

## West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network

### Progression Agreements

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Progression agreements lie at the heart of progression activities in the WYLLN. Our main targets are for the number of learners supported, the number of learners progressing and the number of curriculum developments. The relationship between these targets is captured in progression agreements. Our curriculum developments are designed to make HE more accessible to vocational and work-based learners and the new provision must have a progression agreement. It articulates the type of support learners are expected to receive before and after progression has occurred. Institutions are expected to produce progression agreements as part of their partnership activity and for the courses for which ASNs have been received.
- 1.2. The way the system works was described in the West Yorkshire Progression Agreement Framework, which was signed up to by the heads of all FE and HE institutions in West Yorkshire (except the Northern School of Contemporary Dance). It was finalised in June 2008.
- 1.3. This paper provides an interim review of the progress made to date in implementing the Framework and highlights some of the issues emerging. A full review of the first year will be reported to the Board in the September meeting.

#### 2. Progression Agreement Framework

- 2.1. The progression agreement operates at two levels: at a strategic level, with the Agreement of Intent; and at an operational level with the Progression Agreement.
- 2.2. The Progression Agreement is made up of required and additional elements. The required elements include
  - A statement of the entry requirements the learner will be required to meet to access the named course
  - A guaranteed interview and information on how it will taken place
  - A description of the application process learners will be required to complete
  - Personal career and development planning
  - A statement of when and how changes or modification to the course/programme will be carried out.
  - A statement of how information in the Agreement will be passed on to the receiving institution
  - The provision of information on financial support that may be available to learners
  - A statement of how the Agreement will be modified or terminated
  - A statement of how the Agreement will be reviewed
- 2.3. The Progression Agreement may also include additional requirements such as

- A guarantee of places
- How feedback to unsuccessful candidates will be given
- A programme of jointly planned activities to increase the candidates understanding of HE
- How IAG activities will support them during the application process

2.4. Once a Progression Agreement has been set up between a sending and receiving institution, it is signed off by the relevant tutor and their head of department (or equivalent). To ensure learners fully understand what they can expect from the agreement, a Learner Progression Agreement is completed for each individual.

2.5. A recognition panel, made up of representatives from the Credit and Progression Task Group, reviews each progression agreement before it can be endorsed by the WYLLN. Progression Agreements can be recognised; recognised with recommendations, recognised with conditions (and recommendations); or not recognised.

2.6. An example of a recognised progression agreement is given in appendix 1.

### 3. Current position

3.1. The Progression Agreements currently recognised by the WYLLN are shown in appendix 2. A summary of them is given in the table below:

Total number of agreements recognised	25
Number of internal progression agreements	12
Number of progression agreements from level 3	10
Number of foundation degree top-ups	13
Number of multi-entry/exit agreements	3

### 4. Emerging Issues

4.1. At the September Board meeting, when the planned progression agreements were being considered, there was general agreement that there should be a focus on progression from level 3 to 4 and on multi-entry/exit agreements. The Agreements currently recognised are those that were being planned in September, so the concerns expressed then are reflected in the Agreements recognised to date. In agreeing partnership agreements with institutions, WYLLN officers have stressed the need to focus on these types of agreements. In order to further emphasise their importance, it is proposed that targets for multi-exit/entry agreements for progression from level 3 to 4 should be set, as part of the sustainability strategy.

4.2. Some of the Progression Agreements recognised by the WYLLN go well beyond the minimum requirements of the WYLLN Progression Framework. However, there are some concerns as to whether the focus of the activity within partner institutions has been on developing the agreement and not on its implementation. This will be a major element of the review.

- 4.3. One element of the Framework not always readily implemented is the Learner Agreement. This agreement makes it clear to the learner what they can expect from the Progression Agreement and is signed by tutors from the sending and receiving institution, as well as the learner. Concerns have been expressed about the level of bureaucracy and may be one of the reasons for it not being implemented immediately. Equally it may be a reflection of the process having an institutional rather than a learner focus. This will be another major area of the review.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1. The Board is asked to consider and comment on the current situation with regard to the implementation of the West Yorkshire Progression Framework and agree to the proposal that the sustainability strategy should have targets for level 3 to 4 and multi-entry/exit progression.