

Yorkshire Universities Technical Assistance Project

Higher Level Skills Project Research Report (January 2014)

Background

1. Jessica Grant (Director Higher York) and Jenny Hall (Creative Business Development Manager) at York St John University were engaged by the Yorkshire Universities Technical Assistance (YUTA) project to carry out the following tasks in whilst Projects Officers and a Project Coordinator were recruited:
 - a. To review the Leeds City Region (LCR) LEP and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding (YNYER) LEP draft European Structural Fund Strategies to establish where higher level skills interventions will support LEP objectives.
 - b. To identify and map current HLS provision from YU partner universities.
 - c. To keep under review the national guidance on use of ESIF for higher level skills and incorporate into the development of ideas at local level.
 - d. To develop a list of potential HLS projects including cross referencing LCR and YHYER ESIF strategies and rationale for need.
 - e. To consider specific high level skills requirements in relation to YNYER LEP's Biovale project.

Introduction

2. For the purposes of this project a broad view of higher level skills has been taken. It incorporates the following areas of activity:
 - a. Training/continuing professional development/work force development for businesses.
 - b. Graduate employability.
 - c. Enterprise and start-up.
 - d. Access to higher level learning.
3. The project is principally about areas of activity which both support the LEP priorities and are potentially fundable through European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) specifically the ESF element of that. However, it seemed sensible to include all ideas for potential project areas so that work does not have to be duplicated in the future when other funding pots emerge. A simple update is likely to suffice.
4. This report provides a response to the different aspects of activity described in point 1 above plus any additional appropriate observations. Given the timescales it has not been possible to go into extensive detail but priority has been given to information which will aid new officers in post.
5. It is recommended that the YUTA Project Officers, once in post, work closely with university institutional leads across the LEP areas. In addition, they should link with officers already working in organisations which are focused on collaborative work across HE partners e.g. White Rose, Higher York, HEART.

Methodology

6. This report has been informed through:
 - a. Discussions with staff in Yorkshire University member organisations plus those from other HE organisations including HEART, Sheffield's HEPP, the RISE project, FE/HE colleges.
 - b. Desk research.
 - c. A project update was provided to Yorkshire Universities KT directors at their meeting in January 2014.
 - d. A number of meetings have been conducted with LEP secretariat representatives from both LEPs and a number of workshops attended for the LCR LEP.
 - e. Meetings were held with colleagues working on the Biovale project and Craig Walker from White Rose.

LEP ESIF strategies and project match

7. At the time of writing the LEP areas differed in how they have presented their ESIF strategies. The YNYER LEP has produced a document which incorporates ESIF into their overall Economic and Investment Strategy. The LCR LEP has created a separate document designed to support their overall economic strategy (plus themed strategies such as their Skills Plan).
8. Both LEP areas include skills as one of their priority areas. For both LEPs, higher level skills cuts across all their priorities and so there is the potential for universities (and colleges) to deliver projects which would seemingly be the immediate priority in the plans.
9. Table 1 below describes the types of projects which could be delivered by universities to support LEP priorities.
10. Notes relating to the discussions which informed the project ideas and some current good practice are included in Appendix 1. It should be noted that the mapping activity undertaken as part of this research includes the information provided by individual institutions. It is very likely that some activity has been missed and so will not be noted.

National Guidance

11. At the time of writing this report BIS had issued some further guidelines relating to ESF and eligibility of higher level skills (a full copy of the guidance note is in Appendix 2). The main messages are:
 - a. Universities are well placed to be involved in projects supporting LEP priorities and which utilise ESIF.
 - b. Examples of potential eligible activity in which universities could be involved, include:
 - i. Increase access for the most disadvantaged.
 - ii. Support retention and reduce drop-out rates for the most disadvantaged.
 - iii. Increase participation where there are current or predicted skills shortages (particularly SMEs, under-represented groups).
 - iv. Support employability and transition into employment.
 - v. Support intermediate and higher vocational provision for the unemployed and for career progression.

- vi. Develop skills to meet future needs.
 - vii. Postgraduate activity
- c. Where 'opt-in' match is not available universities will need to provide their own match. Universities are allowed to use their own funds to do this ie tuition fee revenue could in theory be used. Business match is also another source, along with funding from HEIF and other such grants. The advice is make sure that any match activity is relevant to the ESF project in question of course.
- d. An important feature of national guidance is that ESF cannot be used to fund HE degrees i.e. programmes which already attract funding through tuition fees. Non accredited training is acceptable. Further discussion also indicates that activity where there is a 'market failure' or gap not met by other national policy or activity will be prioritised at a national level.

The Rationale for funding Higher Level Skills

12. Higher level skills are referenced by both LEPs as have an important impact on growth and productivity. The development of higher level skills within businesses and organisations will enable both businesses and individuals to grow and prosper. In particular it should positively impact on higher total GVA and more jobs being created.
13. Both LEPs refer to employability and retaining talented people. Internships and other employability programmes clearly match university student and graduate talent to the LEP economies and businesses.
14. Supporting graduate enterprise and start-up will support the aim of both LEPs to increase overall business starts.
15. National funding for HE including tuition fees support the delivery of mainstream HE provision such as full-time undergraduate degrees. The higher level skills agenda can deliver so much more than this but funding usually has be sourced elsewhere. The projects in this report are based on areas within HE where public funds do not support interventions and delivery.
16. The levels of population in both LEP areas qualified at level 4 and above are still below those qualified to level 2 and 3. In both LEP areas skills levels are not improving at as fast a rate at the rest of England and so the skills advantage is being lost.

General observations

17. In terms of utilising ESIF funds there is some nervousness in universities (although not across all) of using these funds particularly relating to the huge administrative burden on institutions and businesses plus the challenge of sourcing match. It is hoped that the support and endeavours of the LEP secretariats and the Opt-in arrangements will help ease this.
18. One of the challenges facing LEPs may be how many ESIF projects can be effectively overseen by the LEP secretariats at one time and therefore the split between individual projects and programmes of activity. If previous guidance is the same in this next round of funding multiple sub-contracting arrangements won't be allowed. Therefore, it may be that larger projects which involve a broader partnership will be favoured (as long as they meet the criteria and support the LEPs' strategies). This will therefore be an important aspect for the Project Officers to monitor.
19. There is a clear steer from the LEPs that projects supported by any funding source need to be business led or at the very least have a strong rationale relating to business growth and business need. It is important to look at the whole business growth lifecycle and draw the higher level skills interventions from this.
20. The two LEPs in the scope of this research will have different project appraisal systems. For example, at the time of writing the LCR LEP was moving towards a Single Appraisal Framework for all funding applications. This would require all bids to be scored against all strategic priorities whether they directly relate to them or not. In addition, it is not known how the LCR LEP will relate to the new Combined Authority in terms of decision making over funding. In the YNYER LEP the processes are still under development.

Next Steps

21. A number of recommendations fall out of this research:
 - a. that YUTA Project Officers could focus on supporting the development of the following project areas:
 - i. Graduate Enterprise – this should be done in partnership with the project leads of the current project. Consideration could be given to how this model of good practice could be built upon including further involvement of post-graduates.



- ii. Training/work force development to support businesses involved in innovation/R and D activity. Especially those businesses which cannot meet the Growth Accelerator conditions or where the Yorkshire Innovation Fund cannot support intervention relating to higher level skills.

A key aspect (and challenge) is to raise the awareness with LEPs and businesses about the vast expertise and quality provision offered by universities. The broad area of non HE accredited Leadership and Management courses could be the focus possibly linked to professional accreditation and/or with the option to pick up HE credits as appropriate to the needs of the business.

It will be important to cross-reference with Craig Walker at White Rose and Joe Ross, Director of the Biorenewables Development Centre (leading on Biovale) so that any further developments that they are aware of can be factored in. Equally it would be beneficial to liaise with officers at Higher York and HEART.

- iii. An internship programme (graduate and/or students) drawing on expertise and good practice developed by individual institutions, partnerships and models (e.g. RISE in Sheffield). The local context and delivery models will be important to consider therefore as part of a wider initiative.
 - iv. Graduate 'top-up' or 'conversion' programme focused at specific businesses sectors, initially engineering and IT/Digital. A quick intervention to provide graduates from a range of disciplines the sector specific knowledge to enter certain role within these sectors.
 - v. Outreach and Access – developing programmes to attract unemployed and minority groups into education and training. With possible reduced funding through the national HE grants to individual institutions it may be worthwhile investigating how a collaborative approach across local areas could increase capacity to deliver outreach and access activities by universities (and colleges).
- b. Consideration to be given to how emerging funding pots such as the Employer Ownership Pilot funding likely to be allocated to the Leeds City Region could support some of the higher level skills projects.



- c. YUTA Project Officers should keep in contact with representatives from HE who have positions on LEP groups and networks including:
- i. Prof. Tim Thornton, PVC, University of Huddersfield (LCR Skills Network).
 - ii. Paul Murphy, Interim Director of Higher York (LCR Skills Network and YNYER Skills and Employability Board).
 - iii. Ian Mcgregor Brown, HEART (LCR Skills Network).

Table 1

Higher level skills project ideas	YNYER LEP Priorities	LCR LEP Priorities
<p>Training/work force development to support business growth</p> <p>Raise the profile of the training/work force development offer from universities through developing a process whereby businesses are updated about the expertise and programmes provided by universities. Potentially this could be through the LEP websites or Yorkshire Universities' web pages which are linked into the LEP websites. A data capture system of some sort would create an easier to use method of information collection.</p> <p>Universities could offer training, coaching or mentoring for leadership and management. Offering a place where businesses can go to choose the expertise which best fits their business needs would support the LEPs' role as sign posters and enablers.</p> <p>Businesses would be expected to contribute to costs or pay the full cost depending on which funds universities are able to access. Equally this would allow for the full spectrum of university expertise and training to be showcased (from short courses to full Master's programmes).</p> <p>This model could cover general leadership and management areas but also those to support innovation in businesses e.g. diversifying your business, change management, implementing innovative practice, sales and marketing a new product. In addition universities could offer training which supports the implementation of a new process, use of a new piece of equipment or product i.e. technical training at a higher level.</p>	<p>Profitable and ambitious small and micro businesses.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative, growing small businesses. • More entrepreneurs who start and grow a business. • Ambitious businesses leaders. <p>Inspired People.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A productive workforce for growing businesses. • Inspired people making the right job choices. • Empowered communities delivering support and inclusion. <p>Successful and distinctive</p>	<p>Strategic Economic Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocking the growth potential of businesses in key economic sectors. • Making the most of a skilled and flexible workforce. • A resource SMART city region LEP. • The environment for growth. <p>Link to key areas identified to be supported by ESIF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills improvement in key growth sectors, address skills gaps, drive up international competitiveness. • Leadership and management skills.

Higher level skills project ideas	YNYER LEP Priorities	LCR LEP Priorities
<p>Universities could assist with assessing business need and business plan development as part of a larger funded programme.</p> <p>Equally they could respond to referrals made by organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce, the Manufacturing Advisory Service as part of a wider project. It would be useful to investigate this further aspect further.</p> <p>Further consideration could be given to how this model could link to the YNYER LEP voucher subsidy concept.</p> <p>Many of the universities in Yorkshire Universities currently work successfully with FE Colleges in terms of a combined offer. Further consideration would be valuable in terms of delivering a holistic offer of training to individual companies or clusters of companies.</p>	<p>places.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlock major growth opportunities. • New development in response to economic shocks and closures. • Environmental quality and community needs. <p>A well connected economy.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast, reliable journeys between key centres. • Transport that underpins growth. • Access to UK and international markets. 	
<p>Graduate Enterprise</p> <p>Support the current model (ERDF funded at the moment) of the Graduate Enterprise project which is currently led by the University of Huddersfield but partners with University of Bradford, University of Hull, Leeds College of Music, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds Trinity University, Sheffield Hallam University, University of York, York St John University. The University of Leeds and the University of Sheffield are currently strategic partners in the project,</p>	<p>Profitable and ambitious small and micro businesses.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative, growing small businesses. • More entrepreneurs who 	<p>Strategic Economic Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocking the growth potential of businesses in key economic sectors. • Making the most of a skilled and flexible

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<p>receiving no ERDF funds and having no contracted outputs, but taking part in sharing of best practice and promoting regional events to their student and graduates. The Graduate Entrepreneurship Project promotes entrepreneurship and business start-up to the HE student and graduate population, combines resources and best practice to support entrepreneurs, manages a broad framework of support activity which is delivered locally by individual HEIs, and regionally, to engage students and recent graduates and support business start-up and growth. It enables each institution to provide a range of enterprise support to its students and graduates who are looking to start up in business, whether the support needed be guidance, finance or networking with like-minded individuals. Each institution offers a selection activity from the list below to its students and graduates, tailored to its own needs where appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific 1-2-1 business start-up advice • Networking events and business-specific workshops • Proof-of-concept funding up to £1000 • Start-up grants up to £2500 • Access to an annual 4 day residential boot camp in the summer <p>The current model is primarily a pre-start programme, working with students and graduates to hone their business ideas in the proof of concept phase and through to start-up with some limited post start-up support.</p> <p>A cross LEP model could provide an economy of scale and this builds on an existing and successful partnership and process. It would be interesting to review activity in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showcasing SME and business endorsement and benefits to economic growth • developing entrepreneurial skills to be used as employees businesses and organisations. 	<p>start and grow a business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious businesses leaders. <p>Inspired People.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A productive workforce for growing businesses. • Inspired people making the right job choices. • Empowered communities delivering support and inclusion. 	<p>workforce.</p> <p>Link to key areas identified to be supported by ESIF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise support.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of postgraduate entrepreneurial and commercialisation skills thus broadening the pool of talent available to the LEP areas and supporting national policy on postgraduate learning. • how the model could be extended to incorporate colleges as hubs of enterprise development (this would have implications for central coordination resource required)/ • how new graduate businesses, 12 months into their life, can be supported through universities and colleges. • how the model could be further developed to incorporate curriculum design aimed at embedding concepts of enterprise and entrepreneurial activity. 		
<p>Supporting business growth needs through student and graduate internships</p> <p>Coordinate the supply of student or graduate interns who would work on specific projects related to business growth e.g. research support including market research, website development, social media presence, export markets (language students or international students for example). Social enterprises and the voluntary sector could benefit from subsidised internships for example, working on capacity building, fundraising and financial modelling. Provide subsidies to raise the profile and accessibility for businesses (particularly small and micro-businesses). The project could utilise local processes established and embedded through local universities and colleges which have already proven successful in reducing the administrative burden on businesses. Local partnerships of institutions could be engaged to coordinate the placement and</p>	<p>Profitable and ambitious small and micro businesses.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative, growing small businesses. • More entrepreneurs who start and grow a business. • Ambitious businesses leaders. <p>Inspired People.</p>	<p>Strategic Economic Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocking the growth potential of businesses in key economic sectors. • Making the most of a skilled and flexible workforce. <p>Link to key areas identified to be supported by ESIF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills improvement in

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<p>support of interns. The RISE project (Sheffield) provides an interesting model which joins the City Council with the universities in Sheffield to work jointly with businesses. This is similar to an initiative which is in the early stages of development in York building on excellent internship/business engagement practice through University of York and York St John University and Higher York. It is suggested that a localised approach using a recognised model tailored to local need would provide easy access and facilitate relationship building rather than one programme covering a number of LEP areas.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A productive workforce for growing businesses. • Inspired people making the right job choices. • Empowered communities delivering support and inclusion. 	<p>key growth sectors, address skills gaps, drive up international competitiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships and course placements.
<p>Biovale</p> <p>Develop and coordinate a training/workforce development programme or 'Academy' to support innovation and business growth in agri-tech and biorenewables through the Biovale initiative (University of York with FERA and other partners). Training opportunities could include leadership and management, technical training, mentoring, lower levels of training plus access to talent (internships, placements and Apprenticeships). Subsidies to support internships and training would attract businesses.</p> <p>As part of the wider Biovale theme provide training and talent support in response to defined work force development and growth needs by specific companies or clusters within the biorenewables, agri-tech, food production, agricultural industries area. Create a tailored programme to meet their needs. Subsidies would make the offer more attractive to businesses but there should be an expectation that companies contribute too. If initial work force development planning/consultation was required this would be an additional cost to the business or external funding would be required, alternatively where there is a recognised referral agency then they should be linked with colleges and</p>	<p>A global leader in food manufacturing, agri-tech and biorenewables.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World class innovation in agri-tech and biorenewables. • Agriculture and food business connected to new opportunities. • Low Carbon businesses. 	<p>Strategic Economic Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocking the growth potential of businesses in key economic sectors. • Making the most of a skilled and flexible workforce. • A resource SMART city region LEP. <p>Link to key areas identified to be supported by ESIF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills improvement in key growth sectors, address skills gaps, drive up international

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<p>universities to ensure that the right training/talent offer is in place.</p> <p>Clearly Biovale is in the early stages of development and so an ongoing dialogue is required in order to further define specifics. It will be important to cross-reference with the work on agri-tech being taken forward for YUTA by Craig Walker at White Rose and for further work to be carried out to assess training needs of the 'Biovale' businesses now and in the future. In addition, Higher York is likely to continue to support discussions with Joe Ross, Director of the Biorenewables Development Centre, in terms of potential local provision and solutions to meet business needs as they emerge. It is strongly recommended that all further communication regarding future support of Biovale in terms of higher level skills and the YUTA project could be directed to Joe Ross.</p>		<p>competitiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management skills. • Internships and course placements.
<p>Graduate Employability 'Top-up'</p> <p>Respond to an immediate demand for new employees through intensive courses for recent graduates. Offered on a selection basis in the summer months following examinations to students about to graduate and who are interested in working in certain industry areas. To date demand has been identified in the IT/digital/coding and construction in the York area. For construction the demand is for non-trades staff e.g. sales, marketing, project management. For IT/digital there is a demand for coders. External funding would be required to offer a short (and potentially accredited) course in partnership with the industry so that an immediate workforce issue and talent pipeline issue can be solved. This model could potentially be transferred to other industry areas. It supports the retention of talent in the LEP area and is one way of tackling graduate unemployment and underemployment. Wrap around information about sectors to provide improved career aspiration to</p>	<p>Inspired People.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A productive workforce for growing businesses. • Inspired people making the right job choices. • Empowered communities delivering support and inclusion. <p>Successful and distinctive places.</p> <p>Objectives:</p>	<p>Strategic Economic Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocking the growth potential of businesses in key economic sectors. • Making the most of a skilled and flexible workforce. <p>Link to key areas identified to be supported by ESIF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills improvement in key growth sectors,

Higher level skills project ideas	YNYER LEP Priorities	LCR LEP Priorities
<p>certain sectors could be included.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlock major growth opportunities. • New development in response to economic shocks and closures. • Environmental quality and community needs. <p>A well connected economy.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast, reliable journeys between key centres. • Transport that underpins growth. • Access to UK and international markets. 	<p>address skills gaps, drive up international competitiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships and course placements.
<p>Outreach and Access</p> <p>Develop enterprise, employability, access and inclusion – graduate enterprise, internship and work placement opportunities have been outlined above. However, given the funding support other project areas could be expanded to improve access to jobs and learning, inclusion in the workforce as follows:</p> <p>Expanding outreach activity into local communities. With public sector cuts this has been reduced significantly which has reduced the ability of universities and colleges to work with harder to reach groups and encourage them to take up training and learning opportunities. Outreach is labour intensive but good practice developed over many years shows that it often is the key to providing</p>	<p>Inspired People.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A productive workforce for growing businesses. • Inspired people making the right job choices. • Empowered communities delivering support and inclusion. 	<p>Strategic Economic Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the most of a skilled and flexible workforce. <p>Link to key areas identified to be supported by ESIF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, advice and guidance. • Community learning and



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<p>improved access to learning, training and employment. Activity could include 'bitesize' tasters, employability related courses working closely across the voluntary and community sector, agencies such as Job Centre Plus, colleges and universities.</p> <p>Supporting employability projects which support unemployed graduates with focused workshops (CVs, job search, leadership and management, IT, presentation skills, languages, introduction to cross cutting knowledge such as customer service, sales and marketing) and opportunities to network with the business community</p>		<p>driving up skills in deprived neighbourhoods.</p>

Appendix 1 – Notes to support project ideas

Notes including examples of good practice and expertise.

Training/work force development

The University of Huddersfield is working with Calderdale Council, Calderdale College and a number of businesses to develop an Innovation and Skills Centre. This builds on the success of the 3M Innovation Centre. The new centre will provide a place where SME's can access and be trained in technologies relevant to their businesses. Internships, apprenticeships, work placements will be created there. There will be business grow on space. The intention is to have a physical location in Halifax. This model takes the concept of a business centre or R&D centre so much further by joining up innovation and skills. The model could be replicated elsewhere in the LEP areas and a number of discussions are at initial stages. Calderdale Council have put in an expression of interest to the Skills Capital Fund in the LCR LEP. Contact Liz Towns-Andrews, University of Huddersfield . Jenny Hall, York St John University.

Need to cross-reference with Growth Accelerator project (e.g. University of York) and YIF, Northern Leadership Academy.,(e.g University of Leeds) UKTI offer (e.g. University of Leeds).

Bradford Council are setting up a Producer City Strategy to build skills and innovation knowledge and confidence in their businesses and looking to strengthen the infra-structure and trade links

Some useful links:

University of Bradford – Owen Whitehouse – interesting work in action learning , network mapping and peer-to-peer working.
3M centre – University of Huddesfield - <http://www.3mbic.com/services/>

University of York <http://www.york.ac.uk/business/cpd/>

University of Huddersfield <http://www.hud.ac.uk/business/developingpeople/>

University of Leeds Business School - <http://business.leeds.ac.uk/>

Sheffield Hallam University <http://www.shu.ac.uk/business/how-we-can-help/training-and-professional-development>

HEART

<http://www.heart.ac.uk/business/short-courses/>

Higher York

<http://www.higheryork.org/employers/courses/>

Student/Graduate enterprise

There is support across most of the universities to expand graduate enterprise opportunities. Postgraduate has emerged as a strong new theme. The Graduate Enterprise project could be a vehicle for this – contact Liz Towns Andrews /Kelly Smith at the University of Huddersfield.

A number of universities would like to expand their own capacity and space to support start-ups e.g. University of Hull.

Internships

A number of universities expressed interest in expanding internship (student and graduate opportunities) and most have programmes themselves. The theme of underemployed graduates also emerged as an area of current activity but also the need

to expand opportunities to find more appropriate opportunities for underemployed graduates.

Some useful links:

<http://www.welcometosheffield.co.uk/rise>

Higher York

<http://www.higheryork.org/employers/business-services/>

Heart

<http://www.heart.ac.uk/working-students/>

Sector specific work

The University of Hull is potentially interested in projects to support food production, logistics, adaption to climate change(food, forestry, fuels), digital health, health technology, adoption of technology for service users in health. They are already involved in supporting Yorkshire Potash.

There are many examples of universities developing curriculum with employers e.g. Sheffield Hallam Business School working with Nestle to develop an industry specific degree, Leeds College of Music developing modules which either stand along or form part of a degree creating a direct pipeline through to industry - <http://www.lcm.ac.uk/courses/Undergraduate/BA-Hons-Music-Business>

University of Bradford have developed an academic part-time/ distance learning programmes on a bespoke level for engineering.

Sheffield Hallam – set up this company to provide work experience for students involved in computer games development.
<http://www.steelminions.com/>

Access/Inclusion

There is a proposal to develop a UTC in Scarborough which seems to have excellent business buy-in. The University of Hull are potential HE partners. They have been involved in another UTC proposal in Hull.

Potential interest in postgraduate outreach linking with current HEFCE funded projects.

Some interesting expertise e.g. University of Bradford – STEM Centre which supports schools as Industry centres of Excellence. Contact Nazeera Karodia. Also University of York has a broad programme of links to schools including through Chemistry, Electronics.

Useful contacts

YU KT leads

Kelly Smith – GE project

Martin Edmondson – RISE

Michelle Watson – University of Hull.

Craig Walker – White Rose

Joe Ross – BioVale

Paul Murphy/Claire Newhouse – Higher York



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in Your Future
European Regional
Development Fund 2007-13

Ian McGregor-Brown – Heart.

Annabel Jelley – Skills lead YNYER LEP
Martin Green – Skills lead LCR LEP

Appendix 2

ESF 2014-2020 - Higher Level Skills

One of the requests made by local representatives on the ESF Skills, Employment and Social Inclusion Advisory Group was that central Government should provide further information on potentially eligible higher level skills activity, to help LEPs develop their ESIF Strategies.

We have said in the preliminary and supplementary guidance to LEPs that for the 2014-2020 round, ESF can be used to support intermediate, technical and higher level skills needs identified by LEPs in their strategies. The supplementary guidance issued in July 2013 gave an indicative list of activities that ESF could support. **Below are further examples of potentially eligible activity. The eligibility of any particular activity will be dependent on the scope of the final version of the Operational Programme agreed with the European Commission.**

LEPs need to make sure that activity does not duplicate or undermine national policy, including policy on grants and loans. We will only consider exemptions to this principle where a local specific need and/or market failure has been demonstrated and where these fall within the ESF priority objectives. Such exemptions are likely to be limited but if you think you are likely to need one, please discuss with your BIS contact at an early stage.

Potentially Eligible Activity

1. Increase access for the most disadvantaged:

- ESF could fund the delivery of outreach activity including taster courses to under-represented groups to help improve take up and retention. This might for example include the cost of participation in summer schools or work-based access course delivery;
- ESF could fund the development of new outreach activity including taster or access courses, particularly where this is being co-designed with intermediaries or representatives of the target groups and/or involves developing innovative approaches;
- ESF could fund the development of new methods of delivering learning to reach remote learners (e.g. including e-learning and local delivery of provision in non traditional venues);

- ESF could offer financial/bursary support targeted at under-represented groups, specifically for course related costs demonstrated as being a barrier to accessing learning. Additional funding would supplement existing government grants and loan schemes, and learning and learner support packages.

2. Support retention and reduce drop out rates for the most disadvantaged:

- ESF could fund additional learning support for under-represented groups where this activity can be demonstrated to enhance retention and attainment.

3. Increase participation where there are current or predicted skills shortages, particularly where this addresses the needs of SMEs with growth potential or includes targeting under- represented groups;

- ESF could fund the development and delivery of outreach activity including access and taster programmes to increase the participation of particular groups (eg female take-up of STEM provision);

4. Support employability and transition into employment:

- ESF could fund the setup and management costs of activities to involve SMEs in skills provision (e.g. employability activity delivered by SMEs, setting up work placements and projects, internships, graduate placements);
- ESF could fund the costs of specific modules (additional to the core credit-bearing element of HE programmes) designed to better prepare under graduates/graduates for employment or self-employment or to increase the effectiveness of those recently securing employment in SMEs;
- ESF could fund specific activity (development or delivery) targeted at increasing the employability of particular groups (including graduates) who are under-represented in the workforce or who face particular barriers to gaining employment (e.g. those with a disability);
- ESF could be used to support activity to develop self-employment or entrepreneurial skills to start and grow a business or social enterprise.

ESF may fund the costs of staff time from institutions and from SMEs for the time they are directly engaged in delivering ESF activity (ESF cannot fund the whole salary of a member of staff who may work partly on ESF and partly on other activities).

5. Support intermediate and higher vocational provision for the unemployed and for career progression;

- ESF could fund the development costs and contribute to the delivery costs of specific vocational short courses designed to enable the unemployed to progress onto higher level courses or access good quality employment
- ESF could fund the development costs and contribute to the delivery costs of specific vocational short courses designed to help low skilled employees to progress to higher value employment (particularly where this targets groups under-represented in higher skill roles)

6. Develop skills to meet future needs (e.g. in relation to new technology, construction or production methods):

- Develop skills for innovation in companies including aligning with ERDF supported activities and in line with LEP growth priorities.

The above are examples of potentially eligible activity and should not be regarded as a complete list. LEPs need to think about how the issues they identify in their strategies can be successfully addressed. If LEPs are not sure about the eligibility of specific activities they should speak to their local BIS and Skills Funding Agency colleagues.

Also, we would encourage LEPs to consider:

- whether cross-LEP collaboration with FE and HE institutions in their neighbouring LEPs would provide an added dimension to higher level skills activity; and,



- the extent to which addressing equality issues will support the skills needs they have identified. For example, there was a strong focus on STEM skills in many strategies, but few picked up on issues such as the lack of girls and women undertaking study and moving into careers in these areas, to address those skills needs.

Post Graduate Activity

Where LEPs are thinking about activity relating to postgraduate skills they might also want to consider how their planned activity contributes to wider government ambitions for postgraduate education. Earlier this year BIS announced for 2014/15, a Postgraduate Support Scheme (PSS) to pilot projects with higher education institutions to test options for finance and activity aimed at stimulating progression into taught postgraduate education, particularly from less-advantaged backgrounds and in areas that support the Government's ambitions for economic growth. This will be followed, after evaluating the success of the PSS, by further investment in 2015/16 to support students by removing barriers to participate in postgraduate education. Findings from this investment will help shape government policy beyond 2015.

Match Funding

Where the opt-in model is used, opt-in organisations will identify the match funding for higher level skills activities. Where the opt-in model is not used, providers will need to provide their own match funding.

We are aware of a number of queries which suggests there may be some confusion between not using ESF to pay tuition fees (i.e. the principle of not duplicating or cutting across national policy on grants and loans) and the provision of match funding by universities and other HE providers, where that funding may be sourced from tuition fee revenue. These are two different issues.



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We wish to be clear that we have no objection to HE providers offering match funding for HE related activity, as long as the match activity is within the scope of the Operational Programme and the approved ESF operation. This would be entirely a matter of choice for the HE provider.

Appendix

RISE Sheffield: Economic case study

The ability of small to medium enterprises to grow and employ staff is critical to the growth and success of our economy. Productivity is estimated to be 30% higher in businesses that use higher level skills and over 80% of businesses who currently employ graduates say they are an excellent source of new ideas. In 2012 however, a LEP survey showed that only 18% of 899 surveyed small to medium sized businesses in the Sheffield city region employed graduates.

[RISE Sheffield](#) was created to address this critical economic and business need – connecting two of Sheffield’s greatest asset; our innovative small-medium businesses and some of the 19,000 graduates who are produced in Sheffield every year. RISE is a working collaboration between city partners, Sheffield City Council, Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Sheffield and the private sector and can be most easily understood as a ‘graduate scheme for a city’. In the spirit of both promoting Sheffield as a destination for graduates and allowing businesses to access the best talent (particularly critical for shortage skills areas such as Software or Engineering) the scheme is open to applications from all graduates, not just those within the city. The scheme has been financed by Sheffield City Council and the two Universities and was contracted through a competitive tender process to delivery partners; Gradconsult, Yorkshire Graduates and Common Purpose.

Since its launch in Summer 2013, the project team have, to date, delivered 45 Sheffield city region-based SMEs with support to attract, recruit, train and employ 51 graduates using an internship model. The RISE internships are for a minimum of six months and both the graduates and businesses are supported by the RISE team during this time with development events, practical toolkits, site visits, core training and business to business mentoring.

The range of participating businesses is extensive and roles/sectors include engineering (TC Wild, X-Cel Superturn, Special Steels, Eadon consulting), manufacturing (Granton Medical, Pyronix, McKenna Precision Castings), 3rd sector (Cathedral Archer Project, Sheffield Children’s Hospital, Roundabout, Cadence Works, Groundworks), technology (Tangentix, Lightworks, WanDISCO, Switchstance IT, Ffreeds Ltd), Logistics (Shepherd Distribution) to

HR and recruitment (Forde, Total HR) and marketing (BHP, Prolog Print Media, e-Achieve, ACE and S4C).

The scheme has successfully:

- Stimulated demand for high level skills amongst SMEs
- Enabled a simple effective route for employers to access high level skills
- Promoted Sheffield city region as a destination of choice for graduates
- Promoted SMEs as a viable career destination vs traditional large recruiters
- Created a next generation of city-networked talent and leaders
- Generated a significant socio-economic impact for the region
- Enabled all graduates who applied for the scheme (not just those who were successful) to become more employable by receiving good quality feedback
- Retained and utilised graduates from the universities two major universities (35 of the graduate appointed to date have come from SHU or UoS)

The success of RISE in 2013 has secured funding for further intakes in 2014, primarily due to the incredibly positive response from graduates, participating businesses and wider Sheffield business community.