

Case study for projects

ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

1. Project title

Skills for Life Initial Teacher Training – Extending Access

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 University of Bolton and Skills Solutions project has been set up with the intention of making integrated SfL Initial Teacher Training provision accessible for trainees who find traditional provision difficult to access. We have developed, with our project partners, Skills Solutions and the WEA (Workers' Educational Association), a blended learning approach for the combined Literacy & ESOL route. This programme can be delivered flexibly, involving online study supported by locally delivered face-to-face sessions.

The impact of this project is that it makes available flexible training for those who need it. In the past it has been difficult to provide a course that is accessible for all. Employers often find it difficult to release teachers at a specific time. Others for reasons of location, find it difficult to travel to existing courses. Our development of a blended approach should overcome these difficulties as trainees can study at a time convenient to them, supported by an experienced Literacy/ESOL Teacher Trainer.

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

The University of Bolton and Skills Solutions are offering fully integrated PGDE and PDE programmes at level 5 and 6 via on-line and blended learning.

The Skills for Life programmes are firmly established at the University and have been in operation for 9 years.

The target audience is initially to reach staff of Skills Solutions and the WEA who deliver Literacy and /or ESOL and who need an integrated initial teaching qualification. The target trainees will be those who may have found it difficult to access a suitable qualification previously because of either. We may extend this to pre-service where appropriate. We also intend marketing this qualification further and have already started the process for this.

Disappointingly we have yet to recruit from WEA but this is possibly due to a change in role for the colleague from WEA who supported our bid.

We intend to recruit a minimum of 20 students to this programme for the current academic year and expect this to grow in subsequent years. We will recruit to set deadlines within the year on a 2 monthly basis. We will continue to advertise the course through University of Bolton and Skills Solutions websites and the course will be included in other marketing events such as Open Days.

We have also been able to use the programme flexibly. We have one student who is unable to attend one module on the face to face programme so he is undertaking this on-line and will join a group after completion.

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.

Project funds have been used to pay staffing resource to:

- Develop a comprehensive blended learning package, involving online study supported by locally delivered face-to-face sessions
- Extend access to Initial Teacher Training for Skills for Life for those potential trainees likely to experience access difficulties.
- Develop existing expertise within our team and our partners in devising online delivery
- Use the experience from the project to extend the range of online provision across our teacher training partnership and other initial teacher training pathways
- Share good practice and ICT knowledge across the partners

The project funds have been used to release contracted members of the team and to pay Hourly paid lecturing staff to undertake some of the subject specialist development.

The funds have also been used to allow staff from the University of Bolton and Skills Solutions to work together to develop materials.

The project funds have also allowed us to invest in technology to support the programmes including the purchase of i-pads to record sessions.

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 **we** learnt in terms of efficiency, quality improvement, costing and affordability?
- How can **we** 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 emphasised because we have done this in partnership!

We feel that the project has allowed us to develop an excellent resource and a sustainable model for the delivery of ESOL/Literacy teacher training. We intend to use the same format for further development of Numeracy, Teaching Learners with Additional Needs and then the generic teacher training programme.

Technology has been crucial to the development of this project and staff have created excellent resource bases through Moodle. A potential problem is that the prospective students are not as comfortable with using this method. We have attempted to alleviate this by ensuring we offer a face-to-face induction.

The PTLLS module written for this course has been launched as a stand-alone module and is working extremely well online, with excellent participation in the discussion groups. We are very encouraged and hope that the online course will work equally well. We discovered that in order to achieve high participation in the on line forums there was a need for a significant amount of tutor input at the beginning – the tutor started off the discussions and took time and care to ensure that each participant received a detailed and constructive response to their contribution – we found that the learners' confidence increased and that gradually they were participating in productive on line discussions with minimal input from the tutor.

What hasn't worked so well:

There has not been a lack of enquiries in response to our advertising, all of which we have followed up. Some have been on behalf of training organisations. Early evidence however suggests that the costs of the training are a barrier – when people find out how much it is going to cost they appear to lose interest.

Recruitment has continued with circulation of details throughout the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network and the Lancashire Work Based Learning Executive Forum. Flyers have also gone out to all tutors in the NW region of the WEA.

The timing of the applications for the first tranche of bursary funding has been challenging; it is difficult to get applicants through from interview and initial assessment to the offer and enrolment stage in time for the first round of applications in September. If there had been more certainty around the bursaries i.e. if organisations knew they would definitely receive £1500 toward the cost of the course for their employees, the course would have been easier to advertise – the lack of certainty around the bursaries diminishes the attractiveness of the programme despite its flexibility.

However, we remain positive about the potential recruitment to this course and will continue to promote it through our websites and through our partnerships. The course will also be publicised through Open Days.

We would advise that future projects engage with teams (or more than one individual) within a partnership arrangement, to ensure continuity of the project.

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.

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

This project has shown us that it is possible to deliver high quality on line teacher training but that the resource implications of offering this result in provision that as expensive to deliver as face-to-face classroom delivery.

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

We are considering offering “roll on roll off” delivery to enable learners to join at any point in an academic year. Note that this would have a considerable staffing resource implication (as above).

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

We have achieved sustainable improvement e.g. the on line materials are excellent and can be used more widely than for this project.

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

The on line learning materials were produced by a team of staff from the University and Skills Solutions who had previously worked closely together and the enterprise benefited from a co-operative approach. Ideas and resources were shared and developed. All staff involved in the production of the materials were highly skilled and experienced, were confident with the technology and were extremely creative.

We would be happy to share some of the ideas behind the resources and provide examples.

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

Recruitment has been much slower than we had hoped and we have moved the start date back to the end of October in order to give more time to recruitment. This in turn means that there might be issues around getting the bursary but we hope to have candidates enrolled in time. We also intend to recruit to this programme from January 2013.

We learned that it is difficult to undertake such a project with new partners – the most successful elements were those which were undertaken within the framework of a well established partnership with equal levels of commitment and a mutual understanding of future organisational benefit.

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.

Gill Waugh
The University of Bolton
Academic Manager – Education
01204 903310
Gw4@bolton.ac.uk

Rose Davies
Skills Solutions
Churchgate Academy
Rosemarie.Davies@churchgate-academy.co.uk

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.

Examples of resources attached.

These are available on-line for those who are registered on the programme.