

From: Claire LESTER [7054] [c.lester@hefce.ac.uk]
Sent: 03 December 2008 11:20
To: Stephen Challenger
Cc: Kate GOULD [7239]
Subject: LLN monitoring return- West Yorkshire

Dear Steve

I am writing to thank you for the monitoring template that was submitted for the last academic year, 2007-08. We were very grateful for the level of hard work put in by the LLN to complete the new monitoring requirements. The monitoring reports have allowed us to make overall judgements about the progress of LLNs but have also underlined the rich diversity of LLNs.

Your report has now been read and analysed by the North institutional team and by the WP LLN team and I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with feedback on your submission.

As you will be aware, we have produced an initial analysis of the monitoring reports which was distributed at the recent LLN national forum conference, as well as electronically to all directors. We will be using this draft report as the basis for a fuller report which we anticipate to publish online by the end of the year.

The LLN is progressing well following a slow start which was predominantly a result of recruitment problems. It is pleasing to see that all of its first year milestones have been achieved, although behind the original target date, with the exception of agreeing a sustainability strategy and establishing a credit framework.

Whilst no progression agreements are in place, 36 are being prepared. We will be keen to read how work on progression agreements has progressed in the next report, especially planned work around the 14-19 diplomas.

Progress in each sector has been affected by the slow recruitment of Sector Officers. Of particular concern is the impact on Health and Social Care, which the report states has experienced less than satisfactory performance. The report does not mention the HEIF 3-funded White Rose Health Innovation Partnership (WRHIP), which the University of Bradford is a member of- it would be useful to know how or the if the LLN plans to link with this project.

It is pleasing to see that IAGnow also allows for the tracking, monitoring and evaluation of interventions. Phase 2 of this project will develop this further and will assist the collection and collation of information to inform the HESA, HESES (and presumably HEIFES) returns as well as WYLLN reports. If successful, the project will provide a system for measuring the influence and effect of IAG on the learner and their progress into HE. A number of LLNs are developing tracking systems linked to IAG, it would be useful to share approaches taken by LLNs.

It is good to read that the LLN is on target for the numbers of learners supported with IAG. The LLN has investigated progression software and has confirmed that it favours GMSA Pathways. The report states that financial exploitation of IT tools and systems are being considered as a sustainability option, however this may be problematic given the investment needed to ensure that these are robust and fit for purpose and the competition from other LLNs and educational providers. We would suggest that the LLN carefully considers the pros and cons of open source and commercial developments.

Strong FE-HE links are apparent through sector groups, staff development, the IAG advisory group and 14-19 group. Curriculum developments (FDs and FD modules) are based on strong links with employers, their intermediaries and the sector skills councils.

Although there is some under spend, we are aware that discussions are taking place with the institutional team and a proposal for re-profiling is likely to be submitted around May/June 2009.

There were areas where we would have been interested to see further detail, in particular we would have liked to have seen consideration of how the LLN works with partner institutions to promote equality and diversity (as requested in the revised monitoring guidance issued in August 2008). In addition, the report outlines the LLN's sustainability options, which includes income from IT tools, bidding for ASNs and accessing funding via the Employer Engagement Fund. Given the current circumstances, it is essential that the sustainability working group considers broader plans for sustainability, in particular embedding progression activity. We will be keen to see how plans for sustainability are progressing in the next report.

Thank you once again for the hard work that has gone into producing this report – the reports have enabled HEFCE to develop a thorough position on the considerable progress being made by all LLNs and we hope that the LLN will find the data collected a useful component to feed into individual project evaluations.

Best wishes

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