge and experience necessary for evaluating Career Focus within one institution
- difficulties in establishing an active steering committee
- the need to identify additional funding for an independent evaluation

Deliverables

- four pre-recruitment workshops and open evening delivered with the UK Civil Service, media organisations, finance, retail and the voluntary sector
- workshops offering practical training for new and undergraduates in the area of CV development, interview techniques, personal development, confidence building and mentoring opportunities
- evaluation of report
- a dedicated information line for the project event and programme

Oxford Professional Updating System (OPUS)

Host organisation
University of Oxford

Contact details
Michael Meredith,
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michael.meredith
@conted.ox.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
None

Web address
www.tall.ox.ac.uk/
opus

Timescale and level of funding
£285,000 over two years

Purpose of project

The project was primarily concerned with developing and promoting a methodology for individualised learning. It aimed to build a computer-based system (OPUS) capable of delivering courses tailored to meet individual needs and starting from a student's current level of knowledge.

Outcomes

- a demonstration version of OPUS (on a subset of materials relating to the project), to enable people to try it
- contact arrangements for those interested in implementing OPUS, supported by the project manager
- implementation documentation
- a website
- a workshop offered through the Association of Learning Technology
- presentations at conferences
- committed participation in all initiated activities

Main Successes

- website
- understanding of the difficulties of developing provision
- promotional tool through the website
- process and procedures to assist implementation

Unanticipated Outcomes

- a unique knowledge base was created around the issues of implementing online personalised learning, current projects and possible solutions
- documentation to aid development of content developed in XML, suitable for delivery via a variety of modes
- a valuable contribution to the position of eLearning in higher education

Deliverables

- website
- online toolkit for personalisation in eLearning

PHOENICS

Host organisation
University of Leeds

Contact details
Ashley Clarke, email:
a.r.clarke@leeds.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
Universities of
Central Lancashire,
Leicester,
Northumbria at
Newcastle and
Strathclyde and
Sheffield Hallam

Web address
www.leeds.ac.uk/
physics/phoenics

Timescale and level of funding
£71,150 over two years

Purpose of project

To further investigate and define sustainable, expandable models of paid industrial placements for physics undergraduates, by bringing together the expertise of academic departments, specific employers and the 'Year in Industry' organisation.

Outcomes

- use of promotional materials for different audiences, including employers, undergraduate students, A-level and GCSE students, school teachers
- investigation of factors inhibiting uptake of placement opportunities, through national surveys of physics departments, consortium surveys of students and student 'buzz' groups
- promotion of positive impact of participation in work placements
- introduction of a faculty-wide Progress File at Leeds University, and the development of a PDP file at Leicester University, dedicated to work placements

Main Successes

- establishment of a new placement programme, based in Silicon Valley, California, involving physics and astronomy students from three White Rose universities (in this case Leeds, Sheffield and York)
- developed good working relationships with both Year in Industry (YINI) and the Shell Technology Enterprise Programme (STEP) organisations
- work to embed, within the curriculum, a range of annual special events to promote placements at partner sites
- piloting and reviewing of processes in departments in order to facilitate effective liaison with placement providers (YINI and STEP)

Unanticipated Outcomes

- a wider investigation of the disincentives to placement take-up experienced by undergraduate students prompted by initial lower uptake of placement opportunities
- closure of two consortium partner physics departments (University of Northumbria at Newcastle and Sheffield Hallam) during the lifetime of the project necessitated a re-profiling of the project

Deliverables

- 'Silicon Valley' placement programme
- events: 'Careers Fair' at Leeds University; 'World of Work' at Leicester University; 'Awareness of Work Placements' at Strathclyde University
- website

Marketing Graduates' Skills

Host organisation

London School of Economics and Political Science

Contact details

Peter Levin, email: p.levin@lse.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Oxford Brookes University

Web address

www.teamwork.ac.uk

Timescale and level of funding

£192,040 over two years

Purpose of project

To pioneer a model of skills development that is not only flexible enough to improve the prospects of students entering any field of graduate employment but also simple and robust enough to fit into typical university course structures and methods.

Outcomes

- design, implementation, recording and evaluating successive programmes of 'teamwork tutoring'
- production of both a practical and a conceptual model of skills development
- wide range of materials, as detailed below

Main Successes

- investigation into the concept of employability. The project hosted a one-day colloquium on 'rethinking graduate employability', attended by a wide range of delegates representing further and higher education institutions, educational developers and policy makers. It was found that a significant proportion of graduates spend their early years in the graduate labour market with a number of employers until they find an employer and a 'career job' that suits them. Accordingly, the process needs to be viewed as a 'matching' process, one of selection-by-employee as well as selection-by-employer, and the concept of 'employability' needs to be matched by one of 'employer-ability'
- development of a robust model of 'teamwork tutoring' that can be employed by academics who give their students group projects to undertake as part of their academic work. The model can be tailored to projects of different kinds and to the make-up of different student cohorts
- successfully engaged the interest and active involvement of a variety of academic colleagues, who both supplied an input to teamwork tutoring and invited the project workers' participation in the design of the assignment given to students

Unanticipated Outcomes

- interest and support gained from academic colleagues stimulated the transformation of the project into one of action research
- project workers were led to question some of the axioms that they took for granted at the outset, notably to do with 'employability' and 'skills'

Deliverables

- the 'teamwork tutoring' model, corresponding papers and web-based materials
- a prototype manual and a presentation/workshop for teachers
- a resource for students: 'The Good Teamwork Guide: How to Make a Success of Your Group Project' (pending)
- a policy paper, 'Bridging culture gaps...'
- a colloquium on Graduate Employability (June 2002)

Understanding the Future (UTF)

Host organisation
e-skills UK Ltd

Contact details
Melody Hermon,
email: melody.hermon@e-skills.com

Partners (if any)
Universities of Nottingham and Oxford, and Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS)

Web address
www.itcompass.net

Timescale and level of funding
£288,300 over two years

Purpose of project

The project aimed to improve HE responsiveness to the changing demands of employers in the IT services sector. It sought to ensure that the sector better understood and responded to the needs of HE in terms of sector-wide labour market intelligence and careers information. It also aimed to make HE teams better equipped to advise students about opportunities in the sector and provide an innovative model for sector-wide interaction with HE, which could also be utilised by other sectors key to the UK economy.

Outcomes

- reviewed all current graduate IT careers publications and other information available to careers advisers and students, to understand the base line at the start of the project
- employer-led workshops for careers advisers led to increased knowledge and understanding of the IT sector
- on-line survey attracted 2,379 responses from employers, students, graduates and careers advisers
- six multi-stakeholder focus groups were held to explore in depth the underlying issues concerning the sector, and to provide qualitative data to support the quantitative research from the on-line survey
- attended nine university and national careers fairs across the UK, representing both the IT sector and e-skills UK
- delivered targeted presentations at:
 - AGCAS Biennial Conference in September 2001
 - National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) Conference in March 2002
- labour market intelligence - organisations recruiting non-IT graduates into IT roles
- case studies across a range of employers, types of role and geography

Main Successes

- established an impressive site at 'IT Compass' that has achieved over a million hits during the project life cycle

Unanticipated Outcomes

- invited to be 'Expert of the month' on doctorjob.com for September 2002, providing advice to students looking to develop a career in the sector and encouraging them to visit the IT Compass website

Deliverables

- IT Compass website (www.itcompass.net) includes:
 - 'Getting into IT' - a guide for students and graduates
 - jargon buster
 - case studies
 - employers recruiting non-IT disciplines
- sponsored and contributed, in partnership with AGCAS/CSU (the Higher Education Career Services Unit), to the development of 15 occupational profiles on the high profile 'Prospects' career website (www.prospects.ac.uk)
- UTF brochure
- display stand was designed to promote the sector, employer partnerships and the relevance of non-IT disciplines

Mathcomm: Mathematics for Communications and Electronics

Host organisation

University of
Westminster

Contact details

Alison Carter, email:
cartera@wmin.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Employment Studies
Research Unit

Web address

www.mathcomm.co.uk

Timescale and level of funding

£95,299 over two
years

Purpose of project

The purpose of this project was to encourage more A' level maths students to study for a career in electronic and communication engineering and to help address the shortage of suitable graduates for these industries. The main way of addressing this was to create an interactive learning resource on CD Rom which would be attractive to the 16-19 age group. It gives students practice in various applications of maths and demonstrates the range of career opportunities within electronic and communication engineering.

Outcomes

- MathComm CD Rom produced using feedback from A' level maths teachers and with input and material from industry
- CD Roms distributed free to all schools and colleges throughout the country teaching A' level maths for use by teaching staff with students or by individual students. There are also question banks which can be used by teaching staff
- a website was developed which is accessible both directly and via links via the CD Rom

Main Successes

- development, production and distribution of the CD Rom which is a useful resource for schools and demonstrates to students potential career paths
- the engagement and support of industry including NTL, INTEL, Mathsworks and the RAF

Deliverables

- MathComm CD Rom
- website

The Maths for Engineers Webdisk

Host organisation
Educational Broadcasting Services Trust (EBS)

Contact details
Jim Stevenson, email:
jim@ebst.co.uk

Partners (if any)
The University of Leeds,
Media Ink

Web address
www.mathsforengineers.net

Timescale and level of funding
£232,562 over two years

Purpose of project

To provide a collection of electronic learning resources for students studying mathematics, delivered on a single DVD. The resources comprised two distinct types of video sequence (modelling and tutorial) and extracts from a mathematics computer-aided learning package. The project drew on two existing resources addressing mathematics, with a view to integrating them into one, cost effective distance learning solution, supplemented by new video tutorial support materials. These materials were to be presented in a web-style interface and include printable text solutions to the modelling videos.

Outcomes

- a DVD which incorporates:
 - 15 modelling videos which show how mathematical models can be developed for real life problems
 - from each modelling video a 'solutions' file which is downloadable. This provides detailed mathematical solutions to the models developed in the videos
 - 29 video seminars which complement the modelling videos and enable students to access more formal tutorials in an electronic format
- promotion of the disk on a 'Maths for Engineers' website and links made with the relevant LTSN subject centres
- a wide uptake of the resource across the higher education sector

Main Successes

- integration of the two existing resources, coupled with new material, into a single product, available as DVD with CD Rom copies
- distribution of the disk to a named contact in each university and FE college, and, where requested, supply of multiple copies
- good links established with the relevant subject centres providing an excellent route to the primary target audience
- the process in which the disk was developed meant that university departments were able to utilise material to supplement lectures and tutorials, further enhancing the usability of the resource

Unanticipated Outcomes

- development of the disk led to further ideas for additional materials. MathTutor is being produced by the project team and will be available from EBS
- the disk model, established for Maths for Engineers, can be effectively used to deliver other material in different subjects and at different levels. The team talked to other interested parties about their projects and now have a pilot disk project running with the Teacher Training Agency

Deliverables

- the disk on DVD with CD Rom copies
- an associated website to further support the dissemination of the disk
- a model which can be replicated in different subject areas

Northampton Business Environment Forum (NBEF)

Host organisation

University College
Northampton (UCN)

Contact details

John McClatchey,
email:
john.mcclatchey@
northampton.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

None

Web address

www.northampton.ac.
uk/~nbef

Timescale and level of funding

£96,100 over two
years

Purpose of project

This project was designed to raise awareness of the value of employing graduates and to develop skills and training opportunities for graduates. The project specifically aimed to encourage University College Northampton (UCN) graduates to seek employment in the local area to address the skills shortage amongst local SMEs and to encourage local SMEs to utilise this accessible resource. In addition the need for enhanced skills training for graduates was acknowledged. Further, UCN had considerable experience of teaching waste disposal management and wished to develop, with partners in industry, a programme of certificated training, in both HE and FE on the subject.

Outcomes

- **Economic**
 - support of national, regional and county employment strategies and the development of other links with key stakeholders
 - improved SME competitiveness through training
 - training of local SME staff through projects which have been supported by Northampton Business Environment Forum (NBEF)
- **Education**
 - extensive range of short courses, seminars and other training events
 - four job fairs
 - increased uptake of CPD amongst local SMEs
- **Partnerships/Networks**
 - developed new and established key networks and partnerships
 - input to exhibitions and other business events
 - model adopted by another HEI and being considered by four others
- **Dissemination**
 - six academic papers
 - input to national events including reception at the House of Lords
 - local newsletter

Main Successes

- successful development of extensive working partnerships, which include trainers, educators, employers, government offices and community groups
- training provision well received by employers, companies and students
- successful dissemination using a broad range of vehicles and media
- NBEF was formulated on a basis of sound research

Unanticipated Outcomes

- development of a website
- inclusion of community groups into the project

Deliverables

- training materials
- certificated short courses
- a model for partnership development and continuation

Securing More Quality Work Experience Opportunities in SMEs in East and West Midlands

Host organisation
Engineering Employers Federation (EEF)

Contact details
Claire Donovan,
email: cdonovan@eef-fed.org.uk

Partners (if any)
National Council for Work Experience (NCWE)

Web address
None

Timescale and level of funding
£95,620 over one year and six months

Purpose of project

This project aimed to enhance the employability of students, address skills shortages and create a better link of small companies with higher education. It sought to achieve this by persuading more SMEs in the engineering sector, including the electronic industries, of the business benefits of placing students on quality work experience programmes. The project was designed to deliver, through two local EEF associations in the East and West Midlands, a pilot programme that would firstly benchmark SME and student perceptions of the benefits of placements and also develop and disseminate, to SMEs and HEIs, case studies which highlighted those benefits. The programme also sought to deliver events to raise awareness of both those business benefits and development opportunities of student placements. Finally it aimed to place 500 students on quality work placements across the engineering sector.

Outcomes

- research undertaken to define 'quality work experience' and support the development of a code of practice showing roles and responsibilities
- case studies were produced and disseminated to careers services and employers
- positive relationship was developed for closer working with the Shell Technology and Enterprise Programme (STEP) and with the Graduate Apprenticeship Scheme to ensure programmes were complementary
- work in the East Midlands was particularly fruitful and has elicited active support from East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)
- intensive work to generate employer interest in the two regions

Main Successes

- case studies produced and well disseminated
- strong link established between EEF East Midlands and Loughborough University
- EEF East Midlands and the East Midlands Regional Development Agency worked well together
- good links established between EEF West Midlands and two universities in the region for developing graduate apprenticeships
- better understanding of the issues facing SMEs
- progress with some SMEs towards employing graduates and engaging undergraduates on work experience

Unanticipated Outcomes

- it proved difficult to engage sufficient SMEs to offer placements. The work was impeded by the recession in the engineering sector resulting in a reluctance to take on extra staff in whatever capacity
- project ended early since it was unlikely that the remaining outcomes would be achieved in any significant way. However there were some significant successes achieved and these will continue to impact on the links between HE and SMEs within the East and West Midlands and further afield
- preparation of an evaluative learning document in order to disseminate the lessons learned from the experiences and difficulties of this project

Deliverables

- the additionally commissioned 'learning document'

Professional Pathways

Host organisation
City University

Contact details
Virginia Williams,
email:
ginny@city.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
None

Web address
www soi.city.ac.uk/
organisation/pl

Timescale and level of funding
£197,005 over two years

Purpose of project

The main aim of this project was to pilot a novel mode of learning which combined formal HE study with placement employment. The rationale behind the project was to see if such a mode would firstly accelerate the entry of people with IT skills into the workplace. Secondly if it would improve the education, employability and career prospects of students and thirdly attract students from new groups, for instance those who want relevant work experience alongside study or who need substantial employment during their period of study. The 'Professional Pathway' mode was piloted to determine its feasibility, its potential take up with employers, students and academics and to identify the necessary conditions for its successful implementation.

Outcomes

- mode was piloted with two cohorts of 15 students over two years in the Department of Computing at City University. After one year of full-time study students could opt for the Professional Pathways mode, transferring to four days per week in relevant employment with one day weekly attendance over a further three years
- the mode proved to work well
- the mode is dependant on the active participation of sufficient employers which is partly determined by the state of the economy
- students, academics and employers taking part need to be adequately briefed and supported by pathway staff
- the scheme is popular with mature students

Main Successes

- project has demonstrated that the Professional Pathway mode works well
- the mode is now accepted and supported by the institution
- project has documented the scheme well for others to learn from

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the project provided the opportunity for a group of staff not previously involved in educational research to engage in this process. Therefore it afforded considerable staff development

Deliverables

- information on the web regarding the scheme, how it works and what are the pros and cons of running such a mode
- proceedings of the conference hosted by the project, 'New Patterns of Learning in HE' (<http://www.ncwe.com>)

Flexible Learning in a Postgraduate Environment (FLIP)

Host organisation

University of Central England

Contact details

Rob Ellis, email:
rob.ellis@tic.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Bolton Institute,
Loughborough
University, LTSN
Engineering subject
centre, Staffordshire
University, Sony

Web address

www.tic-online.com

Timescale and level of funding

£189,825 over two years

Purpose of project

This project, based in the Technology Innovation Centre (TIC), an independent company, formerly the Faculty of Engineering, at the University of Central England, aimed to explore the technological and pedagogical effects and implications of a range of eLearning paradigms.

Outcomes

- perspectives of three different stakeholders were explicitly addressed: academic tutors, commercial managers and academic managers
- assessment of the effectiveness of learning programmes, undertaken by part time students, that utilise new technology on a distance learning basis
- enhancement of higher level lifelong learning for the workplace

Main Successes

- fruitful working relationship with Bolton Institute and the LTSN subject centre
- higher number of published conference papers and articles than was originally envisaged

Unanticipated Outcomes

- a different relationship with Sony than was originally envisaged
- work with Advantage West Midlands, the host institution's regional development agency

Deliverables

- practice guide for the three stakeholder groups
- papers and presentations for international journals and conferences
- series of workshops corresponding to three levels of dissemination: for awareness, understanding and action

The Virtual Hothouse

Host organisation

Centre for Enterprise

Contact details

Jon Mason, email:
jon.mason@centrefor
enterprise.co.uk

Partners (if any)

Universities of
Leicester and
Nottingham, De
Montfort University,
Loughborough
University and
Nottingham Trent
University

Web address

www.Ideas-
House.com

Timescale and level of funding

£240,243 over two
years

Purpose of project

The first aim was the development of an internet platform which would enable young people, especially graduates and undergraduates, to enhance their entrepreneurial competencies. That is, provide them with the attitudes and skills to achieve their goals whether they be personal, work related or in respect to new venture creation. Secondly the project sought to create an internet gateway, encompassing a virtual business start-up incubation facility, providing services for students and graduates aspiring to start their own business.

Outcomes

- development of a comprehensive website, 'Ideas-House', consisting of over 300 on-line pages with practical advice. The website covered the identified key seven aspects of business start-up. It included an interactive on-line support feature, using mentoring facility and discussion forums as dynamic features to further advance the user's experience
- in-depth aspirations survey was conducted with approximately 2000 students at the five partner universities to identify entrepreneurial intent. Results of the survey helped inform the project, provided an evidence base to enable the project to have more impact and contributed to the continuation of the project
- business plan competition targeted at potential users of the website with a cash prize of £1,500 for the winner. This strategy created substantial interest and gained publicity in the local press

Main Successes

- a 'virtual hothouse' in the form of the project website which received over 1100 visits within the project lifetime
- a resource pack of materials, both on-line and off-line which can be used to support either self or supported study by students in both FE and HE institutions
- a gateway to a wealth of further resources for those wishing to explore the development of enterprise in more detail
- a successful business plan competition, which received over 60 entrants from across the East Midlands
- a PhD database of approximately 100 students who were working in the field of small business enterprise

Unanticipated Outcomes

- provided the Centre for Enterprise with greater understanding of student and graduate needs in developing their enterprise skills and aspirations
- delivery of a series of events, bringing together people who have experience of starting a business with students who aspire to develop their enterprise skills and/or start in business
- delivery of a series of 'ideas-house' seminars attended by over 200 students
- 15 institutions have expressed interest in using the materials in some way
- production of a useful good practice guide identifying key principles for the development of eLearning networks

Deliverables

- website
- 'Ideas Pack', a hard copy workbook version of the website

Photo Imaging Graduate Programme

Host organisation

Photo Imaging NTO

Contact details

John Stacey, email:
john@phototraining.fsnet.co.uk

Partners (if any)

Kodak, City College Manchester, Plymouth College of Art and Design, City of Westminster College London, North East Surrey College of Technology, South Nottingham College, West Midlands Digital Imaging Centre

Web address

www.photoimagingnto.org

Timescale and level of funding

£161,024 over two years

Purpose of project

The photographic industry is undergoing a digital revolution and over 90% of its 45,000 employees are working in companies of less than five people. These not only find it difficult to afford staff training, but are also finding it difficult to get appropriately trained staff. Only 18% are recruited from FE and HE and the employers cite skills shortages in ICT as a major reason. The project therefore aimed to address this situation by developing a bridging programme for final year HND students and graduates of photographic courses seeking to work in the industry and thus help increase graduate employment in the sector.

Outcomes

- developed and delivered a bridging course which gives students the necessary ICT imaging skills to engage with the digital revolution in photography
- gives students the new skills needed for work in the industry and helps make them more employable in the sector
- programme was delivered online and images printed at a distant central printer thus simulating 'real world' experience

Main Successes

- the development of the Photo Imaging bridging programme for HND and graduate students and its successful delivery in five institutions
- changes in technology forced team to review and change delivery of programme from study site to centralized on-line provision

Unanticipated Outcomes

- completion of an employer survey to ensure framework is relevant to industry needs

Deliverables

- Photo Imaging bridging programme for HND and graduate students
- a training framework for graduate entry into the sector

The Growing Careers Partnership

Host organisation

Writtle College

Contact details

Phil McCash, email:
pmcc@writtle.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

None

Web address

www.growing-careers.com

Timescale and level of funding

£132,152 over two years

Purpose of project

The aim of the project was to firstly increase awareness, amongst young people and the general public, of course options in the land-based sectors of horticulture, environment, food chain and rural related courses. Secondly, to provide a web-based job vacancy advertising service to graduates and leavers from such courses. The project would thereby aim to help businesses in those sectors address their recruitment needs. It was also the intention to disseminate the results of the work to a wider audience in order to identify transferable solutions.

Two specific objectives were set:

- to stage an innovative event that would explore new ways of engaging young people and adults with both participation in further or higher education, and with careers in the horticultural, environment, food chain and rural sectors
- to develop and operate a job vacancy advertising website suitable for graduates and college leavers seeking entry-level careers in the same sectors as above

Outcomes

- event featuring 'Groundbreakers' workshops, link ups with many local schools, 30 activities running over two days, sponsorship from sector-relevant businesses, street entertainers, celebrity chefs and clear links to target careers at every stand
- event which successfully integrated representation from partner colleges, universities, businesses and professional organisations
- over 700 school pupils attended the Groundbreakers Schools Day, and over 5,000 adults and families attended the Groundbreakers Big Day Out
- website featuring regularly updated live vacancy screens, searchable databases, on-line application procedures, detailed career guides, labour market information, course information, and job search help
- website exceeded the target for page hits by a factor of eight (116,988), and in the process advertised over 1,400 high quality job vacancies, and dealt with over 2,100 job seeker enquiries

Main Successes

- Growing Careers website achieved a high level of user satisfaction regarding the quality of the service provided
- successful delivery of the Groundbreakers event and preliminary workshops supported by positive user feedback

Unanticipated Outcomes

- anecdotally, the Groundbreakers event seemed to have beneficial effects on staff morale at the college

Deliverables

- website
- event

Professional Training for the Construction Industry

Host organisation

University of the West of England (UWE)

Contact details

Tony Bryan, email: tony.bryan@uwe.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

None

Web address

www.flic.uwe.ac.uk

Timescale and level of funding

£139,743 over two years

Purpose of project

To develop a model for flexible delivery of education and training. This will allow learners without previous experience of HE the opportunity to learn at their own pace and at times and places to suit them.

Outcomes

- units of study have been awarded validation by UWE. The project is able to offer credit that can build into a 60 credit certificate. It is hoped to use this outcome of the project as part of normal University programme development in the future. Units of study will be developed using the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment™
- experience gained on this project is already being drawn into a project funded by the university to develop good practice in delivering post-graduate programmes via the web (WebMBE)
- the team has been asked to contribute to the work of the “work-based learning” group who are reporting to the university

Main Successes

- the project team was the key to success through their expertise and commitment
- the project was supported by senior management and faculty staff who became authors and assessors for the project

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the project team noted positive effects of the project, including effects on other teaching and learning materials and approaches, and new interest in learning which was generated amongst several different members of the team
- funds have been secured from a professional body, The Institute of Housing, to develop material for housing management to complement the material on housing development provided by the project

Deliverables

- two newsletters
- articles in CEBE, the LTSN subject centre publication
- website
- 90 online study topics

Learning Bites

Host organisation

Liverpool Hope
University College

Contact details

Jill Armstrong, email:
armstrj@hope.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

University of Liverpool
and Liverpool John
Moore's University

Web address

www.learningbites.
ac.uk

Timescale and level of funding

£120,125 over two
years

Purpose of project

The project aimed to support the development of critical business awareness amongst non-business students, and develop a curriculum model that could be implemented quickly to meet the needs of local employers. Learning Bite units were developed and embedded in the three HEIs in different ways and the project team share a long term vision of making these units available to potential HE students, undergraduates at the Liverpool HEIs and people full-time in the workplace. The project sought to develop an enquiry-led approach to Learning Bite units.

Outcomes

- 20 Learning Bite units were developed with 12 piloted by the end of the project and others being piloted in 2002-3
- over 800 students were involved in the piloting of Learning Bite units
- developed and disseminated an enquiry-led curriculum model based around problem solving to meet a specific learning need
- developed a website access point for students wishing to find out more about Learning Bites and, at end of project, the development of an associated database
- Learning Bite units were accepted as part of the credit framework at Liverpool Hope
- Learning Bite units were used as part of post-graduate training at the University of Liverpool
- issue of level, outcomes and quality assurance and credit transfer were formally explored at Liverpool Hope
- 15 Learning Bite units were made available through a virtual learning environment accessible externally through the web
- four further Learning Bite units were developed as on-line interactive resources

Main Successes

- getting engagement from the majority of academics within a department in sustained curriculum thinking and development, as this has long term impact and change
- the project is ongoing beyond its funding with further piloting work, ongoing steering group meetings, and continuing exploration of the use of Learning Bites in HEIs and private sector
- widespread interest amongst academics in different parts of the three HEIs involved
- interest from a wider range of students than envisaged
- academic staff recommending Learning Bites to students

Unanticipated Outcomes

- development of a deeper understanding of curriculum by the academics who engaged in the development of Learning Bite units, which contributed to achieving a score of 24 in their Teaching Quality Assessment
- the project gave impetus and opportunity to the teaching of languages and provided units that were open to a wider range of students not otherwise able to undertake any language course

Deliverables

- website
- database to support student admissions and tracking
- various reports
- 20 Learning Bite units developed
- over 800 students have undertaken Learning Bite units
- dissemination workshop at SEDA conference
- announcement in HEFCE Council Briefing

Developing Opportunities in Teams (DOIT)

Host organisation

St Helens College,
Liverpool

Contact details

Susan Thomson,
email: s.c.Thomson@livjm.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Liverpool John Moores University (JMU),
University of Liverpool, Liverpool Hope University College and Liverpool Community College

Web address

www.doit.ac

Timescale and level of funding

£191,239 over two years

Purpose of project

This project was a collaborative HE/FE, team based, work experience initiative designed to develop a partnership between FE/HE, commerce and industry. The aim was to work together to develop and encourage growth in the local economy, integrate HE and FE in links with commerce and industry, and to provide supportive, high quality work experience opportunities for students.

Outcomes

- 43 mini projects successfully set up and delivered by student teams on behalf of companies
- the DOIT project strengthened and built upon a number of partnerships within the Merseyside area including the public and voluntary sectors
- the DOIT website providing information and motivation for students and employers
- 6.6% of those students who participated in the DOIT project expressed an interest and have been referred to Graduate Hothouse, a JMU initiative that prepares potential entrepreneurs for starting their own businesses
- a web based platform for recruitment and dissemination
- continuous dissemination, both internally and to external partners, plus to other appropriate bodies, through publicity materials, student and employers guides etc
- the development of a successful team-based model for work experience

Main Successes

- development of a CD Rom of learning
- further successful development of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Business Bridge project management database on to a web based platform
- linking with, and extending, partnerships and networks
- the development of a successful business-led model of HE/industry interaction
- evidence that cross sectoral student teams can be formed in order to deliver project-based work experiences
- increased confidence for those students taking part along with awareness of workplace demands and tangible evidence for CVs
- positive feedback from business in terms of cost savings, improved productivity and business systems and the introduction of new technology

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the production of a CD Rom of learning. The CD Rom provides a comprehensive account of all activities relating to setting up and managing a student team brokerage service, from the infrastructure needed to support the project, through to marketing, selection and implementation. This could be a valuable resource for other projects in the future. A further application could be possible in the implementation of Foundation Degrees in FE

Deliverables

- publicity and information literature
- CD Rom of learning
- business link web-based platform database

Capability Entrepreneurship

Host organisation
Middlesex University

Contact details
Peter Newby, email:
p.newby@mdx.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
Bournemouth University,
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, Leeds Metropolitan University, London College of Printing, Sheffield Hallam University.

Web address
None

Timescale and level of funding
£150,300 over two years

Purpose of project

The main aim of the project was to use the interest, commitment and knowledge of member institutions of the Higher Education for Capability network to champion the cause of entrepreneurship in education and the business world. Entrepreneurship is one of the meta-skills that lies at the heart of graduate capability. It bridges graduate capability and the work environment and its development aims not only to help increase graduate employment in SMEs but, in doing so, increase the effectiveness and competitiveness of the economy.

Outcomes

- three new accredited programmes for undergraduates/postgraduates
- two extensions of existing programmes
- four non-accredited programmes
- 1500 undergraduates and 900 postgraduate students on accredited and non-accredited modules

Main Successes

- demonstration of the number of students who are interested in self-employment
- ability to capitalise on the imagination and creativity of students
- enabling people to believe that they can succeed
- collaboration on a jointly taught summer school that attracted students from five partner institutions

Unanticipated Outcomes

- summer school - the result of thinking through how to resolve a gap in the programme and one of the great successes of the programme for staff and students. This genuinely showed the benefit of working in partnership

Deliverables

- information on technical, legal and procedural issues associated with business start-up
- tutor materials on business planning, project and financial management, marketing, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and reflective development
- classroom activity materials on business decision making
- case studies and web-based learning materials (for the self employed)
- one conference and another planned for 2003
- several conference presentations by partners
- publication of a journal in 2003

Key Skills: Making Connections between Higher Education and Employment

Host organisation
The Open University

Contact details
Linda Hodgkinson,
email: l.hodgkinson@open.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
Universities of Durham, Nottingham and Warwick

Web address
www.open.ac.uk/
keyskills

Timescale and level of funding
£283,783 over two years

Purpose of project

The Key Skills project set out to make two way connections between learning in higher education and its application in employment contexts through awareness, development and use of higher level key skills. The project aimed to develop methods, strategies and support materials for implementing and evaluating higher level key skills development in business and industry. This involved working with companies to identify relevant meta-skills and factors that facilitate key skills transfer from HE to employment contexts (and vice versa), while integrating development of such skills within their human resource development and appraisal activities. The project helped individuals within companies to identify the higher-level skills acquired through work and how these can be adapted/applied to HE learning for continuing professional development or changes in job role/career.

Outcomes

- development of a range of materials, models and web based resources and systems to support higher level key skills development (see below)

Main Successes

- development of strategies to support the interface, and maintain dialogue, between higher education and industry
- development of methods, strategies and support materials for implementing and evaluating key skills development within higher education and industry
- raising the profile of the importance of key skills development for graduates
- hosted a national conference to disseminate findings
- ongoing consultation to advise on higher level key skills development, implementation and assessment

Unanticipated Outcomes

none

Deliverables

- an open access electronic support and assessment system
- a research report on factors that may inhibit skills transfer
- a database of real work-related case studies and other resources to illustrate the application of higher level key skills in a range of employment contexts/job roles
- models for incorporating skills development and assessment within HRD, IPD and CPD strategies in HEIs, businesses and professional bodies

Connecting Cultures: Creative Arts Graduates Working in Health Care Settings

Host organisation
Colchester Institute

Contact details
Chris Lerwill, email@chris.lerwill@colchinst.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
University of East Anglia

Web address
www.colchinst.ac.uk/cc

Timescale and level of funding
£96,095 over two years and three months

Purpose of project

To investigate the experience of creative artists working in healthcare environments and the ways in which arts education institutions could increase the employability of creative arts graduates in this growing area. Also to assess the implications of the projects findings for the undergraduate curriculum in the creative arts.

Outcomes

- a series of part-time work experience placements in three healthcare organisations, each of which demonstrated excellence in this field
- two healthcare trusts and a healthy living centre provided a variety of environments from wards and cafes to community groups
- the two cohorts of participants were creative arts graduates drawn from a wide range of arts disciplines including graphic design, poetry, music and dance
- each participant was supported by a mentor who was experienced in working in healthcare settings

Main Successes

- considerable learning about, and documentation of, the problems of such placements in healthcare settings
- clear indications of the issues which need to be addressed by management and staff at the placement as well as the artists concerned
- a series of successful placements with much learning by those on all sides - artists, education staff and healthcare staff. The richness and variety of the artworks produced and interaction with healthcare staff and patients had considerable positive effect on the environments and people

Unanticipated Outcomes

none

Deliverables

- a set of guidelines about artists placements in healthcare
- guidelines for the curriculum content at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and for the development of assessed placements for arts students in healthcare settings

Careers Planning and Skills Development

Host organisation
University of Durham

Contact details
Catherine
Richardson, email:
c.i.richardson@
durham.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
None

Web address
[www.dur.ac.uk/
careers-advice](http://www.dur.ac.uk/careers-advice)

Timescale and level of funding
£197,000 over two
years

Purpose of project

The aims were firstly to create an integrated approach within Durham University's careers service to skills and careers training for undergraduates. Secondly to offer undergraduates the chance to take part in a developmental programme which would more effectively prepare them for work. Finally, to effectively use the resources of nationally recognised work experience opportunities, regional and national employers, training and regional organisations.

Outcomes

- the project's 'Get Ahead' programme brought together a large national company, the university's Student Community Action group and the Careers Advisory Service to provide a programme which focuses on transferable employability skills - skills developed via practical, enjoyable interactive sessions
- a positive impact on the careers service - the 'Get Ahead' programme enabled the Careers Advisory Service to work with first year students for the first time on a three year programme. Previously careers advisory staff worked with penultimate and final year students. However it has been recognised that students need these skills not only to increase their employability but to assist them within university life
- creation of employment teams with employers invited to provide training sessions to students to give them an insight into careers within market sectors. The sessions took the form of interactive workshops, presentations, company visits, etc

Main Successes

- involvement of both national and regional employers
- smaller local organisations were given the opportunity to work with Durham University students, who in turn were given an insight into what it would be like working for a smaller company within the region
- students were given the opportunity to meet representatives from less traditional market sectors
- a 95% attendance rate on the Get Ahead programme

Unanticipated Outcomes

- initially the project had its own website but it was decided to incorporate it into the university Careers Advisory Service website in order to help with the integration of the project into the careers service

Deliverables

none

Developing Learning Organisations

Host organisation

Risk Management
Alternatives
International Ltd

Contact details

Nick Ford, email:
Nick.ford@
rmainternational.com

Partners (if any)

University of Central
Lancashire

Web address

www.
Learningorganisations
.net

Timescale and level of funding

£191,773 over two
years

Purpose of project

The purpose of this project was to develop a mechanism for encouraging small to medium enterprise (SME) employers to discover the benefits of employing humanities graduates and also to benefit from a learning organisations network through which they had access to study opportunities at their local university as well as a developmental network of SMEs. The project developed a validated module for humanities students including a 12 day placement at an SME which had identified a short term project to be done by the student. In return for taking a placement student the SME got 'learning credits', which could be used to buy a module of learning for one of its employees.

Outcomes

- a fully validated work experience module at Level 2, with fully documented guidance to anyone wanting to set up and deliver a similar module in their own university. Guidance included all the steps needed to get students into suitable placements. This included health and safety and risk assessments at the workplace, preparatory sessions for the students prior to going on placement, and debrief sessions on return in addition to the assessment tasks which could usefully be set
- a network of SMEs was developed which has subsequently been taken over by the local Business Link in the North West. This network provided the work placements and the members were, in return, eligible for the credits at the university. The lead organisation had a member of staff who worked closely with the SMEs identifying projects which would be suitable for work experience opportunities. It was then up to the academic to find suitable students to fill the vacancies
- the lead organisation arranged a regular series of workshops and seminars which were available for the network members and others to encourage them to see the benefits of the network

Main Successes

- the existence of a network which could be handed on into the ownership of the local Business Link (Regional Development Agency)
- overcoming some of the challenges presented by the cultures of the SME and the university

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the ongoing activities of the network in conjunction with the university as a whole, not just the humanities students

Deliverables

- guidance books on setting up the academic module and the associated work placements
- a website

Skills *plus*

Host organisation

The Open University

Contact details

Peter Knight, email:
Peter.knight
@open.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Lancaster University,
University of
Manchester, Liverpool
John Moores
University and
Manchester
Metropolitan
University

Web address

[www.open.ac.uk/
vqportal/Skills-Plus/
events.htm](http://www.open.ac.uk/vqportal/Skills-Plus/events.htm)

Timescale and level of funding

£163,725 over two years

Purpose of project

This project sought to work with four departments in each of the partner institutions to build curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment practices that systematically enhance students' employability. The intention was to make small adjustments for maximum impact. Simultaneously powerful and rigorous research was to be carried out with undergraduates and graduates to validate a complimentary account of the nature of employability that had sector wide impact. This was to build on the concept of skills equating to employability. Rigorous dissemination activities on paper and by working groups and conferences were to ensure wide sharing of the findings across the sector.

Outcomes

- this project provided an alternative view of employability based on thorough research and has helped four universities to amend their curriculum design, delivery and assessment practices to enhance the employability skills of the students. Many of these amendments have been small and often reflect a change in attitude or emphasis, rather than root and branch reform of the curriculum. Sixteen departments in four north western universities are now addressing employability for their students in a more effective way
- the research engaged employers and their graduate employees in helping to specify more accurately the nature of graduate employability. The USEM model designed by the project (Understanding, Skills (subject specific and generic), Efficacy beliefs (and self theories generally), Metacognition (including reflection)) is thoroughly defined and explored in the papers written by the project team
- an academically credible set of research papers and a book are now available to the community to enable a wider approach to developing employability to be engaged

Main Successes

- extensive research involving over 2000 students and a range of different departments, academics and professional fields
- the range of dissemination events which encouraged participation on an ongoing basis by interested practitioners
- two members of the team bid successfully for the HEFCE Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team which will continue work in this field but with a much wider remit

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the team was able to interview a small number of unemployed graduates to begin trying to understand how they were characterised in comparison to the employed graduates
- ongoing influence through the Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team, directed by Peter Knight

Deliverables

- a knowledge-building network website on employability and the USEM model
- five papers:
 - change thinking, change practices: a guide to change for heads of department, subject centres and others who work middle-out
 - defining and addressing employability: a fresh approach
 - employability and good learning
 - employability through the curriculum (paper presented to the European Association for Institutional Research)
 - work-related learning and the first cycle of higher education
- book entitled 'Enhancing Student Employability through Curriculum Change' to be published in late 2003/early 2004

Implementing the HE Progress File

Host organisation

Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA)

Contact details

Rob Ward, email:
rob@recordingachievement.org

Partners (if any)

CRA Member Institutions

Web address

www.recordingachievement.org/Support_for_Practice/Higher_Education/default.asp

Timescale and level of funding

£161,359 over two years

Purpose of project

The aim was to co-ordinate and develop national, IT-based capability for the successful practical implementation of policy on the HE Progress File, via a unifying website. Also to link it to sectoral policy, materials for staff development, materials from graduate employers and frameworks for continuing professional development.

Outcomes

- all the above aims were achieved
- events run by the project team included seminars, workshops and presentations in a variety of fora, and involved a wide range of participation, from students to academic staff to employers to policy makers etc
- the project benefited from close working relations with a range of other development projects, including some external consultancy to several other project teams and initiatives, including the HEFCE's Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL)

Main Successes

- via an ongoing consultation process, the project was particularly successful in producing materials to support personal development planning (PDP) and in engaging in dialogue and contributing to the debate around HE policy in this area. The focus of this project was particularly timely, in light of the new obligations of HEIs to provide PDP opportunities for students
- the project succeeded in making links between FE, HE and the world of work

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the project received a higher degree of interest from a wider audience than it had originally envisaged

Deliverables

- a website
- staff development workshops on PDP and CPD
- consultancy on PDP

Minority Ethnic Recruitment, Information, Training and Support (MERITS)

Host organisation

AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services)

Contact details

John Gough, email: jgough1@dmu.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Universities of Manchester, UMIST, Loughborough, Manchester Metropolitan, Brunel, Central England and Southampton Institute

Web address

www.agcas.org.uk/merits

Timescale and level of funding

£190,000 over one year and two months

Purpose of project

This project aimed to address the fact that UK black and Asian graduates are twice as likely to be unemployed as white graduates, half as likely to be offered jobs in the first year after graduation and perform less well at all stages of the job search process. It sought to enhance the abilities of black and Asian students and graduates to compete effectively for employment commensurate with their skills, qualifications and potential. It also aimed to help higher education careers services to address diversity issues in the development and delivery of careers services. Finally, it aimed to enable employers to recruit and retain black and Asian graduates. These aims were addressed by piloting a diverse portfolio of career enhancement programmes and using these pilots to develop and disseminate models of good practice, materials and case studies concerning guidance, mentoring and work experience. The project also sought to launch a website as a national focus for students, employers and HE careers services seeking guidance on minority ethnic graduate employment issues.

Outcomes

- initiatives in six different careers services were piloted. They were namely:
 - University of Manchester and UMIST - www.blackandasiangrad.ac.uk website
 - Loughborough University - Get to work on your career (work placements for first year students)
 - Manchester Metropolitan University - online mentoring (www.mentor.mmu.ac.uk)
 - University of Central England - engaging local SMEs in ethnic minority work experience and mentoring
 - Brunel University - proactive mentoring (integrating mentoring into the curriculum)
 - Southampton Institute - promoting success for minority ethnic students and graduates (a 12 week programme including work placement)
- The project trialled and evaluated innovative approaches to:
 - embed mentoring into academic curricula
 - use ICT to make mentoring accessible to larger numbers of students and graduates
 - involve local employers
- a project methodology was developed that built upon the 'community of practice' of higher education careers services. It provided guidance for tutors, careers staff, employers and others wishing to build on the project
- over 200 students and graduates participated in the project, 50 employers provided work experience and mentors were drawn from over 100 organisations

Main Successes

- launch of national website www.blackandasiangrad.ac.uk
- major joint dissemination conference - 'Improving the Prospects of Black and Asian Students - sharing lessons, methods and techniques' (this was in collaboration with two other Innovations Projects - Career Focus and The Impact Programme)
- production and dissemination of MERITS magazine, website and CD Rom of project materials and conference presentations
- increased profile for careers services within participating institutions

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the project proved to be an excellent model for collaborative learning. Systems were put in place at the start of the project to capture and share learning through knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation
- collectively the pilots engaged in creative thinking on how to get SMEs on board, resulting in a number of innovative approaches

Deliverables

- website www.blackandasiangrad.ac.uk
- MERITS magazine
- MERITS CD Rom

Disseminating Models for Developing, Assessing and Recording Student Skills through LTSN Subject Centres

Host organisation

University of Nottingham

Contact details

Peter Burke, email:
pkburke@lineone.net

Partners (if any)

Learning and Teaching Support Network

Web address

www.nottingham.ac.uk/education/cdell

Timescale and level of funding

£92,256 over two years

Purpose of project

This project aimed to work closely with the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) in order to facilitate change strategies for developing, assessing and recording key skills and other competencies through the LTSN subject centres and disseminating successful models. The project was based in the Centre for Developing and Evaluating Lifelong Learning at the University of Nottingham.

Outcomes

- designed and delivered a series of bespoke workshops for LTSN subject centre staff, with a focus on key skills
- built up particularly productive working relationships with subject centres
- developed an interactive CD Rom as part of a key skills support pack, for adaptation and use by subject centre personnel
- drew upon expertise in this field and built upon deliverables produced in previous initiatives, in order to deliver enhanced product for the LTSN subject centres

Main Successes

- the project reported good working relationships with a number of LTSN subject centres
- the key skills support pack was particularly well received by subject centres

Deliverables

- series of workshops
- key skills support pack and an interactive CD-rom for subject centre staff
- booklets, including 'PDP Issues and Agendas'

Work Experience Bank: Towards a National Framework

Host organisation

University of Manchester

Contact details

Norman Rea,
email: norman.rea@man.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

careers services at all the universities in the North East region and Yorkshire and Humberside region

Web address

www.hud.ac.uk/jobshop/project
www.nenweb.org.uk

Timescale and level of funding

£96,100 over one year and five months

Purpose of project

The overall aim was to maximise the impact of the Manchester North West Work Experience Bank (WEB) initiative, by extending it to the North East and Yorkshire and Humberside regions. It firstly sought to link the new work banks to the national hub sites at the Higher Education Career Services Unit (CSU) and National Centre for Work Experience (NCWE). Secondly it set out to develop a web based skills bank in each region and to enable all universities in the two regions to become active partners in the work banks. Finally it aimed to achieve a 15% increase in the number of work experience opportunities currently advertised in each partner region and to register 5,000 students with each regional work bank in the first year of operation.

Outcomes

- the North East Universities Work Experience Bank (www.neuweb.org.uk) became fully operational
- Yorkshire and Humberside Universities Work Experience Bank (www.hud.ac.uk/jobshop/project) became fully operational
- user areas created for students and employers; online Job Bank, Skills Bank and online registration for students to access the e-mail vacancy service

Main Successes

- the project changed participating universities' approaches to promoting opportunities for work experience and graduate jobs

Unanticipated Outcomes

- other regions, not identified in the original bid, have consulted the Project Manager about developing similar regional online work banks
- possibility of further dissemination with potential European collaboration

Deliverables

- two WEB websites

JEWELS II (Joint Systems to Enhance Work Experience of Service and Satisfaction)

Host organisation

Learning and Skills Council (Devon and Cornwall)

Contact details

Pete Watton, email: pwatton@plymouth.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Universities of Exeter and Plymouth

Web address

www.jewels.org.uk

Timescale and level of funding

£96,100 over two years

Purpose of project

This project built on the success of the earlier JEWELS project, which aimed to improve non-degree related work experience through the development of programmes and systems to enhance and extend students' learning, recording of achievement and accreditation opportunities. JEWELS II aimed to extend its proven models of good practice in learning from experience to new contexts and audiences. Also to increase significantly the numbers of programmes within Devon and Cornwall offering accredited independent work experience and take up of such courses.

Outcomes

- considerable impact within two host institutions though the outcomes vary with the differing contexts within the universities
- in Exeter there is an increasing introduction of the Independent Work Experience module within undergraduate programmes across many of its schools
- in Plymouth, with its historically more vocational focus, the project's input has helped develop an initial university employability strategy
- over 700 students have been involved in work experience award programmes, recruited through Work Enterprise Awards (WEA)
- over 360 students have completed modules and gained an award in the two HEIs
- amended and improved 'Job Surfing' facilities to students at both HEIs

Main Successes

- the creation of networks both within and externally to the HEI's linking business, careers, student unions, Work Experience Awards, Learning and Skills Councils and university departments and structures. This has facilitated developments suitable for different contexts and needs
- the development of work experience and independent work experience modules and their use in a variety of settings
- the take up of modules by undergraduate programmes and students

Unanticipated Outcomes

none

Deliverables

- JEWELS website with access to project materials
- work experience modules with student and staff packs
- SEDA paper 114; 'Independent Work Experience: An Evolving Picture', June 2002

Newcastle-Nottingham Internet PARS

Host organisation

University of
Newcastle

Contact details

Geoff Hammond,
email: g.r.hammond@ncl.ac.uk

Partners (if any)

Universities of
Newcastle upon Tyne
and Nottingham

Web address

<http://www.internet-pars.ac.uk/>
www.mypimd.ncl.ac.uk

Timescale and level of funding

£298,456 over two
years

Purpose of project

The purpose of the project was firstly to explore the linking of recording of achievement in schools with the implementation of the HE progress file, and secondly to investigate the issues around linking personal development planning in HE with continuing professional development (CPD) in employment. In addition the project staff aimed to provide consultancy advice to other universities who were addressing these challenges. The Newcastle team worked in the Medical School and related their work to the pre-registration house office year (PRHO) (this is the first year after graduation, when the medical students are still under the wing of the Medical School). The Nottingham team worked with four 16-19 institutions for the pre-HE activities, and with both newly qualified teachers and the School of Education for the CPD aspect.

Outcomes

- the project has demonstrated the feasibility of transferring data from 16-19 schools/colleges into HE with an investigation of scope for pedagogical change to harmonise approaches in the two sectors
- the project also demonstrated the feasibility of transferring data for HE students progressing to CPD, using two exemplars in the medicine and education disciplines and building on existing work using PDP and web-based curriculum support in these two subject areas. The work in medicine built on the myPIMD portal which is a powerful tool to support self-directed learners engaged in CPD. It contains administrative data and privately owned reflective records. The work in the education discipline was with PGCE staff, students and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and built on the ePARS system for undergraduates already in operation at Nottingham University
- the project teams have built two different web-based systems, thus demonstrating that there is no 'correct' answer to this issue
- the project team delivered an extensive dissemination programme including one-to-one consultations, committee briefings and workshops

Main Successes

- the ability to provide extensive guidance and advice to the sector generally. The thinking of the project team was at the leading edge of developments in this area; largely due to the members experience of projects of this kind
- linkages with other bodies working in this area were very constructive

Unanticipated Outcomes

- the development of a working partnership between the Nottingham project team and the DfES Progress File team which will lead to further initiatives linking web-developments for PDP at 16-19 into HE

Deliverables

- website containing extensive guidance notes including FAQs and demonstration facilities <http://www.internet-pars.ac.uk/demo>
- a JISCMail discussion forum <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/HE-PROGRESS-FILES.html>
- case study on experiences of implementation at the University of Nottingham published in Ward, R. & Jackson, N. (Eds) Personal Development Planning: Institutional Case Studies, LTSN October 2001

Bridging the Key Skills Gap

Host organisation

National Union of Students (NUS)

Contact details

Sophie Holmes,
email:
sophie@nus.org

Partners (if any)

CRA - Centre for Recording Achievement,
LUSID - Liverpool University Student Interactive Database,
ITM - The NUS' Internet Partners

Web address

www.nusonline.co.uk/
nslp

Timescale and level of funding

£83,696 over one year and eight months

Purpose of project

This project was designed to create a national student learning programme (NSLP) website to disseminate good practice in training and key skills through an online network. It also set out to facilitate the development of NSLP regions and support for less developed unions to deliver key skills training. This was to be achieved firstly by establishing an NSLP website to publicise the work of NSLP student unions and to facilitate the spread of good practice and innovation, and secondly an NSLP mail base in conjunction with the Training Network where good practice could be exchanged. Promoting an online personal development planner for those students and student trainers participating in self-development activity was another goal. Supporting self-sufficiency for five NSLP regions and establishing a collaborative framework by which established unions support less developed unions through residential events and network days, was a final aim.

Outcomes

- launch, delivery and use of the NSLP website which was developed as an NSLP microsite forming part of the NUS online website
- usage of the website continues to increase and provides a means by which trainers access materials, share good practice and problems etc
- development, promotion and use of the 'Skills Manager' package which is the only nationwide, online personal development tool designed for students involved in extra curricular activities
- support provided for the NUS regions and the provision of a substantial amount of training - 13 network days and five residential events per year, helping to create a network of trainers and practitioners

Main Successes

- establishment, maintenance and usage of the website
- production and promotion of the Skills Manager package
- additional continuation funding secured for retention of staff and further development, monitoring and evaluation of the services created by this project
- project staff worked closely with a number of relevant organisations including the Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), Liverpool University Student Interactive Database (LUSID) and ITM, the NUS' internet partners

Unanticipated Outcomes

- learning that took place not just in the project team but also within the Development Projects Department of the NUS
- knowledge developed during the life of the project has now become core to the work of the NSLP and the Development Projects Department
- the project has reached many more than the original target audience
- the Skills Manager package is being used by HEIs within course modules for personal development

Deliverables

- NSLP website and mail base
- Skills Manager package

Bridging the Gap

Host organisation
The Open University

Contact details
Godfrey Pell
Enquiries to:
p.byrnes@open.ac.uk

Partners (if any)
None

Web address
www.innovations.
ac.uk/btg

Timescale and level of funding
£95,813 over one year

Purpose of project

The aim was to establish effective and sustainable dissemination and communication processes in order to maximise the impact and outcomes of the 1998 - 2000 round of 56 development projects funded within the Higher Education Innovations Fund (HEIF). Also, raising awareness of the projects and providing a communication conduit to address issues relevant to current project managers. Finally, undertaking research into the dissemination and lasting effects of the projects. The project adopted a five-strand approach which included approaching all the project managers and investigating the possibility of helping them with further activities

Outcomes

- the final report containing a set of recommendations and conclusions for future initiatives involving short term funded projects and for the projects themselves
- identifying the need for projects of this kind to develop 'dynamic exit strategies'

Main successes

- the project embarked on this particularly challenging set of approaches in an extremely innovative and interesting way, working through existing networks, organisations, publications and events
- the project team ran a successful event entitled 'Getting the Message Across'

Unanticipated outcomes

none

Deliverables

- website
- digest

Enterprise Awareness in Higher Education

Host organisation

Shell LiveWire

Contact details

John Devitt, email:
John.Devitt@pne.org

Partners (if any)

Young Enterprise and
Shell Technology
Education Programme
(STEP)

Web address

www.shell-
livewire.org/dfec

Timescale and level of funding

£192,200 over two
years

Purpose of project

The project sought to raise awareness and embed the promotion of enterprise awareness in 20 HEIs through a cascade training programme and the production of institutional development plans. The project built on previous work and was a pilot to explore whether such a programme could be extended across the UK. The project aimed to design and produce training materials, train trainers in the HEIs, run promotional campaigns at departmental level, support the production of HEI enterprise development plans and, finally, to provide a link into other enterprise initiatives.

Outcomes

- the project held two briefing days and two further 'Train the Trainer' days. Three levels of training materials were produced, namely:
 - partners briefing materials to engage partner organisations
 - 'Train the Trainer' materials used to link project representatives and HEI Enterprise Champions and to explain how the cascade training would work
 - 'Enterprise Awareness Training' packs to be used in workshops within HEIs, available in hard copy and electronically
- two days of project support were made available to each HEI for each Enterprise Awareness session they delivered, using pro forma press releases and the Shell LiveWire media support
- monitoring and evaluation was built into each stage of the project. In order to assess the impact on staff attitudes a psychologist was engaged to design and undertake a survey intended to measure attitudes to enterprise both before and after involvement in Enterprise Awareness
- all HEIs were offered local links into the enterprise network although only a small number took up this opportunity

Main Successes

- establishment of a list of HEI contacts
- production of training materials
- holding of training sessions
- qualitative review of staff attitudes towards enterprise

Unanticipated Outcomes

- production and commissioning of the attitudinal survey among academic staff towards enterprise

Deliverables

- Train the Trainer pack of materials explaining the process and cascade training
- Enterprise Awareness Training packs
- project-branded display stand
- website

Learning to compete

Host organisation

Resource
Development
International (RDI)
Ltd

Contact details

Tony Baker, email:
tbaker@rdi.co.uk

Partners (if any)

University of
Leicester
Management Centre

Web address

www.rdi.co.uk

Timescale and level of funding

£85,913 over one
year and three
months

Purpose of project

The overall aim of the project was to create a virtual campus which would be supported by a network of 'access points' based within a small number of pilot SMEs, FE colleges, employment agency offices and outplacement centres. In addition to make available, within the virtual campus, a range of management-focussed modules that would develop understanding and knowledge within the broad management subject discipline. Extra support for the students would then be available through the virtual campus.

Outcomes

- RDI developed and produced 80 modules in an electronic format which provided initial content for the virtual campus
- using Blackboard™ (a virtual learning environment), a virtual campus was developed and accessed through the internet. Students are able to take modules on-line, access assessments, modules, timetables, useful web links, student support services, interact with their tutors and also engage in peer support and learning
- as an alternative for those students without access to the internet, materials were made available on CD Rom and paper based resources were also produced
- RDI collaborated with a range of organisations to deliver general and bespoke management-related courses thus enhancing the overall project outcomes

Main Successes

- the project team was able to develop a range of text-based management modules at both certificate and diploma level, and produce them into a format stored and transmitted electronically
- a virtual campus was developed and accessed through the internet. RDI subsequently used the virtual campus to deliver a range of courses both within the UK and overseas

Unanticipated Outcomes

none

Deliverables

- virtual campus
- 80 modules in electronic format

*i*nnovations team



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