

NEWS RELEASE – Monday 15 May 2006

LONDON EMPLOYERS' GIVE THUMBS UP TO PART-TIME STUDY

London employers are more in favour of part-time study for their employees than has been thought, new research by *London Higher* shows.

The research report entitled 'Attitudes to part-time study – the perspective of London employers' revealed:

- ◆ 77% of employers surveyed believe that both they and employees benefit from an employee undertaking part-time study;
- ◆ 90% of employers surveyed believe that undertaking a course of part-time study has a positive effect on employees;
- ◆ employers reported that 90% of employees who undertake part-time study complete their courses;
- ◆ the majority of firms in London provide, often generous, funding to support their staff in their part-time studies;
- ◆ whilst employers are willing to fund job-specific, management, IT and health and safety courses, they are less likely to fund language and well-being courses;
- ◆ 30% of employers surveyed suggest that government subsidies for part-time courses would make them more willing to encourage part-time study amongst employees;
- ◆ employers' policies towards part-time study are informal and often formulated on an *ad hoc* basis, if they exist at all;
- ◆ 88% of employers surveyed who have tried finding part-time learning courses have been successful.

The research was jointly funded by *London Higher* and the London Development Agency. A telephone survey was conducted of 385 employers in Greater London to explore their experiences, perceptions and attitudes towards Part-time Study. The full research report can be found at: <http://www.londonhigher.ac.uk/projects-part.htm>.

These findings are of particular significance in the light of Ruth Kelly's (former Secretary of State for Education) annual letter earlier this year to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) calling for 'radical changes' in the provision of Higher Education (HE), including more opportunities for part-time and short-cycle courses.

And with NIACE's (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education - England and Wales) 'Adult Learners' Week' kicking off on 20 May 2006, London employers have the ideal platform to promote their organisation as one that invests in, and values, its people.

ENDS

For further information contact:

Naz Khan

Projects Officer (Learning & Skills), London Higher

Tel: 020 7664 4840

Email: naz.khan@londonhigher.ac.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. *London Higher* is a membership organisation that promotes and acts as an advocate for London's higher education. It is an 'umbrella' body representing 43 publicly funded universities and higher education colleges. *London Higher* is the biggest and most varied of the regional university associations in the UK. Visit <http://www.londonhigher.ac.uk>.
2. The London Development Agency (LDA) is the Mayor's agency for business and jobs. The LDA prepares the Mayor's business plan for London and mobilises the support and resources of hundreds of partner organisations to help build a thriving economy for London's people, businesses and communities. The LDA is dedicated to improving sustainability, health and equality of opportunity for Londoners. Visit <http://www.lda.gov.uk>.
3. The letter from Ruth Kelly to HEFCE can be found at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/News/hefce/2006/grant/letter.pdf>
4. NIACE's Adult Learners' Week is the UK's largest celebration of learning. It promotes education and training for adults, provides access to information and guidance, motivates more and different adults to participate in learning and celebrates the learning achievements of adults. Visit <http://www.niace.org.uk/ALW/2006/About/WhatisALW.htm>.
5. *London Higher* collaborated with Universities UK (UUK) to conduct research into the London-based element of a national HE Part-time Study project based on data sourced from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for 2003/04. This research report can be found at <http://www.londonhigher.ac.uk/projects-part.htm>. Findings include the following:
 - London higher education institutions enrolled 144,000 part-time students – 17% of all part-time HE students nationally;
 - Overall students from ethnic minorities represent 32% of all part-time students in London institutions; this compares with 11% for the part-time student population of the UK as a whole;
 - There appears to be a greater level of vocational motivation for study among part-time students in London than among part-time students nationally and which is clearly influenced by the presence within London of several major Medical Schools;
 - The part-time population in London is notable for the high proportion of students following taught postgraduate programmes;
 - Almost one-fifth of postgraduate research students are researching in Medicine and Dentistry – a finding which differs significantly from those of the national research;
 - Among first degree students the study of Law is much more prominent in London than in the UK generally, and Nursing less so.

The UUK national research will be published in the autumn.

6. London's universities and higher education colleges are a powerhouse of research, teaching and technology transfer unrivalled anywhere in the UK, Europe and beyond. Collectively London HEIs:

- **Generate** c. £8 billion each year in goods and services
- **Contribute** c. 1 per cent of UK GDP and 4 per cent of London's GDP
- **Provide** a first class education for 378,000 students – who are able to choose from over 6,000 undergraduate courses and several thousand postgraduate qualifications
- **Employ** 50,000 FTE staff - and for every one employed by HE in London, one other job is created elsewhere in the UK economy
- **Win** 25 per cent of all UK research funding - some £600 million annually – led by a cluster of the world's top research institutions and institutes
- **Attract** to the UK over 83,000 international students from more than 200 countries, who in turn spend over £750 million in the UK each year
- **Produce** over 66,000 skilled graduates and other qualifiers for the job market each year, with each graduate cohort having the potential to generate £11.7 billion during their working lives.

7. *London Higher* is currently exploring various tools to facilitate engagement with employers regarding courses available. These tools are expected to be available later in the year.