

HE Response to Economic Downturn: HERA Barometer

Association of Universities in the East of England

HERA Barometer 23 April 2009

Report No 1

Please note that due to the Easter period and the need for institutions to capture specific information in order to inform their return, this first report does not embrace information from the full AUEE membership.

A. Schemes introduced, or significantly re-purposed, to address the present economic downturn

This section focuses on new activity to address the downturn, including significant re-purposing of schemes to meet present needs. (We recognize that all HEI activities could potentially be helping in various ways, and so HEIs and HERAs will need to make a judgment on significant headline, new or re-purposed schemes that need reporting.) List all schemes which have been specifically introduced, or significantly re-purposed, to address the present economic downturn with short (1 line) descriptions. If possible, include in the short description the HEIs involved with the funding origin or stimulus for the scheme (e.g. HEI own, HEFCE, RDAs/Business Links, LSC, businesses/employers, other regional/local).

1 Number of new/re-purposed schemes to address potentially or newly redundant people/communities or skill/workforce development needs

- i. A number of new schemes have been launched as typified by the University of Bedfordshire's management development and maintaining employability programme that started on 1st March and which has attracted 100 graduates employed in Bedfordshire SMEs. It is offered free of charge to participating companies and graduates (with funding support and the partnership of two local unitary authorities).

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2 Number of new/re-purposed schemes to address business needs

- i. Norwich University College of the Arts (NUCA) has launched its Brainchild Business Idea Competition. Corporate sponsors are involved and NUCA is now actively seeking new graduate businesses to support. They have also introduced an Art for Hire package range to accommodate companies with smaller budgets and a range of business start-up workshops that offer one-to-one-coaching
- ii. The University of Essex has introduced Excel training for 16 PlusOne Services Ltd staff based in Southend. Also, a 'Credit Crunch' seminar with Essex Chambers in Colchester that attracted 170 delegates and a similar event in Southend-on-Sea that attracted a further 60 delegates.
- iii. The University of Bedfordshire's Business Growth Programme ① is offering free of charge consultancy addressing critical survival and growth issues for Bedfordshire SMEs. Phase 3 of the Programme ran from January to March 2009 in partnership with the local authority funder. Also, the University's Intellectual Property Advisory Service introduced in November 2008, with emphasis on supporting new knowledge-based businesses.
- iv. Additional activity has been reported by Cranfield University with 20 new interactions.

3 Number of new/re-purposed internship schemes or other post-graduation support

- i. A new postgraduate scheme has been reported by Cranfield University.
- ii. An event is planned for June 2009 that is 'Credit Crunch Challenge Week' to cater for University of Bedfordshire and other local graduates seeking employment. Strong demand has been detected despite minimal advertising to date.
- iii. NUCA has introduced 'Brainchild' that includes new graduate support available as one of the Competition prizes together with a range of business start up workshops and one to one coaching. Delivery of 'How to Get Work Experience' workshops are open to graduates

B. Increased demand

This section focuses on evidence of increased demand for schemes that are already in place, to inform what may be most effective in meeting present needs. Insert list of - up to three - case studies including HEIs participating and a short description of scheme (e.g. funding support/stimuli and partners); include evidence of demand e.g. repeat business, increased numbers etc. Max 250 words each.

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

- HEIs within the region are reporting enquiries for business-focused programmes which are up 28% compared to the same period last year.
- Applications for some business focused Masters programmes are up by 47% when compared to the same period last year.

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

- The University of Essex invitation to participate in the BT Innovation Martlesham University-industry collaboration event on 9th March 2009 was attended by approx 60 delegates.
- Growth in the number of interventions delivered by VentureNavigator during the first quarter of 2009 was 42,000 compared to 36,000 during the previous quarter.
- The University of Bedfordshire's Business Growth Programme ❶ continued to a third stage between January and March 2009 in light of increased demand for low-cost consultancy focused on SME survival and growth issues.
- Cranfield University reports that its High Potential Businesses Club, sponsored by Bedfordshire County Council, has changed its focus this year to 'Strategies for Surviving the Downturn'. They report very rapid sign-up with 32 businesses involved, an increase of 19% on last year.

C. Fall in demand/gaps in activity

This section focuses on loss of activity (i.e. activity that addresses longer-term needs that may be neglected in the down-turn), as well as views on gaps in activity that might help now but which are impeded by barriers or constraints. Short report - 500 words max

- Some tenants (in the property sector) of the University of Essex Business Incubation Centre in Southend have left or moved to smaller units. However others have moved to larger premises.

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6 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)

- Some business focused programmes are experiencing a rapid fall in demand including the Cranfield University Queen's Anniversary Prize-winning Fellowship in Manufacturing Management. Open executive development programmes have seen a fall in demand totalling approximately £2 million.
- Apple Mac training CPD short courses have not recruited.
- A gap in provision has been identified for priority by several universities: effective training opportunities required for graduates who wish to explore and prepare for self-employment.

D. Partnerships and networking

This section focuses on describing the state of regional/local partnerships which may help make HE action more effective, as well as networking and promotions that might improve co-ordination. Short report - 500 words max

- NUCA is developing a collaborative arrangement with Norfolk Network, the local business network which promotes innovation and partnership working. As a Network member, NUCA takes advantage of opportunities for their staff and students to attend monthly meetings and to meet representatives of the business community. Consultation and commission work for NUCA has resulted from this link.

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

- At the University of Bedfordshire exploratory discussions on collaboration are being held with JobCentre Plus. That HEI is now awaiting advice on funding framework from the JC+ 3rd party provision unit.
- Cranfield University and JobCentre Plus developing greater contact, for example, to deliver Cranfield's ECIF programme.
- Several HEIs are currently in discussion with JobCentre Plus 'Access To Work' teams, for example, at NUCA on the delivery of support available to disabled (in particular dyslexic) graduates.

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8 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?

- An increasing number of initiatives and funding referred to in 1 and 2 above arise directly from collaboration with local authorities' economic development and regeneration units
- 14 companies in discussion stages regarding space in CUBIC (Cranfield University Business Incubation Centre). Currently 7 companies are in situ and 3 spaces remaining. Enquiries have increased by 400% Sept 08 - Mar 09 in comparison to Mar 08 - Sept 08. CUBIC offers free office space for six months and is highly subsidized up to 2 years. As a result of this increase, there has been a significant increase in the use of the Business Link service by their incubator tenants.

9 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?

- The Cranfield School of Management has an increasingly strategic relationship with the local council (formerly Bedfordshire County Council) on economic development issues. This is illustrated by the formation and subsequent re-purposing of High Potential Businesses Club.
- Many HEIs report opportunities for academic uptake of the i10 £1,000 ERDF funded 'Low Carbon Vouchers' and EEDA's own £3,000 Innovation Vouchers that have been widely disseminated.
- A collaboration between NUCA and Norfolk Network attracting 160 business people, staff and students - to emphasise the need to retain high quality design and innovation especially during a recessionary period. NUCA also reports a range of Business start up workshops (Business Link) and one to one coaching (Norwich Enterprise Centre).

10 Any other significant regional events, activities or promotions focused on economic downturn?

- The University of Bedfordshire has taken an active role in Local Authority 'recession-busting' events in February and March e.g. with Luton Borough Council at Marsh Farm and with Bedford Borough Council.
- A range of HEI interactions are planned including the GradsEast online Careers Fair in June and the Cranfield Venture Day in May that will focus on 'Starting and Growing a Business in the Recession'. Also, in April the Cranfield hosted an event entitled: 'Providing real help for businesses during the downturn – a ministerial seminar for East of England business leaders'.
- Other activities include the Graduate Mentoring Programme (NUCA).

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- The University of Essex 'Managing and Thriving Under Pressure' networking event was attended by 34 people from businesses and organizations in the East of England region.
- AUEE hosted a joint workshop of HEI representatives with the East of England Business Group (CBI, IOD, FSB, and other business stakeholders) and Business Link East to discuss how the university and business sector can work more closely together during the downturn. Further events are planned, and the feedback from all participants has been extremely positive.

E. Other

This section is for HERAs to add anything that has been left out in questions above, which describes the contribution that HEIs are making – and any barriers they are experiencing. Short report - 500 words max

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.

- This questionnaire currently appears to overlook Universities' enterprise and entrepreneurship activities. HEIs play an important role in stimulating business start-ups by graduates and would-be community entrepreneurs, including provision of support for graduates considering self employment.

Sample additional data

6	How many individuals (FTEs) have registered for CPD programmes during the last quarter		
	<i>CPD/CE Level FTE</i>	<i>Free to learner</i>	<i>Charged</i>
	Non-accredited		88 (Essex)
	< Level 4		
	Undergraduate		11 (Essex)
	Post-graduate		

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Regeneration income with specific SME activity

7	Programme	Number of SMEs assisted*	Expenditure (for quarter)
	ERDF income		
	ESF income		
	UK Government regeneration funds		
	RDA programmes		
	Other regeneration grants and income from local and regional bodies		
	Other		

Income from SMEs

8	Activity	Number of first time SME customers	Total number of interactions	Income (for quarter)
	Contract Research			
	Consultancy	5 (NUCA)	3 (NUCA)	£2,200 (NUCA)
	Equipment and facilities	2 (NUCA)	2 (NUCA)	1,050 (NUCA) £35,626 from Essex Business Hub (including BIC rental from SMEs)
	CPD			£2,750
	IP			