

LLN Research Database by sussexlearningnetwork

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Title: Feasibility study into work based 'top-ups' from Foundation degree to Honours degree

Keywords: Foundation degree; top-ups

Organisation: Sussex Learning Network

Purpose: The study aimed to ascertain whether a market exists for a two-year, parttime, work based 'top-up' course, from HND/Foundation degree to Honours level. With the recent growth of Foundation degrees there has been continuing discussion about the continuum of learning opportunities for successful graduates from these courses, particularly given the general lack of alternatives to progression onto 'traditional' degree pathways. The study was conducted to test the viability of the proposed 'top-up, through discussions with: current and graduated Foundation degree students; partner college colleagues involved in the delivery of higher education; other HEIs and employers.

Method:

- Test the hypothesis that the target group of learners exist through interactions with those studying Foundation degrees and those who have successfully completed Foundation degrees and are now in the workplace
- Test the hypothesis that existing curriculum does not offer well matched progression routes for these learners through interaction with other providers across the UK and particularly the in the south-east
- Obtain a measure of the level of employer support for such a scheme through interaction with a number of employers across a range of sectors
- Develop a framework for individual learning contract development and approval
- Test the viability of the proposed model, both from an educational and financial point of view

It is hoped that a work based top-up for Foundation degree graduates would offer:

- well matched progression routes for those who have a background of work based and work related learning at sub-degree level
- individually tailored courses which accredit existing experience and learning
- enrolment at points throughout the year
- flexibility to take 'study breaks' where appropriate

Outcomes of research: The final report detailing the outcomes of the study went to the SLN Board in

July where further funding was identified to enable the development of a pilot. The pilot will test out a number of the issues involved in establishing workbased learning, and will form a useful base for looking at the wider role of work-based learning across the curriculum.

It is planned that this next phase of the work-based learning project will involve a number of curriculum leads in developing pilots based on existing top-ups or creating a new work-based option. So far, the travel, tourism and retail strand, community practice, performing arts and biosciences have indicated their willingness to participate in the pilot.

Is a final report available?: Yes

How will the findings be disseminated?: Through the Sussex Learning Network website and the Lifelong Learning Network National Forum

Where can it be found?: <http://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/wbl>

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Access the SLN Research Database online at <http://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/research>