

Work Integrated Learning in the UK: An Overview

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Introduction

This *working paper* was prepared as background for a workshop at the WACE Conference held at the University of Westminster in November 2006¹. It provides an overview of approaches to Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in the UK. Readers are invited to add their own interpretations, definitions, descriptions of approaches and examples of work integrated learning². The paper will be continually updated as better and more informed representations are developed.

Concepts and vocabulary

The term **Work Integrated Learning (WIL)** embodies a higher education learning experience that combines and integrates to varying degrees study, work, formal and informal learning and social interaction in institutional, work³ and e-learning contexts. This type of 'blended' higher education curriculum that involves learning in a variety of contexts reflects a belief that this form of experience better prepares students for a lifetime of *learning in a complex world*, than a curriculum that only considers the institutional context.

The integration of learning in these different contexts is crucial to the development of the learner and the achievement of the learning outcomes for a programme, but the ways in which institutional, work and social components of the experience are combined, and the levels of integration and connectivity, are quite varied. At one end of a continuum are blended experiences where institutional, work and possibly service contexts are intimately connected. At the other end of the continuum students' themselves are the main integrating and sense making factor.

WIL requires a co-operative and often formalised relationship between a higher education institution, the provider of work and the student so that what is learnt in the work environment can be evaluated, recognised and integrated with learning in the academic environment.

¹ World Association for Cooperative Education International Symposium Work Integrated Learning 16-18 November 2006 Work Integrated Learning for Sustainable Futures

² Please send additional information to Norman.Jackson@surrey.ac.uk

³ **Work** - paid or voluntary, in private business or industry, public or voluntary service or community situation. The idea of self-employment - students developing their own business enterprise is growing in importance as a more enterprising culture develops.

The term **work placement** is used to describe a work context¹ into which a learner is placed or places themselves for the intended purpose of learning that is relevant to the aims and intended learning outcomes of a higher education programme or module.

Table 1 distinguishes five types of placement learning experience categorised according to whether:

- The placement organisation is real or virtual.
- The work of the placement organisation is relevant/not directly relevant to the academic field of study, the intended professional domain and the learning outcomes for a programme.
- Whether the student is located day-to-day within the organisational environment or operates at a distance.
- The placement organisation is established or is being created and developed.

Table 1 A variety of placement contexts that result in different experiences and learning

Placement context	
<p>1A Placement in organisations that are relevant to the field of academic study or intended professional domain</p>	<p>Students work and learn in an organisation that has been chosen because of its relevance to the field of academic study and intended professional or practice domain. Placement learning is relevant to the discipline-specific outcomes of the academic programme.</p> <p>The day to day relationship of the student to the organisation is one of working within the social environment of the organisation.</p>
<p>1B Remote placement in organisations that are relevant to the field of academic study or intended professional domain</p>	<p>Students work and learn in an organisation that has been chosen because of its relevance to the field of academic study and intended professional or practice domain. Placement learning is relevant to the discipline-specific outcomes of the academic programme.</p> <p>The day to day relationship of the student to the organisation is one of working at a distance. Social interaction relies on communications technology rather than face-to-face conversation.</p>
<p>2 Placement in organisations that are not specifically relevant to the field of academic study or intended professional domain</p>	<p>Students work and learn in an organisation for the financial benefit and general employment experience rather than to develop knowledge and skills that are relevant to a field of academic study and intended professional or practice domain. Placement learning is therefore not directly relevant to discipline-specific learning outcomes for a programme but is relevant to general employability outcomes.</p> <p>The day to day relationship of the student to the organisation is one of working within the social environment of the organisation.</p>
<p>3 Placement in student-created organisations</p>	<p>Students work and learn in an organisation that is created, led and operated by students. Placement learning may or may not be relevant to discipline-specific outcomes of the programme but it is relevant to entrepreneurial and creative outcomes that are rich in the experience of invention.</p> <p>The relationship of the student to the organisation is one of working within the social environment of the organisation.</p>
<p>4 Placement in a virtual organisation</p>	<p>Students work and learn in an organisation that is virtual (not real) although the data/information that populate the virtual environment may be derived from one or more real organisations. Placement learning is relevant to the discipline-specific outcomes of the academic programme. Social interaction may be created through student-student, student-tutor on-line or face-to-face interactions</p>

The term **work experience** is used to denote some sort of exposure to a work setting that may or may not be relevant to the outcomes of a particular higher education programme. The term **intern or internship** is not widely used although it is becoming more popular and our students do encounter it when they chose their work placement in Europe or N America.

The term **sandwich programme** is used to denote a higher education curriculum containing a work placement that is integral to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the programme. *Thick sandwich* programmes contain a year long work placement normally in the 3rd year of a 4 year programme. *Thin sandwich* programmes contain one or sometimes two shorter (typically 6 months or semester (12 to 15 weeks) work placements. In sandwich programmes the experience of working and learning in the work place enables the learner to develop in ways that are consistent with the programme aims and intended learning outcomes.

The term **professional training** is used to describe work place learning where there is an explicit commitment to professional formation (to be and become professional). Therefore a criterion for the selection of work placement environments is the extent to which learners are able to engage in practices and forms of social interaction that support a process of professional formation. Where there is a direct link to professional domains in which Professional Bodies or Statutory Regulatory Bodies oversee standards such bodies might also be involved in determining or approving some of the parameters for work place learning and assessment.

The term **work-based learning** is used if the learner is already in the work place and the higher education programme is designed around the learner and their employer's interests. Learning activity, outcomes and assessment are regulated though an individually or organisationally negotiated agreement or contract. Some work-based programmes are designed by learners (with tutor support) others by employers (with tutor support). Such programmes often contain within them a mechanism for accrediting prior learning gained through the experience of work.

The terms **Placement Administrators or Placement Managers** are used to describe the people who coordinate and organise and work placement activity. **Placement Management** is a term that some administrators are using to describe their role. The terms **Placement Tutors, Visit Tutors** are used to describe the people who visit students while they are involved in work placement. **Placement Supervisors** or **Mentors** are terms used to describe the people who oversee and support students in the work place.

Is Work Integrated Learning the most appropriate representation?

This review of the idea of Work Integrated Learning raises the issue of whether the expression 'Work Integrated Learning', which seems to emphasise the context of work above other contexts, is the right expression to use. Perhaps a more accurate representation for a higher education curriculum that combines and blends working, learning and playing in a variety of contexts is a '**context-rich integrated learning experience**'.

Trends and developments

In the last fifteen years the sector has witnessed a number of developments – often policy-driven that have encouraged WIL and shaped its development. For example:

- a major emphasis on the development of skills and attitudes for employability in the HE curriculum
- significant growth in the embedding of different forms of placement learning within disciplines and across universities
- new forms of working made possible by information and communication technologies
- the development of national (QAA) Code of Practice for the assurance of quality and standards in placement learning
- a growing emphasis on internationalisation and the growing need to provide placement opportunities for international students whose visas restrict their access to organisations
- growing interest in developing graduate entrepreneurial attitudes and skills through placement experiences
- Government / HEFCE policies geared to encouraging greater employer-engagement in higher education
- requirements on universities to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students with disabilities so that they are not disadvantaged in the context of placement learning
- increased costs of higher education to learners with the introduction of fees and the increased expectations of students that they will be employable when they graduate in order to pay off their debts
- increasing use of placements by employers as their main vehicle for graduate recruitment

These factors have resulted / are resulting in:

- greater consideration of WIL as a design principle in the undergraduate curriculum and new work integrated learning curricular designs and experiences
- increased competition between universities to secure appropriate placement learning opportunities and the development of virtual rather than real placement experiences
- the growth of organisations to help students find placements
- utilisation of the (non-placement) employment environments in which students work during term and vacation as contexts for learning
- a need to prepare students for new workplace environments e.g. remote placement or placement in student created organisations
- concerns for how placement learning is recognised, articulated and assessed
- interests in the role of the external examiner in the process
- more developed and rigorous systems for quality assurance

Approaches to Work Integrated Learning in the UK

This is an indicative list of approaches and readers are invited to contribute further examples.

HE-based programmes with year long work placement

These programmes tend to be part of an individual learner's initial professional formation. They are offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and they have been established for over 50 years. *Thick sandwich* programmes contain a year long work placement normally in the 3rd year of a 4 year programme⁴. *Thin sandwich* programmes contain one or sometimes two shorter (typically 6 months or semester long - 12 to 15 weeks) work placements. In general, the employment context does not impact greatly on the

⁴ The University of Surrey has a well established programme like this <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/professionaltraining>

academic curriculum and it is left to the student to transfer and integrate their learning between these two contexts.

A variant on this form of work integrated learning are entrepreneurial semester or year long placement models whereby a student or group of students set up their own business.

HE programmes with module based work placement

These are higher education programmes that contain within them one or more modules that provide opportunities for placement learning. Placement learning in this context is often project-based, connected to a lecture or seminar programme and may involve study visits or remote placement.

HE-based programme with alternating taught and short practice placements or modules which contain both practice and institution-based study

These programmes involve a truly integrated curriculum where placement alternates with university study throughout a programme. Such programmes are offered at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and they are the norm in health-related professional / vocational programmes. These programmes tend to be part of an individual learner's initial professional formation in teacher training, and health and social care areas. Periods of placement in practice situations are a compulsory part of the overall programme. These programmes are often regulated by Statutory Regulatory Bodies.

The amount of time spent in a work place / clinical setting is often defined by a Statutory Regulator for example. Social Work requires a student to gain 200 days practical experience in a practice setting (L1 30 days, L2 70 days, L3 100 days. Nursing programmes are made up of 50 per cent theory and 50 per cent practice (4600 curriculum hours by statute) ie placement or practice based learning equivalent to 2300 hrs (about 280 days).

A specific example of this type of work integrated programme is the MET programme⁵, the final two years of the Manufacturing Engineering Tripos degree programme at the University of Cambridge. In Year 1 students take five lecture courses and a group project and spend 1 day per week in industry-related activities, including company visits and workshops. During the project groups of four put together a full business proposal for a new company to manufacture a specific product. Some groups form their own company and go into business. Year 2 comprises a mix of intensive modules, interspersed with periods in industry solving real-problems. Working in small groups they spend two week periods in industry tackling a problem identified by the company. At the end of the project they present their findings to the company. The final 8 weeks are spent on an individual project that addresses a significant industry problem. Students also work on an overseas research programme that culminates in a two week industry-based study tour organised by the students.

HE-based Foundation Degrees

Foundation degrees were launched in September 2001. Foundation degrees are only offered at undergraduate level. They aim to provide students with specific business, technical and specialist skills needed in the workplace. They are vocationally linked higher education qualifications developed in collaboration with employers. They provide specialist technical knowledge and skills within specific fields and can be delivered in a variety of

⁵ www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/met

ways, via the internet, distance learning and direct through universities, or linked to Further Education colleges and Higher Education colleges under a lead university. Their design allows progression to an honours degree and they encourage flexible learning (work-based, work-related and distance learning).

Workplace –based learner negotiated and designed programmes

Learning programmes are a mixture of work-based projects or portfolios of activities, distance/on-line learning, institutional or workplace courses, collaborative or network-based learning. These programmes also include student generated records of learning for the purpose of awarding academic credit for prior or current experiential learning. The learning described in these records is personal and highly contextualised. Academic credit is gained in one of two ways: by mapping learning against the outcomes for existing academic modules, or by demonstrating learning against negotiated learning outcomes that are themselves aligned with level descriptors that contain within them the dimensions of the academic standards being sought. The model is found in negotiated work-based learning schemes like those of the University of Middlesex⁶.

The University for Industry's *Learning through work* scheme provides a national award scheme and on-line support and guidance system for this type of learning⁷. Eight institutions are participating in this scheme. University of Chester; University of Derby; University Northampton; Northumbria University; University of the West of England, Bristol; University of Staffordshire; Wakefield College; University of Southampton

Industry-based collaborative training accounts

Collaborative Training Accounts are an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) funded initiative which supports a number of innovative industry-based education programmes such as industry based EngD's and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP)

EngD programmes

These are typically blended courses of e-based self-study along with intensive on-campus study periods and are aimed at full-time employees.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

These are collaborative partnerships with business and industry to enable a company to become more innovative and productive and to boost profits and are supported by a Government (dti) grant. A high quality graduate is recruited to work on a specified project lasting between 1 and 3 years. During this time they have huge training opportunities, including the chance to take a Masters degree or PhD. The application procedure is quick and a grant offer is usually received within 6 weeks of applying. The success rate for KTP is high (c. 70%) and there is an opportunity to resubmit applications.

STEP programmes

⁶ <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/subjects/wbl/wbs/index.htm>.

⁷ <http://www.learnirect-ltw.co.uk/ep/web/home/ltwhome/homepage/> .

STEP (Shell Technology Enterprise Programme⁸) is designed around 8 week placements for undergraduate students in their second or penultimate year of study. STEP can help to identify business needs and provides access to undergraduates with relevant skills to enable companies to It is primarily focused on SMEs, although larger companies are also eligible to apply. Projects can be in any subject and can help companies to research products or markets, and improve information systems or operational procedures

Employer customised programmes

In these programmes an employer, in negotiation with the institution is the main contributor to shaping the work integrated learning programme. The employing organisation contracts an institution to develop a customised curriculum for a group of its own employees. The programme may be delivered entirely in the work place or it might also involve on-line and institution-based learning.

The government is keen to extend this type of collaboration and a new funded initiative has recently been launched <http://hefce/learning/employer/> (see below). The idea extends to private and public sector Academies that will work collaboratively with Further and Higher Education Institutions to design and deliver employer-led curricula and awards.

Assurance and Evaluation of Work Integrated Learning

Each university and college of higher education is responsible for ensuring that appropriate standards are being achieved and maintained and a good quality educational experience is being provided. Student and the wider public interests in sound standards of higher education qualifications, and the quality of educational experience are safeguarded by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) was established in 1997 to provide an integrated quality assurance service for UK higher education. The independent body is funded by compulsory subscriptions from universities and colleges of higher education and through contracts with the main higher education funding bodies. It is the organisation that enables the Higher Education Funding Council (England) to fulfil its obligation to ensure that the education it funds is of an appropriate standard.

Working with peer review processes QAA has created a *Code of [Good] Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards* which universities and colleges can use as a reference point when reviewing their own systems and practices. The Code is also used as a reference point in the peer review of institutional quality assurance systems and practices. The *Code* has 10 sections and the ninth element (currently being revised) covers placement learning. Section 8 – career education, information and guidance is also relevant.

Full Code of Practice

- Postgraduate research programmes
- Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)
- Students with disabilities
- External examining

⁸ <http://www.step.org.uk>

- Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters
- Assessment of students
- Programme approval, monitoring and review
- Career education, information and guidance
- Placement learning
- Recruitment and admissions

QAA is also responsible for overseeing the development of Progress Files to help to make the outcomes, or results, of learning in higher education more explicit and more valuable. The Progress File consists of a transcript or record of achievement; a process - personal and development planning; and the students' own personal development records. The process of learning through reflection and representing and recording both the experience and the learning, is an important process in Work Integrated Learning.

External Examiners

The UK has a system of external examining whereby experienced teachers from an institution that is not the institution where WIL is offered, or practitioners from business and industry are invited to scrutinise the outcomes from WIL. This happens when the WIL contributes directly to the award i.e. when it is credit bearing.

System Level Evaluation of Work Integrated Learning

Evaluation is understood in terms of three purposes: for accountability; for understanding and for development.

*System-level **evaluation for accountability** includes:*

- Periodic Institutional Audit of quality management systems (including those set up to support WIL) by the QAA.
- Student feedback through the annual National Student Survey⁹. Consideration is being given to introducing more questions to the survey instrument to particularly focus on WIL experiences.
- Accreditation Reviews of Professional Bodies, where WIL is important to course outcomes.
- Evaluations of specially funded projects for example placements funded under the EU-Leonardo scheme or ESRPC.

System-level ***evaluation for understanding and development***

System level evaluations tend to be studies commissioned by a system-level organisation such as the Higher Education Funding Councils or the Higher Education Academy. Recent studies relevant to WIL commissioned by these bodies include studies by Little and Harvey (2006), Nixon et al (2006) and CHERI & KPMG (2006):

The new research capacity provided by the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is beginning to have an impact as they also will commission research studies. Some of these will be focused on local situations (within the host institution) but some studies will have systemic implications (see for example Yorke 2005).

⁹ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/2006/survey.htm>

POLICY AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy

Government policy for higher education is increasingly linked to policies and infrastructures for economic prosperity. In recent years the concept of the knowledge economy has dominated Government thinking¹⁰

'A knowledge economy is:

Where the generation and use of knowledge has come to play the predominant role in the creation of national wealth, achieved by effective use and application of all types of knowledge and technology, in all manner of economic activity.

A knowledge economy demands an educational system that can ensure a wide base of knowledge workers, generate new knowledge, creativity and act as a major agent of economic growth. Our education system must provide the human capital, research and investment assets to meet the changing economic and social needs of the UK'.

This way of thinking has shaped the way Government has created its regional infrastructures to support the development of a knowledge economy and it is exerting a strong influence on the way it is encouraging higher education to interact with employers.

Higher Education Funding Council England Policies and Strategies to Encourage Work Integrated Learning

The main source of funding for higher education is through the Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE). The Government's strategic influence on higher education is through HEFCE funding policies.

In 2006 the Government's **grant letter** to HEFCE setting out how it wanted to strategically influence higher education, tasked the Council with leading a **radical change in HE through a systematic and strategic engagement with employers.**

'There are two major priorities that I am asking Council to pursue... The first is to lead radical changes in the provision of higher education in this country by incentivising and funding provision which is partly or wholly designed, funded and provided by employers'..

As a result of this directive, new policy and funding incentives are being created to encourage more employer involvement in higher education <http://hefce/learning/employer/>

The scope of the areas under consideration are wide ranging:

- involvement of HE with the sector skills agenda, regional skills infrastructure and brokerage
- co-funding of HE provision between Government and employers
- measures to support greater flexibility in provision
- quality assurance approaches for customized and workplace learning

¹⁰ Navigating the New Economy: Measuring and Defining Progress towards the UK knowledge economy. www.intellectuk.org/download.asp?file=632

- supporting increasing employer and workforce needs for continuing professional development at higher levels
- the costs associated with workplace learning
- the contribution of e-learning and technology more widely.

One of the Government's ideas is to establish 'Academies' for all the major business sectors. Currently plans are advanced for construction, financial services and the food industry. These will be employer/university/college/sector skills council partnerships. They may well be regionally-based. They must be employer-led and provide 'high class provision'.

Strategic Development Fund

HEFCE is funding employer engagement projects via the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) which aims to:

- support and build on successful activity that promotes growth in employer engagement with HE provision
- enable institutions and their partners to assess where there may be gaps in meeting learner and employee skills and to develop the solutions which will address these
- promote a more strategic approach in HE to its contribution, through HE skills, to economic competitiveness and an effective public sector
- capitalize on opportunities for greater coherence of activity through collaborative solutions.

Policy implications for English universities

A recent review of work place learning¹¹ for the Funding Council called for:

'HEFCE to expect that institutions' strategies for learning and teaching make explicit reference to workplace learning, and how the institution plans to engage with learners already in the workplace. For most people in the future, working and learning will be combined in different ways and with different expectations throughout the life course. More specifically, it will be important for both institutions and HEFCE to recognise that the majority of today's undergraduates are working alongside their studies (whether notionally full-time or part-time). Term-time working has become the norm and has significant implications for the student experience and approaches to learning. A small number of institutions have begun to assess and give credit for learning achievements outside of formal higher education programmes of study. We expect such trends to continue. On grounds of both social equity and the maintenance of academic standards, it is desirable that there is at least a minimum comparability in institutions' approaches to this issue.

HEFCE should also expect institutions to have established 'rules of engagement', so that individual departments that seek to engage with employers and workplace learners do so on the basis of an institutionally-agreed set of standards. These rules of engagement might include statements about the entitlements of learners, employers and the institution in relation to the workplace learning.

We noted above that some providers argue that the current funding methodology does not reflect the actual full cost of delivery of employment-based negotiated forms of workplace learning. On the basis of the available data, it is not possible to determine whether this is the case, but we suggest that HEFCE review current arrangements.

Current datasets do not contain sufficiently robust information to be used as an indicator for allocating additional funding for workplace learning. HEFCE should consider the use of initiative funds to support developments in workplace learning and employer engagement'.

¹¹ Towards a strategy for work place learning http://hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/2006/rd09_06/report.htm

Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: work integrated learning

The Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) with funding of £315 million over five years from 2005-06 to 2009-10 for CETLs represents the largest ever enhancement initiative in teaching and learning in England. The objective is to reward excellent education and invest in that practice in order to increase and deepen its impact across a wider teaching and learning community. A significant number of CETLs have explicit interests in Work Integrated Learning / Placement Learning / Professional Training or Practice Based Professional Learning (Annex 1).

This is an emergent area of policy and practice: infrastructures, networks and forms of engagement are still being developed. But the policy has the potential, through the additional brokerage, and research capacity of the Centre's to have a significant impact on work integrated learning practices. Four CETLs¹² are combining to support a new network for people and institutions interested in work integrated learning.

Organisations that have an interest in promoting and supporting work integrated learning in English HE

There are a number of organisations in the UK that promote and support work placement, work-experience, work-based-learning and the integration of learning in and through work into the higher education curriculum.

Some of these organisations are funded by Government others by individual or organisational subscriptions. The range of organisations professional administrative, student and employer interests, and some bodies attempt to address all these user needs. But no single body takes the lead role in work integrated learning and the world of organised support is not easy to comprehend.

Some of the more important organisations are listed below and further details are provided in Annex 2. Nb there are a growing number of for profit placement agencies not included here.

- Association of Sandwich Education and Training (ASET)
- National Council for Work Experience (NCWE)
- National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE)
- PlaceNet
- Placement UK
- Fledglings
- University Vocational Awards Council
- National Association of Student Employment Services (NASES)
- Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS)
- The Higher Education Academy

¹² The founding members of the Work Integrated Learning CETL alliance are the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education (SCEPTrE), Centre for Excellence in Professional Learning from the Workplace (CEPLW), Centre for Rights, Understanding and Citizenship Based on Learning through Experience (CRUCIBLE). <http://www.workintegratedlearning.co.uk>.

Regional and County Planning & Development Infrastructures

Higher education policy frameworks and infrastructures to support work integrated learning must also be seen in the context of regional and county initiatives to support work force development. Using SE England and the County of Surrey as an example (the host county for the University of Surrey) we can illustrate the basic infrastructures that have the potential to influence employer-university interactions and partnerships for work integrated learning.

The influential organisations for planning, policy decision making, lobbying and development in the region and the county of Surrey are:

- SE England Development Agency (SEEDA)
- Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
- Higher Education South East (HESE)
- Surrey Economic Partnership (SEP)
- Surrey Chambers of Commerce (SCC)
- Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership (SLLP)

Actions aimed at improving employer-educational provider interaction and raising the skills levels across the Region include:

- Regional Skills Productivity Alliance
- Action for Learning Business College Network
- Regional Skills Brokerage Model

SE England Development Agency (SEEDA)

The SE England Development Agency (SEEDA) is the Government funded agency responsible for the economic and social development of the South East of England.

The economy of the region is the 22nd largest in the world, bigger than several countries including Denmark, Austria, Sweden, South Africa, Singapore and Greece. As home to over eight million people, it is the largest region in the UK - bigger than Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland combined, and covers the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and East and West Sussex.

SEEDA aims to be a catalyst for change within South East England , working with partner organisations- businesses, education at all levels, local authorities, Government agencies, voluntary and community organisations and many others - to produce clearly recognisable results.

SEEDA has Government funds to invest directly in a range of economic and social development programmes including educational and training initiatives. SEEDA also helps to secure European Union and private sector investment for the region. Accountable to Government, SEEDA is a business led organisation, governed by a Board whose Members have wide-ranging experience in industry and commerce, local government, education, trade unionism and voluntary service.

SEEDA is working with Higher Education South East (HESE), the representative body for the region's 26 higher education institutions (HEIs), to explore ways in which we can better identify and map provision and current and future demand that is of strategic importance to the regions economy.

Higher Education South East (HESE)

Region covered by HESE

http://www.hese.ac.uk/hese/univ_coll/index.html



The objectives of HESE are:

- To ensure that the roles of the Higher Education Sector in teaching, learning, research, technology transfer and enterprise as they relate to all regional affairs, are properly recognised and understood.
- To ensure that Higher Education Institutes are active participants in the development and where appropriate, the delivery of key regional strategies.
- To be a focal point for liaison and co-operation between the Higher Education Institutes and appropriate regional and sub- regional agencies, including the Further Education Sector in the Region.
- To ensure either through election or nomination, that the voice of the Higher Education Sector is heard in the regional agencies and that its expertise is used by them as appropriate.
- To support the representatives of the Higher Education Sector in that capacity in regional agencies and in any other regional duties.
- To facilitate and strengthen the contribution of the Higher Education Sector to the economic development and competitiveness of the Region.
- To encourage wider collaborative activity between the Higher Education Institutes in the region, where this is considered to be beneficial both collectively and individually and to seek and accept regional and other funding on their behalf as appropriate.
- To contribute as appropriate at the strategic level to the interaction of Higher Education Institutes in the South East Region with EU institutions.
- To monitor the contribution of the Higher Education Sector to the regional economic performance and to both benchmark and maximise it
- To maintain an effective information and publicity system to ensure that the contribution of the Higher Education Sector is recognised and understood widely in the Region.

South East Learning and Skills Council

The Learning and Skills Council was set up to deliver the outcomes of the government's national Skills Strategy and to develop greater connectivity between key initiatives that support and impact on the effective delivery of this agenda.

The appointments of regional leads in Workforce Skills, Skills for Life and Action for Business are part of a sustained commitment to bring about cultural change and the

reengineering of the provider base to enable employer responsiveness. This needs to be taken into account in the delivery of the Skills for Life Quality Initiative (SfLQI) in the SE <http://www.sflqi.org.uk/>

The objectives within the SfLQI in bringing about a whole organisational approach to the strategic planning and delivery of *Skills for Life* within the LSC and non LSC provider networks, together with the opportunities to embed a sustainable regional infrastructure, provide the SE LSC with a unique opportunity to integrate the *Skills for Life* strategy within the national Skills Strategy and to use the Initiative to bring about a step change within the provider network as part of the region's commitment to cultural change and the move to a demand-led approach to learning.

County-level infrastructure

Nested within this regional framework and capacity for planning and supporting economic development is a local county-based infrastructure.

Surrey Economic Partnership (SEP)

Is a partnership between business, the public and voluntary sector. It brings together the principal organisations in economic development to exchange views and progress in addressing the issues facing the Surrey Economy. It takes collective action to engage business and enable business to influence public sector agenda and strategies and takes more focused and carefully prepared action in a small number of chosen areas.

Surrey Chambers of Commerce

Surrey Chambers of Commerce represents over 1000 businesses in all sectors of the economy, and of all sizes. It seeks to represent the interests and support the competitiveness and growth of all businesses in the Surrey community and region.

Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership

The Lifelong Learning Partnership scheme was established by the Department of Education and Skills in 1999. It seeks to be the independent voice of the learner and to challenge funders and providers to collaborate to respond to this voice. Each county has its own scheme. Surrey LLP is a company limited by guarantee and is guided by a Steering Group which is responsible for strategy. Members of Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership include representatives of learning providers, local community organisations and planning/funding bodies. There are ten Community Learning Partnerships within SLLP, each providing a community voice. A Learner Panel commissions research.

The role of SLLP is to:

1. Advise countywide planning bodies on up-to-date learner needs and issues:
 - a) Develop recommendations for addressing the needs of 'disengaged' pre 16 learners.
 - b) Develop recommendations for addressing the key findings of Adult Learner research.
2. Ensure learner needs are addressed by plans:
 - a) Broker meetings between Surrey providers to review gaps and duplication.
 - b) Present the challenges and propositions arising to planning and funding bodies.
3. Encourage collaboration:

- a) Facilitate 'learning communities' by focusing resource in five areas of multiple need.
 - b) Integrate Community Learning Partnership (CLP) plans within county strategies.
 - c) Expand the CLP membership so they are a focal point for all local agencies with an interest in learning.
4. Develop communication to promote a learning culture and widen participation:
- a) Produce quarterly newsletter.
 - b) Disseminate research and good practices via web site, case studies and reports.

Work Integrated Learning in the UK: an appreciative big picture

Building and making sense of *big pictures* is critical to understanding a complex system which is inevitably made of many interacting complex systems. Big pictures help us understand a little better how the system works: how the parts of the system fit together and interact with each other and how the system co-creates itself through the myriad conversations, interactions and transactions that take place every day. They allow us to appreciate where we are strong and not so strong and to appreciate the emergence of new patterns, possibilities and issues that lurk within the complexity. They enable us to communicate, share and compare the way we do things with other systems and cultures. Above all, they support learning in a very complex world. This attempt to create a map of a very complex system is at best a crude representation. But we hope it's a useful start that we can continue to develop with others and that others can develop for themselves.

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