

Engagement and Accessibility: Funding Flexible Credit Frameworks

NUCCAT Conference

Tuesday 10 November 2009

Jurys Inn
Sheffield



*NORTHERN UNIVERSITIES CONSORTIUM FOR
CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER*

PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

Following the 2009 reorganization of the Government, for the first time in living memory there is no longer a Ministry with either the word 'Education' or 'Universities' in its title. Now that higher education is embedded within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, it remains to be seen whether this sector will get a better deal from the Government. Clearly there are both risks and opportunities to be grasped through the linking of universities with business, and this structure should mitigate the risk of one becoming too detached from the other.

Perhaps this can be seen as a natural continuation of the policy of the Government and HEFCE over the last two years; there has been a major initiative aimed at attempting to find and fund ways for the HE sector to respond more effectively to the needs of employers. This has led to different institutional models and approaches to effective employer engagement.

Unfortunately, this initiative is playing out against a background economic situation dominated by the financial crisis, and a reduction in the overall number of graduate vacancies. There has been a surge in applications for a university place, partly due to demographics, but also with a big increase in applications from mature students, with the more vocational courses seeing the biggest increases. This large rise in applicants has happened at a time of a spending squeeze, and a result seems to be that the Government is wishing for the HE sector to take more students without a commensurate increase in funding.

On the other hand, potential developments such as 'no fee degrees' may help to promote wider access to HE, and other published contributions to the late-2008 'Higher Education Debate' such as calls to encourage part-time study and transfer of students between institutions, the linking of fees to modules rather than to programmes, and the augmenting of the current degree classification with a better description of what the student has actually achieved may well lead to interesting developments in the coming year.

Finally, the Government will be reviewing the role and effectiveness of quangos, which may have an impact on the future of funding in the HE sector.

In the light of these developments, and with such a rapidly moving picture, we are fortunate to have two keynote speakers who are at the heart of policy-making and governance in the sector. Dr John Selby, HEFCE's Director for Education and Participation, will address HEFCE's view of the recession and credit transfer, considering the current state of credit frameworks and credit transfer, and the implications of the recession for learners, institutions and the HE funding system.

Anthony McClaran, the CEO of UCAS between 2003 and 2009 will reflect on the lessons learned during the five years in this role, and the light it may shed on issues of student engagement in the work of the QAA. Anthony will take up his role as CEO of QAA in October, and his talk will be entitled, "From applicant service to student engagement: an applicant-centred perspective on the work of QAA".

DISCUSSION WORKSHOPS

There will be two discussion workshops, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and each workshop will run twice (subject to demand). The following topics are being offered – please indicate your preference in rank order on the Conference Booking Form, keeping a record of this sheet.

ISSUES FOR WORKSHOPS

A Speed dating with Bologna

Workshop Leader: Professor Tim Birtwistle, Professor of the Law and Policy of Higher Education, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK Bologna Expert

This session will encompass the origins of the Bologna Process, and the general scope of the action lines. The position of the United Kingdom within the overall framework will be considered. The potential effects of the 2009 Leuven Communiqué, issued at the end of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, will be explored, alongside the Universities UK response to “2010 and beyond”. The opportunity to discuss such a range of issues will be timely as 2010 was set at the start of the Bologna Process as the deadline for the creation of the European Higher Education Area.

B What is the QCF and how will it benefit learners?

Workshop Leader: Elizabeth Vidis, Policy and Delivery Manager in the Adult Skills team at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

At present, it is hard to understand all the different types of qualifications that learners hold – what level they are, how long they take to complete, what content they cover, and how they compare to other qualifications. The new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) will help present qualifications in a way that is easy to understand and measure, and is at the heart of reform in the vocational qualifications system. The QCA hopes that the qualifications offered will be “far more relevant to the needs of employers and more flexible and accessible for learners”. Discussion may explore ways in which learners can carry credit between the vocational and the HE frameworks.

C Higher level skills for business

Workshop Leaders: Lindsey Bowes, Head of Skills and Innovation (HE), CFE Consultancy; Tristram Hughes, Project Manager, CFE Consultancy

In 2006, Leitch threw down the gauntlet to policy makers and providers to enhance the UK's higher level skills base through increased workforce development and employer engagement in higher education (HE). It was within this context that CFE embarked on an extensive programme of research to establish the appetite for higher level skills amongst employers. The research explored the extent and nature of demand for training at higher levels, including employers' perceptions and experiences of flexible models of programme delivery being developed by HE providers, such as credit accumulation and transfer (CAT), accreditation of in-house training and the accreditation of prior and experiential learning (APEL).

This workshop will consider employers' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of flexible approaches to higher level skills training delivery and evidence that has been collected on the potential impact of the recession on take-up of training at higher levels. We will finally offer some key messages for HE providers seeking to engage more effectively with employers.

D Outcomes-based education: new pathways to qualifications

Workshop Leader: Morag Harvey, senior project officer in the Centre of Outcomes-Based Education, Open University

The Centre of Outcomes-Based Education (COBE) is a research and development unit supporting innovative curriculum design. The Centre works with academic and non-academic units, and with central and regional staff, to support and implement priority curriculum developments. Current research encompasses the Recognising Achievement Project (RAP), jointly run by COBE and the OU's Credit Transfer Centre. This is a two year project to develop new pathways to qualifications via negotiated learning and accreditation of experiential learning. The workshop will explore the work of COBE in relation to Learning Outcomes and the way these have been used to develop different curriculum initiatives at the OU. This will be followed by workshop discussions.

WHO IS THIS CONFERENCE FOR?

All those with an interest in supporting and developing collaborative projects or other co-operation involving HEIs, employers and sector support bodies, including

- academic practitioners and policy makers in HE and FE
- HE administrators
- FE staff working with HE credit
- staff with a role in supporting student engagement and mobility

SPEAKERS

Dr John Selby, Director of Education and Participation, HEFCE.

Mr Anthony McClaran, Chief Executive, UCAS; Chief Executive designate (from October 2009), Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

CONFERENCE FEE

The fee for this one day conference is £150. This includes

- refreshments on arrival and afternoon tea
- a seated buffet lunch with opportunity to network
- a Conference Report, which will be sent out in January 2010

Early Bird Discount

There is an early bird rate of £125 for those whose payment is received by Friday 2 October 2009. If you need overnight accommodation on Monday 9 November, you can arrange this through Jurys Inn, Sheffield. The standard room rate is £72.00 sole occupancy and £82.00 double occupancy including VAT. For overnight booking please phone 0114 291 2222.

The hotel is a short walk from the main railway station, near to Sheffield Hallam University, in the city centre. Parking is available at The Moor Car Park on Eyre Street, Sheffield, S1 4PY. Overnight parking is from 1700 – 0900 and will cost £4.

ENGAGEMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY: FUNDING FLEXIBLE CREDIT FRAMEWORKS

Tuesday 10 November 2009

Provisional Programme

9.45am	Registration and Coffee
10.15-10.30am	Welcome and Introduction Dr Paul Birkett, Chair of NUCCAT, University of Bolton
10.30-11.15am	Keynote Speaker Dr John Selby, Director of Education and Participation, HEFCE
11.15-12.30pm	Workshop session 1
12.30-1.30pm	Lunch
1.30-2.45pm	Workshop session 2
2.45-3.30pm	Keynote Speaker Mr Anthony McClaran, Chief Executive, QAA
3.30-4.00pm	Questions and Workshop Issues

NUCCAT CONFERENCE 2009 BOOKING FORM

Tuesday 10 November 2009 Deadline for booking: Thursday 29 October 2009

Title _____ Name [block letters] _____ Forename _____

Position _____ Phone _____

Organisation _____ Fax _____

Postal address _____

Postcode _____ E-mail address _____

DISCUSSION WORKSHOPS Please indicate your selection by placing numbers in the boxes below in rank order. We will make every effort to meet your first two choices. Please could you also indicate in the second box in each row your level of knowledge of the area concerned (B= basic knowledge only, S= some knowledge but would like to learn more, E= significant knowledge and would like to explore particular issues in detail). This information will help workshop leaders to pitch the workshop at the appropriate level.

A Bologna Process

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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B Qualifications and Credit Framework

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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C Higher level skills for business

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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D Outcomes-based education

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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CONFERENCE FEE The early bird rate is available if payment is received by Friday 2 October. Please contact the Jurys Inn directly on 0114 291 2222 for overnight accommodation

Payment details I wish to pay by credit/debit card
(a separate form will be sent to you)

I enclose a cheque payable to *Sheffield Hallam University*

Please invoice me. Purchase Order number _____

I am paying the early bird rate [£125]/the standard rate [£150] [delete as appropriate]

Special dietary requirements _____

Signed _____ Date _____

MORE ABOUT NUCCAT

The Northern Universities Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer is a federation of 44 Higher Education (HE) institutions and HE related bodies in northern and central England and Northern Ireland. The membership includes the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), the Open University and some regional university associations.

Working through its membership and in collaboration with other credit bodies, NUCCAT seeks to

- share best practice in the development of modularity, credit frameworks and academic frameworks, including assessment
- promote staff development in these areas
- work with other consortia to resolve issues of common interest
- undertake specific projects on credit

The consortium holds quarterly meetings in September, December, March and June each year. It organises an annual conference in the autumn and has established an annual series of regional workshops to assist member institutions with staff development.

NUCCAT meets regularly with representatives of the other F/HE credit bodies through the United Kingdom Credit Forum. The Forum undertakes periodic surveys of HE credit practice in the United Kingdom, and works in tandem with the QAAHE to ensure alignment between the framework for higher education qualifications and the guidance on credit arrangements for the qualifications within the framework. Over-arching principles and descriptors for credit-rated awards have been developed, covering both FE and HE, vocational and academic programmes, and the interfaces between them. The Forum has also made responses to consultation papers on similar issues within Europe arising from the Bologna process.

MAKING YOUR BOOKING

Send the booking form, with the details of payment or cheque to
Jill Hitchenor

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City Campus
Howard Street
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Telephone 0114 225 5319
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E-mail j.hitchenor@shu.ac.uk
www.nuccat.ac.uk

Early bird deadline for payment Friday 2 October 2009
Final deadline for making booking Thursday 29 October 2009

CONFIRMATION OF THE BOOKING

Payment for this conference must be received before
10 November 2009

Confirmation of your place at the conference will be sent out on
receipt of your completed booking form.

A joining pack, including confirmation of your discussion
workshop groups, will be sent two weeks before the conference.

At registration you will receive the final programme and a list of
participants.

CANCELLATION OF THE BOOKING

If you cancel your booking at least 14 days before the conference
a refund will be given. Please note that there is an
administration fee of £30. We regret that cancellations made
after Thursday 29 October 2009 are non-refundable.