



Newsletter



Editor's comment

We were delighted that so many admissions tutors from HE & FE ran workshops on the 21st October and the feedback on 'Application to Offer' has been extremely positive. Thank you to the key speakers, those of you who ran workshops & the operational team for making the day such a success.

Initial reactions to 'Diplomas & HE Progression and Curriculum', held on 6th November appear to be positive. Many thanks to the key speakers, workshop facilitators & operational team for all your support.

The theme of this edition is work-based learning and due to the number of submitted articles there is only a brief update on progression. Our Apprenticeship agreements will be formally signed at this month's Management Board. In addition our APEL protocol will be presented to the Board and feedback from initial testing on the APEL Guide has been positive.

Progression Route from National Diplomas in Health & Social Care into Social Policy Degree Courses—Ruth Waring University of Bath

One of the main focuses of the WVLLN's work on progression agreements has been the idea of the transferability of vocational qualifications i.e. that the transferable study skills in National Diplomas (ND) can allow students to progress from the subject area they've studied between 16 and 18 years old, to a completely different subject at HE (just as is already common practice for A level students).

However, earlier in the year, a meeting between a careers advisor & level 3 tutor in Health Studies at Wiltshire College and the Director of Studies & admissions tutor in the Social Policy Department at the University of Bath revealed that there is also plenty to be done around raising awareness amongst vocational learners that progression onto related courses is a possibility.

The majority of students on the college's ND in Health Studies have chosen the course because they have a very clear idea of a particular profession they wish to pursue, such as midwifery, nursing etc. When it comes to applying for HE they can focus on courses which will enable them to reach this goal.

However, at 18 (just like some A levels students) a proportion are uncertain about what career they want to follow in the future and this is where Social Policy related courses may provide an interesting option.

The meeting between FE and HE staff enabled them to gain more of a familiarity of the content of their respective courses. Discussions covered what vocational learners could offer in terms of knowledge & skills, as well as what courses within the Social Policy field could offer the students. FE staff were able to allay HE staff concerns about the vocational learners' ability to tackle exams. From FE's perspective, a significant proportion of students may start their ND with fairly low GCSE grades, but leave with much higher grades on level 3 courses than they expect. The courses attract really bright, able students who can tend to panic about exams, maybe as a result of negative experiences in the past. However, as a result of the different approach to study and assessment they encounter as part of their ND the students really blossom and gain an enormous amount of confidence which

means when they come to HE level study they are ready for the challenge of HE study and the associated formal exams. Students who go onto courses like nursing and midwifery will face a lot of exams and students who keep in contact with their former FE tutors report that although there may be some initial cultural shock as with any transition to a new learning environment, because they are really motivated by the subject they are studying, they persist and succeed.

FE staff felt that if these ND students had a clearer idea about what the Social Sciences at university involved and the types of careers they can lead to some would be interested in applying. The HE staff involved in the discussion were very positive about increasing the diversity of their student body in a way which enriches the learning experience for all students.

It was agreed that visits by Social Policy 1st year students to Health & Social Care students at the college would be a good first step in raising awareness of the possible progression route into Social Policy courses across the WVLLN region.

Effective Work-based Learning in Art, Design and Media project

Victoria Trachy, Progression Co-ordinator at Bath Spa University has been involved in a project examining effective work-based learning within Art, Design and Media Foundation degrees. The project jointly funded through Higher Education Academy Art, Design, Media Subject Centre (ADM-HEA) and the South West region for foundationdegreeforward (fdf) involved four institutions leading the research (Arts Institute Bournemouth, Bath Spa University, University College Falmouth and Plymouth College of Art & Design). These four HEIs were chosen for their strong Creative Industries links and provision. The project focused on the engagement of employers in the successful delivery of work-based learning in Art, Design and Media in Higher Education, with particular reference to Foundation degrees. The purpose of the project was to identify case studies which would

highlight specific models of good practice.

Each institution was asked to undertake a survey to determine the level and variety of employer engagement and work-based learning activities within Creative Industries Foundation degrees (in the case of University College Falmouth this included its BA Hons Art, Design and Media provision). These surveys enabled each institution to identify two case studies of good practice which highlighted the different ways of undertaking employer engagement and work-based learning. The case studies included live projects such as re-designing new office space for a local company undertaken by students on the Foundation degree in Interior Architecture & Design at the Arts Institute Bournemouth; designing for the annual Poppy Appeal for the Royal British Legion (RBL), a national campaign, carried out by

The Foundation degree in Visual Communication students at Arts Institute Bournemouth and critiqued by the RBL. University College Falmouth examined employability and work-based learning within its BA Illustration and Journalism degrees. Bath Spa University carried out case studies on projects undertaken by students on their Foundation degrees in Theatre Production and Graphic Design.

The Bath Spa University Foundation degree in Graphic Design case study explored a number of interesting 'real-life' projects carried out by first year Foundation degree in Graphic Design students at Weston College. The case study focused on the student experience of working in a 'model' commercial design studio and how this enables students to test industry projects and share work experiences.

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Flexible Foundations @Bristol—Dr Frank Williamson

In this article Dr Frank Williamson, Progression Co-ordinator at the University of Bristol, outlines Bristol's FD in Counselling which is being delivered at the City of Bristol College, plans for monitoring, evaluation and development of this, and possible other initiatives in flexible, vocational learning.

The University and College jointly launched the Foundation Degree in 2007/8 with nearly 50 part-time students (0.67 FTE), many with vocational qualifications, some with previous HE study and overall a very diverse group. A second similar group of over 60 students has just registered with the University at the college.

The programme is a mix of academic and practical ingredients including theoretical bases of various models of/approaches to counselling, the application of these [theories and models] to professional practice, the opportunity to explore some specialist settings in greater depth and placements in a range of roles from helping to trainee status and thence to (supervised) paid or voluntary practice. The type of assessment on the programme is also wide-ranging, from essays to presentations, reports and their evaluation and more reflective pieces on professional and personal development. Skills development and train-

ing in research methods are also covered especially for those intending to further BSc Honours study at Bristol or elsewhere, or directly into practice. Professional accreditation of the programme and its graduates is being sought and final development of the top-up Honours component at Bristol, for those who qualify for and choose this path, is underway.

Responsibility for academic leadership and direction of the programmer is with the University while the operational co-ordination and most of the teaching is provided by staff in the new University Centre at the College.

Professor Avril Waterman-Pearson, the University's Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and its member of the WVLLN Management Board said she was "delighted that the Foundation degree was recruiting so well and that, while such offerings were unlikely ever to become prolific at Bristol, where they fitted well with our strengths, status and emerging Mission and Vision, where we can make significant contributions to local & regional communities and economies and where we could implement our commitment to the Fair Admissions

agenda by flexible and innovative programmes, we would do so."

In this light, the possibility of a FD for Communication Support Workers, being developed by the pioneering Centre for Deaf Studies, is another significant initiative, as was the part-time BA programme in English Literature and Community Engagement, launched for the 2008/9 intake.

Monitoring, evaluation and research of the Counselling programme and its students will be undertaken by Frank so that additional and appropriate support can be given to these and future students undergoing important transitions in their learning trajectories.

Upcoming Events

- 21st November—Management Board, Carpenter House, Bath
- 2nd December—Team Away Day, Combe Grove Manor Hotel, Bath
- 10th December—Peer Review, Reading
- 16th December—Executive Board, Carpenter House, Bath

Progression Focus

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Projects included designing a brochure for a series of higher education taster workshops funded by the WVLLN development bid; a poster campaign for Weston Arts Festival and brand identity for a local interior design company.

The Bath Spa University Foundation degree in Theatre Production case study highlighted the programme's innovative work-based learning practices which could be adapted for Art, Design and Media Foundation degrees. This included the delivery of the programme in conjunction with the Theatre Royal Bath with students undertaking professional roles on theatre productions in one of the busiest commercial theatres outside of London. Students are taught by industry professionals and undertake professionally accredited training programmes alongside their Foundation degree.

The in-depth case studies and the findings of the project will be disseminated by Higher Education Academy Art, Design, Media Subject Centre and fdf. The outcomes of the project will also feature in the ADM-HEA Networks magazine.

Article by Victoria Trachy

Progression Co-ordinator at Bath Spa University

Care Home Conference—Lynn Denning Health & Social Care Strand Co-ordinator based at UWE

The Care Home Learning Network recently ran a Bristol care home event. The day was chaired by Amanda Cheesley from the Care Services Improvement Partnership, and the keynote speaker was David Francis from CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) talking about the forthcoming changes in the inspection process. The event then rotated the delegates through a series of 5 workshops which were led by representatives from the following sectors:

Bristol Primary Care Trust, Western Vocational Life Long Learning Network & Train to Gain, Commission for Social Care Inspection, Mental Health & Adult Community Care Services

The workshop run by the WVLLN and Train to Gain had two aims:

1. Raising awareness of the funding that will be available through Train to Gain from November 2008 to support managerial and leadership development for SMEs with 5—250 employees.
2. Giving managerial staff the opportunity to look at ways that universities can help support their development utilising this funding.

Some of the topics discussed at the WVLLN / Train to Gain table included:

- Being creative about funding streams and what courses to use
- Identifying what is actually needed by/for individuals?
- Using action learning sets across organisation in relation to management developments
- How to develop from being a senior care deliverer into management
- How to move existing learning into academia

The day was a great success with very positive feedback. The delegates particularly enjoyed the opportunity to discuss and share practices and experiences across organisations identifying core issues that could be addressed collectively. The Care Home Learning Network is now organising similar events in the North Somerset and BANES areas.