

HERA Barometer

Name of regional association:

Association of Universities in the East of England (AUEE)

A. Schemes introduced, or significantly re-purposed, to address the present economic downturn (Word limit 500)

Returns from the East of England's HEIs indicate considerable activity; the following being indicative:

To address newly redundant people/communities

University of Hertfordshire:

- UH organized the 'Positive Action' Recession Event which attracted 200 people and included exhibition stands, workshops, a motivational key-note speaker. There was also a Q&A panel session to respond to skills/workforce development, business start-ups and the need for business advice. New range of Workshop programmes for current students and graduates (up to 2 years) e.g. Workshop on 'Recession Proof Your Career.'
- Discussion Forum on UH Alumni portal on how graduates survived last recession. The collated information is shared with current students via Career consultants during 1 to 1 sessions with clients (students, graduates) and also information will be used in workshops to provide IAG to clients.
- FIT {Student} – A personal development programme is designed for students to manage stress and plan effectively to the needs of the market. Currently has over 600 students registered on this programme.
- Graduate Futures colleagues interacted with AGCAS about the recession and attended the training day on 17 April 2009 to discuss Career Crunch and what steps Services are taking to support students.

To address business needs

University of Essex:

- Human Resources seminar focused on how companies can retain their knowledge base during a downturn. The event was held in Ipswich in partnership with University Campus Suffolk (UCS) and it attracted 47 delegates.
- Agreement with Business Link East to co-host 7 workshops between September 2009 and March 2010.

New/re-purposed internship schemes or other post-graduation support

Norwich University College of the Arts:

- Internship Project with ECIF funding – 1st June onwards, working with new graduates and industry.
- Range of business start-up workshops and one-to-one coaching.
- Delivery of 'How to Get Work Experience' workshop open to graduates.

University of East Anglia:

- Rolling out of Enterprise and commercialisation advice and financial support by UEA's Enterprise and Engagement Office – using the basic offering provided to Academic staff and arranging for this service to be available to all undergraduates and postgraduates considering business start up. Programme will include the

ability to access Proof of Concept funding, advice and mentoring and signposting to external service providers.

- The Enterprise and Commercialisation office are developing and supporting teams of Postgraduates to enter the BBSRC Biotech YES & NERC Environment YES entrepreneurship and enterprise awareness programme.
- HEFCE Enterprise Challenge Investment Fund – Recent Graduate Programme – focused at un-employed or under-employed recent graduates who will be able to access a group coaching to raise confidence, interview and recruitment training and business skills.
- HEFCE Enterprise Challenge Investment Fund – Promotion of the Graduate Intern Programme – starting in September 2009 - 10 week intern programme for new graduates to work with SME's and third sector organizations. Companies will receive a £400 grant from the ECIF funding to support the internship programme cost of £1500.
- UEA are providing a £500 subsidy for SME's participating in this year's Shell STEP programme for the first time.

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B. Increased demand for existing activity (Word limit 500)

AUEE has received reports from across the region demonstrating increased demand as typified at the University of Hertfordshire where there has been a 300% increase in applicants to business ideas challenge from 39 to 130. Similarly at the University of East Anglia and at other HEIs there has been a significant increase in the number of students / graduates registering for the Shell STEP programme. The University of Bedfordshire has been one of several HEIs where the uptake of EEDA and i10's (CKE) voucher schemes has been very strong and successful.

Re-skilling needs or workforce development and graduate internships

University of East Anglia:

- Increased demand for Nursing Courses – a recent round of fast track applications targeted at those looking to re-direct their career resulted in 316 applications which resulted in approximately 40 offers.
- Increased demand for PGCE Teaching Courses – applications up 32% from 2008 levels.
- Increased interest for “subject knowledge enhancement” training for teachers.

Cranfield University:

- Although some ECIF funded programmes are up and running, the majority are scheduled to begin this September. Marketing of these programmes has begun, involving resources from across the University and drawing on a range of external partnerships, which has resulted in significant interest. The recently launched re-skilling website: <http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/sas/reskill/> is being widely publicised and should lead to increase demand. The Business Growth Programme is offering tailored provision of particular relevance to SME's that are facing significant challenges as a result of the current economic climate. This has seen significant demand.
- Cranfield's selected Praxis Personal Development programmes have also seen increasing demand. These programmes are designed to provide individuals with enhanced communications skills, helping them when either seeking employment or experiencing challenging conversations due to the pressures of the economic climate on their company. Since March this year enquiries for Masters-level

provision have been steadily up on 2008 – overall this year enquires are up 2% on last year.

Addressing business needs

- Cranfield University reports increased interest and attendance at this year's Venture Day which focused on business growth and start up in the economic down turn. Also, increased demand for the School of Management's Accelerated Talent Development Programme – 3 places has so far been funded through ECIF.

(368 words)

C. Fall in demand/gaps in existing activity (Word limit 500)

Some concern has been expressed by several HEIs as typified by this comment from Cranfield University:

'It is particularly difficult to recruit company sponsored participants to short courses and similarly it is increasingly challenging to secure the required industry support for all our Masters provision in terms of student project support etc. The Management School have cancelled their High Performance Business Teams Programme due to lack of interest and are looking to replace it with the 'Employee Engagement Programme' later in 2009.'

AUEE believes that there is some evidence to suggest that "green business" and the social and community aspects for business are slipping in terms of priority for business as they concentrate on survival.

The University of Bedfordshire is not alone in identifying a priority need for effective training opportunities to be offered to graduates who wish to explore and prepare for self-employment. HEIs play an essential role in stimulating business start-ups by graduates and would-be community entrepreneurs.

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D. Partnerships and networking (Word limit 700)
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Within the last eight weeks AUEE has hosted an ESRC event to assist business development representatives from member HEIs, worked to strengthen revitalised linkages with London Technology Network, submitted a cross-regional ERDF bid to support Low-Carbon SKTPs and facilitated a KTP Funding Workshop to assist membership HEIs.

AUEE is aware that the University of Bedfordshire has held discussions on further collaboration with JobCentrePlus (JC+) and is now awaiting advice on funding framework from JC+ third party provision unit. Also, the Association has been informed about a number of 'Economic Challenge' workshops that have been held and which are on-going as typified by those at Writtle College. This is where revised and additional networks and partnerships are used to work more closely with County Councils, Borough Councils, Business Link and other partners to provide a cohesive approach to its business customers. Writtle's involvement with the EEDA LandSkills East funding has enabled the

College to offer training to meet the needs of their land-based sector which includes people in need of skills development and those who are, or who face, redundancy.

Norwich University College of the Arts:

- New connections with the IoD to present outward-facing activities, including Creative Consultancy, Art for Hire and live commissions. This coincides with a marketing campaign for Research and Knowledge Transfer capabilities.
- Brains Eden - An event where games companies and education/training providers gave short presentations and discussed new ways to supply the right kind of talent at the right time. The theme for the evening was the creative process, how do good ideas get turned into fantastic games?
- Range of Business start up workshops (Business Link) and one to one coaching (Norwich Enterprise Centre).
- New short course programme developed and promoted for 2009 / 2010 includes skills-based courses in Photoshop and digital media – to be distributed through The Learning Shop at The Forum in central Norwich.
- Mentoring Programme Launch – 30th April 2009 – students, graduates, industry.
- Alumnus Association Networking Event – 7th May 2009 – students, graduates and industry

Cranfield University:

- Increased contact has been made with local JC+ to assist the University increase awareness of programmes available.
- Participated in meetings facilitated by AUEE and attended by EEDA and other regional organizations aimed at developing relations within the region to deliver coordinated and complementary ECIF activity.
- Links have been made with the Hertfordshire Job Club and R2R (Response to Redundancy) through Central Bedfordshire Council.
- The University was invited to exhibit at Silverstone at the event for those made redundant from Brawn GP.
- An increase of 33% month on month on enquiries for Business Incubation Centre, resulting in a steady increase in uptake of Business Link Services.

University of Hertfordshire:

- Working with county/borough councils to support with Placement and Work Experience opportunities for University of Hertfordshire students.
- Hosted the Positive Action – Recession Event (02/04/09) which involved JC+ as a stand holder and initiated a new working relationship with the organization.
- Won a bid through the Economic Challenge Investment to engage with 100 SMEs to raise awareness of and agree bespoke business support action plans, deliver training courses, APEL and CPD programmes to enhance graduate employability, for those in work and unemployed, and the implementation of a business support network.
- Hosted the Positive Action Recession Event in April which included Business Link as a partner, who presented a workshop on 'Starting Your Own Business' and ran a stand giving out information to attendees at the event.
- Business School partnered with the FSB to provide a series of one day 'Business Fundamentals' training workshops tailored for SME's in Hertfordshire, covering key topics, such as Marketing Principles, Employment Law and the small business and Using New Media.

University of Essex:

- Delivered presentation on support available to disabled (in particular dyslexic) graduates with JC+ 'Access to Work' team. Planning to deliver again next academic year.

- Increased demand from JC+ to use business facilities for workshops for their clients.
- Liaison with JC+ on ECIF activities, specifically developing online skills assessment tools/audits.
- Communicating with Confidence and Managing Conflict networking event attended by 38 people from business organizations in the East of England region.

(697 words)

E. Other (Word limit 500)

The following is indicative of much good practice across the region of HEIs working with suppliers, cultural events etc,

University of Essex:

- Professional Development Studies submitted a bid under the Southend Borough Council Economic Partnership Programme to deliver a non-accredited course of skills and knowledge development for employed and unemployed people who are or are interested in working in the third sector. The programme is at Levels 3 and 4 and will develop the learners in areas such as Employment and HR, Interpersonal Skills and Team Building, Finance and Procurement and Quality Assurance.

Writtle College:

- The College is hosting a summer programme of 34 “Economic Challenge” workshops targeting local businesses. These feature networking opportunities, guest speakers focusing on economic downturn issues and solutions, access to expertise and a “Business Crisis” where struggling businesses can receive relevant and practical assistance.

Cranfield University:

- Four dedicated programmes have been introduced aimed at re-skilling staff from local businesses.
- Eight tailored short management and personal development courses introduced for those individuals who are newly redundant.

University of Bedfordshire:

- The University’s Intellectual Property Advisory Service has been operating since November 2008 with emphasis on supporting new and existing knowledge-based businesses.

University of East Anglia:

- The UEA based InCrops Project is an established ERDF/EEDA funded project which is promoting crop derived bio-renewable near market research, supply chain development and product development helping local business and entrepreneurs exploit opportunities within these sectors. Progress to date is well ahead of target that the totally inclusive approach to partners is impressive.

(257 words)

F. Summary remarks (Word limit 300)

The East of England is a diverse region with a wide range of HEIs from small specialist institutions such as the Norwich University College of the Arts and Writtle College (land-based) though to large universities with global reputations. Whilst all institutions have actively cooperated in joint ventures for many years, their willingness to work together to mutual advantage has improved still further since the start of the economic downturn. Complementary expertise is being used to support a range of projects that reach-out to the business community, many of which engage with JC+, Business Link and other cross-regional organisations.

AUEE continues to facilitate a range of services and networks to support the collective membership and these interactions range from events organised to enable Research Councils to project opportunities though to a representation of views via membership to the Board of Directors of the Institute of Knowledge Transfer.

Member HEIs are not only seeking out innovative and highly responsive ways of bringing support and re-skilling to those made or facing redundancy; they are also bringing into play far greater levels of support for their summer graduates. All institutions recognise that economic downturns tend to increase the number of business start-ups and that, with added support, the failure rate of new businesses can be substantially minimised.

It is widely accepted that past graduates who now face redundancy from positions in sectors not immediately related to their original qualification can, with specific up-skilling, stand a far greater chance of early re-employment within different sectors. Additionally, those staff in local businesses experiencing reduced working hours can be equipped with additional higher level skills to fully prepare them for the opportunities that will result from an upturn in the region's economy.

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