

Case study for projects

ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

1. Project title Flexible APL/APEL

2. Project summary (max 50 words)

This may be the same as in the original submission, but please amend in light of changes you may have made during the duration of the project.

The project will develop and pilot a flexible, on-line APL/APEL process that will allow greater access and achievement of the credits needed by individuals to progress onto the 2nd year of the CertEd/PGCE course delivered through the 24 Post Compulsory education and Training (PCET) Consortium partner colleges.

3. Your ITE provision (approx 200-300 words)

Describe the ITE provision you are offering from September 2012, including as a result of the project: number of students (predicted or estimated if not confirmed), accreditation, delivery methods and target audience

Standard provision.

The ITE provision offered through the Consortium (a partnership with the University of Huddersfield) has experienced a fall in the number of trainees (approx. 400 rather than the usual 950 1st years) as a result of a number of factors: the increase in tuition fees (although these are lower than undergraduate fees and partner colleges charge the same as their own HE fees); confusion over the regulations for 2013 onwards; fulfilment of qualified staff in the sector who have now achieved the FETT qualifications; and, lack of job opportunities as a result of cuts in the sector.

Accreditation. The programmes accredited are: Certificate in Education; Professional Certificate in Education and Postgraduate Certificate in education (all Lifelong Learning). Both Pre- and In-service courses are offered at the University centre; the other centres only offer In-service at the moment but two centres are to offer both In- and Pre-service as from next year.

Delivery methods include weekly meetings and blended learning for the Subject Specialist module (this is one of the few courses that offers subject specialist provision). We have previously offered monthly meetings (Saturdays) and we may consider this in the future, in combination with on-line learning.

Target audience.

The target audience is determined by each centre but generally includes any teacher from the LL sector. Some centres do tend to specialise in certain groups (e.g. armed forces or police, voluntary sector).

Changes as a result of the project. We are enrolling additional 2nd year trainees as a result of the Flexible APEL project. We will be following these students through the 2nd year to evaluate their success and experience. We plan to do this by questionnaire which will be sent out at Christmas, Easter and the end of the 2nd year.

4. Resources used (you may decide upon the level of detail to be provided here)

Outline the resources used to run this provision (outlined in 3 above) including: teaching time, resources used, tutoring/mentoring etc.

Where possible please provide a cost for these resources.

Initial framework

It is not possible to run this provision without the following being in place and established:

1. The infrastructure of a VLE that can be amended to take the additional flexibility that this project needed.
2. Established and experienced technicians who have the expertise and flexibility to work with the project team and tutors.
3. Experienced e-tutors who are also familiar with the curriculum *and* APL/APEL systems and candidates. We were fortunate to be able to call upon such tutors. This would be difficult in small provision.

These three elements are difficult to estimate as they are a pre-requisite to the undertaking of such a project. The set-up costs of the above would not be sustainable for this project alone and would be very front-loaded.

However, we can make the following estimates which are expressed in days; individual institutions will be able to apply their own daily or hourly rates.

Development Time:

These are one-off costs.

Technician support for development. We have estimated that 40 days were used.

System development and support (incl. development of hand books, resources which were adapted from our resources) - Development of the system by an expert ILT tutor – 42 days. This will depend on the daily rate for such a person.

Delivery Time:

Tutors -Training of tutors (1/2day) – 12 tutors + 2 trainers = £1,800 (tutors); £150 – trainers (this is a one-off cost but which may be needed on an annual basis for updating and general development)

Tutoring – for each candidate - 2 hrs (teaching hours the actual hours were greater by an estimate of 2.5 for each teaching hour). This may need to be increased or a group teaching cost included. This will depend on the costs per teaching hour.

Technician Support: we estimate that 3 days per month were needed

Management - Maintenance and updating of data (allocating tutors monitoring progress, etc) – 3 days per month.

System Management – which would be needed if this provision is to be replicated by others (i.e. not just a feature of this project) – 6 days per month. Elements of this could be distributed to others but it is still a heavy resource that is needed.

This does not include any contribution to the overheads of the infrastructure of a VLE or any other overheads. Neither does it include any future monitoring of the progress of the candidates (which, for example, we will be undertaking over the next 9 months).

5. Achievement against aims and objectives of project, and lessons learnt (approx 400 words)

The main purpose of these projects was to set up new sustainable models of delivery of ITE (DTLLS and equivalents) which will:

- support providers to develop new and sustainable models of delivery to the highest quality standards;
- create efficient models of delivery, while maintaining fitness for purpose, with a focus on creating excellence in teaching and learning;
- develop ITE provision which is attractive, and affordable, to new trainees and employers and stimulate new partnerships and increased co-operation between subject associations, employers and providers.

Please comment on how well you believe your project has addressed these overall aims and objectives by answering the questions below. Any supporting evidence will be welcome here.

- What lessons have I learnt in terms of efficiency, quality improvement, costing and affordability?
- How can I implement the outcomes from this project in other similar provision?
- In what ways has technology been used to support the delivery? What advice would you give in terms of where it should be used and in what ways? (Answer only if applicable.)
- What should be avoided? What doesn't work?

We have been able to build on lessons learnt from previous experience in terms of our APL systems and blended learning. The Flexible APL provision may offer a faster and cheaper route through from CTLLs to 2nd year CertEd/PGCE. There are provisos, however.

1. The systems/infrastructure need to be already developed. The establishment and maintenance of an e-system is resource heavy and needs to be sustained through previous investment and sharing with other elements of the same or other provision. Economies of scale are needed.
2. Tutors need to be confident in FETT, APL support and e-systems, including e-learning. Many are experienced in the first, fewer in the second and fewer still in the last (although the number of tutors who are experienced in e-learning is growing).
3. Candidates need to be aware of the demands of the process and prepared to undertake a period of intensive work. The Flexible APEL project showed that true APEL is rare; all the candidates required a 'mini-bridging' course. There is still a notion of APL/APEL being a 'tick the box' approach on the part of potential candidates.
4. It has been recommended by some tutors that we include an initial group meeting for candidates to explain the system. Thus may be piloted next year but this militates against one of the objectives which was to allow individuals from geographically dispersed locations across the north of England to participate. However, what may be explored is the additional support of a work-based mentor who may be able to explain how the system will work. This will require a training pack for mentors.
5. It is essential that all centre managers (or the lead teacher educator) understands the system and that they then understand the APEL portfolio that they will consider in accepting the individual candidate onto the 2nd year.

6. Advice to others

This case study will be made available to other providers via the Excellence Gateway. Please outline any advice you would wish to give to others who may be inspired to develop a similar model by answering the questions below. Where possible please highlight any resources (publicly available) that may be of use to others.

1. What difference has this project made to our knowledge of running affordable and excellent ITE programmes as an organisation?

It has highlighted the possibility of combining APEL with a 'mini-bridging' course to steer candidates from their 24 credits to a 60 credit equivalence. Candidates would have to pay a fee in future (for the purpose of the project participation this was made available on a free basis)

2. What, if any, further developments are you considering as an organisation following on from this project?

To implement the recommendation (from an employer) of the identification and use of a mentor in the workplace who would then continue as the mentor in the 2nd year. An additional hand book will be needed for such a mentor.

3. Will this project result in sustainable improvement? If so, how?

It will facilitate the progression route for those with various lower qualification (such as the present CTLLs) onto the 2nd year.

4. How can the lessons learnt in this project be applied to other provision?

To consider how to adapt and extend your APL/APEL service to incorporate a bridging course. APL/APEL is too daunting for candidates and it is rarely the case that the individual candidate does have the full range of underpinning knowledge that is necessary to progress further.

5. What lessons are there about the strategic use of technology for ITE?

That considerable time and expertise is needed; the amount of time should not be underestimated (there are always glitches). The use of such a system needs to be incorporated into the overall delivery of the course. There are considerable implications for the organisation.

See resources available at end.

7. Contact information

Please provide contact information of the author of this case study and state whether you are willing to answer queries from others.

Denise Robinson d.robinson3@hud.ac.uk

Yes, I am happy to answer queries.

8. Resources available for others

Please provide details of the resources that can be made available to other providers as a result of this project. Examples may include teaching and learning resources, handbooks, spreadsheets to calculate costs, flyers and recruitment materials, procedure documents etc. These should be referenced in this report and submitted at the same time.

Introduction – flyer

How to use Skype – Guide

Questionnaire for candidates

Tutor recruitment sheet

APEL Handbook

These are supplied as attachments.

Links to the help videos for tutors and candidates as below.

- Candidates <http://www.screencast.com/users/verylikecheryl/folders/Flexible%20Apel>
- Tutors <http://www.screencast.com/users/verylikecheryl/folders/APEL%20Tutors>

Newsletter:

<http://consortium.hud.ac.uk/media/consortiumwebsite/content/documents/projects/apel/APELNewsletterHUDCETT-v3c.pdf>

Equality and Diversity Video - Trevor Gordon

- <http://consortium.hud.ac.uk/projects/latestprojects/flexibleaplapel/resources/>