

HERA Barometer

HEFCE National Report to DBIS and Other Stakeholders on Higher Education's Response to the Economic Downturn



December 2009 report
Period covered: September to November 2009

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Introduction

This report, compiled by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), is the outcome of a data collection process managed through the Higher Education Regional Associations (HERA) in September 2009. It follows the pilot report circulated on 1 May 2009, a second report in July 2009 and a third in October 2009. This series of publications to stakeholders is collectively known as the 'HERA Barometer'.

The aim of the HERA Barometer is to provide Government and other national stakeholders with current information on:

- how the HE sector is responding to the economic downturn
- changes in demand for HE provision and services
- examples of good practice as well as barriers to an effective response

Unlike previous reports, this report primarily focuses on increased demand for activity that has already been put in place by HEIs to address the economic downturn. The data herein on new schemes is still additional to that already reported in previous HERA Barometer Reports.

In this report, recurring themes have been highlighted separately in the 'Overview' section below.

Overview

<p>Introduction of new schemes has slowed but there is evidence of universities developing innovative ways to address the economic situation</p>	<p>As expected all of the HERAs have reported a decline in the introduction of new schemes as schemes addressing the downturn develop and deliver impact. Many institutions have been developing innovative approaches to the economic situation such as enhanced business outreach schemes.</p>
<p>High demand for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, and in particular Shorter KTPs</p>	<p>Seven of the nine HERAs have seen high levels of demand for KTP especially SKTPs.</p>
<p>Less paid work placements offered by businesses</p>	<p>Five of the nine HERAs highlight a lack of paid work placements from businesses as an issue.</p>
<p>Support for people who have recently been made redundant</p>	<p>All of the regions showcase schemes supporting people recently made redundant. The support ranges from tailored careers guidance to employability training.</p>
<p>Business start-up guidance and support</p>	<p>Six of the HERAs showcase business start-up support as part of the ongoing work with Job Centre +, Business Link and other agencies.</p>
<p>The success and availability of Internships and work placements schemes has varied across the regions</p>	<p>Six of the nine HERAs reported successes through their internship and placement schemes. Two of these highlighted the decrease in paid placements as a challenge to the schemes.</p>
<p>Careers advice for graduates, unemployed and people recently made redundant</p>	<p>Five of the nine HERAs have seen an increase in demand for careers advice. There are several HEIs across the regions that have increased the level and breadth of careers service offered to meet this demand. The increased breadth of this provision includes tailored advice about employability.</p>
<p>Support for SMEs</p>	<p>Five HERAs specifically mentioned HEIs who are supporting SMEs through various schemes and programmes.</p>

Reduced demand	Five HERAs described reduced demand for services such as short full fee consultancy, business training and graduate placements.
Recession to recovery	The report demonstrates that the economic downturn support schemes are having an impact. The HERAs all mention that enhanced links with Business Link, Job Centre + and RDAs have been beneficial in developing some of these schemes and planning for the future.

Data Health Warning

The HERA Barometer is a new data collection exercise and therefore cannot provide the level of robustness and independent verification checks expected of a more established, formal survey.

In terms of the data population:

- All nine English regions returned data
- As the West Midlands Higher Education Association has not been able to take part in past reports their submission covers the period from May 2009. Therefore, an annex has been appended to accommodate the additional information.

Within each region, some HEIs may not have participated in this round of reporting

Association of Universities in the East of England (AUUEE)

A. Increased demand for existing activity

Despite the publication of national figures suggesting that the country remains in recession, confidence in this region's economy is growing. Businesses are responding to a range of new opportunities offered by the region's HEIs. Indicative of this confidence, Cranfield University's business growth and Praxis Personal Development programmes are fully subscribed. In addition, all available places on their Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF) supported re-skilling initiative have been filled and waiting list exists. Nearby at the University of Bedfordshire, their 'Basics of Building a Business' programme, run for local businesses and students, has seen an increase in attendance from start-ups compared to the same point last year.

The following case studies also demonstrate the increased demand:

Anglia Ruskin University

Anglia Ruskin continues to receive record levels of applications from those made redundant from the business sector in London and the South East. The University has agreed with the National College for School Leadership that their programme can be adapted to meet the needs of these people. Originally intended for those already working in schools, it can now be accessed by those from a business background.

The University also reports that recruitment to postgraduate courses supports anecdotal findings that graduates are staying in education and seeking to up-skill, rather than entering the jobs market. For example, their MSc in Forensic Science has recruited its largest ever number of students for the autumn 2009 start.

University of Hertfordshire (UH)

Increased demand has been experienced by the University for KTPs where UH typically offers around 20 at any one time. Six firm enquiries were received during October; several with a particular focus in the computer science and software fields.

Hertfordshire reports increased demand in short courses run by their School of Creative Arts. Classes range in scope including Photoshop, web design and animation. Returning and new student numbers are far higher than in 2008.

UH has experienced a greater number of final year students and alumni attending “recession proof your career” workshops with input from employers and careers consultants. Attendance at enterprise events is up 47% and registrations for Hertfordshire’s business ideas competition are up 200%. UH reports an increase in graduate jobs being advertised with 160 vacancies compared with 134 at this time last year.

University of East Anglia (UEA)

UEA’s Project Evolve focuses on middle/senior management training and development for those who have been or who are likely to be made redundant. 272 completed programmes have taken place with a further 164 individuals booked into future courses.

The first graduates on another of UEA’s ECIF projects, their Graduate Intern Programme, have completed their placements and one has already been offered a full-time position. There are a further eight placements being advertised.

UEA’s Business Plan Competition has been launched with 18 registrations for the business start-up workshop, 20 expressions of interest/applications well ahead of the deadline. Their Enterprise and Commercialisation advice has attracted a number of Student Entrepreneurs who have been mentored and are now trading. This support has embraced assistance from law and accountancy professionals.

Norwich University College of the Arts (NUCA)

NUCA’s first graduate on their Internship project has already completed. With a further six starting there are currently nine internships running with four due later this month. The first round of their Mentoring for the Creative Industries has also already been completed and a new series of partnerships will commence in November.

NUCA’s Brainchild Business Concept Competition offers a wide range of fully subscribed start up workshops and one to one coaching including:

- CV’s, covering letters and job applications;
- researching & applying for exhibition opportunities;
- copyright & IP;
- freelance, self employment & business start-up;
- teacher-training options.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in existing activity

To date there has only been a slight fall in demand across the region for the courses and services offered by higher education institutions. Where falls have occurred it seems likely that these have arisen because:

- some employers have had to scale back their staff development programmes;
- individuals have less disposable income for community engagement studies.

For example, at Anglia Ruskin it has been noted that whilst employers remain keen to engage on identifying skills shortages within their workforces, and to develop CPD to address those shortages, they are far less willing to commit to funding training for their employees on an FTE basis. Generally they increasingly expect employees to undertake training in non-work time only, which fits only with part-time or short course provision and thus may not adequately fill the skills gaps.

Meanwhile at the University of Hertfordshire there has been an overall fall in demand for evening courses in language and cultural subjects that are targeted at the community. At Cranfield University their Management School has had to cancel their High Performance Business Teams Programme due to lack of take-up.

The region's HEIs continue to react flexibly to the ever-changing opportunities that exist and they are equipped with well developed networks that help identify any gaps in existing activity. Where these are detected, the universities are responding both individually and collectively. Any barriers that may impede solutions tend to be addressed via the AUEE networks. For example, there was widespread concern for the many qualified eighteen year olds who were unable to secure a place at university/college this autumn and also for those who have obtained their first degree but who cannot find employment. Via these AUEE networks, specific web-based information has been prepared to cater for both of these distinct categories and is signposted to the graduates in the region.

At the University of Bedfordshire past demand from local businesses for short, full-cost consultancy projects focused on business growth has been impressive <http://www.beds.ac.uk/knowledgehub/casestudies> However, demand has fallen away during the recession leaving a market failure for this kind of intervention. There would appear to be a gap here that now requires some public sector priming.

C. Partnerships and networking

AUEE continues to encourage and facilitate partnership activity that adds value to not only the region's HEIs but also to the relevant economic and social imperatives in the East of England. For example, the Association co-hosted a very well attended and acclaimed annual conference in October entitled 'Managing the changing landscapes of HE in FE'. Representatives from both sectors, along with key regional stakeholders, came together to discuss shared areas of interest and opportunity. AUEE has also facilitated specific relationships between its member HEIs and with TCHC, the organisation responsible for skills brokerage – including Leadership and Management, Train to Gain, and Response to Redundancy. The following are indicative of other regional partnership and network interactions:

Writtle College

Writtle is working closely with Chelmsford Borough Council's Redundancy (RI:SE) programme where numbers are increasing by about 20% as people fail to return to employment. The College has approached several other authorities with a view to starting similar redundancy initiatives in their districts, the most advanced of which is in Maldon where there will be a launch later this month.

The College is working with Jobcentre Plus at their daily 3 month compulsory interviews for the unemployed in Chelmsford. This work is expanding to two adjacent towns. In-line with its ECIF responsibilities, Writtle is working with the East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership, the East of England Development Agency and the LSC in offering support to those faced with redundancy, an area where the College has seen rapid growth that is expected to continue into 2010.

Cranfield University

The University's Business Development Incubation centre has engaged with Business Link to deliver a drop in surgery-day for regional businesses during Global Entrepreneurship Week (16 – 20 November 2009). This has been promoted via the Bedfordshire County Council events programme. Also, their School of Management has delivered an evening seminar for local small businesses from the Milton Keynes Sparc Network where attendance was higher than projected. Cranfield's involvement with the 'Response to Redundancy' programme with Central Bedfordshire Council continues.

University of Hertfordshire

The University of Hertfordshire has experienced increased interest in, and submissions from, the creative sector in the innovation voucher scheme as operated by EEDA with between 50-60 already approved and awaiting confirmation of other successful applications. Such interest from businesses has also been detected by the University

through the increased attendance by organizations looking to recruit graduates at their Careers and Recruitment event.

University of Essex

The University has joined forces with Essex Chambers of Commerce to offer 'Essex Business – The Skills to Succeed' programme. The programme is designed to ensure that businesses have access to the skills necessary to compete successfully and emerge as winners. Essex has also developed its 'Introduction to Leadership' programme that was launched in October. This is delivered by a senior academic who is also a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and who in 2008 received the University of Essex Excellence in Teaching Award. All of the University's networking and partnership events held during the autumn have been fully subscribed by representatives drawn from businesses and organizations across the region.

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

As stated earlier in this report, the first of the region's intern programmes are being completed with strong demand from both graduates and companies/organisations that they should continue. The following case study from the UEA emphasises the significant value of such activity:

University of East Anglia

The University of East Anglia's Evolve Intern programme places recent graduates with businesses and public sector organisations within Norfolk, with support funding available for Norfolk based small and medium-sized businesses. Placements run for between 10 - 12 weeks and can be in any industry sector. Companies have used the programme to investigate new services, research and develop new products, launch ecommerce websites, build bespoke software, streamline processes and deliver benefits throughout their organisations. www.evolve-norfolk.co.uk

UEA reports that a Norwich based media company is reaping the rewards of its early involvement with this new Intern programme. It was when Digital Media identified an urgent requirement to undertake a copy writing project that they turned to the University's Evolve Intern programme, which is helping organisations develop new products and service during the recession, whilst providing valuable new skills for the employed graduates. Through this scheme a graduate has been able to launch her career in a way that not only provided real life experience but also offered the opportunity to put her skills in front of a potential employer. The graduate had such a positive impact on the Company that they have offered her a job at the end of the internship.

The following two case studies are indicative of other new and re-purposed schemes:

University of Bedfordshire

The University of Bedfordshire's Knowledge Hub launched their 'Supporting Graduates in Employment' programme in September. This is co-financed by the European Social Fund in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council. The programme provides free leadership and management training to graduates living in Bedfordshire and offers access to the Certificate in Leadership and Management from the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) at Level 5. The first course proved to be fully subscribed with delegates from a variety of organisations ranging from hospitals, solicitors, carpentry firms and fitness companies. Training is open to all graduates, regardless of when they completed their degree, who work in SMEs or public sector companies, or those who have been made unemployed within the last six months. Employees within SMEs can also be accepted if they have work experience equivalent to graduate level.

Low Carbon SKTP programme

Following AUEE's successful application for European Regional Development Funds, a low carbon SKTP programme (LowC-SKTP) will be rolled out across the region by Anglia Ruskin University from the start of 2010. This programme has been specifically constructed to offer a new dimension to an existing scheme that will assist SMEs to respond to the opportunities arising from the downturn. The project aligns with ERDF Priority Axis 1 – Innovation and Knowledge Transfer and it meets several goals from the Regional Economic Strategy. Selection criteria have been grouped into four thematic areas:

- Technology Development/Adoption
- Process
- Behavioural Change
- Longevity and Reuse

E. Other

HEIs Working with Suppliers

A recent EEDA coordinated approach to economic and social recovery has been 'Destination Growth' that kick-started Enterprise Week for the East of England on 3rd November 2009. Hosted from the world-class air museum at Duxford and with key note speakers including Sir Alan Sugar and Greg Dyke, the event provided 800 SMEs the opportunity to interact with a range of services and expertise including those from universities. It offered delegates the tools and confidence to not only see-out the downturn but also a fresh look at surviving and thriving in a recession. As an exhibitor,

AUEE detected an improved level of confidence from SME representatives; a view was shared by a number of universities exhibiting at Duxford, all of which were pleased with the significant level of firm enquiries.

As a more specific example of an HEI working with other agencies, the University of Bedfordshire partnered with London Luton Airport, Luton Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils and the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Chambers' of Commerce to facilitate a 'Meet the Buyer' supply chain event. Held in September and attended by over 100 local businesses, the event was highly successful. The University prepared companies for the event by hosting a training day on presenting successfully to suppliers. Contracts have already been signed by a number of suppliers.

<http://www.beds.ac.uk/knowledgehub/entrepreneurship/Meetthebuyer>

HEIs Working with HEIs

It is clear that several HEIs including the Norwich University College of Arts are interacting strongly with their Alumni Associations, both where past students are turning back to their HEI for support with re-skilling and also where they are offering help to one another via mentoring and/or internships.

A number of the region's universities continue to interact successfully with the NCGE. Events such as at the University of Hertfordshire's 'Herts Make it Happen – Flying Start' organized in conjunction with NCGE, have been very successful in supporting unemployed graduates.

All HEIs have reported strong demand for their ECIF open days, recruitment events, and specialist activities. For example, 'Sustainability Live' offered from Cranfield University and the series of business clinics at Writtle College have been well attended as businesses and graduates recognise the benefits of working closely with HEI's, especially in these economic times when new business opportunities can be detected.

In many cases HEIs are sharing good practice and market opportunities in order to maximise their ability to offer meaningful and timely responses. For example, the ways in which the Norwich University College of the Arts works closely with the University of East Anglia. UEA in turn, in joint partnership with the University of Essex, embraces responsibility for University Campus Suffolk in Ipswich. Equally, Writtle College is working closely with Anglia Ruskin University and the University of Essex to ensure any business enquiries are responded to by the most appropriate Essex based HEI.

Other HEI Events

As another example of events aimed at the dissemination of best practice and at eroding any barriers to success that may exist, AUEE is facilitating an ESRC sponsored seminar

at the University of Essex that addresses the various facets of the impact of research in social sciences.

Barriers

AUEE believes that all member HEIs are working at or very close to full capacity and that the ability to respond to future imperatives may be severely hindered by a shortage of available staff. Nevertheless, all institutions are working closely to ensure that their existing high reputation of interacting with the region's business community is maintained and enhanced.

F. Summary remarks

East of England Overview

Since the summer months there have been a number of indications to suggest that confidence is returning to the East of England's business community. Undoubtedly stimulated by ECIF support, the university sector institutions have been offering a greater range of business support and re-skilling packages that have attracted far more business enquiries than at this stage last year. The volume and nature of the enquiries made at 'Destination Growth' in early November indicated that many businesses appear more optimistic than they were during the summer months.

Collaboration and Networks

The region's HEIs continue to grow their networks and to collaborate wherever possible in order to add value to the economic and social fabric of the East of England. Indicative of recent collaborative activity, AUEE members agreed to out-source the management of the region's web-based graduate employment service GradsEast so that it can become more responsive to the needs of both employers and graduates. The service is growing strongly and it has already engaged with a number of large scale employers seeking to recruit graduates. <http://www.gradseast.co.uk/>

Cross-Regional Linkages

Representing its member institutions as well as all other Higher Education Regional Associations, AUEE attends the Institute of Knowledge Transfer (IKT) Board meetings. This network is proving to be invaluable in not only helping to disseminate IKT news to members but also to feed back to the Board recommendations that will enable IKT to develop sustainability.

Impact

The East of England universities are well aware of the importance of their impact upon both the regional and sub-regional economies, as well as their social responsibilities. As detailed earlier in this report, many of the university sector services have been developed

to support the business community and these have been well received and fully subscribed. Many businesses, especially SMEs, are now interacting with an HEI for the first time and from this initial relationship it is likely that longer term interactions will flow. The universities are aware of the need to measure impact to seek out new forms of engagement that remain effective and which offer long-term solutions.

East Midlands Universities Association

A. Increased demand

East Midlands Universities report that demand for their programmes, courses and innovation activities, is buoyant. Unfortunately, as we explore later (section B), some businesses cannot avail themselves of the support available, as they are unable to finance even heavily subsidised provision. Interest from recent graduates in the region's internship schemes continues to be strong and many students are also considering self-employment.

Demand from Businesses:

Most HEIs are experiencing a high level of private and public sector enquiries for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs); EMUA has noted previously that the Shorter KTP (sKTP) is attracting significant interest from SMEs. Nottingham Trent University's (NTU) five newly approved KTPs include the region's first sKTP, with a local SME. SMEs have also shown considerable interest in short, postgraduate student placements. The University of Nottingham has had over 30 requests from SMEs for its scheme, run in partnership with NTU, which is expected to allow 35 individuals to be placed with local SMEs. Business Innovation Vouchers for SMEs to access academic support and advice from University of Nottingham are also popular, attracting over 60 enquiries and 30 applications in the first phase.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Postgraduate placement Programme' page on the University of Nottingham Graduate School website. The page features a navigation menu on the left, a search bar, and a main content area with a large image of a woman working on a laptop. The text on the page includes:

- Home** > postgraduate placements
- Postgraduate placement Programme**
- Are you a postgraduate and fancy undertaking a short, flexible placement with a local organisation?**
- Are you an East Midlands SME and would like help with projects you have been meaning to start but don't have the time or capacity?**
- Nottingham Trent University and The University of Nottingham can pair local organisations with talented postgraduate students to work on a variety of work-based activities.**
- What is on offer?**
- Funded by the EU, Nottingham Trent University and The University of Nottingham are teaming up with local public and private organisations giving postgraduates the chance to engage in a variety of work-based projects.
- The benefits are mutual – postgraduates get real work experience and skills (and some cash); SMEs gain bright, capable individuals keen to make a positive impact within the organisation. Involvement can either be long or short term and covers a range of discipline backgrounds.
- Postgraduates**

The browser window shows the URL <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/gradschool/placements/> and the page title 'The Graduate School of the University of Nottingham'.

The University of Northampton has enjoyed steady demand from businesses and individuals working in the creative industries sector for units in its newly refurbished Portfolio Innovation Centre which has reached 75% occupancy (40 companies). Demand for units in Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln's (BG) Sky Centre Business Incubator continues to outstrip supply; the low cost units with access to a broad range academic and professional support, is proving very attractive to start-ups. Two new clients have opted to take 'hot-desk' space, as an alternative.

RED camera courses, offered by the Creative Exchange (University of Derby) to professionals working in the film production industry (subsidised by Skillset Film Skills Fund) are fully booked, with a waiting list for places.

Demand from individuals:



Interest in Derby's free OnetoOne Careers advice and guidance service remains strong. A newly-developed series of workshops has been delivered across North Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. 225 clients have used the service since August 2009 (132 interventions in October alone). 85 client appointments took place between August-October 2009 and 93 clients attended workshops in October. [Picture here](#)

A heightened interest in self-employment is evident from University of Derby's recently launched "Start-Up & Go" project that supports unemployed people (or those at risk of redundancy) who want to start their own business. Strong demand has seen the initial 12 places increased to 20. Individuals benefit from a structured programme, including a cash grant, free business support and mentoring, membership to the Derbyshire Innovative Creative Entrepreneurs (DICE) Club of new entrepreneurs, and access to a programme of University workshops on marketing, finance, e-business and communication skills.

NTU reports increased enquiries for the Professional Certificate in Photography, especially from individuals affected by economic downturn. About half of attendees at recruitment events were considering professional photography because of their current economic woes (being either recently redundant or needing a second income). The majority also indicated a desire for the 'greener grass' of self-employment. This trend echoes the course leader's experience of previous recessions.

Demand from students/recent graduates:



The East Midlands-wide Enterprise Inc Project (funded through HEIF, ERDF and emda) is aimed at improving the enterprise skills and entrepreneurship capability of 500 students and new graduates, by supporting them to develop enterprising ideas into businesses. All our HEIs report very strong demand for the scheme e.g. University of Derby has received over 130 applications from graduates for one of the 25 places available there.

NTU also reports buoyant demand for its HiveStart programme (funded by the Greater Nottingham Partnership) which helps undergraduates prepare for self-employment in the creative sector, with twice as many applications as there are funded places available.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in activity

In EMUA's last Barometer report, we indicated that although enrolments from businesses for training had dropped markedly over the preceding year, the rate of decline had slowed. Enquiries, both for business services and training are growing, but companies, especially SMEs, continue to struggle to finance these activities. Time is also a factor for businesses struggling to operate with reduced staff; even large companies are reluctant to release employees to undertake full qualifications.

EMUA's HEIs continue to flex their offers in order to address these issues, as we illustrate below, but the inability of cash-strapped businesses, particularly SMEs, to finance even modest fees for training, or the minimum wage for placements, is creating an environment where they are becoming competitively disadvantaged.

Companies continue to recruit graduates, but vacancies remain lower than normal. In contrast, HEIs report an increased demand for Electrical Engineering graduates despite the recession, which may reflect the growing importance of the energy sector.

Two HEIs, recognizing that employers currently lack the capacity to support staff through long-term programmes but still have immediate development needs, have initiated new short course provision. Responding to focus group findings that financial pressures were preventing food-sector businesses from enrolling staff on postgraduate level courses, NTU has deconstructed its Masters level courses into modular formats, providing businesses with access to higher level skills and professional development at a lower cost. Where desired, the credit-bearing modules can be accumulated into a Masters qualification, or used as accredited prior learning elsewhere in the sector. In a similar vein, the University of Leicester is offering short stand-alone modules on management themes through Leading Edge (Leicester's Employer Engagement Project), which can be taken separately, but which can also build into an undergraduate certificate programme.

We indicated in section A that interest from students in internships remains high. Unfortunately that interest is not matched by placement offers from businesses, who remain either unconvinced that an intern would add value, or are unable to finance even a minimum wage position. This dearth of suitable opportunities is exacerbated by the withdrawal of promised placements because of the economic conditions. For instance, the ShellStep programme run by University of Leicester in 2009, although very successful (19 placements completed), was only achieved through strenuous efforts to attract additional companies to the scheme. At least 18 employers who offered placements, retracted them before the start of the programme, citing the recession as the cause. On a positive note, however, their host companies have offered six participants extension contracts.

KTP projects have also been a casualty of the recession. NTU reports three projects that came to an abrupt end since September 2008, due to the economic downturn (a house

builder which went into receivership, an engineering company who made a number of redundancies and a car parts manufacturer who lost a high profile contract).

C. Partnerships and networking

EMUA members continue to work with regional partners and stakeholders to align their activities and funding to obtain maximum impact. These partnerships have been strengthened by increased university participation in regional and local strategic forums creating new opportunities for their students and the regional economy. EMUA has recently secured representation at the Regional Economic Cabinet and EMUA's members are working both individually and in collaboration, to meet the needs of businesses and students. All the region's HEIs have actively contributed to emda's ongoing review of the Regional Innovation Strategy and the update of the Regional Economic Strategy evidence-base. The East Midlands Innovation Networks (i-nets) are beginning to stimulate new business-university interactions and EMUA has successfully facilitated applications to the region's HE Collaboration funds (sponsored by emda). We illustrate some of these activities below.

The Northamptonshire Business Show, a joint venture between University of Northampton's Business Link Start-up Service team and Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited, was designed as a showcase for businesses that have set up in the county in the past 2 years, to display their products and services. Held at the Kettering Conference Centre on 20th November 2009 during Global Entrepreneurship Week, the show formed a major part of the University's local public engagement strategy to help counter-balance the economic downturn. The show was attended by the local MP, local authorities and emda, and featured a range of 'business to business' and 'business to client' start-ups from around the county, with the aim of highlighting the possibilities available to new entrepreneurs, as well as the possibilities of sourcing goods and services from within the East Midlands area.

The Colleges of the University of Leicester Network (CULN; comprising 18 FECs and three HEIs including BG) hosted a meeting of its Enterprise Working Group in October at which emda's Phil Bramhall (Learning and Enterprise) was the keynote presenter. emda wishes to work closely with CULN members to develop enterprise education.

Loughborough University is supporting a local Graduate Retention Project that involves regional university, council and other organisations. The Employer Liaison Manager represents the University on the project steering group. One aim of the project is to research and promote STEM-related start-up businesses in the proposed Science Park in Leicester.

The University of Lincoln has been working with the Benefit Fraud Agency and Job Centre Plus to provide students with summer placements. These were extremely well received – many of the students taking part have already been offered further placements during the vacation periods and it is hoped to repeat the exercise next year. This is a 'win win' partnership between the University and Job Centre Plus as it helps the

students gain valuable paid employment and provides cover during the Job Centre Plus peak leave season.

Lincoln is also using local employer networks to ensure its students are leaving with the right skills and qualifications. For instance, the Sports Department recently met 17 employers, including City of Lincoln Council, Lucozade, District Councils, Hot Prospects, Business Link and Lincoln City Football Club, at a focus group meeting to discuss their experience of graduate recruitment. They explored what skills were needed and employers' understanding of 'employability'; the findings will be used to help inform and develop course content. Meanwhile, University of Lincoln's award winning National Centre for Food Manufacturing (opened in March 2009) has provided a great boost to its work with food sector businesses.

Case Study: National Centre for Food Manufacturing – University of Lincoln at Holbeach

The National Centre for Food Manufacturing is a training factory co-funded by employers, Lincolnshire County Council with support from ERDF, Lincolnshire Enterprise, emda and the University. It provides a 'real-life' environment and top-of-the-range industry-standard equipment including a £1.5 million fully automated production line for 'ready-meals'. The level of engagement with food manufacturing companies has increased greatly since the centre was opened; its unique facilities mean academics and major food manufacturers can jointly develop new technologies within the industry.



"What is innovative about Holbeach is that the provision has been shaped and dictated by the employers whose businesses the campus supports. This partnership has created arguably the best resource of its kind in the UK." Val Braybrooks – Dean.

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

The introduction of major new schemes to address the downturn has slowed as institutions embed their ECIF-funded activities, but universities are still developing innovative ways to help businesses and individuals prepare to take advantage of the economic recovery.

For instance, the University of Northampton has developed a range of initiatives specifically to address the current economic situation. These include an expansion of the business outreach team to increase engagement with businesses as they prepare to emerge from recession and a HEIF-funded Staff Placement Scheme which subsidises 2-3 days of an academic's time to work with companies that would otherwise be unable to engage with the University. Northampton has also funded a PhD studentship to research 'The Role of Social Enterprise in Reducing Long Term Unemployment', which particularly focuses on young people who are not in education, employment and training and has developed a Postgraduate Certificate in 'Income Generation, Bidding and Tendering' to up-skill individuals involved in bid writing. Open to applicants throughout the East Midlands, its objective is to increase the region's effectiveness in competing for funds as public spending contracts.

The University of Leicester has commenced its second series of Business Breakfast seminars, run by the Leading Edge (HEFCE Employer Engagement Project) in conjunction with Business Link. The programme, aimed at regional SMEs, is now focusing on management themes (e.g. change management, organizational management). The format of the sessions has also changed – each session is now a workshop, allowing individual organizations to bring a real issue from their workplace for consideration within the forum and receive specialist support from the workshop facilitator.

At its recent Graduate Recruitment and Placement Fair, Loughborough University's Careers Centre offered a programme of additional support for recent graduates, those made redundant and those still seeking work. Employers ran a series of workshops which were targeted towards graduates as well as students, and careers advisers offered individual advice and guidance to approximately ten graduates on the day of the fair. These resources had been actively promoted through the Alumni Association's website.

The Universities of Leicester, De Montfort and Loughborough are hosting a series of events promoting KTP as a tool to assist businesses through the economic downturn. Around 25 people attended the first event, in Leicester; further events are planned for the west and north of the county. The same institutions, under the banner of '3 Universities for Business' (supported by Prospect Leicestershire), held a successful dissemination event, 'Breakthrough Technologies for Healthcare Innovation', covering university-based initiatives and activities. The event attracted approximately 100 registrations from

business and other organizations throughout the region. The University of Nottingham has been awarded three years' funding, for knowledge transfer secondments allied to recent or current EPSRC research. The programme aims to improve the flow of knowledge from the university to companies and public bodies, by seconding academics to support the translation of ideas, products and processes.

E. Other

In previous reports EMUA has highlighted numerous examples of the contributions our member institutions make socially, culturally and economically to the well-being of the East Midlands. In this report we highlight two examples of how our institutions ensure they stay at the forefront of best practice in knowledge transfer and disseminate good practice to the region's businesses.

Researching Best Practice

The EMUA Innovation and Knowledge Transfer (IKT) Group meets regularly to pursue collaborative activity that helps universities reach out to businesses and the community. As one of its strategic objectives, the group aims to learn from international best practice to inform the development of Innovation and Knowledge Transfer models in the region. To this end, representatives from six EMUA HEIs and EMUA's Executive Director, accompanied by the CEO of EMB Ltd (who deliver the East Midlands Business Link contract) undertook a benchmarking trip to California, organised by EMUA, in September 2009. The five day itinerary, was organised with help from the Science and Innovation teams in the British Consulate and included visits to seven Californian institutions. The trip focussed on three themes:

- University – SME interactions
- Student Enterprise
- Regional models of innovation

The aims of the trip were:

- To compare and contrast the relationship between state, universities and businesses in the US and UK
- To identify and share best practice in the themes identified above
- To encourage fruitful transatlantic links between universities.



As well as identifying best practice which could jointly be incorporated into the region's Innovation structure, individuals identified a number of actions which they propose incorporating into their own institutional practices. In addition, the participants expect to develop not only useful transatlantic partnerships, but also uncovered increased opportunities for partnership working in the East Midlands.

Promoting Good Practice

Good design practice has been identified as a key driver of product (and business) success. De Montfort University (DMU) has been in the vanguard of promoting better design practice, especially to SMEs, who often overlook design until late in the product development process. They recently concluded delivery of a pilot project for the BIS Manufacturing Advisory Service aimed to promote the importance of design in product development for SMEs. It is not only delivering improved performance and jobs in the participating companies, but also facilitated the engagement of companies with consultants, innovation networks and other business support.

Case Study: East Midlands MAS Design Pilot Scheme

The MAS Design Pilot Scheme was completed in July 2009. The scheme began with the delivery of 5 regional, 1 day design workshops (1 in each County). In total 130 people attended from over 70 companies; 76% stating that the event would cause them to change their business approach. Early indications suggest the scheme will deliver significant impact on turnover and job creation. DMU managed the ensuing projects, defining project/product specifications and selecting appropriate consultants. The project promoted an effective working relationship between a wide range of SME's, PERA, Design Consultants and the Medical iNET



Project (Regional)	Dates	RDA Funding	Match Funding/ Funding Levered	Funding Into /Design Community	Companies Engaged	Project Completions	Potential Increase in Yearly Turnover	Potential Jobs Created /Safeguarded
East Midlands MAS Design Pilot Scheme	April 2008 - July 2009	£220,000	£117,000	£195,000	80	13	£3.5 to 5.5 Million	23 50

F. Summary Remarks

The last quarter has largely been one of consolidation for EMUA members, as they embed activities to assist businesses to prepare for economic recovery. There is clearly a high level of demand for ECIF-funded services from businesses and individuals. Institutions that did not receive funds through ECIF are still endeavouring to provide support by re-purposing existing schemes, where possible.

It is clear however, that the demand from businesses is often not matched by their capacity to purchase the available provision, even when this is heavily subsidised. This market gap, particularly affecting the SME businesses that form a disproportionately large part of the East Midlands economy, is concerning, since it is creating an environment where they are becoming competitively disadvantaged.

University Careers Services' advice and support to unemployed individuals (graduates and professionals) is in high demand and is clearly filling a market need. Unfortunately this service is largely limited to the University of Derby's ECIF scheme, in the north of the region.

On a more positive note, the recession seems to be stimulating entrepreneurial behaviour, with students showing a particular interest in schemes to assist them into self-employment. Students wishing to enhance their employability skills are very attracted to the idea of internships, but are finding them difficult to source in the East Midlands. EMUA's members are working hard with other regional agencies (e.g. Hot Prospects) to identify suitable internship and placement opportunities.

There remains considerable concern about the impact of the recession on well qualified young people, including those who were unable to secure a place at university this autumn and are being joined by a record number of applicants for 2010 entry, and also for those that have obtained their first degree, but who either cannot find employment or have been made redundant as employers downsize their workforce.

Universities South West (formerly HERDA-SW)

A. Increased demand for existing activity

A number of Universities are reporting an increase in demand for services from businesses; and for careers support from students and graduates.

- The **University of Plymouth**, using its Enterprise Solutions entry point, have identified an increase in businesses requiring marketing related expertise. E.g. the University has supported a social enterprise with its branding and market identity in preparation for a high profile event. By using Enterprise Vouchers to fund this key developmental activity they overcame a problem of cost that would have otherwise proved prohibitive. The same university also report a huge amount of interest in the newly introduced Shorter KTP model from businesses that seem to desire more short term help and support with tactical issues rather than committing strategic investments in innovation during these economically difficult times. In the north of the region the **University of Gloucestershire** also report excellent uptake levels for their short KTP scheme.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the University of Plymouth's Enterprise Vouchers page. The page is titled "Enterprise Solutions" and "Enterprise Vouchers". It features a navigation menu with links like "About the university", "Courses & programmes", "Business, research & enterprise", "International students", "Community & public engagement", "Popular pages", and "Press office, news & events". The main content area is titled "Enterprise Vouchers" and includes a sub-heading "Financial support during the economic downturn". The text describes the university's offer of financial support to eligible businesses and individuals. It lists the services provided, such as gaining extended assistance with careers planning, accessing specialist diagnostic assessments, and getting access to accredited and non-accredited courses. There are also sections for "Individuals" and "Businesses" that detail the types of support available. A sidebar on the left contains a vertical banner with the text "talent and ideas" and "The enterprise university". A right-hand sidebar titled "Apply for Enterprise Vouchers" provides links to "View the eligibility criteria (Word)", "Download an application form for individuals (Word)", and "Download an application form for businesses (Word)". It also includes contact information for the Enquiries Co-ordinator: "Email: businessservices@plymouth.ac.uk" and "Post: ECOP Enquires Co-ordinator, LINK, 3rd Floor Link Building, Drakes Circus, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 8AA". The browser window shows the URL "http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=27099" and the page is viewed in Internet Explorer.

- With input from SWRDA / Universities South West and aligned to local Business Link services, **Bournemouth University** have developed a programme using work

experience graduates to undertake website review / development with localised businesses to help them maximise the online opportunities offered by website interaction. In the period since the previous report (September 2009) a total of 167 business websites were reviewed, each business being issued with a comprehensive report detailing problems, issues and solutions.

- The **University of Exeter** have found the numbers of graduates coming to the general career management workshops run by their Careers and Employment Service have doubled. With numbers up to 28 per session compared to the usual average of circa 12. In addition to this an out of region workshop for graduates was run in London where a further 17 people attended.
- Universities in the region are working ever more closely with **Business Link** and the **SW Manufacturing Advisory Service** to provide assistance to manufacturing companies during the recession and have run a number of events to explore innovative solutions to help organizations from one of the hardest hit industrial sectors. Following from the University of Exeter event reported in the October Barometer, the most recent event was hosted by the University of Plymouth – the September 2009 ‘Innovation in Manufacturing’ which was delivered in partnership with the **Plymouth Manufacturers Group, Enterprise Europe Network** and **Business Link**. This event attracted over 120 delegates representing 65 local manufacturing organisations and provided an opportunity for businesses to view University facilities, access advice and guidance from internal and external manufacturing experts, network and attend an innovation exhibition.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in existing activity

- During the current reporting period few areas have been reported as showing a fall in demand. Those showing reduced activity include:
 - some Departments are reporting greater difficulty in finding placements for students where employers are providing payments for students.
 - the lead time for developing / establishing a ‘classic’ KTP is growing as businesses are more cautious with strategic investments in innovation. There is a risk that the growing interest in Shorter KTPs could compromise the interest and investment into the longer term strategic classic KTP.
 - with many businesses making redundancies or reducing working hours, there has been a knock-on effect in their recruitment and training policies, and some businesses are tending to concentrate on core activity rather than investing in research and development.
 - there are mixed reports around training in leadership and business management skills with some showing increased demand and others a slight reduction in demand.
 - generally we have found that there is little loss in activity, but are concerned that this could be due to the additional funding on offer in many HEIs through ECIF.
- At the end of October 2009 the SWRDA-funded **Graduates for Business** project came to a conclusion – and this has led to localised gaps in provision as staff have been lost from the region’s Universities as a result of funding coming to an end. The project successfully delivered over 700 student and graduate

placements in South West businesses. The project also supported the regional recruitment service www.gradsouthwest.com which is now financially sustained by HEIs and SWRDA in the region. The service currently has over 41,000 registered student and graduate jobseekers, and c1,700 vacancies.

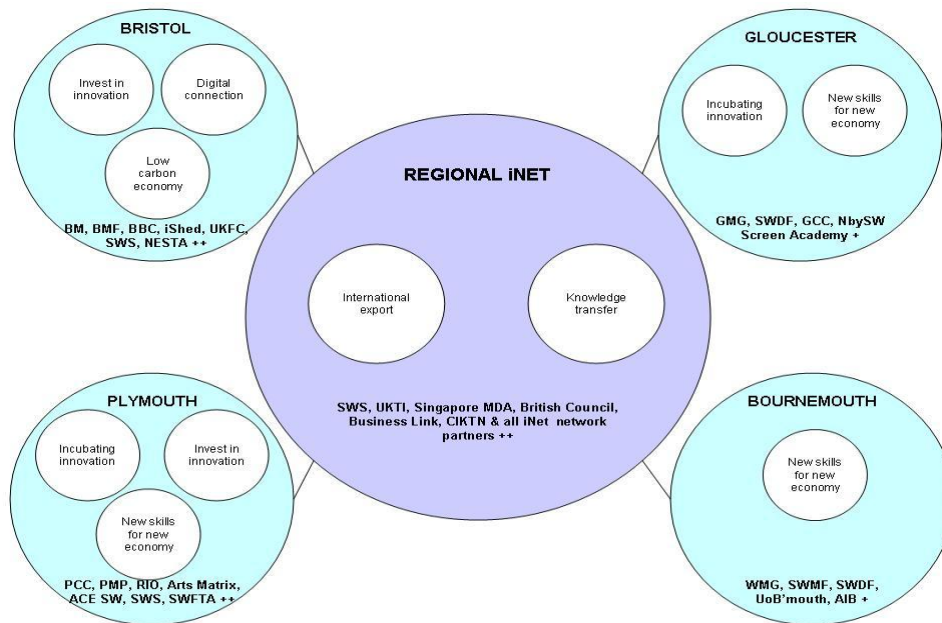
C. Partnerships and networking

Universities in the South West are at the heart of regional partnerships spanning a huge breadth of activity – from supporting entrepreneurs and businesses in their innovation, research and development, and training needs; to providing information, advice, guidance and training to a range of individuals, from students and graduates, through to professional and executive jobseekers. These networks are continually developing and those newer relationships are becoming more embedded.

- **Graduate Internships and Recruitment** – By more extensive use of their Careers and Employment Service, the **University of Exeter** are now advertising career and management workshops at the local Jobcentre Plus along with the graduate business partnership and ShellSTEP scheme in an effort to improve opportunities to students and graduates. Over the last four months the **University of Plymouth** has also been working jointly with their local Jobcentre Plus team. As a consequence of this partnership a range of activities have been developed including joint briefings, additional marketing material to clarify how the University can help graduates (both Plymouth Alumni and from elsewhere) with particular focus on those aged between 18 and 24. The University has also pledged support for the Jobcentre Plus scheme ‘Backing Young Britain’ and is now represented at the local Jobcentre Plus job fairs across the City. This increased level of visibility has proven effective in attracting a significant level of enquiries for graduate level jobs and increased registrations on the regional job database www.gradsouthwest.com
- The region’s Universities are actively engaging in the development of regional Innovation Networks (i-Nets) to support business innovation in the region. The i-Nets are jointly SWRDA/ERDF funded activities. Universities are leading / partners in all five regional i-Nets covering the aerospace, environmental, ICT, bio-medical and creative industries sectors. For example:

The Media School at **Bournemouth University** through the Universities South West Creative Industries Group are part of a south west creative industries i-Net submission to support innovation and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new digital landscape. The CI i-Net business plan is geared to enable creative businesses in the region to realise new opportunity and future growth.

The Creative Industries i-Net will be delivered through a consortium led by South West Screen, and will actively position the sector in the South West to take a national and internationally significant lead in the new digital economy. (**Consortium members:** Arts Council England SW / Arts Matrix / iShed / South West Creative Business Networks / HEIs / Media Academy network / SW Creative Clusters)



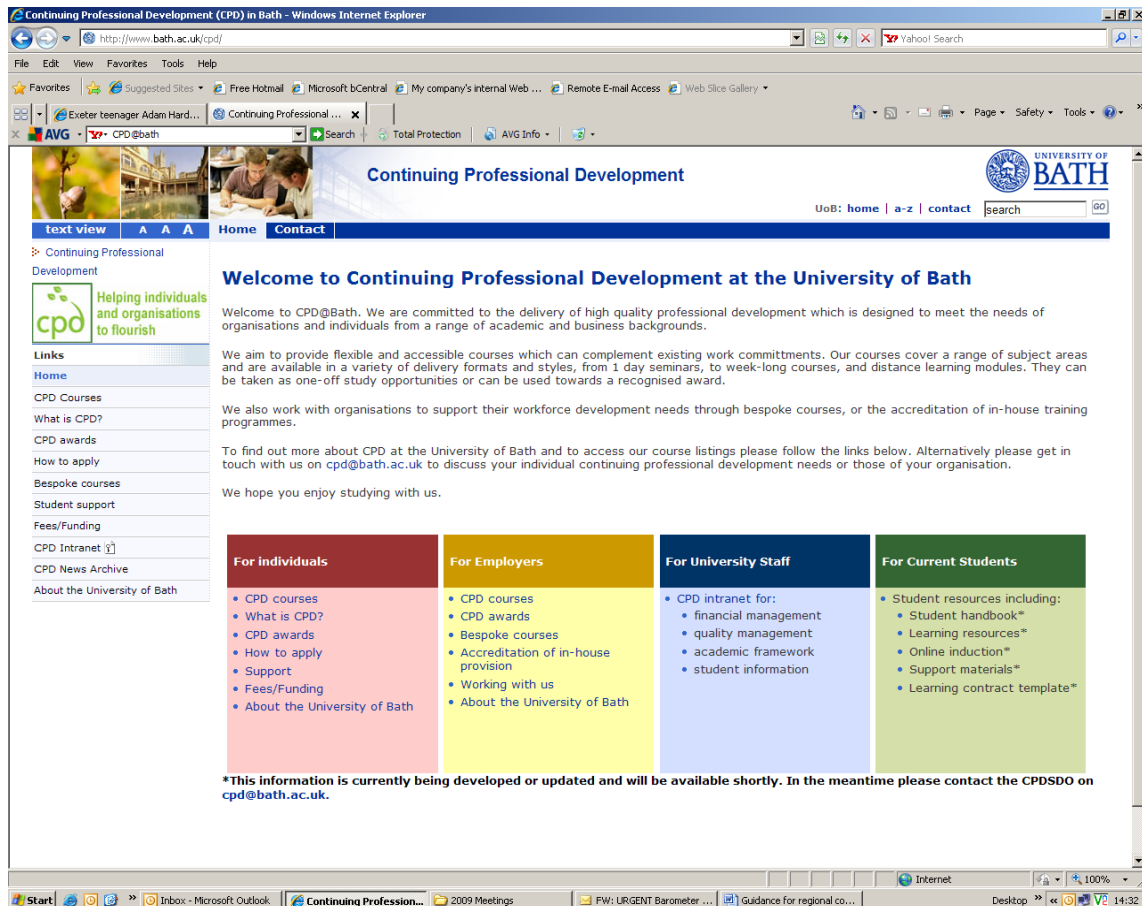
The iNet will:

- ensure that the SW creative industries have a competitive advantage in the new global digital marketplace
- drive innovation in digital technologies to create new models, products, applications and services
- generate new jobs and skills which future proof the sector for an ever evolving creative economy

- Schemes to meet skills/workforce development needs - Bournemouth University** is working with Business Link on a Department of Work and Pensions funded initiative to offer support to newly - or potentially - redundant people. The initiative focuses on offering people information, advice and guidance around business formation, along with additional financial support whilst attending the programme. Bournemouth University is contributing pro-actively by providing meeting space and refreshments as well as being a catalyst for additional support to both Business Link and the clients. The **University of Plymouth** is working very closely with A4e (who were recently awarded the national contract for Rapid Response to Redundancy) with joint visits, marketing literature and support planning. This 'working partnership' arrangement offers those organisations under potential threat and their staff, a diverse range of support including promotion of the University's Enterprise Vouchers (funded through ECIF).
- The **University of Gloucestershire** has extended links with the county's HEI's and Business Link SW in promotion of Graduate Challenge, and in connection with the Regional Knowledge Escalator project. The University also delivers the BUG Business Planning Programme on which Business Link provides support, helping University Staff, Students and Alumni with an interest in future self-employment or business creation.

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

- The **University of the West of England (UWE)** is offering a series of five FREE half day workshops as part of its solutions4recession scheme. They have all been designed to increase attendees' capabilities in specific areas and will be led by expert practitioners from Bristol Business School and UWE Careers: the topics are, New Thinking in Management, Uncovering your Strengths, Finance: a mystery or a foreign language, Marketing: dispelling myths and assumptions, Management as Intervention.
- Graduate Internship Programme Scheme - The **Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester** have launched a second wave scheme to support local businesses and service providers to fight back against the recession through offering work placements. Organisations who take on a graduate for a 6 month work placement will be eligible for a subsidy to contribute towards the minimum national wage rate. The scheme will support graduates who have matriculated this year or post graduates completing in the current academic session. Two graduates will be supported initially. One graduate is already placed with Cirencester Chamber of Commerce. A second placement is being progressed, and it is hoped will be concluded shortly.
- The **University of Plymouth** provides access to career advisors with higher level skills to take a pro-active lead in responding to the increasing demand from graduates, middle and senior managers as well as professionals who are employed and at risk or job hunting. In effect those who traditionally have not targeted HEI Careers Services in the past. The new offer includes a free 'Executives Futures' programme and Graduate Boot Camp covering advice and support for career changers, applying for jobs and interview techniques, tailored to higher level needs. Working closely with Jobcentre Plus and the Rapid Response team, the University has also developed a series of 'Your career: The next step' workshops which are free workshops targeted at eligible individuals notified of redundancy.
- On 4 November 2009, the **University of Bath** launched CPD@bath, supported by its recently established CPD Support and Development Office. CPD@bath is committed to the delivery of high quality professional development which is designed to meet the needs of organisations and individuals from a range of academic and business backgrounds. It will provide flexible and accessible courses which can complement existing work commitments. Courses cover a range of subject areas and are available in a variety of delivery formats and styles, from 1 day seminars to week-long courses and distance learning modules. These can be taken as one-off study opportunities or can be used to gain credit towards a recognised award. It is intended that CPD@bath will work with organisations to support their workforce development needs through bespoke courses, or the accreditation of in-house training programmes. This demand-led approach was facilitated by the approval of a new academic framework for CPD in April 2009 and is supported by a central CPD Development Fund.



E. Other

- The **University of Bath** is implementing a plan to expand its Innovation Centre, located in the centre of the City of Bath, with effect from 1 January 2010. The Innovation Centre provides practical support and expertise to local technology enterprises and companies that emerge from the University's student and academic research base. From the very earliest stages of exploring a novel business idea to the establishment of full trading companies, Bath Ventures Innovation Centre provides support at each key stage of development. The expansion will create additional incubation space as well as provide additional meeting and networking space for businesses. The Innovation Centre has an impressive track record of 'graduating' companies as established businesses in the region, for example:
 - (i) Mirifice, which graduated from the Innovation Centre to expand into offices in Abbey Street in Bath, has since secured funding from the South West Ventures Fund, which is managed by YFM Group.
 - (ii) Screen Learning, which graduated from the Innovation into new offices on Milsom Street in Bath, won a prestigious BETT Award for its groundbreaking educational assessment software earlier this year.
- The **University of Plymouth** has held a successful breakfast event targeted at Social Enterprises where over 20 organisations attended an interactive session which explored their needs and identified where the University could assist. This was the first event focused on this sector and the beginning of dialogue to ensure that their needs are also responded to and met by the higher education community.

- NCGE, BIS, SWRDA and the SW Design Forum, Universities South West and its members have established a **Creative Industries University Enterprise Network (CI-UEN)** with pump priming support from NCGE/BIS and the Knowledge Escalator Project (SWRDA/ERDF). The CI-UEN's first pilot initiative, led by the **Arts University College Bournemouth**, is focused on design mentoring for students that will partner design students with mentors from SME design businesses.

F. Summary remarks

Since the original ECIF intervention at the height of the economic downturn (and by careful strategic re-purposing of existing HEI programmes and activities focussed on employer engagement/graduate employment) the South West has experienced a gradual evolution from business support on a 'crisis response basis' to a more positive 'future planning ethos', which has been practically grounded on the 'needs must' mentality dominating the economic horizon.

Increasingly, we are witnessing a closer alignment of ECIF and ECIF related activity with the emerging medium and long term regional economic strategies such as i-Nets, Creative Industries and the further broadening of Jobcentre Plus / University Careers activity. Many of these have gestated during the recession and are now becoming embedded in partnership interactions which as they mature begin to sow the seedbed for regional activity based on the key features of the 'Higher Ambitions – The future of universities in a knowledge economy' paper published in November by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills.



London Higher

A. Increased demand for existing activity

Examples of increased demand by students and recent graduates include interest in internships, employability training and part-time study. For businesses, there is increased demand and interest in knowledge transfer partnerships (KTP), R&D collaboration and internships.

Birkbeck, University of London: Applications and enquiries for part-time study have increased compared with 2008. For example, enrolments onto UG and PG degree courses starting October 2009 increased 53%.

Kingston University: Graduate to Business (G2B) organised 10 two day bootcamps for 138 graduates in Kingston. There are currently 47 graduates waiting for the future bootcamp sessions. About 10% of attendees are in graduate-level employment.

London Metropolitan: Careers service has seen increased demand by graduates for employment opportunities and workshops. Accelerator (business incubation) has had increased demand from SMEs for mentoring.

London South Bank University: KTP programme grown after slight decrease in 2008, with expansion into creative, not-for-profit and health sectors. Many Knowledge Connect schemes are in the food retail sector.

Queen Mary, University of London: Strong demand from graduates for QUEDOS scheme which funds CPD for the unemployed or those at risk of unemployment.

Thames Valley University: A series of credit crunch and employability workshops for recent graduates were attended by significantly more students than similar workshops for previous cohorts of students.

University of the Arts London: Demand for short courses has increased substantially and there are 20 additional full courses. There is also increased demand for engagement on KTPs for UK companies who are interested in expanding their markets into India, China and Japan.

University of East London: Sixty students have started entrepreneurship training and 14 students started work-based learning programmes. UEL is working with 32 SMEs in the Innovation for Growth project and 24 businesses through Innovation Associates and ECIF funding.

University of Westminster: More of the university's KT partners want to participate in graduate internships and student projects. The 10th KTP project has been secured and several more are at the outline stage.

Case Studies

Royal Veterinary College

The ORBIS (Overcome Recession: Bioscience Investment in Skills) Programme provides 26-week paid internships. Demand for internships has been high and we have received a further 170 intern registrations (taking the total of applicants to in excess of 600) mainly from unemployed graduates or those that have recently been made unemployed.

The programme has been asked to secure further interns for the second cohort of the programme by 40% of the companies registered for the first cohort. A further 15 new companies have registered for the second cohort and companies are already registering for the third cohort (due to be in place in February 2010). Feedback indicates companies are able to continue R&D projects because of the internships.

University of Greenwich

We have seen steady and increasing interest in knowledge transfer schemes to support R&D projects with business through KTPs and local schemes such as Knowledge Connect. Many companies are looking at their market positioning and preparing for an upturn in the economy, or are taking advantage of government support for KTP or collaborative R&D, such as TSB funding.

To respond to this, we have been actively cultivating partnership links with a wider range of business groups and networks, to spread the message that there is valuable support on offer, and to reach more businesses. This is a long-term process but we anticipate benefits will come in the next 12-24 months.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in existing activity

Several universities note the adverse consequence of media stories on graduate unemployment which appear to have negative effects on the motivation of recent graduates pursuing employment opportunities. In addition, financial restrictions are affecting education and skills training in the private and public sectors.

London Metropolitan: A national shortage of ICT-qualified employees is being addressed in consultation with relevant bodies. The London Financial Academy in the Business School has had a large decline in applicants for high level specialist courses, probably because of a reduction in demand from the City financial sector.

London South Bank University: Two new courses developed with local authorities for education and local planning development failed to recruit sufficient numbers because of lack of available funding from local councils.

Royal Veterinary College: A need to bridge the gap between HE and the workplace: companies assert high calibre interviewees are failing in internship interviews partly through lack of motivation. Candidates more likely to get interviews are those with more workplace experience. In addition, there is a need for development funding to provide bioscience SMEs with affordable and accessible business consultancy services.

University of the Arts London: Reduced and deferred demand for sponsored student projects from UK businesses, with an estimate this year will be at least 10% down on 2008/9.

University of Greenwich: De-motivated graduates staying on in part-time “student jobs” and delaying career decisions. Rising debt levels may mean graduates will not take up further study opportunities.

Case Study

Thames Valley University

Several gaps and barriers have become apparent during the past 12-16 months. These include:

- students demoralised by media reports of graduate unemployment leading to inertia or unfocused searches for employment; as a counter, motivational video clips posted on intranet web pages and on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8CzCJrr4iU
- focus groups of unemployed professionals just completed and findings will be used in support programmes
- rise in numbers of graduate internships but some are unpaid or only provide travel expenses, and a number are substitutes for paid employment
- a direct consequence of the ELQ legislation has been higher fees and a significant loss in recruitment of part-time students
- there is likely to be a reduction in training budgets of small businesses if the recession continues, which will affect employer co-funded recruitment and professional development of employees

C. Partnerships and networking

Networking activities are occurring at local, regional and national levels with a range of organisations and stakeholders including local authorities (LA), London Boroughs (LB), regional networks, the London Development Agency (LDA), London First, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Research Councils and BIS.

London Metropolitan: The Upturn project has partnership collaboration with four local authorities (e.g. LB Hackney, Tower Hamlets) and at a regional level with partners such as London First, Jobcentre Plus, three local FE colleges and Business Link in London (BLIL). A senior project manager from the LDA has been seconded to the project and is prioritising effective links with BLIL.

London South Bank University: Working with Lambeth Council to develop the Local Economic Assessment, particularly in business and enterprise, which will be the basis for future economic strategies in the borough and will influence future commissioning of services.

Royal Veterinary College: Working with skills training and mentoring providers. Also collaboration with other HEIs and BIS on the ORBIS internship scheme and programme evaluation.

Thames Valley University: Dialogue with LDA, JobCentre Plus and a network of London HEIs for measures to tackle graduate unemployment and under-employment in London.

University of East London: Discussions are underway with agencies in Thurrock for a new Business Incubator Unit to be located in the same building as UEL’s new Learning Shop. Also, final negotiations with Canary Wharf Group to lease space in Canary Wharf which will make it easier to offer services to the financial sector and enhance UEL’s employability offer to students and graduates.

University of Greenwich: New advice sessions to be started with local employment and enterprise agencies and the local chamber of commerce, following an approach by Greenwich Local Labour and Business and LB Greenwich. Also involved with Thames Gateway London Partnership, Knowledge East Enterprise Network, business groups in south east London and the Greenwich Employability and Skills Partnership (includes JobCentre Plus, LSC and local volunteer groups), convened by LB Greenwich.

Case Study

Queen Mary, University of London

“ImpactQM” is a £3 million programme funded by the EPSRC to undertake KT with industry and develop growth in the economic downturn. Since the start of the programme in October 2009, we have already secured £250k of matching industry funding and agreed £550k of collaborative research projects.

As part of ImpactQM, five post-graduates will be recruited to undertake one year KT projects with industry and should obtain employment with business partners at the end of the project. In parallel, a competition involving PhD students has resulted in 17 students being selected for training through internship placements in industry.

The QUEDOS project has developed a series of eight career-development courses specifically designed for unemployed graduates. The courses are industry specific (e.g. Public Sector, Creative Industries) and also cover business development for SMEs. Two of the events have already been held with about 50 people benefiting and a third is planned for December covering the Financial Industry with over 50 participants expected. Courses are promoted widely through the QMUL Alumni network, University of London Careers Services network, Job CentrePlus, Linking London and LDA.

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

Many of the HEI programmes cover revised course curricula, employability skills, information, advice and guidance to graduates, internships, and assistance and advice to the private sector.

Thames Valley University: Flexible Foundation Degree (FD) framework introduced with “portable” accredited modules. Also the FD in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship has started whereby students develop business ideas on a full-time basis during the course. Significant curricula modifications have also been made. For example, ‘Managing through the Recession: How to Survive’ has been introduced in the School of Hospitality, see www.tvu.ac.uk/futureskills/news/news7.jsp.

The Central School of Speech and Drama: Redesign of existing programmes to take into account the process of returning to employment. The “Cultural Camden” project aims to develop partnerships with two local theatres to share resources and transfer skills.

Queen Mary, University of London: The ImpactQM internship scheme will place around 20 students a year for the next three years. A new Business & Entrepreneurship training officer will coordinate support to post-graduates in business related skills. Careers service support has been extended for graduates and “Careers Day” workshops provide employability skills for unemployed graduates.

University of East London: Six BAME graduates were selected for the Brunswick Graduate Internship Programme for 2009, aimed at helping BAME students access careers in public relations. The 10 week long internships are supported by Brunswick Communications, Unicorn Jobs and Taylor Bennett. A blog at www.unicornjobs.com/posts/interns2009/ describes their experiences.

University of Greenwich: Advice sessions to be provided to local highly skilled residents recently made redundant or seeking a career change. A local internship programme has started, partly with UEL, to place graduates in LAs and the regeneration sector. The Guidance and Employability Team (GET) have developed a range of services to assist unemployed graduates.

Case Studies

London Metropolitan

As part of the ECIF-funded Upturn project, an intensive week-long 'bootcamp' in entrepreneurship was held for 13 students. Accelerator (business incubation) has had eight business starts, 29 students engaged in enterprise training and 10 new businesses benefiting from "virtual incubator" support.

The Career Development and Employment Services (CDES) unit are in collaboration with the East London Business Alliance for internships and graduates can become members of ELBA's Business Club, supported by the City of London Corporation. CDES has helped coordinate 83 internships this year.

A return-to-practice course for architects unemployed for six months or more is to be delivered in November. This course will be run as pilot for 15 people and has partial funding from RIBA (who will accredit it) and a recruitment agency.

London South Bank University

We are running a number of short courses for business on environmental sustainability and energy issues linked to the development of our new Centre for Efficient and Renewable Energy in Buildings (CEREB).

We view these as a way to support businesses to become more sustainable, enabling them to cut costs and improve business efficiency, so increasing their competitive advantage. A promotional event sustainable facilities and engineering attracted around 50 participants and was used to showcase the accredited short-course in 'Sustainable Facilities Management'.

The University is developing a scheme to incorporate an employment agency function within its existing Job Shop. This scheme will increase the opportunities for students enhance future employability.

Based upon the success of the "Applying to Higher Education: Advisers Certificate" the University has added an accredited "Post-graduate Certificate in Careers Education", which was commended by the validating panel for "timeliness" and for "working with external partners" on its development.

University of the Arts London: Part-time business readiness training and coaching for art and design graduates needed to be split into two cohorts as there was insufficient demand to meet output targets with one cohort alone. Graduates are taking more time than expected to understand the need to act in different ways to meet the recession.

University of Greenwich: Staging of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympic games in London has the potential to provide a massive boost to the local economy, especially as almost one third of Olympic events will be taking place in the London Borough of Greenwich. The University is working on several initiatives with the local council and will shortly be launching a local SMEs club and a new student placement service to help small businesses respond to the commercial benefits that the Games will provide.

University of Westminster: The University recently hosted a specialized event entitled "Inclusion and Ability" as part of a European funded project. The event presented knowledge transfer aspects within a new development in languages across cultural understanding, disability and work place integration. Attendees included Metropolitan Police Language Service, RNID, British Sign Language interpreter and representatives from the Braille Chess Association.

Case Study

University of East London

We have recently completed our first Thames Gateway Business Survey with the aim of establishing a baseline understanding of difficulties faced by businesses in the current economic climate. The survey was targeted at companies employing more than five people in sectors such as manufacturing, transportation, finance, insurance & real estate and services. There were 186 responses to this survey, representing a response rate of 5.2%.

The headline findings include:

- **University Engagement with Industry**
Nearly a quarter of respondents had previously engaged with a HEI for enterprise support.
- **Difficult Trading Conditions**
Over two thirds stated that the current economic climate is the biggest challenge facing their business.
- **Innovate to Grow**
Almost all stated that they had introduced some form of new innovation in the past twelve months to develop their business.
- **Skills Shortage**
Just fewer than 50% stated that they are short of skilled staff. Marketing and PR skills were highlighted as the area where most companies had a shortage of skilled staff.
- **Graduate Recruitment**
Over half indicated that they didn't currently employ graduates. About 45% of respondents felt that graduates were not sufficiently prepared to enter into the workplace environment upon graduating.
- **Supervised Student Placement Programmes Deliver Value**
Four fifths of companies that participated in a supervised student placement programme achieved some form of benefit for their company.

F. Summary remarks

Returns were obtained from nine multi-faculty and three specialist HEIs from a total membership of 41 HEIs subscribing to London Higher. This is similar to numbers of returns from London Higher members for the two previous HERA Barometer reports.

HEIs are collaborating with a variety of local and regional organisations to fund and/ or deliver activities aimed at helping final year students and recent graduates as well as local businesses in mitigation or adaptation to current economic pressures.

For example, many HEIs are holding employability workshops for students and making great efforts to find internships placements. However, for the first time, some HEIs are reporting that media stories on graduate unemployment are demoralising graduates seeking paid employment.

Lack of available finance for employee development in both the public and private sectors may affect planned employer co-funded training schemes.

For business support, funding mechanisms commonly mentioned include Knowledge Connect, co-financed by the London Development Agency and the European Regional Development Fund, and HEI knowledge transfer partnerships. Internships and placements may be helping SMEs maintain R&D programmes and innovation processes despite lack of finance from other routes.

Universities for the North East

In the previous two HERA Barometer reports we have identified 33 new or re-purposed schemes aimed at helping businesses and individuals in the NE Region at risk or already suffering the effects of the economic downturn. These are being delivered either directly by our universities or in partnership with other agencies and organisations or, in some cases, indirectly through other networks and partnerships.

In this report we report a further 7 schemes or activities and again illustrate through case studies the breadth and depth of these schemes and also begin to explore, through quantitative outcomes where available, the impact these schemes are having.

A. Increased demand for existing activity

Case study 1 – Newcastle University – Business vouchers

To date 97 applications have been approved within the NE Region with more pending approvals imminent. Of those approved 14 are with charities and the third sector and 23 relate to training and CPD.

In all around 320 enquiries have been logged and importantly approximately 70% of awards and enquiries are from organisations new to the University leveraging new clients into the HE system.

There is also financial leverage with project values being greater than the funding offered.

Around a dozen projects are already completed amongst which there are projects involving Product design and development; ICT applications; Health and Safety; Search Engine Optimisation; Marketing; Funding strategy; and Statistical analyses.

Case study 2 – University of Sunderland – Associate and Fellowship Programme

The Associate and Fellowship Programme is aimed at helping managers and directors facing redundancy to find their way back into employment or re-training. Funded via the ECIF, the Associate and Fellowship Programme has so far recruited 12 people onto the first cohort, which began on 2nd September and another 12 for the second cohort to begin in November. 1st cohort sessions will run over September, October and November with each delegate receiving a total of 3 one to one coaching sessions between workshops.

There is a mix of associates and fellows on the cohort with the fellows slightly outnumbering the associates.

The university has also recruited 12 people to the second cohort due to begin mid-November and delivered in session throughout November, December and January. In summary the project is ahead of forecast target so far having secured 24 delegates against a total of 36.

University staff have had very positive feedback so far and the students feel 'challenged' by the programme and have found sessions with the coaches to be productive.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in existing activity

Again using the regional Universities Knowledge House consultancy service as a proxy for activity levels there is tentative evidence of a recovery in activity with incoming enquiry levels now only 3% down compared with the same period in 2008. Income from contracts secured has risen by 12% compared to the same period in 2008.

It is rather too early to say whether this recovery in activity can be maintained or indeed whether it can be attributed directly to the substantial investment of public funding (ECIF for example) aimed at easing the impact of and accelerating recovery from the recession but the initial indications are more encouraging than they have been for some months.

However elsewhere in the sector there is confirmed evidence of a fall in demand for commercial consultancy with enquiries/contracts from SMEs particularly reduced, however, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP's) are holding up well. Interest in KTPs from both public and private sector continues to grow.

For many companies the availability of funding to support R&D is proving to be crucial in deciding whether or not to undertake it.

C. Partnerships and networking

Case study 3 – Newcastle University/Northumbria University/Newcastle College - Newcastle City Recovery Plan

The Newcastle Strategic Partnership (statutory Local Strategic Partnership – LSP) approved a joint plan on 20th July from the City Council, Newcastle College, Newcastle University and Northumbria University on mitigating the impact of the economic downturn in the city. This included collaboration in: developing employment and advisory services to help and support those made redundant; agreement to hold joint procurement events to reduce the barriers facing smaller firms in tendering for public sector contracts; and working together when promoting cultural and leisure opportunities.

This is the first time that such economic development activities carried out by the FE and HE institutions have been mapped out in a collective manner, let alone backed up by strategic commitment to harness those resources effectively for the benefit of the city.

Case study 4 – Teesside University – Digital City Fellowships

The DigitalCity Fellowships Scheme offers entrepreneurs and innovators in the digital media and digital technology sectors the chance to explore their ideas. It is coordinated by the Institute of Digital Innovation and is part of the DigitalCity project facilitated by the University, Middlesbrough Council and One Northeast.

There are three fellowship awards:

- Junior Fellowship - for basic idea or skill development: £500.
- Innovation Fellowship - individuals or teams with a strong idea in new technology - projects are expected to lead to creation of a new business: £4,000 per person.
- Creative Fellowship - strictly team projects working on a pre-proof of concept to develop new products - projects are expected to lead to creation of a new business: £4,000 per person.

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

Case study 5 – Durham University – Durham Industrial Bridging Fellowship (DIBF)

During a recession company production and trade reduces which creates the opportunity for businesses to release key staff to work within a university.

DIBF is aimed at managerial scientific / technical staff (middle management) who are on reduced working hours, under threat of redundancy or recently redundant. The scheme targets companies of any size in ONE North East's priority sectors of process industries, health and energy, but will also consider applications from companies in any sector if they want to work with the University and meet the schemes eligibility criteria.

Following the ECIF award in April 2009 the University applied for and received match funding from ONE in May 2009. Further preparations were made for the scheme's introduction and the first applications were received in June 2009.

To date, 14 formal applications (but many more enquiries) have been received and 12 Fellowships awarded: 9 twelve month Fellowships, and 3 six month Fellowships. Financially, we have committed £414 k from the scheme's budget of £1m. We are

currently administering a further 2 applications one of which we expect to award. The scheme has been received enthusiastically by participating companies and Fellows alike. We have promoted/marketed the scheme using a colour leaflet acknowledging the scheme's sponsors.

With 30 Fellowships still to award (1 twelve month Fellowship, 5 six month Fellowship and 24 three month Fellowships) the University is about to widen and intensify its marketing of the DIBF scheme working with relevant intermediary organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce, Local Authorities and Development Companies and sector specific organisations such as North East Process Industries Cluster (NEPIC), the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI) and the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF). At this stage we anticipate committing all the remaining Fellowships and funds.

Case study 6 – Northumbria University – “Nurture Programme”

A £1.6m integrated service for businesses to develop healthcare concepts has been launched to exploit the North East's strengths in health sciences and design to bring successful new products to market. Northumbria University's healthcare technology development programme - 'Nurture' - is providing a clear and practical route for SMEs to transfer state-of-the-art research into commercial products such as medical devices and technological services.

It offers targeted businesses fast track support and multidisciplinary expertise to include every stage of product development, from research and concept design through to feasibility, prototyping, design for manufacture and clinical testing. The project is being part financed by £750,000 ERDF investment through regional development agency One North East. The agency is contributing £420,000 from its Single Programme funding, with the remainder match funded by the university.

“In the current economic climate, companies' R&D plans and budgets are often the first area to feel the pain,” explained Bruce Watson, Enterprise Business manager for Northumbria University's School of Design. “We aim to ensure that the pipeline of innovative healthcare and wellbeing ideas continues and North East SMEs have access to a broad range of development expertise and funding support to keep them at the forefront of this sector. This project's multidisciplinary support will ensure that we maximise new healthcare opportunities across the region.”

Case study 7 – University of Sunderland – Internship Scheme

Guroo Ltd, a small, innovative company based in Houghton-le-Spring that produces online learning resources for students aged 14-19 is now reaping the benefits of involvement in the university's Internship Scheme.

The company approached the university for technical support to redesign and develop its website towards a web 2.0 enabled system with additional features to meet the needs of its learner community.

Jonathan Wells, Guroo's Managing director, is extremely positive about the impact of the intern on the business. Speaking of the benefits he said "(the intern) has brought about a step change in our capacity to innovate. As a small company, without the internship scheme, we would probably have said that recruiting a technical graduate would have been too big a step and too big a risk for us. The scheme has removed the risk and given us the opportunity of exploring new ideas that we wouldn't have considered a few months ago."

The (ECIF) funding has enabled the university to place up to 30 of its graduates within organisations across the North East in six month fully paid graduate positions – 25 have been placed to date.

E. Other

Case study 8 – Northumbria University – “Riders on the Storm”

Newcastle Business School hosted 'Riders on the Storm' - an open seminar for local Professional Service Firms. The purpose of the seminar was to give advice and to share experiences with Professional Service Firms during the current turbulent economic climate. The event was attended by a number Professional Service Firms including Brewin Dolphin, Ward Hadaway, Muckle LLP, Tait Walker, Dickinson Dees and Lloyds TSB. Topics such as 'the North-East business climate – trends and intelligence' and 'Keeping your Clients – research and ideas on how client relationship management can help survive difficult times and emerge stronger' were delivered during the session.

Case study 9 – Northumbria University – Business Aware Sessions

Newcastle Business School has launched a series of events aimed at enhancing the skills of SME business managers in the Region. The Business Aware Sessions programme is offering small and medium sized businesses six seminars and networking events to provide them with the platform to improve their business during recession. The sessions will give business managers the opportunity to explore issues that face SMEs and participants can choose topics such as marketing, networking skills and selling which will be delivered by experts in the field.

The sessions are free to trading SMEs based in the NE and to local entrepreneurs.

Case study 10 – Nissan/Gateshead College/Job centre Plus – Training for the unemployed

Up to 1,000 unemployed people are to receive training from Nissan that could equip them for future job opportunities including working on electric vehicles. The Japanese car company's Sunderland factory is optimistic that job opportunities will arise with the arrival of the Qazana production next year and the new electric vehicle battery plant soon after.

There is also still the possibility that the factory could be chosen for European production of the Leaf, Nissan's new electric car.

The Sunderland based NAC group, which provides "green collar" training, is working with Nissan on the training initiative with Gateshead College and Job Centre Plus.

The first batch of 120 trainees have started their five week placement on the scheme.

Case Study 11 – Teesside University – "Science to business hub"

A new science collaboration for the chemical industry is to bridge the development gap between research and the prototyping of products and services. The 'Science to business hub' is to help over 100 small local businesses to gain a competitive edge in product development by opening up innovative relationships with academic institutions and research establishments.

With a focus on the speciality chemicals sector, a £1.27m investment from the University is being match funded with £1.17m from the European Regional Development Fund 2007-13 administered by One North East. The project will link with two similar projects run by CPI and NEPIC, increasing opportunities for SMEs to tap into the latest sector research, share best practice and network more effectively.

F. Summary remarks

In overview there remain signs of cautious optimism in the private sector as previously reported however it would be premature to conclude that this can be taken as an indicator of sustainable recovery and such recovery as there is remains fragile with Finance Directors predicting another difficult year ahead. Anticipated reductions in public spending are manifest as a much more pessimistic outlook for the public or quasi-public

sectors or those businesses and organisations substantially dependent on public expenditure and procurement.

The following is a series of snapshots from reports or press releases – both regional and national - issued since the last HERA Barometer report which illustrate a somewhat mixed forecast for the coming months:

Business

- NE business activity rises – data from financial information firm Markit has revealed evidence that the NE economy may be recovering. New business growth hit its highest level since February last year and the rate of reduction in staff numbers slowed according to the PMI survey. The North east's Business Activity Index rose from 53.8 in August to 58.3 in September growing at the second fastest rate of the 12 regions surveyed. The report found that NE output increased for a third successive month after 13 months of decline. (Newcastle Journal October 13th)
- The Business Activity Index indicated a continuation of this trend rising to 59.3 in October. (Newcastle Journal November 10th)
- The NE Chamber of Commerce's latest economic survey (the NE Business Barometer) shows the region is still in the grip of recession but the rate of decline is slowing. While domestic orders for the coming three months remain sluggish exporters are reporting that demand for goods and services is up for the coming quarter. (Bdaily October 14th)
- New research shows that business in the North of the UK are preparing for growth despite the impacts of the economic downturn. The Institute of Chartered accountants for England & Wales (ICAEW) Enterprise Survey 2009 says that the effects of the downturn could last until 2011 yet most businesses still plan to grow in the years to come. The survey suggests that Northern businesses remain more positive than the UK average with 79% planning annual turnover growth over the next two years against a UK average of 66%.
- Administrations rise by 10% - the number of businesses falling into administration has risen by 10% to 2,320 companies during the first nine months of 2009 compared to the same period in 2008. The wholesale and distribution sector was the hardest hit. (Deloitte)

People

- The unemployment figure for the NE Region has increased by 2.6% according to the latest figure released by the Office for National Statistics. The ONS figures

show that the jobless total in the NE rose from 115,000 to 118,000 in the three months to September with around 9.5% of the workforce unemployed.

- Part-time work is helping to cut the rate of unemployment but could hold back the recovery. Business chiefs in the NE warned that part-time staff making up a higher percentage of the Region's workforce could slow the Region's recovery from recession. (Newcastle Journal November 12th).
- A report by the Prince's Trust based on a study of 1,720 people aged between 18-30 showed that many young people have a business idea but are holding off doing anything about it until the end of the recession. Over half of those polled complained that Job Centres and careers advisers did not give enough information about self employment while two thirds said schools and colleges offered little or no advice. (Bdaily November 10th)
- Volunteering England has seen an 86% increase in the numbers of young people offering their services as volunteers since the beginning of the recession.
- The Regional Learning and Skills Council has witnessed a "big upturn" in businesses seeking to access training for their staff through the Train to Gain programme. (Bdaily September 16th)
- Graduates offer a 5:1 return on investment according to a report by Lancaster University. Graduate recruitment programmes generate a return of £5.30 for every £1 of investment and the average graduate pays for themselves within 20 months of starting claims the report commissioned by the Government's Backing Young Britain campaign.
- The Populus survey of 500 UK business leaders for the BYB Campaign reveals that whilst 87% of employers view work experience as good practice, 55% feel it only benefits the individual and not their organisation. 41% offer no work placements at all despite 69% saying they are more likely to hire someone who has spent time in their organisation.

Place

- The North East's deprived areas have been hardest hit by the recession according to "The Impact of the Recession on the Northern City Regions" report by the Northern office of the IPPR. The report shows that areas which suffered the highest unemployment rates in March last year have experienced the biggest increases in unemployment since then. The Tees valley has had one of the biggest increases in unemployment in the country since the start of the recession.



**Working together for business
and the community**

North West Universities Association (NWUA)

The initiation of new activity to support individuals and businesses affected by the recession is now slowing as focus moves to delivery and member HEIs are beginning to report the outputs and impacts of their established projects. Due to development lead times, several Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF) activities have also been delivered for the first time during the period October to December.

Despite the slow down in new projects, we do expect to have new activity to report in early 2010 with a number of projects due to begin delivery. For example, the call for proposals to the HLSP Redundancy Response Fund was launched on 1st October and successful projects will begin developing CPD to meet the needs of individuals and businesses affected by the recession in January 2010. Similarly, a consortium of eight NW universities successfully secured £1.7 million European Social Fund (ESF) money in September to enhance their services to graduates and we expect the much delayed £7.7 million European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) UNITE project, involving nine NW universities¹, to begin delivering student and graduate placements in 2010.

A. Increased demand for existing activity

On the whole, demand has been strong across the ECIF activities delivered by NW universities and outputs are beginning to be delivered. For example, as of 24th September 2009:

- at the University of Chester, 40 unemployed or underemployed graduates have benefited from ECIF funded training;
- at Liverpool John Moores University 70 graduates have participated in the Graduate Accelerator Programme;
- the University of Bolton has welcomed 70 delegates on short courses through their ECIF programme;
- the University of Cumbria has provided grants of £2000 to 11 graduate business start-ups particularly in the creative industries;

¹ University of Central Lancashire, University of Cumbria, Lancaster University, University of Chester, University of Salford, University of Bolton, University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores, Liverpool Hope University.

- the Liverpool Hope University Business Recovery Programme has helped 15 businesses through 9 workshops;
- and at UCLan, 100 ECIF funded internships have been created so far.

Particularly strong demand has been identified for subsections of ECIF activity by the University of Manchester. Its ECIF funded High Flyers Programme, which consisted of a four week programme where participants could network with key regional employers and attend sessions delivered through active learning, interactive simulations and exercises to mirror real life experiences, was heavily oversubscribed, receiving 280 applications for 40 places. As a result the size of the programme was increased with increased funding from the University.

The Higher Level Skills Partnership (HLSP) has again provided some interesting information on demand from business for higher level skills and their willingness and ability to engage with the HLSP. The picture is varied both across and within sectors.

Contrary to expectations, HLSP courses in the construction sector, particularly badly hit by the recession, have continued to recruit well with 300 learners attending courses accounting for nearly 50% of total HLSP learners to date. There is evidence that some courses have been heavily subscribed by overseas students, possibly as a credible route into work due to the value placed by employers on UK Higher Education courses. Courses in the Energy and Environmental Technologies Sectors also seem to be 'recession proof'. In part this is because some provision relates to the new REACH legislation to which businesses are required to respond. Nuclear related provision is also recruiting to target. Elsewhere, whilst some projects within the Digital & Creative sector have suffered a decline in demand, a project developing CPD modules for professionals working in the fashion industry has found that more companies are beginning to enquire about HE training and that delegates who have taken units are keen to do more. This was particularly the case when 20 credit units were deconstructed into 5 credit 'bite sized' units.

The recession has also increased demand from individuals working in the legal sector for re-skilling CPD. Evidence collected to support an application into the HLSP Redundancy Response Fund, demonstrates that whilst some areas of the legal profession have been adversely affected by the economic downturn, others are thriving. As a result, individuals working in subsectors relating to the housing market, whose jobs are insecure, are seeking re-skilling CPD into legal growth areas.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in existing activity

The University of Manchester's 'Looking at Future Options' workshops for the unemployed which form part of its ECIF funded programme, were initially undersubscribed. Potential participants seemed reluctant to take part as they associated attendance at a course with failure. Alternative marketing routes are now being taken to promote the workshops. The University has also found that the P.G Dip scholarships, funded by ECIF, were undersubscribed. Originally targeted at underemployed graduates, it was found that the majority of applicants were unemployed graduates seeking a full

year programme. The P.G Dip scholarships have therefore been replaced with Masters Scholarships, again with extra funding from the University.

We have had reports of a lack of demand for graduate placements/internships from some institutions. Whilst there has been sufficient interest from business to create placements, filling these with graduates has been difficult. Several factors are thought to have contributed to this: In part this is due to difficulties in maintaining alumni relations because students often change email address and residence after graduation; in part it is because many students have continued to 'take a break' after the completion of their studies and before considering their employment options; and in part it is because many graduates take part time jobs and are reluctant to forfeit this income for an unpaid or national minimum wage placement.

Several projects funded through the Higher Level Skills Partnership have struggled to match anticipated learner numbers as a result of falling demand for work based learning from employers during the economic downturn. For example, in the Digital & Creative sector recruitment onto CPD in new media production has been stalled until an industry upturn and in the Financial and Professional Services sector one university is concerned about the sustainability of a course for the Financial Services Call Centre sector following the introduction of a commercial pricing policy. The Financial and Professional Services sector has also experienced increasing difficulty in securing employer engagement in the development and delivery of work based learning. Whilst the will to engage is still evident, company circumstances, including the redundancy of individuals involved and company financial crisis, mean that employers involved in course delivery in year one of the programme are no longer able to offer their services.

C. Partnerships and networking

Through NWUA, the HE sector continues to be represented in both strategic and political processes in the North West region through joint working with partners including the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA), the Joint Economic Commission, Jobcentre Plus and the Regional Skills and Employment Board. Individually, the universities in the NW continue to work in partnership with each other and with regional stakeholders.

On 24th September, **NWUA** hosted a round table meeting of members (attended by 10 of the 14 North West universities²) to discuss the HE sector's response to the economic downturn. The aim of the meeting was to share members' experiences of delivering Economic Challenge Investment Fund and other economic downturn related projects and to explore best practice, barriers to activity, gaps in provision and opportunities for joint working. At this meeting several universities reported increased working with Jobcentre Plus (JCP), although the success of these relationships varied from university to university. The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the collaborative European Social Fund **Graduate Employability Support Programme** led by the University of

² University of Cumbria, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool John Moores University, University of Lancaster, Edge Hill University, University of Chester, University of Central Lancashire, University of Bolton, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Manchester.

Cumbria in partnership with the University of Bolton, University of Chester, Lancaster University, Liverpool John Moores University, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Central Lancashire and the University of Salford. The £3.5 million (£1.7 million ESF) project is detailed in section D below.

The **University of Cumbria** is part of a successful £1.6 million multi-partner bid to the Department of Work and Pensions Future Jobs Fund (FJF) led by Cumbria County Council and the sub-regional economic partnership, Cumbria Vision. The project will provide jobs, training, coaching and mentoring for 250 young people in important Cumbrian sectors including Healthcare, the Public Sector, Environmental, Housing, Education, the 3rd Sector, Tourism, Nuclear and Energy. The university will play a role both as training provider and employer. As a training provider, the university will align Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF) and European Social Fund (ESF) activity to provide training for unemployed graduates who become eligible for FJF and those for whom Foundation Degrees will be a suitable progression route. As an employer, the university will provide six to twelve month fixed term contracts in administrative assistant, receptionist and student advisor positions. The project is due to start in January 2010.

NWUA attended a meeting held by **NWDA** to discuss the North West's graduate support offer on 17th September. The meeting brought together key stakeholders including the Learning and Skills Council, the Association of Sector Skills Councils, Government Office North West (GONW), and JCP and was convened at the request of the RSEB Chairs Group after the NWUA Graduate Support Offer paper was considered at their meeting on 21st August. Partners around the table agreed that the support available to graduates in the region is characterised by a complex multi-agency offer spanning the universities, the LSC and JCP. However, there was consensus that the universities were well placed to offer additional support and the ESF bid, detailed in section D below was subsequently approved by GONW.

Following its meeting on 19th October NWUA prepared a briefing for the Regional **Joint Economic Commission** (JEC) on the capabilities of the region's universities relating to digital technologies. Information was compiled from existing intelligence gathering (ratified by member HEIs) including the creative and digital capability matrix, information on capabilities aligned to New Industry New Jobs and capabilities aligned to the EU ICT Policy Support Programme. A similar briefing on low carbon technologies is being prepared for the December meeting of the JEC.

Liverpool John Moores University and NWUA have been represented on the **Institute of Director's Education Event Panel** established to organise a business, HE engagement event. The event, *Forging Links: Business & Education Working Together*, took place on 26th November 2009 and brought together 120 delegates from business and education. It sought to improve dialogue and understanding between IoD members and the HE sector and to highlight the benefits of engagement despite and because of the recession. Institutions were also invited to exhibit at this event with the University of Cumbria, Lancaster University, Liverpool John Moores University and Manchester Metropolitan University choosing to have a presence alongside NWUA and the Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance, the lifelong learning network for Greater Manchester.

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

The development of new projects and initiatives to respond to the recession has now slowed as efforts focus on the delivery of previously reported projects. However, a number of new programmes have been established and these are detailed below.

With the assistance of NWUA, eight universities have successfully developed a bid to the European Social Fund (ESF) for a **Graduate Employability Support Programme**. The £3.5 million (£1.7 million ESF) programme will deliver information, advice and guidance (IAG), retraining for individuals, and graduate placements. It is anticipated that the programme will assist over 1600 individuals through a variety of mechanisms including 380 placements. The project start date was September and, following receipt of the grant letter from Government Office North West, the full range of activity will begin delivery before Christmas and complete in December 2010.

The £350,000 **Higher Level Skills Partnership Redundancy Response Fund** (HLSP RRF) was launched on 1st October 2009 and it is anticipated that eight to ten projects will be funded. The deadline for proposals is 4th December 2009. The HLSP RRF has been established to commission the development of responsive level 4+ CPD provision to meet the needs of those at risk of redundancy, those recently made redundant and new graduates unable to find employment. The fund aims to be both reactive and proactive to labour market needs - reacting to specific redundancy situations and labour market intelligence, and proactively and strategically developing CPD for sectors identified for growth in the upturn. Proposals to develop CPD to re-skill for the economic recovery must be informed by New Industry New Jobs.³ Development activity will begin in January 2010 with delivery to commence no later than January 2011.

The first cohort of ten students began the Liverpool John Moore University's new **Postgraduate Certificate in Business Turnaround Management** in October. The Postgraduate Certificate is a joint initiative between LJMU's Liverpool Business School and Blenheim Associates, a private sector business turnaround consultancy firm. The partnership is intended to give the course relevance and credibility as well as academic rigour. The course has been developed in response to growing demand for the skills of the business turnaround specialist, needed in any economic climate, but particularly so with market conditions as they are.

In addition, the roundtable meeting on 24th September, detailed in Section C above, provided evidence that the economic downturn has also refocused mainstream and existing activity in subtle ways. For example, the universities indicated that the economic downturn has provided the impetus to review the processes currently used by the Careers Services and to subsequently expand on and improve existing services. The **University of Central Lancashire** has merged together the Careers Service with the Centre for Employability Studies and business incubation, placements and enterprise activity to create **Futures+**. The result is an enhanced service to students and graduates who have a single point of contact to access employability and enterprise elective

³ BERR Pub 8854 (April 2009), *New Industry New Jobs*, <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file51023.pdf>

modules and programmes, work experience and placements, enterprise workshops and seminars, advisers in careers and employability, business start-up and self-employment advice and business incubation.

E. Other

HEIs as Employers

Following endorsement from the NW Universities HR Directors, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has developed a proposal to establish an **Apprenticeship Training Company (ATC)** in the North West to enable universities to host apprentices without adding additional cost or head count. It is thought that the model could overcome some of the barriers identified at an NWUA roundtable meeting to discuss the issues in March 2009, including the fact that many universities are not currently recruiting. Using this model the apprentices will be employed by the ATC who will then charge the university the wage cost for the apprentice, anticipated to be £115 per week. The proposal was tabled at a meeting of the main NW Universities HR Directors group in October and a decision will be made on how to proceed in November.

Events

ENERGUS and the University of Cumbria hosted the **Trade Union Congress (TUC) Cumbria Skills Summit** on 25th September 2009. Kevin Rowan, TUC Regional Secretary spoke about responding to key challenges and the role trade unions can play in the current economic climate with particular reference to Cumbria. He highlighted low paid / low skilled workers and the young unemployed as particularly vulnerable and welcomed the apprenticeship programme and facilities provided by ENERGUS and the University of Cumbria. Also speaking were representatives from Cumbria Higher Learning, Unionlearn, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and the Learning and Skills Council.

Potential barriers experienced by HEIs

Concern has been expressed by member HEIs and regional partners, via the Regional Skills and Employment Board (RSEB) Regional Employability Group, that the current focus on placements, internships and apprenticeships/short fixed term jobs could lead to 'employer fatigue' and an increasing difficulty in sourcing employers able to host young people. Businesses are also being approached from multiple sources: there has been a proliferation of graduate placement/internship schemes across the region's universities; many agencies, including Local Authorities, are delivering Future Jobs Fund projects; and Jobcentre Plus is promoting its Backing Young Britain campaign. Each requires significant commitment from businesses. It has been suggested that the issue should be included on the agenda of the next RSEB Employer Group to ensure a joined up regional approach to employer engagement.

How HE contribution could be improved

At the NWDA Graduate Support Meeting on the 17th September and the NWUA Roundtable meeting on the 24th September the lack of regional intelligence on graduate unemployment, graduate vacancies and graduate skills needs was highlighted as a barrier to fully harnessing the university offer to regional economic development needs.

Universities had found it difficult to estimate the likely demand for some ECIF activity due to a lack of JCP information on graduate unemployment/JSA claimants. Similarly, there is a need for a clear sector specific evidence base around graduate skills needs and graduate vacancies.

F. Summary remarks

With many ECIF and other economic downturn related activities now at the delivery stage and more large scale projects due to begin, the universities in the North West are delivering a wide portfolio of activities in response to the economic downturn.

At the NWUA roundtable meeting on the 24th September, members agreed that the speed with which ECIF projects had been approved, developed and delivered (resulting in outputs within six months) was a success story that should be promoted. This can be contrasted with European Funding sources which have resulted in significant barriers and delays to HE sector activity in the North West.

As the recession ends, the universities in the North West are well positioned to contribute to economic recovery. The universities, through NWUA and individually, have been fully engaged in the development of the NW Regional Strategy (RS2010) and associated efforts to map regional capabilities against New Industry New Jobs. Engagement with the Regional Development Agency is essential for achieving HE sector representation and influence on regional strategic and political processes; however, universities have also highlighted that it will be important to engage at all spatial levels including 4NW, Local Authorities, sub-regional partnerships and city regions in light of the general election in spring 2010.

The universities have also stressed that the negative effects of the recession are likely to continue despite improved economic indicators. In particular, there will be a lagged impact on the public sector, including Higher Education, with a significant knock-on effect to the private sector supply chain.

Higher Education South East (HESE)

A. Increased demand for existing activity

Within the South East region, there is considerable interaction between HESE members and other agencies covering the spectrum of business and social engagement. Demand from businesses for graduate internships, work force development programmes and innovation to support their business growth is illustrated below:

Case study 1: Workforce development programmes:

Southampton Solent University

As previously reported, the four new faculty-based Solent Enterprise Centres (SECs) specializing respectively in provision of training and skills development in the areas of Business and Professional Development; Innovation and Design; Maritime Management; and Media Production (for the creative industries), a range of new initiatives are currently being developed and implemented. These include:

- New CPD and Skillset short courses for the increasing number of mid-career independent and freelance film and broadcast professionals working within the Solent and south coast sub-region. Courses focus on latest technologies and professional practice as well as business and marketing skills
- 'Bespoke' Team Leadership and Manager training programmes for leading regional leisure industry organization during a period of re-structuring
- Commencement of 30-week specialist 'SolidWorks' digital design/CADCAM software training for more than 14 participants from local marine manufacturing companies seeking to ensure latest digital design capability.



University of Surrey:

Demand for the University of Surrey's Leadership Academy has increased. The Leadership Academy is working with managers and SME owners and directors in the South East to help minimise the impact of the recession. A number of activities to beneficiaries are free of charge. The Academy is currently supporting:

- 100 unemployed or 'at risk' managers and executives through 10 hours of 1:1 coaching free of charge.
- 60 unemployed or 'at risk' managers and executives through participation in Enterprise & Employment clubs. These facilitated workshops are a chance for people to form supportive networks, build contacts and develop and maintain their existing skills.
- A range of regional business leaders through the hosting of regular events which address issues being faced in the recession, for example; trust and social capital, and entrepreneurial leading out of the recession. These events provide an opportunity for leadership practitioners, academics, business advisors and business leaders to collaborate to find innovative solutions for challenges they currently face.
- A range of business leaders through Sustainability Syndicates (action learning sets); small, facilitated and supportive environments where business leaders can come together and find ways of overcoming current challenges.

Case study 2: Graduate internships

Kent Universities for Business and Enterprise (KUBE) Business First Project:

The KUBE Business First project links businesses in Kent and Medway with graduates from four institutions – Canterbury Christ Church University, University for the Creative Arts, University of Greenwich, and University of Kent.

The total of graduates trained to date is over 90 and meets the target set by the project. Over 100 businesses have submitted projects for placements which is exceeding the target. There is an increased demand for Sales, Marketing and Website Design skills and the matching of graduate skills with business needs in this particular area is proving to be a challenge as demand is out stripping supply in terms of graduates on the project with these particular skills.

Case study 3. Research collaboration with industry:

University of Portsmouth

The university has experienced an increased demand from companies with a desire to engage more effectively with the Technology Strategy Board Innovation Platforms. With the growing emphasis on developing a successful Low Carbon Economy the university

has experienced particular focus from existing clients in Low Impact Buildings and Intelligent Transport Systems and Services.

The University's initial work with UK based company Safeguard started out as a consultancy with the University of Portsmouth Advanced Polymers & Composite Group. It quickly became apparent that the project would be much more involved than the company anticipated. However the Research & Knowledge Transfer Department assisted in finding suitable vehicles for collaboration via a Finance South East Proof of Concept Loan and a Technology Strategy Board's Retrofit for the Future Innovation Platform Grant. The subsidised funding allowed the company to develop a market leading high performance solution that has proven additional benefits in thermal conductivity thus also reducing energy use in buildings as well as protecting old housing stock from water and salt damage.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in existing activity

Relatively little information has been received from HESE members relating to a fall in demand. It is worth noting, however, that placement officers at some universities report a drop in the number of secured placements as part of sandwich degrees.

HESE represents its members on the Creative Economy Partnership, chaired by SEEDA, which is working to address the issues raised in an Experian report regarding the effect of the recession on creative industries in the South East. The report states that the creative industries sector faces a number of challenges in the short-term, including:

- Severe lack of liquidity which could prevent new ideas being brought to the market and this is likely to affect the sector more than others;
- Difficult times for those running smaller, fledgling businesses who may be less experienced when it comes to making the tough business decisions required to survive in this climate;
- Finding business models which work in the downturn – replacing advertising funded model with innovative alternatives
- There also remain a number of longer term issues; such as protecting Intellectual Property, competition with other creative clusters, and broadening the workforce demographic.

C. Partnerships and networking

In November, at the Open Annual Public meeting the South East Regional Development Agency (SEEDA) outlined its plans and priorities for the future. SEEDA is embarking on a new approach to developing and delivering regional strategies, working in partnership with local authorities throughout the region via the South East England Partnership Board. This Board will be supported by new Regional Delivery Boards replacing the Regional Skills and Productivity Alliance and the South East Business Advisory Board. Existing and new sub-regional partnerships will feed into the policy process through a number of expert and task and finish groups.

At the sub-regional level HESE members continue to support the new SEEDA funded Innovation and Growth Teams, the University of Greenwich will provide a full-time secondee to the Kent and Medway Innovation and Growth team (IGT) which will focus on supporting firms with highest growth potential in the Kent and Medway region.

The University of Surrey is a partner in a 3 year ERDF funded Project led by SEEDA funded Sector Consortia Envirobusiness. The project is fundamentally about facilitating market led links between universities with expertise in environmental / engineering fields and businesses operating in or wanting to move into Emissions Trading Scheme markets. The aim is to “catalyse innovation” and produce a host of knowledge transfer, collaborative R&D and commercialisation projects. The other HEI project partners: Brighton, Sussex, Kent, Kingston and Greenwich.

Other sub-regional activity

Case study 1: University of Oxford Cultivating relationships with the business world

The University's work with the local, national and international business community grows year on year. The Regional Liaison Office, which works in partnership with organisations including the South East England Development Agency, the Government Office of the South East and the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership, has recently promoted local business activities including:

Venturefest Oxfordshire's annual fair for high-tech entrepreneurs brings together entrepreneurs, scientists, inventors, financiers, business angels and supporters to promote ideas, introduce potential funding, encourage networking and open up new markets.

Oxford at Saïd Oxford academics discuss their research in everyday language in twice-termly seminars at the Saïd Business School with local businesses and the professional community, students and staff. Topics cover a wide range of subjects including monetary policy, cancer research, artificial intelligence, stem cells and corporate governance.

Case study 2: University of Portsmouth – Low Carbon Economic Area bid for Department of Business, Innovation & Skills

The University of Portsmouth are an integral partner in a Low Carbon Economic Area bid that is being prepared for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. The bid is focused on gaining recognition of the PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) area as a high growth region for innovative businesses contributing to the effective development of low carbon business services and best practice. The emphasis is on the development of the Marine Sector, but elements from the Information & Communication Technology, Energy and Built Environment Sector's also add strength to the bid.

The University brings expertise and a strong delivery track record to the partnership; in particular:

- Brokering effective collaborative relationships between the diverse range of industrial stakeholders and the Higher Education partners
- Materials Innovation and Development utilising unique expertise and facilities in Advanced Polymers and Composites
- Through collaboration with the **University of Southampton**, the university will also develop and enhance expertise in Intelligent Transport Systems / Green Logistics to provide innovative near market solutions to the broad range of regional stakeholders and customers

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

Overview:

The universities in the South East continue to dedicate significant resource to responding to the needs of the economic downturn. Many initiatives are funded by the Economic Challenge Investment Fund. However, universities across the region are responding to the economic downturn regardless of receipt of ECIF funding.

Case study 1: Southampton Solent University

A number of new and expanded initiatives and schemes designed specifically to meet and address business needs have been established in recent months. These include:



Southampton
SOLENT
University

- The development and imminent delivery of new courses (“Designated Persons”) responding specifically to recession-induced shifts in professional practice and Ship2Shore career progression in the maritime industry with respect to the training needs of senior shore-based officers and personnel.
- The adaptation of an existing and popular Hydrographical Surveying course as distance-learning version to meet the demand from an increasing number of eco-marine companies and other organizations both in the Solent area and beyond who are seeking to engage more effectively in the growing off-shore sustainable energy market.

Case study 2: University of Surrey

Professor Michelle Lowe from the Faculty of Management and Law at the University of Surrey has been awarded £1.45 million as part of a partnership business engagement cluster involving the Universities of Southampton, Leeds, Oxford and Surrey. RIBEN offers considerable opportunities to promote innovation and enhance competitiveness amongst retail firms in the region via Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) arrangements and via a business voucher scheme. The voucher scheme will enable small and medium sized retail firms to apply to RIBEN for £3,000 vouchers which they can use to access university research relevant to their business innovation needs.

The University of Surrey launched 2 new centres in October 2009 that will generate the scientists and engineers needed for Britain's future. The new centres at Surrey are worth nearly £12m and will train over 100 researchers at doctoral level. They are 2 of 17 industrial doctoral centres, announced nationally that will equip their doctoral research engineers with "state-of-the-art" research expertise and the necessary business skills to turn pioneering ideas into products and services, boosting their impact on the UK's economy. www.surrey.ac.uk/eng/minmat/ www.surrey.ac.uk/engD/sees/

Case study 3: Careers and Employment Centres

University of Reading: Careers Service support for students and graduates in the recession

Arts and Humanities graduates are being more adversely affected by the downturn than any other subject areas. As a result of this fact the Careers and Advisory Service (CAS) won a bid to run a Career Coaching for Graduates in Arts and Humanities sessions with 30 graduates in Autumn 2009. The aim of the project is to:

- Develop in graduates a motivation to act and build confidence
- Improve vocational awareness
- Improve recruitment skills

The end result will be to increase graduate success in applying for graduate level positions of employment and to provide CAS staff with valuable new skills in enhancing student employability that will lead to better materials being produced for the benefit of a wide range of Reading students. The programme will pilot a mixture of face-to-face, phone and on-line coaching techniques and 2 one day workshops (starting in September) and either face to face or phone coaching for the duration of the project. The purpose is to help graduates make significant progress by January 2010 in achieving their career goals towards finding graduate level opportunities. This is a pilot to see if there are lessons we can learn in how to help the larger group of Reading graduates and students.

Case study 4: Winchester MBA

The University's weekend MBA run from the Basingstoke campus now has 12 students enrolled. It enables students in full time work to participate in part time study by attending roughly one weekend in five and to graduate within 15 months. A number of those enrolled are there to develop their leadership skills and to advance their careers.

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E. Other

Spin out activity:

Case study 1: Recent University of Oxford spinout companies include:

Isis Innovation is the University's wholly-owned technology transfer company. Isis files on average, one patent application every week and its recently formed division, Isis enterprise, offers consulting expertise and advice on technology transfer and innovation management to universities, government and industry worldwide.

Intelligent Sustainable Energy has been formed based on super smart electricity metering technology. The company will further develop a smart metering technology that will deliver far greater detail about how electricity is used by consumers.

Oxford Emergent Tuberculosis Consortium was formed to commercialise the world's most clinically advanced vaccine candidate for the prevention of TB, which has now entered Phase IIb proof of concept clinical trials in South Africa. It is expected that the trial will generate important safety, immunogenicity and preliminary efficacy data about the vaccine candidate. This is the first proof-of-concept trial of a new preventive TB vaccine in infants in more than 80 years.

Oxford Financial Computing was formed to develop Monte Carlo simulations for financial applications with a particular focus on high performance implementations on graphic cards and similar multicore platforms.

Case study 2: Early stage incubation activity:

The SETsquared Partnership (Universities of Surrey, Southampton, Bristol and Bath)

Despite the recession, The SETsquared Partnership, which combines the resources of the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Southampton and Surrey to incubate early-stage technology businesses, has experienced a successful year for investment in the companies it is supporting. In the year from 01 September 2008, companies in SETsquared incubators received £52.5 million from private investors and VC funds, creating 142 new jobs along the way.

Over the last 4 years, companies supported by the centres have raised over £170m and created over 1100 jobs. Over 100 businesses have 'graduated' from the centres, typically after 18 months to 3 years and with expended services now over 100 are currently being supported within the Partnership.
http://www2.surrey.ac.uk/mediacentre/press/2009/17030_setsquared_business_incubator_sees_technology_innovation_investment_soar_to_over_52_million.htm

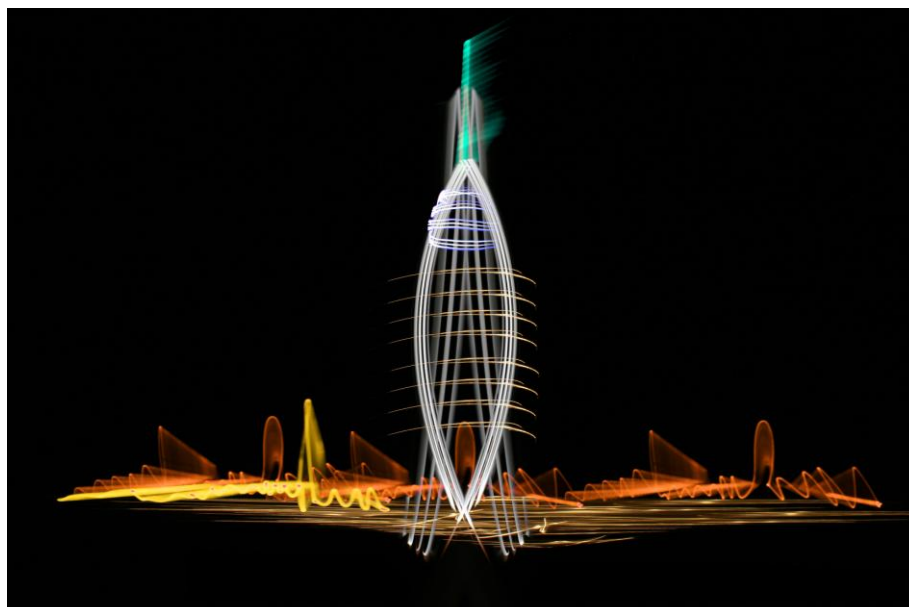
Case study 3: Support for Graduate Entrepreneurs

The University of Portsmouth development of Cibas, a business advisory service for the creative industries continue to go from strength to strength. The university works very effectively in co-operation with other support organisations like Business Link to deliver the service. From January 2006 to the present day, Cibas has supported over 500 artists and creative businesses through one-to-one advice and guidance. In the same period, over 1000 individuals attended Cibas training, networking and continuing professional development events.

Habibur Rahman is a Portsmouth-based photographer and 2007 graduate in Photography from the University of Portsmouth's School of Art, Design and Media is one such individual.

After an initial one-to-one advice session he took part in the first Cibas three day intensive start-up training programme and then arranged follow-up sessions with Cibas Advisors to focus on the practicalities of managing a freelance career and the implications of copyright and intellectual property law in his work.

With support from Cibas, he has successfully embarked on self-employment, creating and exhibiting his own artwork and developing a portfolio of clients as a photojournalist including, Portsmouth Football Club, City Life Magazine and the local Portsmouth newspaper, The News.



West Midlands Higher Education Association

The West Midlands Universities and University Colleges continue to play a key role in the region's response to the economic downturn. Through innovative and near market programmes we are meeting the short and medium term needs of the hardest hit across our region; a region which is experiencing the full impact of recession.

Our Barometer case studies illustrate the complementing of established sustainable programmes with the successful introduction of new and repurposed schemes specifically to meet the identified needs of businesses and individuals in the downturn. These schemes are impacting on the economic performance of the region through the retention of graduate capability in regional SMEs and the provision of knowledge exchange with businesses of all types. We have responded in a proactive and professional way to the funding supplied by HEFCE under the Enterprise Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF) and the impact of these schemes is starting to be felt across the region. There are many business support programmes and the overall number of enquiries they are servicing is rising, but in many cases it is too soon to evidence comparative demand.

We can report a surplus of applications across the region for undergraduate courses and our Careers Services continue to report increased demand for career and employment and one to one coaching and mentoring services. Imaginative events and workshops to meet this high demand for support have been employed by HEIs throughout the year, designed to equip graduates and students with the skills and knowledge to manage their careers through the recession. In addition the marketing and delivery of the mainstream university offer is in many instances now also being tailored for and framed within the context of the economic downturn.

As the case studies show much effort has focused on internship opportunities and this has produced a range of successful schemes. The wide range of regional internship schemes led to the production of a regional document which provides links for guidance for both employers and graduates.

This report highlights the current activity which forms part of the contribution of the Universities and University Colleges to the economic prosperity and recovery of the West Midlands. These initiatives should be read in the context of all West Midland's Universities and University Colleges having long term strategies to maximise their impact on the economic, social, and cultural wellbeing of the region.

A. Increased demand

The following case studies demonstrate the Universities proactive and collaborative response to the needs of regional businesses and individuals during the recession. Schemes have been rapidly tailored in recent months to meet the changing market needs made evident during the downturn; this has resulted in greater take up and impact:

Graduate Advantage

The Graduate Advantage project provides paid full-time and part-time work placements, summer internships, graduate placements, and free employability training. The project is a region wide collaboration involving Aston University (lead), University of Birmingham, Birmingham City University, Coventry University, Keele University, Newman University College, Staffordshire University, University College Birmingham, Warwick University, University of Wolverhampton, University of Worcester and the Open University.

ECIF Funding was awarded in order to deliver an additional 150 graduate placements. In addition to Graduate Advantage delivering a number of these placements centrally, they have used their placement expertise to partner with Remploy and Keele University. Both partners bring with them specialist skills and their own networks in order to capitalise on sourcing and supporting graduate placements beyond the scope of the Graduate Advantage central team. In recent months the project has placed 26 graduates in organisations across the region, and will have placed an additional 50 by the end of December 2009

Birmingham City University

The ECIF programme for the Faculty of Technology, Engineering and the Environment is a skills upgrade programme based on the delivery of single modules from existing CPS and MSc courses to companies operating in the automotive, aerospace, design and manufacturing sectors. The target number of individuals that the faculty is to train under ECIF is 246. However, since the contract commenced the interest in the programme has exceeded expectation and at present there are in excess of 300 individuals scheduled to undertake a variety of half and full module courses.

There is also a continuing increased demand for careers coaching and support from students and graduates. Similarly there is continuing high demand for career and employment services, especially for one-to-one advice and career management workshops. To cater for growing demand and to keep employers involved, the University is developing online advice and guidance via chatrooms and virtual recruitment fairs as well as continue pushing the e-mentoring scheme.

The Innovation Voucher Project (formerly known as the INDEX project)

The scheme invites regional small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to apply for a voucher to the value of £3000 to purchase academic support from one of the 13 regional universities and university colleges. This began as a 2 year pilot project in 2007, but due to the continued and growing demand the project has been extended; most recently with ECIF funding enabling a number of vouchers to be aimed at specific sectors. The current round of vouchers (Round 6) is funded by Advantage West Midlands (AWM), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the West Midlands Centre for Construction Excellence (WMCCE) and the Environmental Cluster at AWM. Previous

rounds were funded by Advantage West Midlands (AWM), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC), the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

The application level for vouchers has grown in the recent economic climate with approximately three times as many applications being received in shorter timeframes for the recent rounds of vouchers.

University of Wolverhampton

The University's Intelligent Career Development agency, i-CD, have prepared learning materials in Leadership Skills as a direct response to demand in many sectors for greater flexibility in organisations in order to adapt to changes in demand and opportunities.

The University's Business Development & Enterprise Department (BDE) has experienced an upturn in the number of attendees at the business focused seminars, events and workshops they organise across the West Midlands region. Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) events have seen the greatest increase in demand: information requests have doubled over the last few months.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in activity

The following cases highlight where a drop in demand has been evidenced for university programmes and the subsequent innovative solutions devised and implemented to rejuvenate the service and demand:

Graduate Advantage

From July to Sept 2008 despite receiving a higher number of placement briefs from employers than during the same period in 2007, at a point after the vacancy is advertised Graduate Advantage were experiencing unprecedented levels of drop-out from employers, the primary reason quoted was financial. Historically Graduate Advantage converts every 1 in 3 placement briefs to a placement, this reduced to 1 in 6, the lowest conversion rate since the project began in 2003.

In recognition of this Graduate Advantage consulted with the 12 universities and University College Partners at a Steering Group meeting and passed collective ideas to AWM. As a result of this in December 2008 Graduate Advantage introduced business subsidies that part-funded the cost of paying a student or graduate. Eligible companies could claim up to £1000 to cover 50% of the student/graduate's pay for the first 8 weeks. Reaction from businesses was extremely positive with the wage subsidy bringing the conversion rate from placement brief to placement up to 1 in 2, higher than pre-recession levels.

University of Birmingham

The University reported a gap in support for individuals with the right enterprise experience skills and the Graduate Enterprise and Employability programme has been developed in response to this.

Staffordshire University

The Futures programme working in conjunction with JobCentre plus is providing expertise to graduates who are currently out of work or are at risk of being made redundant. However, there appears to be a gap in service provision on advice and guidance for non-graduate middle management personnel, who have been made redundant and who have not been given a comprehensive redundancy package inclusive of redeployment support. Working in partnership with the county's Chambers of Commerce a series of events aimed at a more diverse audience is planned and will provide a host of support activities alongside advice on accessing HE provision to realise and accredit work experience.

C. Partnerships and networking

The region's Universities and University Colleges continue to develop and expand their regional and local partnerships, particularly with JobCentre Plus, Advantage West Midlands and a range of West Midlands Business Support Agencies. Established partnerships have responded quickly to the downturn and the resulting tailored schemes are meeting the needs of graduates and businesses.

West Midlands Graduate Internships

This scheme brings unpaid internships to the region via a new partnership between JobCentre Plus and regional Universities, funded by Advantage West Midlands and coordinated by Aston University. The JobCentre Plus link up is the only one of its kind in the UK. Aston is coordinating and marketing the scheme using the experience of the Graduate Advantage project team, the Universities are subcontracted to deliver a matching service, and JobCentre Plus can offer unemployed graduates access to the Flexible Routeway, an existing ESF programme that pays Job Seekers Allowance, travel expenses etc. and supports the graduate with training and support during the internship.

Aston University are the contract holder and they subcontract with Birmingham City University, Coventry University, Keele University, Staffordshire University, University of Wolverhampton Warwick University and Warwick Science Park.

There has been an increase in demand since a baseline drawn at July 2009. Statistics available at the 12 week mark show immediate demand and impact on the region from employers and graduates: Since July 14th 2009 the project has generated 691 graduate

applications and 643 internship briefs from regional employers. So far 179 graduates have been matched with 66 start dates confirmed.

University of Wolverhampton

Traditional routes for the KTP recruitment process have not included JobCentre Plus. Over the last 4 months the University has experienced a significant increase in graduate 'traffic' from JobCentre Plus applying for both the Shorter and Classic KTP projects. From a zero base they now have between 5% - 40% of CVs received originating from JobCentre Plus (The variance in the percentage range is directly proportional to the specialist technical requirements of certain KTP projects).

Staffordshire University

The Futures Programme scheme provides focused "knowledge intensive" support addressing immediate impacts the recession has on individuals and businesses. Consultations have been ongoing at a regional level with partner HEIs, stakeholders and other public sector partners to ensure a coordinated response is offered to address regional issues such as graduate retention and to maximise leverage of existing regional support initiatives including Graduate Advantage, Business Link and Jobcentre Plus provision. Focusing on local needs in the manufacturing, service sectors and associated supply chains, by providing business resilience and individual resilience support.

The foundation degree in Business Start up, currently unique to Staffordshire University within the Midlands area, is being extended to other partner institutions. Designed to include rent tiered payments and an initial 4 month rent free period, the award is an ideal vehicle to support entrepreneurs and new business within the region – especially in such a depressed climate.

West Midlands Regional KTP Scheme

The University of Wolverhampton is the responsible body for the recently initiated £24.3M West Midlands Regional KTP Scheme. This is a multi-agency funded project involving the region's Universities and University Colleges, Advantage West Midlands, TSB (Technology Strategy Board) and ERDF funding to support innovation and sustainable growth in regional businesses.

Innovation Advisory Service (IAS) and IT Advisory Service (ITAS)

Closer working relationships with Business Link have been established with the University of Wolverhampton winning open tender contracts to deliver various elements of these two specialist programmes that support the Business Link Solutions for Business agenda. The former provides the framework for supplying specialist innovation advice to SME referrals from Business Link and the latter provides the same for ICT based referrals as well as running awareness raising events in the region. Consortium supporting the Innovation Advisory Service is University of Wolverhampton (lead),

Birmingham City University, Coventry University, Keele University, and Staffordshire University.

Student Placements in Enterprise Education SPEED

The SPEED West Midlands programme is a £5.1M programme funded by AWM, ERDF & HEIF and managed by University of Wolverhampton with the intention to create 480 jobs via self-employment and 140 new businesses over its life via the Partner Universities within the region. The Partners are; University of Wolverhampton (lead partner), Aston University, University of Birmingham, Birmingham City University, Coventry University, Harper Adams University College, Keele University, Staffordshire University and University of Worcester.

Several of the Universities in the region have reported running a series of events aimed at business support in the downturn and also careers support to help graduates and students in gaining employment.

Events:

West Midlands Economic Forum

The University of Birmingham and Aston Business School have collaborated with the West Midlands Business forum on regional events including a business seminar on Financing Recovery with speakers including Jack Straw, MP, Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor.

Business Voice West Midlands

The Universities have also been supporting Business Voice West Midlands in the Credit Crunch Breakfast Seminars focused at supporting regional businesses in the recession.

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

A wide range of new schemes have been developed in direct response to the recession and the emerging needs of business, the community and individuals. The cases given illustrate the on-going commitment of the regional Universities and University Colleges to the economic and social well being of the West Midlands.

The West Midlands Business Operations

Funded by Advantage West Midlands until 2012 to provide a range of routes that will impact on the shortfall in level 4+ skills in the current workforce, as identified in the Regional Economic Strategy. The project provides innovative supported work based development routes that incorporate full or partial, credit bearing awards. Working with businesses, the project draws together expertise and experience that will result in improved business performance. The project was approved summer 2009 and the Lead

Partners are Aston University, Birmingham City University, University College Birmingham, Coventry University, Staffordshire University, University of Wolverhampton and FDF; supported by a significant number of the region's FECs and specialist providers.

National Higher Education STEM Programme

The University of Birmingham was recently awarded the National Higher Education STEM Programme by HEFCE. As well as increasing and widening participation in the key STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines, this £20M national programme will address the needs of employers through helping to develop more responsive and flexible curricula in the STEM disciplines, and upskilling the current workforce. The programme will identify the current skills needs of employers, developing flexible provision and encouraging individuals in the workforce to engage in their own skills development.

EREBUS

The EREBUS Capacity Building Cluster collaboration between Aston Business School, Warwick University and the University of Birmingham is funded from the Economic and Social Research Council to innovate and transform business practices. The Project offers KTPs, CASE Awards, Vouchers and placements for PhD students. The cluster provides high impact projects aimed at regional SMEs in the areas of energy, health technologies or finance and provides businesses with intellectual capital in the form of graduates, facilities and faculty. The capacity building cluster totals £1.5million with part funding from participating companies. It is building research capacity in the region through these projects and other cross-company-university training and networking events.

Coventry University

i. Enterprise, Sustainability & Growth

The Institute of Applied Entrepreneurship is delivering a package of support to 30 companies in the development of an entrepreneurial environment. There are a series of interventions to determine entrepreneurial profiles, business viability, goals and actions, The targeted interventions will then be developed, implemented and reviewed using training, research and consultancy.

ii. Business Sustainability Vouchers

A voucher scheme for 40 organisations or individuals for up to £3000 for accessing any one of a number of specialist schemes to tackle key issues faced by companies in the economic downturn. This may include support for starting a new business, access to international markets, specialist design and measurement advice and student placements. This project will link with other schemes such as Innovation Networks and Shorter KTPs.

iii. Gaming/Serious Games Institute

This project provides a specialist consultancy provision to 10 at-risk companies within the sector, enlisting the support of sector specific academics, investors and innovation specialists. There will be a mentoring provision for 20 graduates in 2009-10 linked to industry placements which will be run physically and using virtual environments.

This is a pilot scheme aimed at exploring, testing and learning from the delivery of a shorter KTP programme within the region. The project will deliver Knowledge Transfer Partnerships of between 10 and 40 weeks duration. Each partnership will be formed by a regional company, regional university and qualified associate to deliver a specifically defined knowledge transfer project. Coventry University Enterprises will manage the delivery, in partnership with the Technology Strategy Board and the region's Universities, of 37 regional sKTP's.

Salaried Graduate Internship

This Scheme has been developed by the University of Worcester to provide new opportunities for graduates looking for employment in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, supporting businesses and students during the economic downturn and helping to equip them for the recovery. During their 12 month internship graduates are expected to make a practical contribution to the work of the organisation, whilst simultaneously undertaking a Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Management including specifically designed work-based activity.

Keele University

The ECIF Project Green is now underway with 120 students applying for the 35 projects available in the first intake. The scheme offers graduates a paid work placement of at least four weeks with a local business to tackle an environmental project plus study towards a post graduate study in Environmental Management. The scheme is open to unemployed graduates and those facing unemployment who are looking to re-skill. Keele University has teamed with Groundwork Trust, Build up North Staffordshire and Wardell Armstrong to launch the first round of placements in September with further rounds in December 2009, April 2010 and June 2010.

E. Other

Several Universities including Aston University, Harper Adams University College and University College Birmingham have reported that the inclusion of a placement year in their undergraduate courses has been a significant boost to their employment success on graduation. These placements are also providing businesses with valuable resources to progress key development projects during the downturn.

A key strategic issue for the region is the continuous alignment of University and University College services and support programmes with those undertaken by a range of regional and national support agencies.

Good practice cases:

Harper Adams University College

The continued success, through a period of economic recession, which is achieved at Harper Adams University College with students on all undergraduate honours and foundation degrees undertaking a mandatory placement period (normally for a year) can be attributed to the very close working relationship built up over many years with employers, together with the continued professional and consultancy involvement of many academic staff, in addition to more traditional research interests.

For an essentially vocational institution such as Harper Adams the placement period provides focus from everything from day to day teaching, through to course design and responding to industry skills shortages as well as providing the foundation for our extremely successful graduate employment record.

Finding placements this year presented additional challenges for the team due to the pressures businesses are experiencing in the downturn. However, through the active development of new business contacts we continue to place 100% of our students.

Birmingham Science City

The portfolio of research and innovation projects funded at University of Birmingham and Warwick University supported by AWM under the Birmingham Science City initiative have now developed business engagement and marketing capability through the universities and Marketing Birmingham and work is on-going with Business Link, Manufacturing Advisory Service, MediLink and other regional and national agencies to promote the opportunities to businesses in the thematic areas of energy, medicine and healthcare, and advanced materials and manufacturing. Over the next few years these projects will support new research and development with companies in the region, nationally and internationally, provide business support to innovating companies, develop new skills for a knowledge-based workforce and deliver new highly skilled jobs to the region.

Yorkshire and Humber

A. Increased demand for existing activity

Increased demand for higher education

As reported in the previous HERA Barometer for October, as part of the national picture, universities in the region have received a record number of applications for higher education courses starting in 2009. With a government imposed cap on student places, this has led to tough competition for places.

Increased demand for training, employability, information and guidance and job seeking support

Demand from graduates and professionals for training, employability and job seeking support remains high.

Universities in the region are continuing to deliver a range of measures to help graduates to improve their employability and to support them during the recession:

- Internships
- Employability skills
- Careers advice, guidance and coaching
- Job seeking support
- Increased scholarship funding and discounted tuition fees for postgraduate study
- workshops, seminars and support for graduate entrepreneurs and enterprise activities

Case study examples of interventions supporting graduates and professionals delivered in this reporting period are provided below:

New Postgraduate Certificate in Employability and Enterprise - University of Bradford

The University of Bradford has created a new Postgraduate Certificate in Employability and Enterprise as an additional employability support mechanism for its Economic Challenge Investment Funded (ECIF) internships. The qualification gives students advanced interview skills, training on effective C.V. writing, advice on how to stand out in a crowded job market, enterprise skills, and will provide 12-week job placements. Crucially, employability skills are being linked with a greater understanding of how small

businesses work to allow graduates to make contributions quickly once on in the workplace.

Global Entrepreneurship Week – Yorkshire’s Universities

During Global Entrepreneurship Week (16-22 November) Universities in the region are running a range of events to provide advice and information to students, graduates and members of their local communities interested in starting their own businesses.

The University of Huddersfield, host institution for the regional Graduate Entrepreneurship Project, is holding an enterprise showcase, a series of inspirational talks by successful entrepreneurs and enterprise competitions including a SimVenture business simulation game. As part of the week’s events, the University will also formally launch its new Centre for Creative Enterprise.

During Global Entrepreneurship Week, Leeds Trinity University College will be running its own Employability and Enterprise Week to give students tips on getting their dream job after graduation and special insight into their chosen sector.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in existing activity

No additional news items to report on fall in demand/gaps in existing activity for this reporting period.

C. Partnerships and networking

Partnership working

- ECIF funding is leading to increased partnership working with local authorities, Business Link, Chambers of Commerce through cross marketing and referral of HE products.
- The West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network is leading on a project to place HE staff roles in local authorities to support the work of the Work and Skills Boards in West Yorkshire. The aim is to enable partners to be more responsive to local higher level skills strategies resulting in more employer progression agreements and employer based training and accreditation opportunities.
- Business Link is now referring clients to the Graduates Yorkshire regional internship programme and ongoing presentations on the programme are being held with advisor teams to ensure information is cascaded across the region.

- Yorkshire Universities is working with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that the scope of the HE offer is fully represented in the district provision tool kit to ensure effective referral and take up of the HE offer.
- Yorkshire Forward hosted a visit from the Office for Graduate Opportunities within the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to share information on what support is available for graduates in the region. As part of their engagement with RDAs and other regional partners, colleagues in the Office for Graduate Opportunities in BIS are hoping to visit all the RDA regions to meet partners and exchange information on what help is available for graduates regionally. Organisations represented at the meeting were HEFCE, Yorkshire Universities, Jobcentre Plus, Next Step Careers, Graduates Yorkshire, the University Careers Services and Yorkshire Forward. Two key areas of good practice in the region were identified by BIS as being the Graduates Yorkshire Regional Internship programme model and the creation of the help-zone page, a single site on the Graduates Yorkshire website holding information (by sub-region) for graduates and employers on recession-time support. Regional best practice on graduate support will be included in a national report being produced by BIS on the graduate agenda to inform policy development. Other actions from the meeting include a link to be put on the National Graduate Talent Pool website to the regional internships programme in Yorkshire and a meeting between the University Careers Services with Next Step Careers to explore a referral process for graduate guidance.
- Yorkshire Universities recently attended the YACHT, a new network organised by Government Office Yorkshire and the Humber for senior communications professionals and press officers. YACHT is an anagram of the acronym of Yorkshire and the Humber Communicators. The network aims to enhance links between organisations, particularly those working in the public sector, across the region to create a regional network of communicators working together to share information, intelligence and ideas. At the first meeting, on Thursday November 5, Ros Dawson, Press Secretary to the Regional Minister, Rosie Winterton, gave a presentation on Building Britain's Future – the Government's plan to work with the British people to shape the economic recovery and together build a stronger, fairer and more prosperous country. Martin Seymour, Head of Economic Recovery at GOYH, also talked about the work and aims of Economic Delivery Group (EDG) set up by the Regional Minister to lead the region's response to recession and its preparations for recovery.

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

Case study examples of new activity being delivered are detailed below:

Major Development Programme with the NHS – University of York

The University of York is launching a major development programme to help senior NHS executives save money by raising quality and productivity, rather than resorting to across-the-board cuts in jobs and services. The programme has been developed in collaboration with senior health staff from across the University, including the Centre for Health Economics, the Department of Health Sciences and York Management School.

The programme is also open to private sector health executives, and is designed to develop smart, evidence-informed strategies to improve quality and productivity.

With current estimates suggesting that the NHS needs to make savings of £20 billion by 2014, a team of 20 world-leading health strategists will help the 25 delegates to adopt more analytical, evidence-informed methods to make increasingly effective use of resources.

Delivery of the programme is highly interactive and includes a mix of speaker-led workshops, plenary presentations, panel discussions and 'Dragons' Den' workshops.

For more information please visit: <http://www.york.ac.uk/health-strategy-forum/>

Free Management Masterclasses for businesses in Yorkshire – University of Bradford

The School of Management at the University of Bradford is offering Yorkshire organisations free Management Masterclasses to ensure they can sample management development courses and understand how management learning can be implemented in the workplace.

The 'master classes' led by Executive Education at the School, are aimed at decision makers who commission management development in public and private sector organisations. These decision makers will have a unique opportunity to experience the School's management training range and can benefit from taking part in practical and interactive master classes as executive delegates. The aim of the master classes is to help organisations better implement management learning for real results.

For more information please visit: www.bradford.ac.uk/management/master

Engineering and Manufacturing Road show - University of Sheffield

An engineering and manufacturing road show on wheels is touring the UK to bring the latest and future technologies to businesses and schools.

The road show's aim is to connect UK industry with the latest tools and techniques to ensure UK manufacturing and engineering remain world class while developing the economy. It will also help encourage young people to take up career paths that will create the next generation of world class researchers and engineers.

MANTRA (The Manufacturing Technology Transporter) is a specially modified HGV packed with the latest machinery and simulators. The 14 metre long truck will take to the road with a dedicated team to demonstrate the manufacturing and assembly line technology of the future and help to inspire young people to take up careers in engineering.

Established by the University of Sheffield's Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre with Boeing (AMRC) and with funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and industry sponsors, MANTRA will introduce companies to the latest production engineering technology and techniques helping them to innovate with new products, increase productivity and keep UK manufacturing competitive. The road show will also be used to show secondary school pupils how exciting manufacturing can be - using eye catching technologies such as virtual reality assembly and advanced modelling systems.

For more information please contact: pressoffice@epsrc.ac.uk

E. Other

Case study examples of university-led wider economic and civic engagement for this reporting period are detailed below:

Community engagement

The contribution of students to the city of Sheffield – Sheffield Hallam University and University of Sheffield

Local people from across the region took part in a week-long series of free events during half-term (26 - 31 October 2009) hosted by students at the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University. The event aimed to celebrate the positive contribution students make to the city of Sheffield and also provided people with the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities, helping to inspire them to discover and understand new things.

Students from a range of societies at both universities hosted an exciting schedule of performances and interactive activities, which saw adults and children alike trying their hand at something new.

Families were given a taste of different subject areas with language sessions and fun-based science activities for kids, whilst also being treated to musical performances from students in the Department of Music. In addition, people were able to get involved with a number of diverse workshops including hip-hop dancing, samba drumming, singing, circus acts and Capoeira – an Afro-Brazilian art form that combines elements of martial arts, games, music and dance.

For further information please contact: Lauren Anderson at the University of Sheffield on 0114 2221046 or email l.h.anderson@sheffield.ac.uk or Tess Humphrys at Sheffield Hallam University on 0114 225 4025 or email t.humphrys@shu.ac.uk

Economic and Social regeneration solutions and combating climate change Coal: The Social, Economic, Regeneration and Climate Change Opportunities – University of Sheffield

Experts from the worlds of politics, academia and business came together at the University of Sheffield (28 October 2009) to discuss social and economic regeneration opportunities for the coal industry in Yorkshire and the implications this will have for climate change.

The conference, which was held at the Edge Conference Centre at the University, was hosted by the Rt Hon John Prescott MP. He was joined by a delegation of Chinese politicians who gathered in Sheffield to look at the positive contributions that could be had from the coal industry.

Discussion included increasing co-operation and investment opportunities between the North of England and industrial areas of China, the positive contribution of coal, latest and future techniques in the mining and burning of coal, government policy for the coal industry and coal communities, climate change issues, and regeneration implications and considerations for the region.

The Coalfield Regeneration Trust have been actively supporting the conference and will be showing the delegation from China, several facilities that they have helped establish to deal with the after-effects of the coal industry in the UK.

The Conference is an initiative supported by the new Centre for Low Carbon Futures (CLCF). This new research hub brings together world-leading expertise based within Yorkshire and Humberside with the aim of building a competitive, sustainable and carbon efficient regional economy while providing climate solution of national and international significance.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/management/events/coalconference2009.html>

F. Summary remarks

ECIF Programmes in the region

- ECIF funding has led to greater partnership working within the HE and FE sector and with local authorities, Business Link, Chambers of Commerce and other intermediaries. There is anecdotal evidence of increased awareness of the HE offer, particularly with local businesses. ECIF programmes have also led to referrals to other education and training programmes and core funded activities where clients are not eligible for the ECIF project e.g. to level 3 FE.
- The complexity of the match funding conditions for the ECIF programmes remains a challenge for planning and delivery of provision designed to meet need.

Improved intelligence on graduate destinations in the region

- Yorkshire Universities and Graduates Yorkshire (GY) will be carrying out a survey of the GY registered graduates to get a snap shot of what's happening three months on for the class of 2009 graduates. The survey will capture the current circumstances of graduates in the region as well as their experiences of the various touch points and support available within the public sector support system e.g. Jobcentre Plus and Next Step National Careers, the university careers services in the region etc. Intelligence on the graduate situation in Yorkshire will be used to help inform other employability and skills initiatives - both recession response and longer-term.

Graduate guidance

- ECIF funding has enabled HE partnerships to meet a gap in mainstream provision by providing enhanced careers support to professionals (including graduates) facing redundancy or unemployed above the mainstream offer from JobCentre Plus and Next Step Careers.

West Midlands Higher Education Association additional information

A. Increased demand

1. Evidence of increased demand for schemes addressing newly or potentially redundant, re-skilling needs or workforce development and graduate internships

University of Wolverhampton

The University's Professional Skills Development unit, Intelligent Career Development Ltd, has developed learning materials in direct response to identified re-skilling needs in the Construction sector for multi-site communications and management – essentially arising from smaller and more dissipated contracts in the sector. In addition workforce development needs in the area of HR law have been identified in a number of sectors as a result of the recognition of legislative changes.

The University's Career and Employment Services 'The Workplace' continues to develop its placement activities, having already placed 77 graduates and on target to place 100 graduates into full time employment this year. The West Midlands Centre for Construction Excellence (WMCCE) run by the University of Wolverhampton has seen a rise in the number of enquiries from the Construction Sector for Internships.

There has also been an excellent response to the University's first international internship scheme (Leonardo Funding). To date there has been 18 applications and so far, 4 have been accepted to the programme.

2. Evidence of increased demand for schemes addressing business needs in the economic downturn

Staffordshire University

Business Futures (part of the Futures programme (ECIF)) is strengthening business resilience through knowledge transfer opportunities by accelerating access to academic expertise and establishing greater 'Knowledge Networks' throughout the region. This involves near market technology diagnostics and a series of market making events which commenced in October 2009 and will run into the summer of 2010.

Staffordshire University is investing its VAT windfall into the Working Futures Fund, to give local people and local businesses hit by redundancy access to financial assistance to support vital training and development. To date £45,450 has been spent on providing subsidised training for key sectors and topics, from leadership and management, Prince 2 and Apple Media training, to bespoke provision for the local ceramics sector and community and voluntary services, both of whom have been struggling in this current

market. All of this provision has been designed to respond to the needs of the receiving organisations, to help their workforce meet immediate business needs.

B. Fall in demand/gaps in activity

3. Please summarise any schemes which are experiencing rapidly falling demand and/or gaps in activity that have been identified by stakeholders (e.g. HEIs themselves or partners)

Birmingham City University

The Faculty of Technology, Engineering and the Environment, until recently, ran a number of large funded schemes aimed at assisting companies in a variety of sectors from manufacturing to the creative industries. Unfortunately the projects came to the end of their lifetime just before the full impact of the economic downturn hit the West Midlands. This has no doubt resulted in a gap in much needed provision as currently the only funded scheme to enable companies to up skill their workforce to deal with the issues presented by the economic downturn is ECIF.

C. Partnerships and networking

4. Please summarise any increased working between HEIs and JobCentre Plus and/or with companies on graduate internships, graduate recruitment etc?

Staffordshire University

Graduate Futures is assisting graduates from the region, regardless of their graduation date or institution with employability training and support. In addition to workshops throughout the Staffordshire region, 1:2:1 guidance interviews and online careers fairs are also readily available. Working alongside JobCentre Plus, Graduate Futures through the University's Careers service is providing an enhanced service to all graduates and also providing pre-entry advice to individuals who are considering HE entry post redundancy.

5. Please summarise any increased working between HEIs, RDA Skills, JobCentre Plus and other skills partners on schemes for the newly or potentially redundant people/communities and to meet skills/workforce development needs in the downturn?

University of Wolverhampton

i-CD is currently in negotiation with 3 colleges, more to follow, on two kinds of key partnerships; targeted HE provision integrated with FE to augment the provision into FE College's clients and validation and accreditation of external programmes – a streamlined approach to accrediting existing and new FE provision within the HE award framework of the University.

6. Please summarise any increased working between HEIs and RDAs/Business Links and other business support and innovation partners on schemes for businesses in the economic downturn? Please also mention any work with the self-employed or supporting self-employment.

Graduate Enterprise and Employability Programme

The University of Birmingham, Aston University and Birmingham City University have recently received funding via the Working Neighbourhood Funds to create a programme designed to support enterprise and entrepreneurship amongst graduates and current students. The Graduate Enterprise and Employability programme (GEE) has significant links with Business Link and major regional enterprise groups and individuals.

The project will run until March 2011 providing support to over 500 graduates within the city of Birmingham. Support will be provided for individuals seeking to start their own businesses; a graduate enterprise club will operate across the city comprising networking, guest speakers, mentoring; and advice support and guidance will be available to graduates who are currently, underemployed, or wishing to start a business, to include enterprise advice, guidance, careers advice etc.

It is expected that each university incubator space will be able to accommodate a minimum of 10 businesses every six months; this will enable 90 businesses to be supported over a 15-month period. Each business will have a six month tenancy, and each university will work with other agencies and programmes to help direct the businesses to move to grow-on facilities. This will ensure that continued support is provided to sustain continued growth.

West Midlands Manufacturing Advisory Service

The Manufacturing Advisory Service in the West Midlands (MAS-WM) was established in 2002 by three partner organisations including WMG at Warwick University. Since its inception, MAS-WM has worked extremely closely with regional universities, and initially a high percentage of new development programmes were placed through these sources. Regular "knowledge days" are held between MAS-WM and universities to ensure excellent links are maintained, and to encourage knowledge transfer to the MAS client base. A change in delivery model nearly two years ago and the reduction in maximum acceptable daily rates led to a drop in work brokered between the MAS client base and local universities. MAS-WM is currently working to increase this interaction, as it is well understood that there is strength of knowledge in the regional university base, but this is driving the need for improved speed of reaction and an acceptance of different funding models. Currently there are a number of critical projects being delivered on the MAS-WM Automotive Response Project (ARP), by Coventry, Warwick, Wolverhampton & Birmingham City Universities and these are focussed in areas such as new product

development, materials research, business planning & market diversification. This £4.5m ARP Programme is a proactive response to supporting business in the current recession and has already resulted in some very successful projects, growing businesses and safeguarding jobs.

Staffordshire University

The Futures Programme

By increasing the flow of communication between the project and stakeholders/partners, the project offer has been combined with that of regional agencies to provide a greater and more comprehensive support package to the business community. Programmes have been launched for STEM focussed demonstrator events and a series of business club events in partnership with the Institute of Directors.

Arts for Health

The University is promoting the Developing Arts for Health award, which is an accredited professional development course which aims to support artists working in health settings. It focuses on work in a range of health settings and incorporates issues as project planning and delivery, partnership working, health policy and funding. Effected greatly by the economic downturn this sector of micro businesses will now be supported by The Futures Programme with a 50% course subsidy and will provide placement opportunities within the course itself. The course contributes to graduate retention by enabling graduates to train in an area of direct relevance to their employability within the sub region and extends the stock of work based learning provided by the university in partnership with local employers.

University of Birmingham

The University is a lead partner in the £40M Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) to be developed at Ansty Park research and development site near Coventry. The MTC brings together the universities of Birmingham, Nottingham, Loughborough and the RTO TWI to provide internationally-leading knowledge base resources within a high quality environment for the development and demonstration of new manufacturing technologies at production scale. Founder industrial members are Rolls Royce, Airbus UK, AeroEngine Controls and Jaguar Land Rover all of which have significant operations or supply chains based in the Region. The MTC is integral to delivering the UK Government's Manufacturing Strategy announced last year. The MTC provides a real step change for manufacturing by bridging the gap between academic research and commercial production enabling the needs and requirements of industry to be met in a way which has not been achieved until now.

D. New or re-purposed schemes to address the current and forthcoming economic situation: transition to economic recovery

A wide range of new schemes have been developed in direct response to the recession and the emerging needs of business, the community and individuals. The cases given illustrate the on-going commitment of the regional Universities and University Colleges to the economic and social well being of the West Midlands.

8. Examples of new schemes to support redundant people/communities or skill/workforce development needs

Coventry University

The Faculty of Engineering and Computing is working with external partners to deliver support for the development and provision of targeted training for automotive manufacturers and third party suppliers. They will provide workforce skills and development for 200 employees and additional support for 10 companies to help maintain a position within the market, manage legislative and consumer pressures or diversify into new sectors which are less affected by the economic downturn.

The Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull Lifelong Learning Network

The Network is offering partner organisations the opportunity to deliver the Local Communities, Higher Skills- Flexible Modular Solutions project funded by the Working Neighbourhood Fund. The aim of the project is to improve the higher level skills base in Birmingham in order for business to remain competitive with a highly skilled workforce. University College Birmingham's application to this programme will deliver 120 modules at level four to individuals at risk of redundancy in the workplace.

10. Number of internship schemes or other post-graduation support

Coventry University

A bespoke mentoring and graduate placement scheme has been developed by the Institute of Creative Enterprise for 40 BA/MA graduates. This will provide supervised mentoring relationships between graduates and business mentors from the creative industries and recent alumni.

Staffordshire University

The Futures programme (ECIF) provides Information, advice and guidance to unemployed graduates and professionals to build individual resilience and provide support for entering traditional industries as knowledge transfer agents. To date 220 individuals have received one to one careers guidance and 60 graduates have benefited from intensive career management workshops. It also aims to build employer

engagement and focuses on work based learning to bring value added education to the work place. The provision of subsidised and free higher level short course training is helping to maintain the talent within the Staffordshire region and ensure the readiness of the workforce once the recovery begins.

The University is also supporting their LLN partners by developing opportunities to access HE provision. 45 individual learning opportunities have been delivered to date and a further 155 planned up until September 2010. Staffordshire University is also offering subsidy for post-graduate courses of up to approx £1200.

Staffordshire Partners has been successful in obtaining just under £6million from the Future Jobs Fund, providing 978 posts across different organisations in Staffordshire. Part of Staffordshire University's commitment to the project is to provide 10 apprenticeship places in November 2009.

University College Birmingham

UCB employs several graduate teaching assistants who are given the opportunity to study for a Masters degree whilst taking on some teaching and research duties. Many of these graduates are able to apply for permanent positions as and when these become available. This opportunity provides able but inexperienced graduates with relevant experience to progress their academic career in a structured manner.

E. Other

11. Please feel free to add comment on any other HEI contributions relevant to the economic downturn, such as good practice in working with suppliers, cultural events etc. Also any good practices or suggestions on how the HE contribution could be improved, including any barriers HEIs are experiencing.

University College Birmingham

The University has established a one-stop shop approach to meeting employer needs by locating all such work within one coordinating unit- BusinessHub@UCB. The role of the Hub is to locate all business facing activity in one outward facing office that will attract businesses and other organisations to take advantage of a range of services and specialist expertise offered by the College including business consultancy, market research, tailored training, corporate hospitality and food product and recipe development.

The University also commuted the savings from the temporary reduction in the rate of VAT to business-support activity through BusinessHub@UCB and created a new product development facility which has become a well-used specialist support resource by food and drink manufacturers. It has been of particular benefit to start-up/small businesses in food and drink manufacture who are unable to afford the capital development and ongoing running costs of such facilities

University of Birmingham

The Honey Pot Scheme:

The scheme provides financial support to undergraduate students at the University of Birmingham to undertake work experience over the summer vacation period. Students can apply for up to £800 to support low or unpaid work experience placements. The Honey Pot is funded by the University of Birmingham Alumni. The Honey Pot supports a diverse range of work experience opportunities within sectors such as: performance and arts, banking and business, environmental and historical, engineering and science, health and social care, and IT and media! To make a successful application you will need to demonstrate your proposed work experience supports your future development and is linked to your future career.

The Talent Pool:

This is a unique programme that provides customised training and access to practical, 'real-life' opportunities to develop the next generation of academics, business consultants and entrepreneurs. Talent Pool offers a training programme that enables Doctoral and Postdoctoral Researchers to develop the essential skills required to deliver consultancy projects and provides a brokerage system to develop their relationships with external businesses. The programme is targeted at doctoral and post-doctoral researchers in the Engineering and Physical Sciences. Members of the Pool undergo a course of training in enterprise skills relevant to SMEs including professional consulting skills. Following this, the researchers will respond individually or in multi-disciplinary teams to real consulting projects as posed by SMEs, large firms and public sector clients.