

Case Studies

The Open University in Scotland

Managing in the workplace – a skills utilisation project

In 2008 the Open University in Scotland responded to an external request from Scottish Care to support workforce development in social services. Senior care workers in residential homes for older people are required, by the regulator, to hold both professional and additional management qualifications. To meet the management qualification requirement the University worked on the OUBS course *Managing in the Workplace* (B121) to ensure that it was relevant to care workers employed in residential homes.

Fifty students were registered on the course in November 2008. Of these 20 were employed by a local authority and 30 in privately owned care homes. Most of the students had not been engaged with post school education except for the vocational qualification which was the required professional qualification. Despite careful pre-course preparation the amount of support available from the employers was variable. The most engaged and supportive employers gave study time, time to attend tutorials and work based support. Many employers gave none of this support.

Despite this, through the support of their tutors and their own endeavours, the students who submitted both assessed pieces of work passed the course. More than this, they developed increased confidence in themselves both as learners and as managers in social services. Much very useful feedback was gathered about the supports which employers, students and University tutors found helpful.

An Open University bid to the Scottish Government for Skills Utilisation funding to develop support materials for students, tutors and employers was successful in 2009. This work is now underway and will be developed with successive cohorts of students over the next three years. This work will also research the specific supports which employers in this sector find helpful in their workforce development. It will engage employers in public, private and third sector settings and support skills development in a part of the workforce which has been traditionally undervalued and under skilled. Ultimately, its effects will benefit the entire Scottish population through supporting a more highly skilled workforce in care homes – a social service experienced directly or indirectly by all.

Working with the college sector

In response to the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) report *Articulation for All* (2007) The Open University in Scotland (OU) developed its strategy for working with the college sector in Scotland. Research has shown that approximately 28% of the OU in Scotland's new entrants, whose previous entry qualifications are known, have a Higher National qualification. The SFC recognises that the OU is a significant route for articulation and as a result, provides discrete funding on an annual basis to develop its national role.

One of the main actions of the OU's strategy is to develop articulation and progression agreements with individual colleges. These agreements link the colleges' suite of higher education qualifications to the OU's extensive range of courses and degrees to create progression routes between the two learning providers. This allows individuals to benefit from multi-optional, flexible learning programmes that offer them a range of ways to upskill and reskill when they



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need to in order to ensure their skills stay current and relevant. Current articulation agreements between colleges and other universities are predominantly concerned with full-time study, whereas these agreements are designed to offer particular benefits to individuals who have studied part-time, or who are looking to commence or remain in employment while they work towards a degree. The college partnerships also offer considerable benefits for employers, by offering a one-stop-shop for many of their training needs and supporting their employees to develop their skills 'on-the-job'.

Developing a work-based learning curriculum

The Open University is developing a suite of work based learning awards at Diploma of Higher Education Level. These awards are developed with industry and employer involvement and typically at least 50% of the credit points required to achieve the award derives from work based learning modules. To date the university offers fifteen such awards in Scotland, namely Diploma of Higher Education in:

- Analytical Sciences
- Business
- Business Information Technology
- Computing and its Practice
- Early Years
- Financial Services
- Health Sciences
- Health and Social Care
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Leadership and Management
- Operating Department Practice
- Paramedic Sciences
- Primary Teaching and Learning
- Sport and Fitness
- Working with Young People

Each DipHE award offers progression routes to an honours degree.

Developing talented managers - a collaborative development programme

In the current context of changing and expanding provision, integrated partnership working and a greater emphasis on value and quality, today's managers face many challenges. In response to this changing environment NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council have selected an innovative collaborative management development programme to help equip their health and social care managers with the skills they need.

The partnership brings together the Open University, West Lothian College and GAP Learning Designs to provide training for almost 200 managers at NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council over five years. Building on the success of an award-winning pilot programme, the partners will deliver an enhanced programme designed to generate improvements to health and social care services, leading to improvements in patient care.

David A. Lee, Associate Director for Workforce and Organisational Development, NHS Lothian commented that: "More often than not management skills are



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assumed and untested. In NHS Lothian it is our intention to recognise and validate those skills by way of licensing effective management practice. This innovative development programme as part of our overall framework for management and leadership development is our means and ultimately effective patient care is the end."

The interprofessional and interagency programme provides individuals with the knowledge, skills and analytical tools needed to become an effective manager who is able to use evidence-based strategies to achieve positive outcomes for service users. It covers areas such as effective leadership; team working; communication and decision-making; implementing change; and managing budgets. Mary a mother of two children with eleven years experience of social care said *"The programme provided me with theories, concepts and techniques to apply in different management settings. It helped me to understand my own role, its context and the bigger picture of how my actions impact upon my organisation and its clients"*

Heriot-Watt University

The Engineers of the Future (EotF) programme builds on a longstanding relationship between Heriot-Watt University and Forth Valley College. Together with Ineos Manufacturing, this partnership has developed an exciting, innovative and unique training, education and career programme currently in its pilot stage. The programme takes high achieving school leavers and guides them through a 5-year programme that integrates the development of hand-skills, work-based training and the academic requirements leading to the full MEng degree. This programme is different to both articulation and integration because it is a full partnership program (University, College and company) throughout the full five years to produce "work-ready" graduates. The pilot programme has been run in conjunction with Ineos Manufacturing and has attracted SFC funding, which is now being used to develop a range of programmes tailored to the needs of individual companies. Significant periods of the programme, including the academic vacation periods, involve workplace learning, training and development that incorporates a full appreciation of health and safety, skills for employment and an in-depth knowledge of the sponsoring company and industrial sector.

This uniquely tailored academic and training programme is specifically designed to combine the practical applications of working in the Science and Technology Industries and underpinning knowledge. The programme promotes an integrated tertiary education that integrates the strengths of the college and the university expertise combined with the work experience provided by the industrial partner. It is attractive to both individuals and employers as it breaks down the requirement to make a decision about whether to pursue a wholly academic route or vocational career. Learners achieve a Modern Apprenticeship, Higher National Qualification and an MEng Degree. The programme is delivered jointly using a novel mixed-mode of delivery that includes:

- college-university integrated learning materials;
- laboratory, workshop and project work in industry, college and at Heriot-Watt;
- conventional teaching with focused contact time;
- tutor support within Industry with support from both Forth Valley College and Heriot-Watt;
- collaboration with industry sponsors to tailor the academic learning with practical work-based activity.

The University of Glasgow



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We view student enterprise as a key economic development activity and a source of new innovative ventures within the Scottish economy. We have, therefore, been extremely active in developing the enterprise skills of our students and supporting them in creating new, innovative businesses. The high level skills development happens both within the academic curriculum and within the thriving student enterprise community. In the last year we have supported 41 students who have started 10 businesses generating in excess of £100,000 of public sector support. This adds to the 40 companies commenced in the preceding five years who have so far secured over £600,000 of start up equity.

During this time period we had a number of notable successes:

- Since its launch at the start of 2009 Glasgow students / graduates have won three of the monthly Shell Livewire Grand Ideas competitions. BrailleBand is a refreshable braille display system that connects to any PC or laptop which enables blind people to communicate with textual information in the same way that sighted people do. Ncapsulate's initial product is a defensive system for front line modern conflict that allows constant visual contact to be kept over checkpoints.
- Another winner Arc Product Design will launch Pressure Alert, a unique adaptation of a medical device called an Endotracheal Tube which is inserted in the patient's airway allowing them to breathe during anaesthesia. Pressure Alert is the first device that gives a popup warning integrated into the pilot balloon. Arc PD were also one of a select group to receive funding via the NESTA Starter for 6 programme. They were also runners up in the Scottish Institute for Enterprise Ideas competition.
- Safehinge received Scottish Executive SMART funding to develop their flagship ALU range which prevents finger trapping in doors. They are currently supplying local authorities in Manchester, Dundee and Neath Port Talbot.
- Red Button Design, who are developing a water purification and storage system for the developing world won the National Laboratory Service's Innovation Award for Environmental Technology 2009.

We provide enterprise training programmes for students aimed at fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and providing basic knowledge transfer and business skills.

Along with colleagues at Scottish Enterprise and Columbia University New York we are also involved in the Encouraging Dynamic Global Entrepreneurs programme. The programme takes 16 students from Glasgow and a similar number from Columbia and teams them up with high school pupils from the local area. After a one week training course that GU facilitates the students, in teams, deliver consultancy projects for small businesses as well as developing a business pitch for an idea of their choosing.

Scottish Agricultural College

Work Placements - SAC operates a scheme whereby students can apply and be financially assisted to undertake work placements within the SAC Consulting Division in the Farm Business management Offices and the Environmental Consultancy Group of SAC. On successful completion of their period of work placement the students will continue into the final year (normally their Honours year) of their studies and may upon successful completion be offered a full time post with SAC. The financial assistance comes through SAC Trust Funds and the specific Business Group the students are placed in. Additionally, we have also



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recently re-validated our BSc/BSC(Hons) Degree in Agriculture to include a Professional Practice module in year four which should assist students in being more prepared for the job market. The re-validated programme provides a more business management focused stream includes work placement as part of the Professional Practice module.

Distance Learning - SAC has very recently validated or is in the process of developing the following programmes on a distance learning basis which provide vocationally based high level skills:

- MSc Applied Poultry Science;
- MSc in Countryside Management (which is currently being developed and has a specific CPD focus; and
- MSc level Principles of Genetic Improvement CD-Rom course which is aimed at up-skilling people for working in the animal breeding industry.

University of the West of Scotland

MSc in Sensor Design (Honeywell – a formula for success)

Honeywell identified a gap in the market for skilled graduates able to hit the ground running in the field of sensor design. Graduates coming out of general engineering degrees were not equipped with the requisite knowledge and practical skills thus requiring further training to bring them up to speed. Honeywell staff were interested in addressing this and provided their time freely to shape the content of a course in conjunction with The School of Engineering and Science at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS). The result was a new and unique MSc course in Sensor Design in September 2008.

The Chief Engineer for Honeywell Sensing and Control described UWS as providing a global sensor training ground in Scotland, well positioned to help Scotland's companies compete in the \$multi-million sensor design market. The relationship with Honeywell and development of the new MSc Sensor Design course has led to the University building contacts with local Scottish companies in the Sensor Design area. These discussions have led to a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with GMI based in Inchinnan, an Industrial CASE Studentship Application with SST Sensing in Bellshill and a STFC PIPSS Funded Research Collaboration with Selex Gallileo based in Edinburgh. Honeywell has identified the potential for the MSc Sensor Design to be delivered to a wider student base via distance learning delivery. The University is currently in discussion with Honeywell in relation to this opportunity. As a result of renewed discussions, Honeywell staff have been using the University's Metallurgy testing services located at the Paisley Campus.

PG Diploma in Creative Media Practice

This PG Diploma is an innovative programme focusing on the development of students' knowledge, understanding and the creative and technical skills required to create digital content for screen and broadcast and the wider creative industries. The programme provides flexibility and choice, enabling students to broaden and deepen their existing knowledge and abilities in the areas most relevant to their career aims.

The programme is designed to meet the needs of individual students assisting new entrants, from a wide range of disciplines, to gain a credible foothold in the creative industries, while allowing those who need to adapt to the demands of new times and new technologies to do so with confidence. The programme has been designed to be able to respond quickly to the changing requirements of the



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creative industries. The Creative Industries and the Screen and Broadcast industries make a significant contribution to the Scottish economy and one which needs to be developed in terms of postgraduate education, training and professional accreditation. In particular, there is a need to support creative industry professionals working in small creative enterprises, to enable them to extend their skills and creativity.

There is no similar postgraduate programme in the West of Scotland; indeed no course in Scotland offers the unique blend of high level creative media skills, industry-focused tuition from industry experts and professional practitioners combined with a strong critical focus. The flexible and adaptable range of high level skills on offer in this programme will respond to the difficulty that the micro-companies, which make up the bulk of the creative media industry in Scotland, have in recruiting and developing appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Innovation and creativity lie at the heart of this programme. The PG Diploma in Creative Media Practice aims to develop and sustain a strong community of highly skilled, critically engaged creative media practitioners able and willing to make a significant and lasting contribution to Scotland's cultural and economic growth.

The University of Stirling

Employability and skills development

The University's Career Development Centre (CDC) has been leading on the development and implementation of our employability strategy. Activity in this area has been underpinned by additional strategic funding from the SFC. Key achievements in the last year include:

- the delivery of a series of bespoke interactive workshops for MBA students
- the establishment of an internal Employer Task Group to streamline and discuss institutional approaches to engaging with employers
- collaboration with BUNAC to formulate a bespoke work experience programme for Sports Studies students
- the creation of an Employability Zone within the information room for students, graduates and staff to use
- regular work experience clinics
- delivery of employability workshops to PhD supervisors and sessions for academics at Eufair
- the production of student work experience toolkits

The CDC deliver a range of careers accredited modules which students can undertake as part of their academic programmes. The range of modules includes a project placement option in the Active Learning in the Community module. This innovative full module focuses around a compulsory, project-orientated placement (30 hours) with a community-based, non-profit making organisation. It provides an opportunity to develop and enhance personal and professional skills. It also contributes positively to the well-being of the local community and explores issues relating to active citizenship. This module also offers students the opportunity to relate their academic skills and knowledge to project-based work experience.

Developing leaders in sport

Stirling University, Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence, is working with UKSport to provide students with opportunities to develop their leadership skills,



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extend their sports coaching and sports teaching experiences and enhance their understanding of other cultures.

A group of students, most of whom are studying sport/physical education, is recruited annually to work with two Zambian sports organisations – Edusport and Sport in Action. They spend part of the summer working in challenging environments and situations in townships in Lusaka. It is not unusual to find up to 150 enthusiastic and energetic youngsters turning up for a coaching session on a stony, dusty Lusakan compound.

Stirling's students provide training for local sports leaders working for Edusport and Sport in Action. They also teach and coach various physical activities to children in townships in the capital. Students are challenged to create a sustainable impact by training leaders locally to continue the work throughout the year after the students leave at the end of the summer.

Students are also challenged to help to improve the health of those living in some of Lusaka's compounds. Zambia has one of the world's most devastating HIV and AIDS epidemics. More than one in every seven adults in Zambia is living with HIV and life expectancy at birth has fallen to just 42 years. Stirling's students use physical activity sessions to teach youngsters about the risks associated with HIV/AIDS.

On their return, these select groups of students are provided with additional training during their time at Stirling to develop further their leadership and sports-specific skills, thereby enhancing and fast-tracking their employability.

"Overall I felt my leadership and communication skills benefited so much from this experience and I feel more confident talking in front of large numbers of people..."

"...I am able to problem-solve outside of western and developed cultural frameworks which will allow me to show credibility and adaptability when applying for jobs in the future."

"The difference in my leadership skills on the very first day to the last was, in my opinion, really quite big!"

Many of the students involved in the project have graduated. Some are undertaking post-graduate qualifications, some are teaching physical education in schools, some are working for national sports agencies, some are working in higher education and two are employed in international development. One of these has established a charity *Friend of Edusport* to help fund further activity in Lusaka. <http://friendofedusport.org/>

The potential of physical activity to deliver vital health messages to Lusakans will be enhanced next year. A select group of students from Stirling studying nursing will also be working in Lusaka in 2010. They will be challenged to provide accurate knowledge about health behaviours, sexual health behaviours and minor injuries to local sports leaders working for Edusport and Sport in Action.