



Lifelong Learning Universities: Developing Flexibility and Sustainability

BeFlex Plus Training Pack



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Lifelong Learning Programme

Multilateral Project (Modernisation of Higher Education)
Agreement No 2007/3572/001-001
Project No 134538-LLP-1-2007-1-BE-ERASMUS-EMHE

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Introduction to training materials

The BeFlex Plus project set out to address the problem that university lifelong learning (ULLL) has not been high in the priorities of the Bologna process, until recently. It builds on the first BeFlex project funded under the Socrates programme, which provided a baseline of the state of play in ULLL and the use of Bologna tools in its development. It has produced a review of progress over the period leading up to meeting of the Bologna ministers in Leuven in 2009 and seeks to stimulate further development of best practice and innovative actions for ULLL, particularly those using the Bologna tools in regional learning partnerships and strategies for LLL.

These training materials represent one of the outputs of the project to achieve these objectives. In addition there is a full thematic report with executive summary and a full technical report of the questionnaire and case study data collected during the course of the project activities. A printed version of these reports is included in this pack and all are also available on the website:

<http://www.eucen.org/BeFlexPlus/index.html>

The training materials are designed to be useful and relevant for those who are relatively new to the area of lifelong learning as well as people with more experience. We hope that more experienced managers and practitioners will use the materials to reflect on their experience, adapt them to suit the specifics of their own situation, and will extend their discussions to consider additional areas that we have not had space to cover and will. We also hope that all users will challenge our point of view in your discussion – we recognise that our approach is often only one of many legitimate ways to address a situation!

Five topics are addressed:

- Exploring Diversity in University Lifelong Learning
- Curriculum in Partnership
- Implementing Institutional Change in University Lifelong Learning
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Regional Collaboration and Partnership in University Lifelong Learning

Each topic is supported by training materials suggesting ideas for training sessions. Each one includes extracts from the questionnaire data and case studies collected in the BeFlex Plus project with suggested activities for workshops and training events. Each activity lasts about 1½ - 2 hours and can be used as a one-off session or, by combining the 4 or 5 activities in each topic or from different topics, they can be used for longer staff development programmes.

The activities are designed to stimulate structured discussion about areas critical to the topic. The objective is not to offer answers but to encourage and stimulate users to find their own solutions, to reflect on the issues and their own experience, and to come to a deeper understanding of topics. The learning material is designed to be used in small groups either with or without a facilitator. The material can also be used by individuals working alone, but most of the activities require you to reflect on different approaches to issues, so discussion with others will be helpful. Of course it might be useful for users to organise discussion on-line.

We hope that you find the materials useful and we would welcome feedback: please send comments and evaluative feedback if you have used the materials to Pat Davies, the BeFlex Plus Project Director: pat.davies@univ-lille1.fr

The materials have been produced by Judy Rumbelow and Darryl Bibby of Bibby Rumbelow Ltd (www.bibbyrumbelow.com) in association with Pat Davies on behalf of EUCEN (www.eucen.org) and the Project partnership.

Project partners: Universities of Oldenburg (DE), Deusto (ES), Helsinki (FI), Lille1 (FR), Aveiro (PT), Lund (SE), and Kaunas Technical University (LT), Catholic University of Louvain (BE), Hogeschool of Amsterdam (NL) and London Metropolitan University (UK)

Acknowledgements:

We wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to all those who contributed to the work of this project: the EUCEN staff, the partners and members of the management group, our external evaluator, the experts who conducted the visits, the institutions who gave case studies and who hosted our visits, all those who responded to the questionnaire, and all those who engaged with us in the consultation on drafts of our reports and the materials. It is impossible to name them all but without their input these results would not have been achieved. We hope that they have found it interesting and useful, that these materials and the project reports do justice to their efforts and that we will continue to work together to develop lifelong learning universities in Europe.



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INTRODUCTION

EUCEN is registered in Belgium as an 'a.i.s.b.l.' - an international not-for-profit association. EUCEN's current President is Dr Michel Feutrie.

EUCEN was founded during a project meeting in Bristol (UK) in May 1991. The title of the event was "Towards a European Universities Continuing Education Network" and the participants agreed to continue to meet on a regular basis and to formalise the network as a registered Association. The universities participating in the meeting became the 15 founding members of EUCEN (Aalborg and Aarhus - DK; Bordeaux - FR; Bristol, Cambridge, Exeter and Oxford - UK; Galway - IE; Granada and Valladolid - ES; Hanover - DE; Leiden - NL; Liège - BE; Porto - PT; and Pavia - IT). The first Statutes were presented and approved in Liège in May 1992. The first General Assembly where new members were accepted took place in Spring 1993, at the EUCEN conference in Barcelona.

After the election of Prof. Manuel Assunção, as EUCEN President in May 2000, the Association made a radical change in its organisation, appointed professional staff and opened the Executive Office in Barcelona (ES), with the support of the University of Barcelona, the University Autonomous of Barcelona and University Pompeu Fabra. In the following years, EUCEN evolved from being a voluntary network into becoming now the largest Europe-wide multidisciplinary association in University Lifelong Learning (ULLL), supported by a professional staff team.

AIMS

EUCEN's main aims are to contribute to the economic and cultural life of Europe through the promotion and advancement of lifelong learning within higher education institutions in Europe and elsewhere and to foster universities' influence in the development of lifelong learning knowledge and policies throughout Europe. To achieve these objectives, the Association strives to: enable the exchange of experience and information between members on current lifelong learning regulations and policies and establish contacts with the relevant European bodies; provide contacts for members with lifelong learning policy makers and practitioners in a range of universities throughout Europe; harmonise levels of quality for University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) among members and to maintain standards for effective monitoring; contribute to the development of an effective university credit transfer system that would be acceptable within the network; influence European policy on ULLL; and support the development of high quality lifelong learning in European universities.

MEMBERSHIP

EUCEN membership is institutional. All universities within geographical Europe that deliver the highest academic degree in their country are eligible for *full membership*. In addition, EUCEN grants *associate membership* to similar institutions that are located outside geographical Europe or to European institutions that do not offer the highest degree or diploma in their own countries. National or international organisations concerned with university lifelong learning can apply for EUCEN *affiliate membership*. Currently, the Association has 212 members in 40 different countries within Europe, America and Asia.

EUCEN collaborates closely with all the National Networks for ULLL in Europe and has developed close links with other European networks (EAEA, EUA and EDEN) as well as international ones - UACE (in the US), RECLA (in Latin America), and ICDE (global).

ACTIVITIES AND REGULAR EVENTS

One of the core aims of EUCEN relates to ULLL in policy development at European level. A key activity in this regard is the publication of policy statements on behalf of the ULLL community. In September 2001 EUCEN coordinated a response to the Staff Working Paper on lifelong learning which was later developed by the European Commission into a *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*; in 2003 the Association contributed to the *Trends Report* on progress in the Bologna Process; and in 2005 at the EUCEN conference in Bergen a *Policy statement and recommendations on ULLL in the Bologna Process* were produced for the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) and European policy makers. In 2007, EUCEN responded to the European Commission's

communications and consultations on ECVET and on Adult Learning; and in 2009 again sent recommendations to the BFUG following the Leuven meeting. EUCEN is also represented in various stakeholder groups and is a member of EUCIS, the European platform for LLL.

The Association is also oriented towards institutional and professional development by organising conferences, seminars, workshops and study visits. EUCEN organises a *conference* twice a year in partnership with one of its member universities on a topical theme; one *study visit* per year – always in a different country; and one annual *meeting with all the national networks for ULLL* in Europe.

RECENT AND CURRENT PROJECTS LED BY EUCEN

- *BeFlex - Benchmarking Flexibility in the Bologna Reforms (2005-2007)*, funded by DGEAC of the European Commission. It aimed to monitor the development of university lifelong learning in the reformed structure of higher education qualifications (the Bologna process) and promote ULLL.
- *BeFlex Plus - Progress on Flexibility in the Bologna Reform (2007-2009)*, funded by DGEAC of the European Commission. This is a follow up to the BeFlex project and aims to compare results with those obtained there 2-3 years before; it also studies university regional collaboration.
- *DOLCETA - On-line consumer education*, funded by DGSANCO (up to 2010/2011). This is a website for all 27 Member States in all the official languages with consumer education targeted at adults, adult educators and teachers in primary and secondary schools.
- *EQUIPE Plus - European Quality in Individualised Pathways in Education Plus (2005-2008)* was a Grundtvig 4 network. The network produced a toolkit for quality in ULLL: national quality reports, a report on the use of indicators in ULLL, a quality learning tool, an annotated bibliography of web based resources and a bank of dissemination materials.
- *OBSERVAL - European Observatory of Non-formal and Informal Learning Validation (2007-2010)*, funded by the Leonardo programme of DGEAC. This project aims to collect and analyse materials, debate the results, and provide an extensive and critical view on situations and practices of validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe; it will also include looking forward to new ideas, new projects and new policy developments. All this will be on a special Observatory website.
- *EQF PRO – Articulation between vocational and academic learning in University Education (2008-2010)*, funded by DGEAC of the European Commission. This project aims: to test in a lifelong learning perspective the level 5 and level 6 of the European Qualification Framework on 25-30 professional diplomas provided by Higher education institutions; to identify potential confusions in the classification of the qualifications at levels 5 and 6 of the EQF framework in different institutions or countries; to identify the nature and source of possible conflicts with other frameworks (e.g. National qualification framework, sectorial framework, local employment constraints...); and to propose guidelines to ensure a better presentation of the qualifications.
- *ALLUME – A Lifelong Learning University Model for Europe (2009-2011)*, funded by DGEAC of the European Commission). This project will propose guidelines helping universities to become lifelong learning institutions, facilitating access and participation not only of young generations but also of populations already engaged in working life, providing opportunities and services for them to return to university several times during their professional and personal life in order to be able to contribute to a changing economy.

EUCEN has also benefitted over the period 2002-9 from an operating grant from the European Commission to help develop and maintain its infrastructure, improve services to members and develop new ideas.

Access to these projects' web sites is available from EUCEN's web page - <http://www.eucen.org>

Bibby Rumbelow Limited

www.bibbyrumbelow.com

Bibby Rumbelow is a consultancy and training company which specialises in organisational learning and training, work-based learning and employer engagement. The directors of the company are Dr Darryl Bibby and Dr Judy Rumbelow.

There are four divisions of Bibby Rumbelow Ltd:

- Consulting
- Curriculum and Engagement Masterclasses
- Skills Development and Training
- Staff Bank

Dr Darryl Bibby darryl@bibbyrumbelow.com

Darryl started his career in marketing before moving into Higher Education as Business Development Manager and then Head of Continuing Education at Oxford Brookes University. He built a large and successful programme of CPD courses, conferences and training programmes aimed at businesses throughout the UK and overseas. His work was not solely focussed on companies however and he developed the university's first collaborative programmes with the local Adult Education Service as well as establishing Oxford Brookes' Regional Training Partnership. While at Brookes, Darryl secured extensive funding and led projects aimed at researching the skills needs of organisations and developing learning for people in work.

Darryl was recruited to Coventry University in 1999 to establish a new Centre for Lifelong Learning. By 2005-6 the Centre was recruiting more than 2000 part-time students through a curriculum explicitly aimed at the vocational needs of employers and the career development needs of employees. In 2006 the Centre was made a full academic School of the University with Darryl its first Dean. Darryl resigned from the university in April 2008 to set up Bibby Rumbelow Ltd.

Dr Judy Rumbelow judy@bibbyrumbelow.com

Judy started her academic career in Further and Adult Education delivering work related learning and training. She worked as part of the team that wrote the national level 5 key skills standards and was part of the team that piloted their use. Judy has also designed many high quality training and development programmes including training programmes for prison officers, and for the Open University where she also managed the Widening Participation Programme.

Judy became Deputy Director of the School of Knowledge, Information and Personal Development at the National Health Service University (NHSU) where she led a large scale project to accredit Service Support Staff throughout the National Health Service.

Recently, Judy joined Coventry University as Associate Dean of the School of Lifelong Learning where she worked on supporting academic staff to deliver dual accreditation in National Vocational and Higher Education level qualifications. Judy designed and led the innovative work at Coventry University with Darryl Bibby that successfully engaged large national employers in an accredited work based learning programme blending competence and capability. Judy resigned from the university in April 2008 to set up Bibby Rumbelow Ltd.



Exploring Diversity in University Lifelong Learning (ULLL)

Introduction

When reviewing lifelong learning in universities you will quickly recognise its rich diversity. ULLL can be referred to in a range of different ways including 'continuing education', 'adult education' or even 'post-graduate studies'. Approaches to delivering lifelong learning vary from institution to institution within the same country and differ widely between countries. Lifelong learning varies in its purpose, its target audience, as well as the way it is presented in the university curriculum.

This section aims to encourage you to examine what brings such diversity together and defines it, as well as helping you to gain a sense of the range and breadth that is encompassed by ULLL. We ask you to consider the links between the purpose of an institution in delivering lifelong learning and the type of programmes offered, taking account of internal and external influences. Using case studies from the BeFlex Plus Project, we illustrate such diversity focusing on particular target groups of students, and the way in which learning is delivered. We conclude by asking you to consider how the diversity of ULLL can make it a particular challenge to measure its impact and ensure its quality.

The following activities are included in this section. The time in brackets after each section indicates approximately how long we would expect a small group of people working together to take to complete the activity, but of course this can be extended for greater depth of discussion. The case studies referred to in each activity are also noted and all of them (and others) are on the website in full (www.eucen.org/BeflexPlus/index.html).

Activity 1 (2 hours)

How do we define University Lifelong Learning?

In this activity we ask you to think through the parameters of programmes that are defined as lifelong learning and then attempt to define lifelong learning in your own institution.

Case studies

- Supplementary study programme for teachers at pre, primary and lower secondary level, University of Iceland (**IS**)
- Preparation for Higher Education Programme, University of Leeds (**UK**)
- European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students – ERASMUS, Goldsmiths – University of London (**UK**)

Activity 2 (2 hours)

What is the relationship between university policy/strategy for lifelong learning and the nature of the offer?

In activity 2 we encourage you to think about the relationship between the purpose of an institution's policy and strategy for lifelong learning and consider how this affects the nature of the learning opportunities it provides.

Case studies

- Developing modular e-content in the area of ICT (Information and CommunicationTechnology) to support LLL, Džemal Bijedić University (**BIH**)
- Competence Direct – co-operation between Lund University and Akademikerförbundet SSR, Lund University (**SE**)

Activity 3 (1.5 hours)

Diversity in target groups

Activity 3 sets out to illustrate the diversity of target groups at which lifelong learning is aimed and considers the relationship between the target group and the nature of the offer delivered.

Case studies

- Promoting the work-based training of medical doctors, University of Joensuu (**FI**)
- Lifelong Learning routes into Higher Education in Art and Design, Edinburgh College of Art and Design (eca)(**UK**)

Activity 4 (1.5 hours)

What are the challenges of diversity?

In the final activity we identify the challenges that the diverse nature of lifelong learning brings especially in terms measuring impact, ensuring quality and promotion. We ask you to use your experience to start to address these challenges.

Working with the learning material

The learning material we have provided is designed to be useful and relevant for those who are relatively new to the area of lifelong learning as well as people with more experience. We hope that where you are already aware of the practical issues we raise, you will extend your discussion to consider additional areas that we have not had space to cover. We also hope you may challenge our point of view in your discussion – we recognise that our approach is often only one of many legitimate ways to address a situation!

We recognise that those working on this material may have a lot or little experience in University Lifelong Learning. The activities are designed to stimulate structured discussion about areas critical to this topic, supported by case study example – so we are not seeking answers to specific problems but providing a framework for your critical reflection.

We have designed this learning material to be used in small groups either with or without a facilitator. The material can also be used by individuals working alone; but most of the activities require you to reflect on different approaches to issues, so discussion with others will be helpful – perhaps you could organise to do this online?



Look out for this notepad icon, where you see it we have suggested a task for you to do to support your learning.

Aims of this section

- To reflect on individual institutions' definition of University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) in the context of the broad perspective of ULLL in Europe
- To explore the relationship between institutional purpose for lifelong learning and the nature of the programmes offered and use this understanding to articulate the purpose of institutional strategies
- To illustrate the diversity of ULLL with a particular focus on the target groups of LLL strategy
- To examine the benefits and challenges raised by the diverse nature of ULLL and consider implications of diversity on measuring impact, ensuring accountability and assessing quality

Activity 1 (2 hours)

How do we define University Lifelong Learning?

In this activity we will ask you to think through and then record how you might define lifelong learning in your own institution. Below we remind you of the EUCEN definition of ULLL suggested in the earlier BeFlex project:

'ULLL is the provision by higher education institutions of learning opportunities, services and research for the personal and professional development of a wide range of individuals - lifelong and lifewide; and the social, cultural and economic development of communities and the region. It is at university level and research-based; it focuses primarily on the needs of the learners; and it is often developed and/or provided in collaboration with stakeholders and external actors.'

<http://www.eucen.org/BeFlex/FinalReports/ExecutiveSummaryWEBversion.pdf>

In undertaking this activity we recognise that people from different institutions may be working together so we start by reviewing critical aspects which may differ. We illustrate this using data gathered from the BeFlex Plus questionnaire and case studies. We hope that where people in the discussion group have differing experiences of provision you will compare and contrast these.

What types of programmes are encompassed by Lifelong Learning?



First we would like you to consider the type of programmes your institution defines as lifelong learning. Remember that you may call this continuing education, adult education, postgraduate studies or continuing professional development. You will want to consider the duration and size of programmes offered, whether they result in the award of credit, perhaps a full degree or a diploma, and how (and if) they are distinguished from other programmes in your institution. We have included the data from BeFlex questionnaire, question 12 below to inform your discussions.

What are the programmes you offer to support ULLL students (tick one box per row) (Question 12)					
	All	Most	Some	None	Response count
Bachelors are available for ULLL	31.5% (46)	14.4% (21)	26.0% (38)	28.1%(41)	146
Masters are available for ULLL	32.2% (48)	18.8%(28)	37.6%(56)	11.4%(17)	149
Possibility to study selected units/credits of a B or M programme	21.5% (32)	25.5%(38)	42.3%(63)	10.7%(16)	149
Customised programmes for special groups are available	16.7%(25)	20.0%(30)	56.0%(84)	7.3%(11)	150
Separate diplomas for different age groups are available	5.8%(8)	9.5%(13)	23.4%(32)	61.3%(84)	137
Intermediate awards are available	12.6%(17)	11.1%(15)	37.8%(51)	38.5%(52)	135
				Other please specify	13

How is ULLL delivered?



The variety of programmes in ULLL is matched by variety in the ways they are delivered. Below we give three examples of programmes that are very different in their means of delivery. Having read these case studies we would like you to identify how ULLL is delivered in your institution.

Supplementary study programme for teachers at pre, primary and lower secondary level

University of Iceland (IS)

The Centre for Continuing Education and Research (CCER) is an institution within the School of Education, University of Iceland. Its main activity is to provide continuing education and in service training for teachers and trainers. Since 2006 CCER has carried out the Supplementary Study Programme for the Ministry of Education in Iceland, working with Reykjavik University and the University of Akureyri. The study programme was aimed at supporting teachers in their work in response to a revision of the national curriculum. The programme comprises a mixture of distance learning and on campus teaching over a period of up to three years. The programme starts with a weekend preparation where students are introduced to distance learning methods, and the online and campus library. Students then identify their own path of learning choosing courses available from the three universities.

Preparation for Higher Education Programme

University of Leeds (UK)

The preparation for Higher Education Programme is a one year part-time programme for adults from the local community who generally do not have the required formal qualifications for entry to university and who have been out of formal education for some time. The programme combines curriculum and support features enabling a high level of success. Teaching is face to face and takes place in the evening or at weekends to suit the needs of learners. Students are also offered specialist additional support outside the classroom and pastoral support. The achievement of students on this programme is recognised for entry to university by most departments at the University of Leeds as well as other local universities.

European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students – ERASMUS

Goldsmiths – University of London (UK)

Goldsmiths offers students and staff the opportunity of taking part in Erasmus exchanges in the following departments: Computing, Design, Drama, Education, English and Comparative Literature, Visual Cultures and the Centre for Cultural Studies. Students taking part in this scheme will spend a period of time working in a European university alongside students from the exchange university. So while the means of delivery may be similar to what they experience in their home university they will be studying from a different academic and cultural perspective. Exchanges can also challenge students in several of the peripheral areas associated with study including language skills and the organisational elements of studying in a different country such as securing funding, accommodation and travel arrangements.

How is ULLL organised and managed?



Finally we would like you to think through how ULLL is organised and managed in your institution. Aspects of management and curriculum that you might want to consider are noted below.

- Registering or enrolling learners
- Offering support to learners with difficulties
- Giving academic advice and guidance
- Curriculum design and delivery
- Evaluating the quality of courses and programmes
- Managing human resources
- Marketing of ULLL
- The financial management of ULLL

Defining ULLL in your institution



Now that you have discussed and examined aspects of how lifelong learning is delivered in your institution we would like you to try to define it. If you are working in a group with people from other institutions you may prefer to devise a broad definition that covers several institutions – or you may find the diversity is such that this proves impossible.

Below we have included some responses from the BeFlex Plus questionnaire data to the question **‘Give your definition of University Lifelong Learning’**:

‘University lifelong learning means open university education, in-service training of academic personnel of different kinds of public or private organisations and private citizens. It also covers part-time master’s degrees for adult working people and it includes training for the unemployed and those who are in danger of losing their jobs (on an academic level) and also courses for people who have dropped out and want to finish their degree.’

‘ULLL is a concept to enable people to learn at every phase of their life on a university level.’

‘Lifelong learning is based on the assumption that learning takes place in formal, informal and non-formal contexts. Lifelong learners aim to develop their competences during a lifetime.’

‘Diverse, accessible and relevant higher learning provision premised on local and regional economic and social re-vitalisation.’

‘The responsibility of the universities to offer the possibility of increasing the knowledge and the professional abilities throughout life, and to combine theoretical and practical knowledge, and to be adapted to the needs of the labour market.’

Discussion

We would expect that your discussions have highlighted the situation that what is described as ULLL is extremely diverse, and also that the way in which lifelong learning is organised within universities is also very varied. In some ways this situation adds to the strength of lifelong learning. We recognise that learners of different ages, with different starting points and different aspirations will need a variety of different types of learning to meet their needs. However we also need to be aware that such diversity may mean the impact of lifelong learning lacks focus and is hard to promote. In the next two activities we step back and consider the reasons for such diversity in lifelong learning, considering both external influences on the way in which it develops and asking you to review how the purpose and mission of your institution has affected the offer that has developed. We then return to the issue of impact and consider how we might address the challenge of diversity on topics such as evaluation and quality assurance.

Activity 2 (2 hours)

What is the relationship between university policy/strategy for lifelong learning and the nature of the offer?

University policy and strategy in relation to lifelong learning differs and may be influenced by internal or external factors, or both. So, for example, a university may be encouraged to focus lifelong learning on continuing professional development for employees where a government or funding body wishes to support such development to promote economic growth. Universities may also see lifelong learning as an opportunity to strengthen and consolidate their position; so the links with other countries that might be forged through lifelong learning can promote the transnational reputation of the university.



We would like you to identify what you think is the purpose of your institution's lifelong learning policy/strategy. You can start at a broad level and might like to use the categories used below to organise data collected by question 7 of the BeFlex Plus questionnaire.

What is the purpose of your LLL policy/strategy? (Question 7)					
	First purpose	Second purpose	Third purpose	Rating average	Response count
Responding to the employment needs of the labour market	52.8% (67)	33.1% (42)	14.2% (18)	1.61	127
Encouraging participation of non-traditional learners, attracting new groups into the university and serving the needs of people who have not traditionally participated in higher education	27.0% (31)	30.4% (35)	42.6% (49)	2.16	115
Meeting the needs of citizens in all the aspects of life – cultural, economic, social, professional	31.0% (36)	28.4%(33)	40.5% (47)	2.09	116
Stimulating personal development by providing personal development programmes for graduates	34.4%(33)	33.3% (32)	32.3% (31)	1.98	96
None of the above					10



We would now like you to consider how the purpose of the policy might influence the type of programmes you deliver. So, for example, where programmes are designed specifically to respond to the needs of the labour market you might note that learning is delivered in short chunks with flexible timing to fit in with a work timetable. Subject matter may be based on topics associated with professional development such as leadership and management rather than traditional academic subject areas. Delivery of learning might take place in the workplace or by distance or e-learning to avoid learners having to travel a long way from their workplace and so take long periods of time off the job.



For each of the case studies below you should discuss the ways in which their purpose has influenced the nature of the lifelong learning programmes. We offer our thoughts in the discussion that follows.

Developing modular e-content in the area of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to support LLL

Džemal Bijedić University (BIH)

The Faculty of Information Technology of “Džemal Bijedić” University, Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in 1997. It organizes two forms of studies on bachelor and master degree level: face-to-face and distance learning/blended learning. The distance learning software platform used mainly for distribution of teaching materials in electronic form was developed at the faculty. The faculty has done a lot of research in the area of eLearning i.e. distance learning in order to improve the functionality of the system existing at the faculty and the quality of the teaching materials being developed.

The latest initiative is related to research in methodology of making modular and personalized teaching material in electronic form applicable on different education levels and suitable for various learning styles. These activities are in line with the initiative made on the level of the university to establish the Centre of Lifelong Learning, meaning that the experience gained and research done at the Faculty of Information Technologies could be beneficial for the university LLL centre; in terms of offering an alternative form for realization of courses for adults.

Discussion

In this case the university has identified the mutually beneficial nature of the programme. Using e learning methodology for continuing education will provide an accessible approach for a wide range of students and support the university’s aim to establish a centre for lifelong learning. It will also make use of research undertaken by the Faculty of Information Technology and provide a testing ground for using e-learning methodology with diverse student groups.

Competence Direct – co-operation between Lund University and Akademikerförbundet SSR Lund University (SE)

Lund University Commissioned Education is the unit at Lund University responsible for marketing, selling and administering competence development for professionals. It represents all faculties and departments at the university and acts as a one stop shop for companies, organisations and authorities when they are looking for professional development of business and staff.

Akademikerförbundet SSR is a union of university graduates whose members have a degree in economics, social science, social work or personnel management. Members can be found in all sectors of society and 25% of the professionals hold executive or managerial positions.

Lund University works with to Akademikerförbundet SSR to identify competence needs amongst members and then finds the most suitable department in the university to deliver learning to support their development.

For Lund University the co-operation is part of the ‘third task’ – co-operation with society – providing different departments with valuable contacts with the surrounding society. These contacts have a positive impact on the undergraduate education providing it with ‘real life’ examples.

Discussion

Lund University's programme allows it to meet its mission to work with society supporting a variety of departments to make contact with practising professionals. The university recognises that as well as helping it to achieve its third stream mission the contacts with such professionals provides an ideal opportunity for academics to keep up to date with current examples from work and use them to enhance their undergraduate offer.



Finally for this activity we would like you to return to consider the purpose of your own institution's lifelong learning policy/strategy and define how it has influenced what you currently provide.

We hope that this section has helped you to understand the relationship between the purpose of your provision and it the nature of what you provide. We also hope that in using case study examples we have introduced you to the diversity in lifelong learning which may inspire you to try different and innovative approaches in future.

Activity 3 (1.5 hours)

Diversity in target groups



The nature of university lifelong learning means that we expect the offer to be targeted at a wide age range, but we also know that there is variety within target groups according to experience, employment, previous qualifications, and gender. In this section we introduce you to a range of examples of lifelong learning which targets different groups and ask you to consider the following three questions in relation to each example.

1. In what ways do you think the target group has influenced the programme delivered?

For example, referring back to the example from Leeds University used in activity 1 you will note that the programme was delivered at evenings and weekends to allow people in work to attend.

2. Is the target group inclusive or exclusive ? How might this have affected the provision?

For example, the target group at Lund University for the particular programme is exclusive, comprising only members of a particular society whose membership is dictated by previous qualifications. However this model could be replicated for many other professional groups.

3. Is the target group made up of individuals or is it organisational? What influence might this have had on the programme?

For example, the target group at Džemal Bijedić University is made up of individuals. This inextricably linked with the type of provision as the university wishes to test out its use of e-learning for a diverse group of individual students. The purpose of the technology is to accommodate the needs of individuals.

Data from the BeFlex Plus questionnaire, question 8, again provides a useful starting point.

Who are the main target groups of the ULLL strategy/policy? (select one box per row) (Question 8)				
	Very important	Important	Not important	Response count
Individual learners	77.8% (105)	20.7% (28)	1.5% (2)	135
Organisation (private companies, public authorities, public companies, NGOs...)	49.3% (66)	45.5% (61)	5.2% (7)	134
Special target groups (unemployed, Immigrants, refugees, women..)	23.8% (31)	43.1% (56)	33.1% (43)	130
Other				12

We now include two case studies which illustrate universities working with very different target groups. The continuing education department of the University of Joensuu is running a programme which is specifically targeted at particular students.

Promoting the work-based training of medical doctors

University of Joensuu (FI)

The Regional Council of North Karelia, which is a governmental regional administrative authority, and several municipalities in North Karelia have provided the initiatives for this project. The project is implemented by the Continuing Education Centre of the University of Joensuu in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Kuopio. The funding for the project was organised through the TE Centre for North Karelia (Ministry of Labour) from the ESF programme's region of Eastern Finland.

The objective of the project is to promote the work-based immigration of medical doctors to North Karelia. The project is specifically aimed at Russian doctors in North-West Russia, who are waiting to immigrate on a returnee status and who are ready and willing to move to North Karelia to work as medical doctors in the region's health centres after upgrading their qualifications. For its part, the project helps in ensuring the availability of skilled labour force in the field. Eastern Finland is suffering from an acute lack of medical doctors and the project seeks to alleviate the situation. The objective is to train and qualify 10 doctors to work in North Karelia. In addition, the job opportunities in North Karelia are advertised to doctors all over Europe in collaboration with the "M14 Eastern Finland as a Pilot Area in Active Immigration Policy" project. The good practices discovered during the project will also be disseminated in collaboration with the M14 project. The medical doctors will immigrate to Finland in autumn 2008 and they will enter into an employment contract with the municipality for the duration of training.

The Centre for Continuing Studies at Edinburgh College of Art has developed a programme which is particularly targeted at specialist groups of students.

Lifelong Learning routes into Higher Education in Art and Design

Edinburgh College of Art and Design (eca)

The Centre for Continuing Studies (CCS) at Edinburgh College of Art (eca) has developed an innovative working model which gives lifelong learners in art and design subjects a clear pathway towards attaining a degree level award at eca and elsewhere. Students can take a range of our portfolio of short courses as continuing personal education without registering for credit, but many return repeatedly for further classes to build up a portfolio of new skills, heightening both their knowledge and aspirations. The CCS has recognised the commitment of these students by ensuring virtually all our provision is credit rated. This means that students can progress to a validated BA degree award, the BA in Combined Studies (Art and Design) without changing either their mode of study or switching to a more traditional full time single honours route. The proven value of the part-time BA route is that it offers a smooth transition for lifelong learners from personal education to degree based study. The flexibility, diversity, student-centred focus and 'user friendly' timetabling means that the current student body consists 100% of 'non standard' students in the following categories:

- Adult female returners
- Adult males pursuing degree study as lifelong learning, alongside a salaried job
- Adults with disabilities
- Students with spouses with disabilities
- Lone parents with young children
- Adults from severely disadvantaged backgrounds who are able to take this 'second chance' in a fully supported environment

A tool to achieve this transition for learners has been the introduction within lifelong learning of a credit bearing Certificate in Art and Design Studies

We suggest that you also take a look at the wide range of examples illustrated in the 57 case studies collected for the BeFlex Plus project (<http://www.eucen.org/BeFlexPlus/index.html>) and the 53 collected in the BeFlex project (<http://www.eucen.org/BeFlex/index.html>).

In considering these examples you will have noticed that in many cases there is reciprocity between the target students and the nature of the provision. This is to be expected: any good provision should be sensitive to the needs of students so the diverse needs of students influence the way in which provision is delivered. The only time when such a relationship might be compromised is when a university is targeting provision at an organisation and the individuals within that organisation might have needs that differed from those of the organisation. You might wish to consider what would happen in such an instance.

Activity 4 (1.5 hours)

What are the challenges of diversity?



For the final activity in this section we turn to your expertise to consider solutions to a problem caused by the diverse nature of lifelong learning. In working your way through this section you will have recognised how the diversity of lifelong learning can meet a wide variety of needs both for individual students and organisations, and can also be used to broaden and enhance university programmes with effects that can reach beyond the original target group. Yet its very diversity can make it particularly difficult to measure the impact of lifelong learning both at the level of individual programmes and more widely nationally and across borders. Research such as that conducted by BeFlex Plus gives an excellent indication of the wide range of provision which universities recognise as lifelong learning – but now we ask you how the broad impact of such diverse provision might be measured?

- How can such diversity be counted or measured at a national or European level?
- If it cannot be counted or measured easily how can its impact be demonstrated?
- How can it be valued?

- How can its quality be assured?
- If it is for everyone, everywhere, anywhere, how can it have a clear voice in policy debates and how can that voice make itself heard?

These are questions for which there is no right answer and we ask you to be both creative but pragmatic in your responses. For each question below we have suggested a starting point for your discussions.

How can such diversity be counted or measured at a national or European level?

In discussing this topic you might want to return to the definition you wrote at the beginning of the session. Is it possible to devise a definition which is broad enough to encompass most of the lifelong learning in your country? Is there an agreed perception of what lifelong learning is nationally? Is there a forum for sharing data and information more widely than just institutionally? Would it be possible to agree categories for collecting data about lifelong learning– perhaps your funding body or similar already recommends this? Are there any indicators in use in your institution or in your country?

If it cannot be counted or measured easily how can its impact be demonstrated?

A starting point for this discussion might be to consider what you need to measure to demonstrate impact. Clearly for individual projects you will need to focus on their original objectives or purpose, but if you were looking to measure impact nationally you might be able to identify a shared purpose associated with national policy that provided a starting point. A difficulty of this approach might be that not all programmes associated with a particular policy are delivered through lifelong learning – but it is worth a try!

How can it be valued?

In order to address this question you may want to start by considering what you think is the value of ULLL. From this point you might suggest who needs to value ULLL – in many cases the partners who have been involved in collaborative lifelong learning projects – employers, regional authorities or individuals will be those who value it most. You may also want to consider how those who influence its continued provision may be made aware of it, thinking of decision makers at institutional, national and international level – how do they value it?

How can its quality be assured?

This is a slightly easier question as most lifelong learning will have a clear quality assurance policy managed by their individual institution. In some cases lifelong learning programmes use the standard university mechanism for quality assurance but this does not always suit the flexible nature of ULLL. Although the diversity of lifelong learning makes it difficult, you might want to consider whether it is possible to identify guidelines for best practice for LLL quality assurance – perhaps you already have them nationally or at an even higher level?

If it is for everyone, everywhere, anywhere, how can it have a clear voice and how can that voice make itself heard?

One of the problems of a concept such as lifelong learning which is difficult to define is that if there is no clear consensus about what it is, then how can there be a community of practice? If there is no community of practice, who will argue for ULLL in policy debates, and who will make the case for financial support? Who will make sure that ULLL is given importance and status in the mission of universities? The regional, national and European networks clearly have a role to play here. Part of this process is drawing together information about what is happening Europe wide as has been done through BeFlex Plus. You may be able to suggest ways to ensure critical messages reach the ears of policy makers and funders and to discuss what the networks should be doing to support and promote ULLL.

Concluding comments

A key purpose of this section has been to demonstrate the diversity of provision in ULLL using data and case studies, and encourage you to understand how this has come about in relation to the diverse aims and purposes of different institutions. We hope that as a result of working through the section you will have recognised the dilemma that the strength of the diversity of ULLL may also be its weakness in another context. In addressing the overarching challenges raised by such diversity in activity 4 we also hope that you, as practitioners in the area, will have suggested some responses to these challenges.



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Curriculum in Partnership

Introduction

This section addresses the topic of developing a curriculum in partnership. It is designed to cover broad aspects of the topic, encouraging you to explore the purpose and benefits of working in partnership and think through the importance of measuring the impact of the curriculum you design. However it also covers more practical aspects such as defining the choices that must be made about the size and shape of a curriculum. Our overarching aim is to help you to feel better prepared and informed about the process of working in a variety of types of partnership to design and develop a successful curriculum. For experienced practitioners we also aim to provide a stimulus for further discussion of the opportunities and challenges of working in a variety of partnership models.

The following activities are included in this section. The time in brackets after each section indicates approximately how long we would expect a small group of people working together to take to complete the activity, but of course this can be extended for greater depth of discussion. The case studies referred to in each activity are also noted and all of them (and others) are on the website in full (www.eucen.org/BeflexPlus/index.html).

Activity 1 (1 hour)

What is a curriculum?

This activity considers a definition of the term curriculum and then, using case studies, explores the types of partnerships that might be formed when a university develops curriculum with other organisations.

Case studies

- Training for professionals in education in years 2008 – 2011, University of Maribor (SI)
- Co-operation between a university and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree, Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL)
- Further education programme for lecturers of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, University of Hildesheim (DE)
- The Council for Regional Educational Co-operation, ENCELL, University of Jönköping (SE)
- Experienced based knowledge: co-operative venture between education and Professional Bodies, Otto- von- Guericke – University, Magdeburg, (DE)

Activity 2 (45 minutes)

What are the benefits and purpose of designing a curriculum in partnership?

In activity 2 we use two contrasting case studies to stimulate discussion about the potential benefits of developing curriculum in partnership for universities, students and partners.

Case studies

- Co-operation between a university and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree, Hogeschool van Amsterdam (**NL**)
- ‘Enjoying arts’, Duesto University (**ES**)

Activity 3 (1.5 hours)

How do you design a curriculum with partners: size and shape?

This activity is practically focused and examines the aspects of a curriculum that should be agreed with partners during the design process. Experienced practitioners are encouraged to explore the implications of flexible and innovative processes of design moer widely within institutions.

Case study

- Competency development of business management and co-operation, Kaunas University of Technology, (**LT**)

Activity 4 (1.5 hours)

What are the practical challenges of designing a curriculum in partnership?

Here, using a variety of examples raised in case studies, we consider the challenges of building a curriculum with partners and look at ways of addressing them.

Activity 5 (1.5 hours)

How do you measure impact? Maintaining and developing provision.

The final activity reviews ways that the impact of a curriculum can be measured taking particular account of the breadth of techniques that might be used to ensure partners find out what they need to know about impact on leaners and organisations.

Case studies

- Co-operation between a university and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree, Hogeschool van Amsterdam (**NL**)
- ‘Enjoying arts’, Duesto University (**ES**)

Working with the learning material

The learning material we have provided is designed to be useful and relevant for those who are relatively new to the area of lifelong learning as well as people with more experience. We hope that where you are already aware of the practical issues we raise, you will extend your discussion to consider additional areas that we have not had space to cover. We also hope you may challenge our point of view in your discussion – we recognise that our approach is often only one of many legitimate ways to address a situation!

We recognise that those working on this material will have a wealth of experience in areas relevant to curriculum development in partnership. The activities are designed to stimulate structured discussion about areas critical to this topic, supported by case study example – so we are not seeking answers to specific problems but assisting you to come to a deeper understanding of the issues whatever your experience.

We have designed this learning material to be used in small groups either with or without a facilitator. The material can also be used by individuals working alone, but most of the activities require you to reflect on different approaches to issues, so discussion with others will be helpful – perhaps you could organise to do this online?



Look out for this notepad icon, where you see it we have suggested a task for you to do to support your learning.

Aims of this section

- To define a shared meaning of curriculum in lifelong learning
- To identify the purpose and potential benefits of curriculum in partnership
- To consider the size and shape of curriculum models and their influence on working in partnership
- To address the challenges of negotiating and delivering a curriculum in partnership
- To explore approaches for measuring the impact of a shared curriculum

Activity 1 (1 hour)

What is a curriculum? (30 minutes)

Your understanding of what a curriculum is will probably be influenced by your own experiences as a learner as well as work you have done more recently designing and delivering curricula. Before we start to examine the process of developing a curriculum *in partnership* is important to try to build a shared understanding of what the term curriculum means. Below we have included some quotations in which people explain aspects of what they understand by the term curriculum.



Working in a group or individually you should discuss each quote and consider whether you agree with it. Once you have discussed all the quotes you should then try to construct your own definition of what the term curriculum means to you. Try not to use more than 100 words!

- *'The curriculum is the range of courses and learning programmes from which students can choose what they study'*
- *'Curriculum is a planned and coherent area of study designed to deliver defined outcomes'*
- *'The curriculum is the framework which holds together elements of study to give them a recognised and identified purpose'*
- *'In lifelong learning the curriculum can be influenced by the experience, knowledge and aspirations of those studying it'*
- *'The context of delivery of learning can affect the curriculum especially when working with adults'*

Discussion

Curriculum is a particularly difficult concept to define so this was a tough challenge to start with! Although the definitions you have come up may vary quite widely we hope you will have considered the following elements:

- A curriculum is planned and designed to meet explicit outcomes
- A curriculum is created by an organisation or institution with the purpose of generating learning
- The design of the curriculum can be influenced by external factors such the context in which it is delivered or the knowledge and experience of learners undertaking it

In Lifelong Learning external factors have a particularly strong influence especially when the curriculum is designed by several partners working together. Where partners work together each may have different priorities which can mean that a curriculum must be designed to encompass disparate outcomes.

Who are partners in curriculum design? (30 minutes)

Universities

Several universities may decide to develop curriculum in partnership. This may provide improved geographical access for their students or it may encourage the sharing of specialist academic expertise in specific areas of the curriculum. Universities may also decide to partner with other training providers for similar reasons.

Training for professionals in Education in years 2008 – 2011

University of Maribor (SI)

The Centre for Lifelong Education at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor co-operates with the University of Ljubljana and the University of Primorska to deliver professional training for workers in education from kindergartens to higher professional schools. Co-operation between the partners is delivered by a group of co-ordinators with the purpose of providing access to teacher education across the entire territory of Slovenia.

Employers

Universities often aspire to design curriculum with employers. This can give the universities access to additional funding and encourage employers to see them as an ongoing source of relevant training and expertise.

Co-operation between a university and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree.

Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL)

Hogeschool van Amsterdam (University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam) worked with Yacht, an international private sector recruitment and selection agency to provide learning, training and development in IT related subjects for employees. The university worked closely with the company to ensure the requirements of the curriculum were relevant and appropriate to Yacht employees

Public bodies

Universities may be encouraged to work with public bodies such as regional authorities to provide a wide range of learning opportunities for people in a particular region or community.

The Council for Regional Educational Co-operation, ENCELL, University of Jönköping (SE)

The University of Jönköping is working with the Regional Councils and representatives of the municipalities to deliver a range of programmes with particular relevance to the regional employment needs. Goals of the project include an aim to widen participation and to increase accessibility.

Private foundations

On occasion a university may have the opportunity to work with an organisation that provides a different source of funding from more mainstream and widely available sources. Successful partnership is likely to depend on a thorough understanding of the aspirations and ethos of the partner funder.

Further education programme for lecturers of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, University of Hildesheim (DE)

The 'Lectureship Program' for German graduates at universities in Eastern Europe and China offers grants from the Robert Bosch Stiftung to young graduates interested in teaching and undertaking projects. The University of Hildesheim has worked with the Robert Bosch Stiftung to offer masters level credit for students who undertake programmes in organisational development, educational management or adult education/lifelong learning offering a supported and flexible approach to post graduate learning.

Professional organisations

Universities may design curriculum in partnership with professional organisations or professional bodies in order to ensure that the theoretically based knowledge included in the curriculum is fully aligned with the requirements of professional practice identified by the relevant professional organisation.

Experienced based knowledge: co-operative venture between education and Professional Bodies Otto- von- Guericke – University, Magdeburg, (DE)

Otto –von- Guericke-University, Magdeburg, Institute for Educational Science, has entered into a Public Private Partnership with the Institute of Advanced Dental Studies , Karlsruhe, to offer an in-service masters programme. This programme combines experience based knowledge with systematic or curricular based knowledge to ensure students are introduced to the notion of integrated practice.



Above are five examples of the ways in which universities have worked in partnership to develop curriculum. Working in your group or individually we would like you to identify ways in which you or your organisation are currently working or would like to work in partnership to develop curriculum. The ways of working together may fit our five categories above or they may demonstrate more complex relationships where several categories of partners are working together.

Activity 2 (45 minutes)

What are the benefits and purpose of designing curriculum in partnership?

This activity is designed to encourage you to explore why universities decide to work in partnership with other organisations and what the benefits are for the students, the university and the partners. For this activity we have outlined two case studies below:

Co-operation between a university and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree.

Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL)

Hogeschool van Amsterdam (University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam) has created a learning and development programme for Yacht employees leading to a bachelor degree in IT. The key aspects of the programme are as follows:

- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is part of the programme. On the basis of the outcome of RPL a tailor made programme is constructed for each individual employee to obtain a bachelor degree. In this way employees' motivation to participate in a higher educational programme is enhanced.
- The RPL process allows Yacht employees working and living in different regions throughout the Netherlands to participate in the same process resulting in similar opportunities to enrol on a tailor made programme.
- The IT bachelor degree programme should equip Yacht employees for their next career move. In the developing the curriculum relevant IT certificates such as ITIL and Prince 2 have been taken into account. Yacht employees are used to doing short courses with a private training provider which are popular and valuable to the IT business.
- The programme developed by the university meets the same standards and competencies as the regular Bachelor degree programmes in the university.

'Enjoying arts'

Deusto University (ES)

Deusto University has worked in partnership with Bilbao Opera's Friends Association, Bilbao Symphonic Orchestra, Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, Guggenheim Museum and Arriaga Theatre to design a programme of educational activities to help the knowledge and enjoyment of the artistic creations that influence the cultural planning of the city of Bilbao.

The programme aims to create a larger and more informed audience for the artistic institutions of Bilbao. Participants are offered training about artistic planning in different fields which enable them to have a better understanding of theoretical issues as well as preparing for practical productions. The programme also aims to recognise that promotion and enjoyment of the arts can be personally enhancing for individuals.

The programme comprises a variety of different activities relating to, for example, literature, theatre, symphonic music and gallery arts, taking place weekly during two semesters of the academic year. The activities are related to what is taking place at the partner organisations so if there were an exhibition at the Guggenheim museum an exhibitor might come to the university to talk about it and then participants might visit the exhibition.

The programme has taken proactive steps to strengthen the relationship between the university and other institutions in the city of Bilbao.



We would like you now to compare the benefits of designing curriculum in partnership illustrated by each of the case studies. We have provided a table below for you to record your responses.

- For each case study what benefits do you think designing curriculum in partnership have brought? You may wish to consider the following categories:

	HOGESCHOOL van AMSTERDAM	DEUSTO UNIVERSITY
Benefits to the economy		
Benefits to social and cultural dimensions		
Benefits to the university		
Benefits to partner organisations		
Benefits to learners		



To conclude this activity we would like you to consider why you think each of the two universities in the case studies above decided to work in partnership with other organisations?

Discussion

The two universities mentioned in the case studies appear to have very different purposes for developing the curriculum with their respective partners even though several of the benefits derived from the partnership may be similar. Hogeschool, Amsterdam is working in partnership with a private sector organisation with the aim of providing learning and development which will support economic development at a national level. Whereas Deusto University is addressing the local social and cultural agenda with the aim of linking education to the local cultural infrastructure as well as offering an opportunity for individual personal development. However both partnerships recognise the importance of progression for students to further educational development.

As we move on to consider what a curriculum developed in partnership might look like you will note that the purpose of each partnership has considerable influence on the way the curriculum is shaped.

Activity 3 (1.5 hours)

How do you design a curriculum with partners?

We now move from exploring the purpose and benefits of developing a curriculum in partnership to considering the choices about what the curriculum looks like in design. In this section we review key aspects of the size and shape of a curriculum where decision making is focused concerning the best way to meet the needs of partners. First we outline important areas of choice and then we ask you to review your understanding of how to shape the curriculum in response to a case study of partners designing a curriculum together.

We recognise that seeking flexibility in each of these areas to meet the needs of partners can be challenging especially where innovative approaches may require institutional change. We suggest that practitioners who are experienced in curriculum in partnership might focus on potential institutional changes needed to support the flexibility that those working on curriculum in partnership might require in each of the areas below.

Size of the programme – universities can usually choose the size of their programme ranging from the shortest of interventions to full diploma or degree programme. The case studies in activity 2 are a good example of the two extremes. However in practice you may be restricted in your choice concerning the size of the programme by the norms and rules of your university.

Timing of delivery – your partner(s) may have particular requirements about the timing of delivery for a programme. When working with employers as partners they are likely to have demanding schedules as their learning and development needs are often immediate and related to urgent demands of business. If you are designing learning primarily for part-time students, delivery of your programme may have to take place at times when they can study such as evenings or weekends. The university may also have rules or norms about timing of delivery, expecting that learning is delivered in semesters or terms that coincide with a traditional calendar. You may also want to consider the implications of delivering to mixed groups, for example with full-time young students and part-time mature students. You may be able to teach ‘outside normal hours’ but will the library, the canteen or other services be open?

Award of credit – you will need to consider whether your programme needs to carry ECTS credits or not. For some partners this may be the purpose of working with a university and indeed some may bring an already existing training or development programme and ask for it to be recognised by the university. If you are seeking ECTS credit for your programme you are likely to have to adhere to some quite demanding rules set by the university that is awarding credit; especially in relation to assessment and maybe also relating to mode of delivery and duration of study. You may also want to consider how credits might be combined to form a larger award such as a diploma or a degree. Or whether parts of existing diplomas or degrees may be used in the partnership.

Level of programme – when designing your curriculum you may need to make decisions about the level of the learning and study – if you plan for your learning to attract ECTS credits you will definitely have to address this issue. To make informed decisions about the level of study you will need to be in a position to compare the curriculum you are designing with other similar programmes

to gauge an appropriate level. Your university will probably provide official guidelines on this process and you may find wider guidance from subject benchmarks, your national qualifications framework (NQF) or the European qualifications framework (EQF). Your partners may require that a programme is designated at a particular level so that it provides progression for prospective learners.

Modularisation – as you design your curriculum you will need to consider whether you wish to present it in a modular format. Your university may insist that all programmes are designed in combinations of particular sized modules – especially if credit is being awarded. You may be limited in your choice of module size. In turn the size and shape of module may place restrictions on the time spent teaching students, the size of assessments and the mode of delivery.

Mode of delivery – you will need to make choices about the way in which you deliver your programme of study. Your partner(s) may have specific ideas about how they would like learning delivered to fit in with their aims for learning – so they might want a distance learning programme that allows access for students from remote rural areas for example. You might perhaps consider an e-learning approach where learners need to study at different times of the day in a variety work environments. If you are delivering learning for students in work you may need to look ways that learning can be delivered while people carry on with their jobs – coaching or mentoring for example.

Now we ask you to consider the choices that you might need to make when designing a curriculum with partners. Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania) has worked in partnership with Alytus Business Advisory Centre (Lithuania) and the Institute of Economic and Social Development (Poland).



You should read through the case study below and for each of the categories above decide the approach you would advise the partnership to take. To get you started we have worked through an example for the first category – size of programme:

**Competency development of business management and co-operation
Kaunas University of Technology, (LT)**

The partnership between Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania) and Alytus Business Advisory Centre (Lithuania) and the Institute of Economic and Social Development (Poland) sought to stimulate Lithuanian - Polish cross border activity by working with organisations and business communities to solve actual cross border business problems.

The approach taken was to provide learning and training programmes targeted directly at businesses in the two Baltic sea-region states in order to increase the role of businesses in supporting the development and growth of the local communities.

The partners conducted market research in each of the states to identify priority learning needs relating to this problem. The different regions identified their needs as:

- Alytus region : Management of Human Resources, Marketing , Financial Management, Trade Development, Polish Tax System
- Pomerania region : Management of Human Resources, Marketing, Trade Development, Financial Management, Lithuanian Tax System

Size of the programme – in this case study it appears that the partners are likely to want to build a substantial programme. Each of the priority learning needs could be developed into a programme in its own right. The subject areas are also inter-connected so could be combined to make programme that could be accredited at diploma or degree (bachelors or masters) level. Those designing this programme would need to consider whether they offered separate subject related programmes or whether they combined such programmes into one large award. These choices would depend on both the requirements of the partners and the regulations of the university.

The approval process for large qualifications such as degrees or diplomas may take a considerable time – time that partners may not be prepared to wait. Some universities have instigated ‘fast-track’ approval processes to facilitate partnership work.



Now you should discuss and complete the remaining categories in the same way.

Timing of delivery

Award of credit

Level of programme

Modularisation

Mode of delivery

Activity 4 (1.5 hours)

What are the practical challenges of designing a curriculum in partnership?

Now that we have highlighted some of the choices associated with designing a curriculum in partnership we would like to pause for a moment to review the practical challenges that you might face in this process. However, in many cases these problems only come to light after the design process, and awareness of the potential pitfalls at the earliest stage can help you to avoid them. Although the issues we raise can make it seem a challenge to work with partners we aim to help you think about ways in which they can be overcome and we believe that the benefits for all taking part in the partnership warrant the effort required to address them.



Below we have selected some quotes that describe the actual challenges faced by universities when working in partnership. All these challenges have implications for shared curriculum design. We would like you to read the quotes and then:

- a) define what you think is the key challenge expressed
- b) discuss how the challenge might affect shared curriculum design
- c) suggest how the challenge can be overcome

Again we have provided a worked example to get you started.

Regional collaboration case study: linking London Learning, Linking London Lifelong Learning Network

‘A particular challenge has been to encourage a diverse group of people who might traditionally have worked in competition to work together to facilitate the needs of the learner.’

a) Define what you think is the key challenge expressed

The key challenge expressed is that organisations drawn together to work in partnership (perhaps through funding imperatives for example) may actually have competing agendas. They may be unwilling to share information about what they do or plan to do in future because they fear it is commercially sensitive.

b) Discuss how the challenge might affect shared curriculum design

If partners are concerned that they may be giving other partners competitive advantage by sharing plans, experience, knowledge or such products as learning materials it can make it difficult to utilise the full breadth of partners’ experience in the development of the curriculum. It might be the case that a particular partner has been brought into the partnership to share specialist expertise but in fact is unwilling or unable to do this with other organisations it perceives as competitors.

c) Suggest how the challenge can be overcome

First of all it will be important for partners to be open about how the partnership will work and any anxieties they might have about sharing knowledge expertise or materials. Discussions may need to take place about issues such as intellectual property rights and which institution receives funding for any particular students for example. Partners should ensure that shared aims are agreed at the very beginning of the partnership, and then kept under review as the partnership develops. In many cases the partnership is an essential element of gaining access to funding so the financial reward of working together may overcome anxieties about competition.

Regional co-operation in post-secondary technological education, University of Aveiro (PT):

‘One of the main problems of working together in partnership is that the finance that allows the programme to go ahead can only be allocated after the majority of the work in the partnership has been carried out. This makes it impossible to be in a position to start the programmes at the beginning of the academic year.’

Regional collaboration case study: Linking London Learning, Linking London Lifelong Learning Network (UK):

‘A particular challenge has been to encourage a diverse group of people who might traditionally have worked in competition to work together to facilitate the needs of the learner.’

Co-operation between a university and the municipal government of Zwolle in developing and executing a management development programme, RPL Centre, Hogeschool, Windesheim (NL):

‘It takes time to speak each other’s language and understand the differences in culture. Most students at Windesheim are young people between 17 and 23 years old. The whole education system is focused on that group: education and assessment are about people who are on the verge of starting a career, not so much on people with a lot of experience in management. Education and assessment need to be adapted to that new group.’

Quality management for school leavers in vocational schools, University of Helsinki (FI):

‘It can be seen as the central role of the providers of continuing education that they disseminate newest scientific innovations in order to give new tools to and improve the everyday working life of the teaching staff. It must be kept in mind that teaching staff want to have clear and practical new methods and best practices instead of theoretical lectures. This is also a challenge to the teaching staff of the faculties.’

Discussion

From undertaking this activity you will have seen that there are many challenges to designing a curriculum in partnership. We hope that you will have talked a little about all of the following areas:

- Managing competition or different agendas between partners
- Ensuring a balance is achieved between the demand for practical knowledge and skills that may be a priority for learners and the consideration of associated theory which a university and its academic staff might see as most important
- Co-ordinating administrative systems of the university (particularly finance) so that they support rather than hinder curriculum development
- Understanding differences in cultural expectations of partners particularly as a result of different experiences of the education system both in different countries and different groups of learners

Activity 5 (1.5 hours)

Measuring impact: maintaining and developing provision

When designing a curriculum in partnership it can be tempting to allow your focus to become internal and preoccupied with the curriculum itself rather than the impact the delivery of that curriculum will have on those who study it. This final section focuses on the importance of measuring the impact of your curriculum on all partners, and techniques for doing so.

The curriculum you design is only likely to be sustainable if what you deliver enables students to meet the desired outcomes of the partners, so defining the impact of your curriculum is critically important to the survival of your course or programme.

Measuring the impact of your curriculum

In order to measure the impact it is essential to return to the initial purpose, aims and objectives of the curriculum you have designed. The way in which you evaluate impact will, of course, depend on your original purpose; so an intervention that was only designed to meet short term needs – for example a course to address a specialist skills gap which has now been filled – will need to be evaluated differently from a long term programme designed to stimulate social or professional development.

Techniques for measuring impact

Traditionally universities have measured the impact of programmes of learning by judging the outcomes of the study of individual students and monitoring their learning experience. This is usually done by judging the results of assessment – perhaps in comparison to other parallel provision or benchmarks, and gathering qualitative data about individual student experience.

While this is one legitimate measure of impact it is essential to consider how students have used their learning more widely. It is likely that the partners will want information about the impact and success of certain aspects of the provision which may go well beyond individual student satisfaction. So, for example, where the aim of your curriculum has been to improve the depth of appreciation of cultural opportunities in a region, you might want to measure number and length of time of visits to a particular museum or art gallery. For a programme which is for both individual professional development and for the spread of knowledge in an employer organisation, partners might benefit from evaluating the performance of the student's workplace team.



In activity 2 you considered two case studies which illustrated curriculum development in partnership with widely differing purposes. We are now going to return to these examples to ask you to identify aspects of the provision which need to be evaluated and possible techniques for doing so. Choose which one you would prefer to work on and then taking into account traditional techniques for measuring student experience and wider evaluation methodology as referred to in the paragraph above try to do the following:

- Identify the key impacts that you think partners would want evaluated. Consider their rationale for these choices.
- Suggest possible techniques for impact measurements. As well as considering individual outputs (student achievement, experience) and wider impacts (career progression, team performance), you may want to evaluate the way in which the partnership has worked.

Co-operation between a university and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree.

Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL)

Institutions

- Yacht, an international private company in staffing, temporary management and recruitment and selection. Yacht is a market leader in this field in the Netherlands. In this project the IT branch of Yacht is the partner, with the Yacht Academy and the HR department playing an important part in the project
- Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam. Three areas are involved – The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) centre, a business engineering degree programme and an information engineering course
- Exin, a private educational company providing IT courses

Objectives, purposes and context

Many Yacht employees work on Higher IT level, but do not have a bachelor degree in IT. The company has two main reasons for wanting their employees to get a degree

- To show their customers that they only work with highly qualified employees
- To stimulate further development of employees and in doing so strengthen the commitment between company and employees

The objective of the project is to create a learning and development programme for Yacht employees leading to a bachelor degree in IT.

The following are important elements of this purpose

- RPL is part of the programme.
- On the basis of RPL a tailor made programme is constructed for each individual employee to obtain a bachelors degree in IT.
- Although Yacht employees work in different regions in the Netherlands they all have the same opportunity to participate in the programme.
- The programme of learning is designed to equip Yacht employees for the next career step. To achieve this special minor programmes have been developed to support development of particular competences.
- In the development of the programme relevant vocational certificates such as ITIL and Prince 2 have been taken into account. Yacht employees are used to undertaking such courses with Exin and they are valuable to the IT business. The tailor made bachelor programme for Yacht meets the same quality standards and competencies as regular programmes at the university.

Activities

The learning and development programme consists of the following steps for the candidate:

- An IT scan which results in advice on developing certain competencies through work experience and /or Exin modules
- Working and learning at the company and assembling evidence of learning
- An RPL procedure that results in an assessed portfolio of evidence to required bachelor degree standard
- After assessment of the portfolio the student is provided with a report which states what they have to do to complete their degree
- Enrolling of the student on a tailor made programme. For most students this consists of a minor programme (an optional specialisation) and a thesis

'Enjoying arts'

Deusto University (ES)

Institutions

Deusto University Leisure Studies Institute is involved in a partnership with Bilbao Opera's Friends Association (ABAO), Bilbao Symphonic Orchestra (BOS), Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, Guggenheim Museum and Arriaga Theatre.

Objectives, purposes and context

The aim of the partnership is to provide a programme to help the knowledge and enjoyment of the artistic creations that influence the cultural planning of the City of Bilbao. At the end of the project the intention is to have established complementary action between Deusto University and the partners to increase the enjoyment, knowledge and understanding of the arts.

Activities

Training courses are offered about artistic planning in different fields to present and explain the theoretical horizons associated with practical productions. Each week during the two semesters of the academic year one and a half hour activities are provided relating to literature, theatre, symphonic music, gallery arts, opera and large exhibitions. Activities are related to actual events happening in the City – for example, with an exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum, the author of the exhibition comes to the university to talk about it and a visit to the Museum is organised for participants as a consequence. Participants get certificates to prove attendance at activities of the programme.

The programme drives the university to strengthen relations with other institutions of the City such as its museums, theatres, orchestras, and opera.

Sustainability

Where it can be demonstrated that programmes successfully meet the aim and purpose defined by partners the provision is more likely to be sustainable. Evidence of the desired impact is especially important in securing continued funding whether this is from a private sector source where improved performance may make an organisation more productive, or from a public sector source where renewed funding depends on demonstration of outputs achieved. Where curriculum is developed in partnership as part of a funded project it should be accepted that changes may have to be made to deliver provision that is sustainable when project funding ends and must be absorbed into mainstream activity.

Concluding comments

In working through the activities on developing curriculum in partnership you should now have a clear view of the challenges as well as the potential benefits for all partners. You will have recognised the importance of defining the purpose of your partnership and how this will affect the way in which the curriculum is designed and also how its impact is assessed. You should also be aware of the key decisions about size and shape of a curriculum that will need to be addressed in your discussions with partners and be prepared for the practical challenges that working with partners may bring.

As a result of working through this learning material we hope you now feel better prepared for developing a curriculum in partnership and recognise its potential to be a worthwhile and fulfilling approach to curriculum development for all involved, and for critically reflecting on existing partnerships.



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Implementing Institutional Change in University Lifelong Learning (ULLL)

Introduction

This section addresses the topic of implementing institutional change in university lifelong learning. There have been significant developments in ULLL over recent years reflecting the changes in the external political, economic and social environment.

The diverse nature of ULLL (*as evidenced by the BeFlex Plus survey and discussed in the sections on Diversity in ULLL and Developing Curriculum in Partnership*) means that the impacts of these factors on universities vary considerably. We explore the drivers for change and their specific impacts on ULLL. We then focus on the real practicalities of implementing change in ULLL including looking at its structure and its operations in order to give you ideas about how you might begin or improve the implementation of those changes in your own institution. Finally we consider how to prioritise and plan changes and evaluate their ongoing success.

The following activities are included in this section. The time in brackets after each section indicates approximately how long we would expect a small group of people working together to take to complete the activity but of course this can be extended for greater depth of discussion. The case studies referred to in each activity are also noted and all of them (and others) are on the website in full (www.eucen.org/BeflexPlus/index.html).

Activity 1 (2 hours)

What are the reasons for change in ULLL?

The opening activity identifies the main drivers for change in order to gauge what impacts they will have on universities and lifelong learning.

Case studies:

- Guidance and Counselling for people coming back to university
University of Brest (**FR**)
- Linking London Learning
Linking London Lifelong Learning Network (**UK**)

Activity 2 (1.5 hours)

Who is responsible for implementing change in ULLL?

This activity considers the different types of internal organisational structures used for the delivery of ULLL and compares their inherent strengths and weaknesses

Case Study:

- A change to the organisation of ULLL
University of Tartu (EE)

Activity 3 (2 hours)

What changes are being made to implement ULLL?

This activity examines the breadth of changes that are actually being made in universities in response to external drivers for change in ULLL

Case studies:

- Extract from 'The Lifelong Learning Strategies of Finnish Universities'
Åbo Akademi University and the University of Helsinki (FI)
- To become a lifelong learning organisation
University of Science and Technology, Lille (FR)
- ULLL at the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) in the context of the Bologna Process
Warsaw School of Economics (PL)
- Competence out of lifelong learning into the area of professionalization in the context of the development of BA/MA in the Bologna process
Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, (DE)

Activity 4 (1 hour)

Evaluating changes in ULL

Finally the fourth activity identifies how important it is to monitor and evaluate changes in ULLL and considers how this may require different approaches to those that currently exist in universities.

Working with the learning material

The learning material we have provided is designed to be useful and relevant for those who are relatively new to the area of lifelong learning as well as people with more experience. We hope that where you are already aware of the practical issues we raise, you will extend your discussion to consider additional areas that we have not had space to cover. We also hope you may challenge our point of view in your discussion – we recognise that our approach is often only one of many legitimate ways to address a situation!

We recognise that those working on this material may have a lot or very little experience in areas relevant to implementing change in ULLL. The activities are designed to stimulate structured discussion about areas critical to this topic, supported by case study example – we are not seeking answers to specific problems but to assisting you to come to a deeper understanding of the issues involved and providing a framework for your critical reflection.

We have designed this learning material to be used in small groups either with or without a facilitator. The material can also be used by individuals working alone, but most of the activities require you to reflect on different approaches to issues, so discussion with others will be helpful – perhaps you could organise to do this online?



Look out for this notepad icon, where you see it we have suggested a task for you to do to support your learning.

Aims of this section

- To identify the main drivers for change in universities and explore how these impact on ULLL
- To consider the different structures of ULLL between universities and what the consequences of these structures are for implementing change in ULLL
- To identify the real practical changes being made in universities in ULLL
- To explore evaluating change in ULLL and consider how this might differ from existing approaches

Activity 1 (2 hours)

What are the reasons for change in ULLL?

It is important to identify the drivers for change in order to gauge what impacts they will have on universities and lifelong learning. Universities have different degrees of choice depending on the influence of each driver and therefore different consequences for ULLL.



We ask you to work in groups or individually and consider the table below. We would like you to:

1. Read through the table and reflect on the examples it contains
2. Discuss and identify 3 or 4 more key drivers that are impacting on your university – these can be political, social, economic or environmental

3. Discuss and identify how each driver impacts on your university particularly and think about whether your university has a choice in how it responds
4. Discuss and then identify the specific practical impacts each driver has had on lifelong learning in your university. Indicate whether these impacts have been made out of choice or if they have been inevitable

To start you off we have described one key driver identified by European universities who completed the BeFlex Plus survey question (*'please briefly describe the main factors driving the changes'*) – *National Policy and Funding* - and we have illustrated its impacts in two Universities as described in case studies drawn from the BeFlex Plus project.

DRIVER: <i>National Policy and Funding</i>	IMPACT ON UNIVERSITY	IMPACT AND CONSEQUENCES FOR ULLL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRANCE <p>Continuing Education is one of four missions assigned by the Code of Education to French universities</p> <p>National policy giving entitlement for citizens to receive validation of prior learning achievement</p> <p>Changes in funding – there has been a reduction in regional councils' funding for individuals</p>	<p>Case study: Guidance and counselling for people coming back to university - University of Brest (FR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory to provide continuing education • Opportunity to respond to entitlement to recognition of RPL • Reduction in funding and need to seek funding from organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a central office REVA (Return to study and Validation of learning) • Information advice and guidance for individuals approaching the university through REVA • Assessment of cost of learning and validation in order to identify price • Development of new specific training modules for individuals • New contracts between the university and individual learners • Provision of mentors to support individuals through their training and learning by REVA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK <p>Government funding to universities is prioritised toward work with employers. The aim is to increase higher level skills in the national workforce by widening participation and access to university education as well as focussing on regional economic priorities.</p> <p>New vocational foundation degrees specific to a sector of the economy have been created to blend academic and vocational learning.</p> <p>State funding for those studying a lower or equivalent level qualification to one they already hold has been withdrawn.</p>	<p>Case study: Linking London Learning – Linking London Lifelong Learning Network – (UK)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for continuing education has been lost as many students took lower or equivalent qualifications to those they already held • Regional partnerships, working with employers and collaborations are made more important • Universities consider the development of new Foundation degrees and ways of working with partners • Learners are unfamiliar with the value of new qualifications and the new learning opportunities and need new information advice and guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with other regional organisations • Development new 'brokerage' role for LLL staff in relation to advice and guidance – neutral yet learner focussed • Development of flexible learning programmes • Establishment of credit transfer agreements between organisations • Work with employers to design and promote new work based learning curricula including foundation degrees • Closer understanding of local contexts

Discussion

The key drivers as evidenced by the BeFlex Plus survey are:

- Curriculum changes including the impacts of Bologna and the development of ICT supporting distance and online learning
- Market changes including demographics, economic and regional conditions, technological change and need for continuing professional development
- National policy and funding including changes in national systems
- Internal changes to infrastructures including the organisation and management of lifelong learning

It is also clear that international policy has been a key driver: the Bologna process in particular has had a major impact over the last few years. However, universities predict that the Bologna process will have a lesser impact over the next 2 years as much of the work has now been done. Universities also predict however continuing changes in lifelong learning in the future perhaps indicating the amount of work yet to be done in providing more flexible courses and curricula as universities strive to work more in harmony with organisations, employers and society.

Each of these factors and drivers has significant implications for universities but most of them leave universities with a good degree of choice in how they respond. The choices made by a university are likely to reflect its strategy and existing profile – those with strong profiles may find their responses involve less risk than those with a different profile, or those in geographic areas more affected by fluctuations in the economy for example. Higher risk changes are also likely to take a long rather than short period of time to become accepted and established in the marketplace.



It is worth thinking about the element of risk involved in implementing change. This can be highlighted particularly when change is dependent upon people external to the University – for example, if change depends on the sale of courses to an occupational sector, your progress could be influenced by the specific economic circumstances affecting this group. To conclude this activity we would like you to review the impact and consequences for one of the categories you have identified above and consider what risks might influence your approach.

Activity 2 (1.5 hours)

Who is responsible for implementing change in ULLL?

Now that you have identified the nature and impacts of the external drivers affecting your universities we can now move on to consider the different types of internal organisational structures used for the delivery of ULLL and compare their inherent strengths and weaknesses. This is the first

practical step toward understanding how to implement institutional change in ULLL. By identifying where responsibility lies for ULLL and the nature of its infrastructure in an institution we can pinpoint what changes need to be made and who needs to make them.

Question 18 of the BeFlex Plus survey asked, 'How is ULLL organised in your institution?' The table below summarises the results. The highest ranked response in each row is highlighted.

Question 18	Organised by an internal LLL unit (A)	Organised by an internal unit – not LLL (B)	Organised at Dept/ Faculty level (C)	Organised by an external unit (D)	In collaboration – includes a mix of some of previous items A-D (E)	Not offered	Response count
Select courses	31.8%	6.0%	30.5%	3.3%	28.5%	0.0%	151
Select methodologies	25.0%	4.2%	43.1%	1.4%	25.0%	1.4%	144
Evaluate course material	34.0%	14.0%	23.3%	4.0%	22.0%	2.7%	150
Manage human resources	32.6%	12.5%	26.4%	2.8%	20.1%	5.6%	144
Register learners	43.0%	14.8%	19.5%	4.0%	16.8%	2.0%	149
APEL/ APL	29.8%	9.9%	22.9%	1.5%	17.6%	18.3%	131
Support courses to help students with difficulties	19.3%	12.4%	28.3%	2.8%	20.7%	16.6%	145
Academic advice and guidance	27.2%	11.6%	25.9%	4.0%	29.3%	2.0%	147
Professional / career advice and guidance	20.1%	25%	15.3%	5.6%	21.5%	12.5%	144
Mentoring and coaching	23.9%	9.7%	26.1%	3.0%	20.1%	17.2%	134
Marketing of ULLL	44.4%	7.6%	13.2%	3.5%	27.8%	3.5%	144
Financial management of ULLL	43.8%	9.0%	18.8%	3.5%	21.5%	3.5%	144
<i>Other (please specify)</i>							8
<i>Answered question</i>							154

A number of different models are evident in this table:

- A – a special LLL Unit within the university
- B – a special Unit within the university but not LLL Unit
- C – department or faculty responsible
- D – a special organisation external but linked in some way to the university (e.g. Foundation or University company)
- E – a hybrid model with a mix of approaches

The following case study might help you too:

A change to the organisation of ULLL - University of Tartu (EE)

Changes have become an inseparable part of higher education in Estonia during the last 15-20 years. Changes include those associated with the political and economic development in the country (e.g. increasing number of adult students who pay themselves for their studies); changes that relate to the fast development of ICT-based technology as well as the changes that have arisen from the Bologna declaration. The decision to re-organise the university to a programme-based management of tuition is the result of a number of these changes and begun in 2005 with the aim of making the university more entrepreneurial and international, better able to respond to the needs of students, society and employers.

The previous structure was to base the responsibility for teaching with academic departments and faculties. **Weaknesses** were that the departments did not consider cost-effectiveness of their work, nor did they take responsibility for marketing the curriculum. There was no systematic way of taking into account the opinions of employers. Curriculum overlap also occurred with little co-ordination across departments delivering similar programmes. UCE organisation was based on traditions that meant that some departments/faculties organised short courses independently, some did not do it at all and several topics were covered by the courses organised by central unit – the Distance Education Centre. The University's view was that one central unit cannot know the needs of every different target group (more than 100 bachelor's and master's programmes, 35 PhD programmes across 11 faculties) as well as relate curricula closely to the needs of respective employers and professional associations.

Programme-based management in UCE has **strengths** in that each department or faculty has a programme manager who is responsible for initiating and organising CE/LLL courses. Practical support in organising CE/LLL is provided by administrative or special staff in case of bigger units. The task of the central structure – Open University Centre is to support programme managers in faculties. The support consists of creating the rules and system for UCE management in the university (information system for CE courses' descriptions and registration to the courses, database and archive of students, form for certificates, system to calculate costs and allocate prize for courses, ways for payment etc), analysing wider trends and markets, marketing UCE centrally and targeted marketing in companies in different regions, organising seminars and training events for programme managers but also offering practical support in running the courses. Open University Centre also manages its own UCE courses that do not overlap either with the format or topic of the courses organised by the faculties.



We would like you to study the table above on question 18 of the BeFlex Plus survey, and then discuss the following points in small groups:

1. What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of each of the models (A-E) above?
2. For each model, who has the responsibility for implementing changes in LLL? To what degree are the drivers and impacts that you identified in activity 1, within the control of those responsible?

We would now like you to reflect on your university's LLL structure and its ability to successfully implement the changes in LLL that you are making at present perhaps as a result of the key drivers you identified in activity 1.

3. Does the structure you have in place at your university allow you make all the changes easily and effectively? If not where are the areas of difficulty? What is it you need to improve your chances of success?

Discussion

Drivers for change in ULLL are various: the Bologna process is one, but not necessarily the most important one, and the impact on ULLL varies according to a number of factors such as the national policy context, labour market and economic profile as well as the way ULLL is structured within different universities.

As a consequence of the different ways ULLL is structured in institutions, responsibility for implementing ULL changes also varies. Most frequently it is based in an internal LLL unit with a coordinating, promoting or supporting role including managing the marketing and finances of ULLL, with the involvement of the departments and faculties in the delivery. There is much strength to this model and although this gives a significant amount of control for ULLL to the units, it can also mean that it is difficult to make university wide changes because of internal competition between faculties and the unit. A central unit may however be able to act more quickly and easily than a faculty whose main activity is servicing full time undergraduate programmes. Focusing the implementation of LLL in this way limits operations and enables the universities to assess successes and introduce to the rest of the institution gradually minimising risk. Alternatively where ULLL is based in faculties and co-ordinated or supported by central functions it is more likely to be sustainable as it is integrated with the main activity of the institution. Targeted curriculum development and knowledge of specific industry or discipline areas is a clear advantage. However weaknesses might include the development of consistent practice in ULLL across faculties and the university.

Activity 3 (2 hours)

What changes are being made to implement ULLL?

Given the complex relationship between the drivers for ULLL and their impacts in different institutions it is useful to be aware of the changes that are actually being made in universities in order to help us prioritise our own actions.

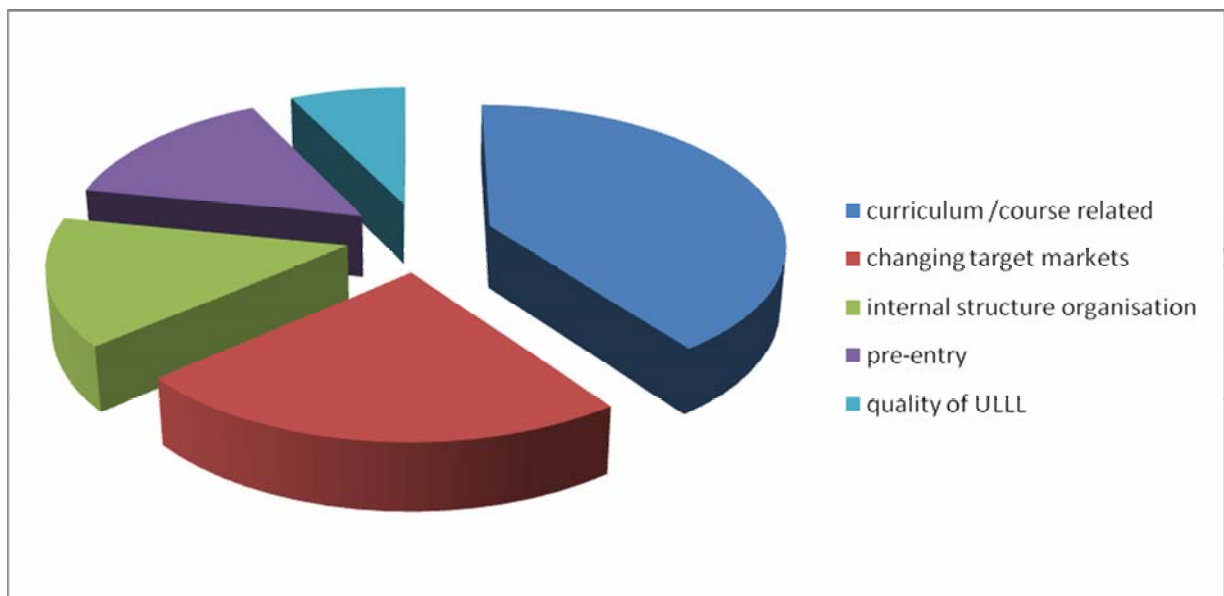
The BeFlex Plus survey asked in detail about the particular changes in ULLL that have occurred over the last 2 years and are anticipated for the next two years, and we have presented this data below for you to work from.

Briefly describe what has changed in your ULLL/policy/strategy/activities over the last two years? (Question 9)			
	Has changed	Is linked with the Bologna process	Response count
Change in goals	65.1%	65.1%	83
Change in curriculum	55.7%	78.4%	88
Changes in target groups	71.6%	48.6%	74
Changes in organisation	75.9%	45.8%	83
None of the above			26
Answered the question			113

What are the anticipated developments in your ULLL strategy/policy/activities in the next two years? (Question 11)			
	Will change	Is linked with the Bologna process	Response count
Change in goals	60.9%	60.9%	69
Change in curriculum	65.1%	60.2%	83
Changes in target groups	74.7%	38.6%	83
Changes in organisation	80.0%	35.8%	85
None of the above			32
Answered the question			117

Are you making changes in ULLL provision? (Question: 16)		
	Response percent	Response count
Yes	59.6%	84
No	40.4%	57
If yes please list three changes that you are undertaking and explain why /for what reasons (see analysis below)		83 –
Answered question		141

Relative frequency of listed changes in ULLL aggregated into 5 main categories (from Question 16)



Study the tables and chart above and then discuss in groups your analysis of the data about past and predicted changes in ULLL. Are these changes consistent with the drivers and impacts affecting you in your university currently and for the next two years?

Does the relative frequency of specific changes illustrated by the chart reflect the same priorities in your own institution? If not, are you able to explain the differences?

Now consider the following case studies illustrating the way changes in ULLL are being implemented, from large scale change across a national university system, to small scale change located within a single department or faculty.

Large scale national change: Extract from ‘The Lifelong Learning Strategies of Finnish Universities’. Åbo Akademic University and University of Helsinki (FI)

At government programme level, know-how and lifelong learning are seen as the premise for Finnish prosperity, for industrial policy and as a starting point for competing at an international level. The changing and ever-increasing demands of the working life are responded to with targeted, high quality education, access to which the Finnish system aims to safeguard. This necessitates even closer cooperation between the education providers and the working sector. The recent draft Teaching and Research (2007–2012) Development Programme of the Finnish Ministry of Education highlights adult education as one of the key areas for development. The adult education programme includes the complete reform of vocational and professional adult education, the opening of new opportunities for adult learners and utilising former knowledge by making the recognition of qualifications, knowledge and experience gained abroad more flexible.

Institution wide change: Extract from ‘To become a lifelong learning organisation’. University of Science and Technology, Lille (FR).

French universities sign a contract with the Ministry responsible for Higher Education every four years. In 2006, USTL decided to make a significant change in its approach to providing access to adults in university programmes. The university decided to move away from a focus of providing course for adults as a second chance to become a lifelong learning organisation providing access to programmes lifelong in a logic of continuity and progression.

Institution wide change: extract from: ‘ULLL at the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) in the context of the Bologna Process’. – Warsaw School of Economics (PL)

The Bologna process has lead to significant School wide reforms including:

- Inflexible faculty and economic sector based structure has been dismantled and replaced
- Two stages of education have been introduced, obligatory basic study and optional major subjects as has a two-level structure to studies, bachelors and masters
- ECTS credit system has been introduced
- Actions to create a system of quality assurance have been undertaken
- Lifelong learning takes place within part-time studies, postgraduate studies, international programmes, courses for companies and SGH Third Age University

Local department or faculty changes: Extract from: ‘Competence out of lifelong learning into the area of professionalization in the context of the development of BA/MA in the Bologna process’. - Carl von Ossietzky University (DE)

ProKultur is an ESF Funded project at the university which is attempting to professionalise masters programmes appropriately for each professional area. The project has worked with the Faculty of Arts and Music and through the appointment of a project co-ordinator with strong professional and teaching experience produced strong results. Market research with people in the target group led to an identification of their requirements and formed the basis for development of appropriate seminars and training which were provided to supplement existing curricula. The faculty were supported in identifying and making changes to curriculum for lifelong learners.



Now complete the table below by taking each of the changes: **Funding, Policy, Strategy, Curriculum, Resources, Delivery methodology, Organisational structure, Teaching and learning, Marketing, Quality systems, Staff Development, APEL, Pre-entry process, Advice and guidance, Marketing, Pricing for ULLL** – and placing them in the column where you think the change occurs (some will occur in more than one place!). We have started this off with **Funding**. There may be other changes that relate to your situation, of course you should add these.

Funding	Funding	Funding	
Government or national level	University level	Faculty, Department or Unit level	Individual university staff member level



When you have completed the table what conclusions can reach about implementing changes in ULL? Are there some changes which would be more effective if they occurred at a different level? Is there a difference between where change is initiated and where it is implemented?



What do you perceive to be the difference between University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) and a Lifelong Learning University (LLLU) (as suggested in the case study for institutional change from the University of Lille I)?

Discussion

Whereas the emphasis reported over the last few years has been on the re-structuring of higher education throughout Europe making universities better prepared to provide lifelong learning, the prediction for the next few years is innovation and growth in the flexibility, availability and appropriateness of curricula to meet new lifelong learning markets needs resulting from economic and social change.

Accompanying this shift from policy to implementation will also be an increase in activity at the level of the faculty and the individual academic. This will bring with it the need to balance carefully the existing capabilities of staff and their commitments with the new demands that may be placed on them. It is likely that there will need to be significant and appropriate staff development support. It will also mean that the range of activities involved in lifelong learning, from pre-entry advice and guidance and recognition of prior learning to administrative, financial and quality systems to accommodate it, will need to be aligned and working to support learners and the university staff involved.

To this effect perhaps to successfully develop and sustain lifelong learning more universities choose to become lifelong learning organisation themselves, continually reflecting on, developing new solutions to service the ever changing needs of society.

Activity 4 (1 hour)

Evaluating changes in ULL

With the significant amounts of change being made within and across institutions it is important to identify at the outset how successful and appropriate the changes made are. It is also an attribute of a lifelong learning organisation, the ability to reflect on events and take actions to improve performance in the future. Universities are familiar with monitoring the quality of student programmes, but may be less familiar with how to monitor and evaluate their own change activity as well as the impacts of ULLL.

Below are a number of anonymous comments taken from BeFlex Plus case studies relating to the evaluation and monitoring of ULLL. The comments are intended to help you reflect on what might be important to know about the progress of ULLL changes and activity in your institution.

Comments:

“In some faculties active programme managers have made considerable progress already. In others, the programme manager is overloaded with other tasks and they do not see a motivation for initiating CE courses. Coming years should give the answer”

“Probably the most interesting result was that participants saw our seminars as very supportive in helping them perform their current job”

“Through all of this case study no mention of the implications for Lifelong Learning has been made and the reason is very simple. It is the policy of the university to consider all learning as lifelong learning and consequently all developments associated with Bologna and ECTS apply to all programmes whether they are full time, part time, ODL, blended or full e-learning”

“Essential in the whole process is good communication between the university and the company; what works, what needs improvement, are we still attaining our goals?”



When you have read through the comments discuss the following:

1. What aspects do you consider to be important to monitor and evaluate in ULLL?
2. How will you set targets or milestones for activities and changes in ULLL?
3. Are there differences between what you suggest in 1 and 2 above and the existing university monitoring processes? If yes, what are the differences?
4. Changes to internal structures and operations have been major part of activity in ULLL over the last 2 years, how have you monitored their development?
5. For the next two years, the prediction is for an increase in the range and flexibility of curriculum for LLL. How will you ensure this is done efficiently and sustainable?
6. Choose one aspect of ULLL development from the three listed and write down how you would monitor and evaluate its performance and value. Use the headings in the table below
 - a. Performance of a new work-based learning curriculum
 - b. Establishment of a new central unit for LLL
 - c. Implementation of a policy for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) across your university

Aspects to be monitored	Target (indicate how it will be set)	How it will be monitored	How/where it will be reported	Responsible person	Timing



Finally, discuss what will make change in ULLL sustainable: is it funding, more flexible programmes, moving higher education closer to society than it has been historically?

Try to come up with three critical points and then reflect on these in relation to the major changes you are making in LLL. Do they match?!

Discussion

Effectively evaluating and monitoring lifelong learning is critical to its success. It is also clear that it is likely to be considerably different to the monitoring practices that are already in operation for traditional university programmes which are often based only on peer review – arguably a subjective assessment of our own processes.

Case studies illustrate that LLL is much more likely to demand continual reference to the experience of the learners, whether they be individuals or organisations. We have seen that emphasis needs to be focused more on the value and the outcomes - or impact and consequences - of the learning than the quality of the inputs.

This leads to a further set of interesting questions that you may wish to discuss:

If the value of ULLL is so critical and it is best judged on outcomes, how accountable should a university be where a programme fails? For example, where ULLL is developed with an external enterprise in order to explicitly develop the skills of its employees to help company growth, but in fact the company performance deteriorates. What responsibility does the university have? If none at all, then there is a gap between the learning given and what it was planned to achieve. But if there is accountability, how might this be managed?

Concluding Comments

The drivers for change in ULLL include a range of external factors such as Bologna, national policy and funding, demographics, the state of national and regional economies, and international competition.

Actions taken to implement changes in ULLL have moved from restructuring internally to increasing course range and flexibility of delivery, targeting different learner groups including those in the workplace, and increasing pre-entry advice and guidance.

Structures that are in place according to institutional strategy range from 'central' discrete units for ULLL to ULLL integrated into the mainstream activity of the university. Each structure has its merits and disadvantages.



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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Introduction

This section explores the topic of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Firstly we examine the essential elements of RPL both from the point of view of the individual who is considering undertaking it and the institution that will recognise and potentially award credit for the learning. We recognise that RPL is only one of many ways of supporting entry into learning and examine the conditions and circumstances that make it a favourable choice. The BeFlex project (<http://www.eucen.org/BeFlex/index.html>) noted that RPL for entry and RPL for part of a Diploma were the least likely services to be developed to give flexibility to learners. Although the most recent survey for the BeFlex Plus project (<http://www.eucen.org/BeFlexPlus/index.html>) shows more activity, it is clear that many universities have not yet developed procedures and processes to offer this service. Noting this we review what the setting up of an RPL process in a university might involve and consider the benefits for learners, organisations, (particularly employers) and the institution itself. We conclude the section by examining the challenges of running an RPL programme and where possible seeking to address them.

In this section we have used the term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – it is the terminology used in the Bologna documents - but we note that a variety of other terms are also used , particularly Accreditation/Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) or the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) or the Valuation of Prior Learning (VPL).

The following activities are included in this section. The time in brackets after each section indicates approximately how long we would expect a small group of people working together to take to complete the activity, but of course this can be extended for greater depth of discussion. The case studies referred to in each activity are also noted and all of them (and others) are on the website in full (www.eucen.org/BeflexPlus/index.html).

Activity 1 (1.5 hours)

What are the essential elements of an RPL process?

In this activity we review the essential elements of an RPL process and ask you to look at the practical implications of each for delivery.

Case study

- Recognition of Prior Learning at the Open University of the Netherlands (NL)

Activity 2 (1.5 hours or 2.5 hours if you decide to complete an action plan)

How do we set up RPL?

Here we focus on what needs to be done to set up RPL with the option of completing an action plan to get you started.

Activity 3 (2 hours)

Where and why might an RPL process be used?

In this activity we consider when an RPL process might be used and look in detail at the benefits for an individual and an organisation in seeking this route

Case studies

- Co-operation between a university and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree.
Hogeschool van Amsterdam (**NL**)
- The 5 phases of VPL (Valuation of Prior Learning)
Hogeschool van Amsterdam (**NL**)

Activity 4 (1.5 hours)

What are the challenges of RPL?

Activity 4 concludes the section with a consideration of the challenges of delivering RPL in a university.

Case studies

- The widespread development of recognition of formal, informal and non-formal learning in the French speaking Belgian universities
Conseil Interuniversitaire de la Communauté française de Belgique - CIUF (**BE**)
- The resumption of studies at the University of Bretagne Occidentale
University of Brest (**FR**)
- Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning
University of Pierre and Marie Curie (**FR**)

Working with the learning material

The learning material we have provided is designed to be useful and relevant for those who are relatively new to the area of lifelong learning as well as people with more experience. We hope that where you are already aware of the practical issues we raise, you will extend your discussion to consider additional areas that we have not had space to cover. We also hope you may challenge our point of view in your discussion – we recognise that our approach is often only one of many legitimate ways to address a situation!

We recognise that those working on this material may have a lot or very little experience of RPL. The activities are designed to stimulate structured discussion about areas critical to this topic, supported by case study examples – so we are not seeking answers to specific problems but providing a framework for you to reflect on the relevant issues, whatever your experience.

We have designed this learning material to be used in small groups either with or without a facilitator. The material can also be used by individuals working alone, but most of the activities require you to reflect on different approaches to issues, so discussion with others will be helpful – perhaps you could organise to do this online?



Look out for this notepad icon, where you see it we have suggested a task for you to do to support your learning.

Aims of this section

- To identify the essential elements of an RPL process
- To examine when and why RPL might be used
- To explore how an RPL process might be set up and managed
- To consider the benefits of using RPL for individuals, organisations and universities
- To examine the challenges of running a successful RPL programme

Activity 1 (1.5 hours)

What are the essential elements of an RPL process?

Recognition of Prior Learning is a method of assessment by which learners can gain recognition for knowledge, understanding, skills and competences that they already possess. They may use this formal recognition or validation for entry to a programme of study in place of the usual entry qualifications or for part of the final diploma so that they avoid repeating learning that they can already demonstrate. In France it is possible to obtain a whole diploma on the basis of RPL. Where learners have the opportunity to have their prior learning and experience recognised it can provide motivation for further study and mean that they can achieve valuable qualifications in a shorter period of time, so making the learning process more flexible and tailored to their needs.

Although RPL is designed to offer learners flexibility it is also essential that the process of awarding credit or part of a diploma for prior learning is regulated and managed to ensure quality. This is especially important as the credit which learners gain through RPL has exactly the same weight and value as credit gained by completing an assessed learning programme.



Below we identify the essential elements of an RPL process. In this activity we write from a general viewpoint. For each element we would ask you, from your experience, to identify how such elements have been (or could be) manifested in practice. We provide some case study material to get you started with this.

The RPL process must be learner centred. It must provide an accessible route for learners to seek credit for what they already know. The process must accept a variety of evidence to reflect the diversity of experience from which learners may choose to demonstrate their prior learning and experience.

Learners must be offered clear guidance about RPL in terms that they can understand to allow them to make informed choices about whether they wish to follow the RPL route, and if they do, what is required of them. They must also be informed of how they can use the credit they have achieved either to enter a programme of study to use it to gain exemption within a programme they wish to study; or other alternatives.

Learners seeking credit by RPL must provide evidence of their learning. The way in which they provide evidence will vary depending on the type of learning they are seeking to gain recognition for and the arrangements of the assessing institution. The assessment process should be transparent, rigorous and quality assured and learners should be able to appeal against a decision. Normally the assessment should include some element of externality – someone from outside the course or the university involved in the process.

Learners must be supported to present evidence of their learning. It must be recognised that learning from experience often looks very different from learning achieved through a course or programme. Learners who wish to gain credit for experience may need help in working out the best way to present it to achieve a successful outcome to assessment and to decide what is relevant. Learners should be encouraged to present evidence of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Good support helps the RPL process to be flexible, accessible and effective for the learner and efficient for the university.

The credit which learners achieve by RPL has exactly the same value as credit achieved from completing an assessed learning programme. The acceptance of this within the institution awarding credit should be enhanced by the transparency of the processes for assessing evidence and for the quality assurance of assessment.

The case study below provides a good starting point for discussion about how good RPL can be delivered.

Recognition of Prior Learning at the Open University of the Netherlands Open University of the Netherlands (NL)

The first version of an RPL procedure was developed in 2006. The subject area was academic computer science in distance education. Two content specialists, members of the support department, a member of the examination committee, a legal advisor and a researcher on RPL developed a RPL-procedure for academic computer science.

The RPL-procedure starts with a general information session, in which all necessary procedural information is given. Subsequently, if candidates are still interested in RPL, they can request an advisory consultation with a tutor. In this consultation, the tutor and candidate analyze the final attainment levels in relation to the capabilities of the candidates and discuss the possibilities for evidence they might present.

After the advisory consultation, the candidate starts with the composition of the portfolio. The first part of this portfolio includes evidence for certified learning; the second part includes evidence for informal and non-formal learning. Candidates are required to deliver the following information: (a) curriculum vitae, (b) descriptions of evidence in relation to the final attainment levels, (c) a work place scan and (d) products that serve as evidence. In this stage of the procedure, the tutor supports the candidate by answering questions and in helping to decide what information is useful as evidence for the final attainment levels.

The support department for the exemption based on diplomas and certificates receives the portfolio for a check on completeness. At the same time, one of the four available trained assessors get the portfolio. The assessors assess the portfolio by means of a scoring system and compose questions about the content of the portfolio for the assessment conversation. After this, all candidates are invited for one assessment conversation in which two assessors are involved. The objective of the assessment conversation is to examine some subjects in the portfolio in depth. In the assessment conversation the assessors have the option to ask for additional evidence. Assessors may require learners to undertake additional assignments, like an essay or a program analysis. All this information serves as input for the assessor to define advice for the examination committee. Finally, this committee examines the advice and decides which part of the study remains for the candidate to obtain a bachelor diploma. The validated result will be confirmed in a disposition and each candidate receives a study plan with a remaining study path outlined.

Discussion

You will have considered several examples of how an RPL process can be put into practice – though as you may have discussed, it can be a complex and challenging process, especially where there are relatively few students using it. One of the major challenges can be that very different arrangements are needed for either individual or small groups of students meaning that each time a process is used, new approaches must be considered. However the case study above demonstrates that a robust process can be relatively straightforward to deliver and provides a managed entry to higher education for students.

Activity 2 (1.5 hours or 2.5 hours if you decide to complete an action plan)

How do we set up RPL?

Consideration of the essential elements of RPL provides a good starting point for looking at how to set up an RPL programme. You might also want to read through the examples in activity 3 on page 8 to find out more about what an outline of the process of undertaking RPL might look like from the point of view of an individual and a company.



We start our consideration of this question by defining what needs to be done to set up RPL. We have defined broad tasks that will need to be done and then outlined the implications for each task. As with the design and delivery of any new procedure in a university it is essential that the effects on the wider university systems and procedures are also considered. We would like you to discuss the design and implementation tasks we have identified. Where you have experience of setting up an RPL process, we hope that you will reflect on the action plan you used and that you will be able to challenge or augment our list. We have also completed the second column and third columns assessing the implications of each task and possible effects on the wider university system. Again we would like you to discuss and add to these columns working from your own experience.

We recognise that to encapsulate this process into an activity we have had to considerably simplify tasks necessary for set up, but hope that this provides a starting point for developing an action plan for those who are interested in doing this.

Setting up RPL			
Task	Immediate implications	Wider university implications	Comment
Identify study programmes that will accept RPL for entry or for credit or for part of a diploma.	Where a programme of study has not previously accepted RPL for entry or exemption.	Agreements about which programmes will accept RPL for credit may need to be negotiated with individual programme managers or may be cross school or faculty. Your institution may also have rules about how much credit or exemption can be achieved by RPL when using it towards a specific diploma.	Your institution may have an overarching RPL policy or may be aiming to adhere to national or European guidelines. Limits may be placed on which programmes can accept RPL by professional body requirements.
Set up an advice and guidance process for individuals wishing to undertake RPL.	To give effective advice and guidance staff will need to have a thorough understanding of what will need to be demonstrated to meet learning outcomes of the receiving programme. Staff will need to be confident to provide advice on the types of evidence that are appropriate especially when demonstrating learning through experience or informal routes.	Although where possible individuals seeking recognition for learning should dictate what evidence they choose to produce, in some cases institutions may set certain parameters.	Where evidence is being gathered from a particular occupational sector or employer it will be important for staff offering guidance to be familiar with the working context.

Design process for assessing evidence of prior learning produced by learners. The process should also allow the volume of credit awarded for evidence produced to be judged.	Staff may need assessor training especially where they may need to develop new skills, for example in carrying out assessment decisions. Where RPL is managed by separate unit collaboration between that unit and the subject specialists from the programme(s) accepting RPL will need to take place. The assessment process will need to include verification of the results through some form of externality.	The university may already have or wish to produce guidelines about assessment of RPL to ensure consistency of judgements made across different departments...	Since quality assurance of any assessment decisions made during RPL is essential the assessment process should be moderated to ensure equity across candidates or departments. This may involve some co-ordination across departments /faculties. It will also have implications for record keeping especially where assessment is made by observation of performance or professional conversation.
Design process for giving individuals feedback on their submission of evidence and support in planning future study.	Staff will be required to provide feedback an individual basis and support students in action planning future study. The process may differ depending on whether individuals are required to achieve competencies defined by their employer or are using RPL to seek entry to a particular programme or exemption from certain elements.	The university will need to ensure an appeals process is in place and that all those undertaking RPL are made aware of it.	This may have implications for the careers guidance service or other services provided by the university to support students.
Ensure a robust quality assurance process for RPL. This needs to be aligned to quality assurance processes for the programme(s) into which RPL is accepted.		The proposed assessment process may need to be considered alongside approval and assessment processes for the programme into which RPL is accepted to ensure transparency and parity between those gaining credit through RPL and those gaining it through a programme of learning.	



We hope that you will use this table as a starting point for considering how an RPL process might be set up and the wide ranging implications if you choose to do this. If you or one of your group is considering setting up a process you might now choose to make an action plan for the process. This is a particularly useful process as the timing of several of the actions is critical and also interdependent. So, for example, it may be essential for a robust quality assurance process to be in place and documented before a department will agree to accept RPL into a particular programme.

You will also recognise that where a university introduces RPL staff will be required to undertake new roles functions and gain new skills. Staff development will be necessary for all those involved.

Activity 3 (2 hours)

Where and why might an RPL process be used?

The table below indicates the extent to which institutions are offering RPL as an option to learners. As we noted in the introduction, although some RPL is offered at many of the institutions surveyed for BeFlex Plus, it is not universally available, especially as part of more substantial awards.

What are the services you offer to support ULLL students (tick one box per row)? Question 13					
Answer Options	All	Most	Some	None	Response Count
Advice and Guidance are <u>available</u>	53%	19%	25%	3%	155
APEL/RPL is offered for <u>access to a course</u>	26%	16%	40%	18%	149
APEL/RPL is offered for <u>part of a diploma</u>	26%	7%	39%	28%	148
APEL/RPL is offered to <u>award full qualification</u>	17%	3%	23%	56%	144
Other (please specify)					10
answered question					156
skipped question					17



In this activity we would like you to consider and compare the benefits of using RPL when working with an organisation and when working with individuals. To support this we ask you to look at two descriptions of when and how RPL is used. Both examples relate to the RPL unit at Hogeschool van Amsterdam. The first describes how the RPL system works and then gives brief information about a particular example where it is used for a programme with a private company called Yacht. (You will have read about this case study if you have studied the section on Curriculum in Partnership). The second example describes how the RPL model at Hogeschool van Amsterdam works focusing on how it affects the individual.



Once you have read through these two examples we would like you to consider how the opportunity to undertake RPL benefits:

- An employer such as Yacht
- An individual learner

Co-operation between a University and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree.

Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL)

The University Of Applied Sciences Of Amsterdam (Hogeschool van Amsterdam, HvA) offers bachelors and masters degree programmes in a professional field, in the following domains: business administration, engineering, built environment, social work, law, education, communication, health. More than 34,000 students are studying, mainly for a bachelor degree. About 6,000 of them are working adults, studying part time. All degree programmes are competence based, which means that students must be able to perform professional tasks in a realistic context to show that they have mastered the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In 2002 the HvA started with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), to determine which competencies working adults already have acquired through work based learning. The goal is to determine a flexible, tailor made bachelor degree programme, in which students only learn what they need to learn and with the possibility of shortening the regular 4-year bachelor programme substantially. In 2006 a central RPL unit was installed to be able to address the questions of organizations as well as individuals more adequately. The assignments of this central unit are:

Being a portal for organizations and individual candidates; developing RPL tools and procedures in co-operation with educational departments of the HvA and, when necessary, with the client; planning and organizing of the RPL assessments; quality assurance, including accreditation as a RPL provider (in 2009 a national requirement for all RPL providers) and training and accreditation of assessors; gaining and disseminating further expertise on RPL and support a lifelong learning policy of the HvA.

The HvA was the first university of applied sciences with an accredited RPL system. Accreditation is obligatory in the Netherlands to be registered as a RPL provider.

'Working and learning towards a bachelor degree in IT'

How a private company and a university work together to stimulate the development of employees in the branch of IT

Institution(s):

- **Yacht**, an international private company in staffing, temporary management, and recruitment and selection.
- **Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA)**.
- **Exin**, a private educational company providing IT-courses.

Objectives, purposes and context

Many Yacht employees work on a higher IT level, but do not have a bachelor degree in IT. The company has two main reasons why their employees should attain a bachelor degree in IT:

- to show their customers that they only work with highly qualified employees;
- to stimulate the further development of their employees and, in doing so, strengthen the commitment between company and employees.

The objective of the project is: to create a learning- and development programme for Yacht employees, leading to a bachelor degree in IT. To achieve this, the following conditions are leading:

1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is part of the programme. On the basis of the outcome of RPL a tailor made programme is constructed for each individual employee to obtain a bachelor degree. In this way employees' motivation to participate in a higher educational programme is enhanced

2. Although Yacht employees work and live in different regions throughout The Netherlands, they should be given the opportunity to participate in one and the same RPL-procedure resulting in similar possibilities to enrol on a tailor made programme.
3. All participants should be prepared for their Yacht focus position in this programme. This means that the contents of the IT bachelor degree should equip them for their next career step. To achieve this, special minor programmes have to be developed in which the competencies of the different focus positions will be worked out.
4. In the development programme relevant IT-certificates like ITIL, Prince II, Java, etc. should be taken into account. Yacht employees are used to do IT-courses with Exin, a private training company. The courses are popular with employees because they are short (a few months) and are valuable in the IT business.
5. Employees only enrol for the university programme once they cannot develop the required competencies at work or with Exin anymore.
6. The university develops a tailor made bachelor degree programme which meets the same quality standards and competencies as the regular programme.

The 5 phases of VPL (Valuation of Prior Learning) Hogeschool van Amsterdam

Phase 1 Commitment and awareness: Commitment and awareness of the individual's competencies and the value associated with them both individually and as interpreted by others in context. Being able to record your competencies in a 'made to measure' way is vital for this understanding.

Phase 2 Recognition: Identifying or listing competencies is usually done with the help of a portfolio. Apart from a description of work experience and diplomas, the portfolio is filled with other evidence of competencies acquired. Statements from employers, references, papers or photos show the existence of certain competencies. The evidence can be aimed at the profession or position the VPL procedure is developed for. In other cases it can be an open portfolio or a complete overview. Evidence is sometimes aimed at valuation, in other cases at personal profiling. The participant compiles the portfolio him/herself, with or without help.

Phase 3 The valuation or assessment of competencies: The content of the portfolio is then valued and assessed, where necessary followed by an extra assessment. The path followed by the person presenting the evidence is unimportant, only the result of the assessment counts. The second step of the process is a valuation. This may be a validation on an organisational, sector or national level in the form of certificates, diplomas or career moves, or a valuation in the form of advice on career opportunities.

Phase 4 The development plan or the actual valuation: This phase aims at the development of the individual by turning the validation and/or advice into an action plan. On the basis of the valued competencies and information about missing competencies or other strengths, a personal development plan is made. This plan is about learning activities that will be done in formal or non-formal learning environments, in work situations, during a change of position, by offering coaching or creating an environment in which informal learning is stimulated.

Phase 5 Structural implementation of VPL: The last phase of the VPL process focuses on the structural implementation of VPL in the training and personnel policy of an organisation.

Discussion

The first example highlights one of the most obvious scenarios in which RPL can be used to benefit both an organisation and an individual within it. RPL can enable an organisation to audit the skills of its employees and assess where further development should be focussed. If the organisation is seeking to get its workforce better qualified then RPL is a time efficient way of ensuring individuals receive credit for what they already know and do not have to repeat learning where they are already knowledgeable and competent. The RPL process may also help an organisation to articulate the competences and qualities which it requires of its workforce in line with its business aspirations. Individuals may also seek to gain credit for their prior learning and experience, perhaps as a starting point for further study. The RPL process benefits them by providing a structured and supported opportunity to collate evidence of what they already know and possibly gain credit for it. As well as possibly reducing the time it takes to achieve a qualification, this process can also provide motivation by validating knowledge which they have acquired informally and stimulating a reflective process which will enhance their ability as learners throughout their study.

Activity 4 (1.5 hours)

What are the challenges of RPL?

We have noted the benefits of RPL and seen how useful it can be for both individuals and organisations. However we have also seen from the data collected in the BeFlex Plus survey that RPL is not especially widely used. In this activity we identify the challenges of RPL for the individual, the institution and at a wider national and European level. Where possible we have used case studies to illustrate challenges. After each challenge we have included some stimulus questions to get you started with discussion on how to address them. We would like you to continue and extend this discussion. If you have completed an action plan as part of activity 2, or you are evaluating an existing action plan you should also consider whether there is anything you should add or amend at the planning stage to address these challenges.

Achieving consistency in recognition and valuing of prior learning.

The system of RPL works best where those who are undertaking it see that consistent judgements are taken about the value of what they know. Ideally this consistency should be apparent within and between institutions. This is particularly important for learners making choices about how they might use the credit achieved by RPL. In the case study below a group of universities and the council of the universities of the French community of Belgium (CIUF) have instigated a project to ensure equity in approach to RPL across a regional community. In striving to delivery equity the project also aims to publicise RPL widely and encourage more people to make use of it.

The widespread development of recognition of formal, informal and non-formal learning in the French speaking Belgian universities

Conseil Interuniversitaire de la Communauté française de Belgique –CIUF (BE)

This project is designed to co-ordinate the activities of RPL in the French speaking universities of Belgium. The objectives of the project are to:

- Promote RPL as a new way to start university study, both inside and outside the academic community
- Guarantee equity during the RPL process
- Improve the quality of RPL in the French community in Belgium
- Harmonize RPL practices in French speaking universities

This project has set up a platform to co-ordinate activities, share best practice and evaluate progress



- *In your institution is there a university wide RPL policy? Or does implementation differ between departments?*
- *How is RPL promoted institutionally? How is it promoted regionally and nationally?*
- *What are the challenges for a student who wishes to have prior learning recognised and has a choice between regional institutions?*

Ensuring RPL is a developmental experience

Potentially the process of RPL could be simply instrumental for students – where all that is required of them is to collect evidence of what they can already do. However if the process is handled in an enlightened way and students are well advised and supported the process should be developmental and formative, especially where they are encouraged to reflect on non-formal and informal learning and experience. The quality of the student experience is likely to depend on the advice and guidance received in early stages of RPL when students are selecting and analysing their current experience and learning to see how it matches what is required to enable them to gain recognition. In the case study below the importance of the role of the counsellor is recognised.

The resumption of studies at the University of Bretagne Occidentale University of Brest (FR)

At the University of Bretagne Occidentale, individuals who are interested in RPL can attend a workshop which is held every Tuesday evening. Here they can talk individually about their learning needs and their aspirations with advisors. They can also approach tutor for expert advice. Then working with an RPL advisor they agree an individual contract which outlines what they need to do. They are given clear advice on finance, funding and costs. As well as having access to special study modules, for example in research techniques, they have access to RPL advisors throughout the year who can help with individual questions.



- *Can you identify other ways that institutions can ensure RPL is developmental and formative for students?*
- *How can you achieve balance between encouraging individual approaches to selection and presentation of evidence of prior learning with ensuring learners demonstrate knowledge and experience against pre-defined learning outcomes?*

How can the 'made to measure' aspiration of RPL fit with university policy and processes that are designed to manage large cohorts of students studying and learning in similar ways?

One of the attractions of RPL is that it allows people to gain credit for experience that is individualised depending on the way they have gained it. This 'made to measure' or individualised approach can mean that evidence of prior learning even for a single programme can vary widely and may even require very different assessment methods. So for example, one person may construct a written portfolio to demonstrate knowledge whereas another may require an observation of what they do at work. In contrast, most university policies and procedures work on the principal of dealing with large groups of students in a similar way. This has implications for the infrastructure especially in relation to finance and human resources for example. So in an effort to offer an individualised pathway the complexity of it can make it difficult to manage and to understand for everyone involved – staff and students alike.

In the case study below the University of Pierre and Marie Curie is undertaking research to find out more about how RPL can be delivered more effectively.

Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning University of Pierre and Marie Curie (FR)

The university is undertaking research to find out how RPL can be delivered more effectively. They note that the take up of RPL is still very modest because many candidates find the academic nature of the criteria they are expected to demonstrate to be difficult to understand. The procedure for RPL can seem onerous and time-consuming to learners. The language in which the RPL process is expressed is not always easily understood.

They are studying the experience of RPL over a five year period so that those responsible for providing the service will be able to make it meet student needs more effectively.



- *How can RPL combine flexibility and accessibility with rigour of quality assurance?*
- *Can you identify innovative procedures by which an institution can deliver an individualised approach for students within the constraints of their large scale operating procedures?*
- *How can the RPL process be described in a way that is easy for students to understand yet fully expresses the demands and learning outcomes of an academic programme?*

There are no right answers to these questions and your responses will depend upon your own experiences of delivering RPL or working with students in LLL. We hope that the responses you come up with will help you in the planning of RPL for your institution if this is what you are planning.

Concluding comments

As we have recognised and identified throughout this section, there is still only a modest provision of RPL at many institutions. To a certain extent Activity 4 may have illustrated why this situation has arisen by highlighting the quite substantial challenges that an institution may face in setting up a procedure. However the case studies highlighted here demonstrate that those universities who have addressed this subject are able to construct approaches which are attractive to individuals and organisations and manageable for their institutions.



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Regional Collaboration and Partnership in University Lifelong Learning (ULLL)

Introduction

This section addresses the topic of regional collaboration and partnership in university lifelong learning. Increasingly, partnerships and collaborations are becoming a feature of the landscape of lifelong learning and as the nature of ULLL varies considerably between universities, so does the range, size and purpose of collaboration and partnership. Added to this is the fact that regional collaboration requires a different approach and set of operational activities from those involved in the planning and delivery of LLL by a single institution. We explore elements of this in the Curriculum in Partnership section of this training pack.

We consider why universities become involved in regional collaboration and partnerships. Frequently it seems external funding is involved which raises questions about whether they happen without this, can they be sustained when the funding ends, and what criteria can be used to assess whether they have been successful?.

We hope that this section will help you explore and better understand the issues and options you are (or will be) faced with in working in partnership or collaboration.

The following activities are included in this section. The time in brackets after each section indicates approximately how long we would expect a small group of people working together to take to complete the activity, but of course this can be extended for greater depth of discussion. The case studies referred to in each activity are also noted and all of them (and others) are on the website in full (www.eucen.org/BeflexPlus/index.html).

Activity 1 (1.5 hours)

Why work in regional partnership or through regional collaboration?

This activity is intended to explore the reasons why universities become involved in regional partnerships.

Case studies:

- The widespread development of recognition of formal, informal and non-formal learning (VAE) in the French speaking Belgian universities
CIUF Conseil Interuniversitaire de la Communauté française de Belgique (BE)

- Co-operation between a university and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree
Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL)
- Regional co-operation in post secondary technological education
University of Aveiro (PT)
- Enjoying arts
Deusto University (ES)
- Competence Direct
Lund University (SE)
- Developing the Market in Occupational Health and Safety
University of Strathclyde (UK)

Activity 2 (2 hours)

What, who and how? Steps in developing and maintaining regional collaboration and partnership work

In the second activity we look more closely at who is involved in partnerships and collaboration and at the specific outcomes that are expected. The aim is to construct a clearer picture of the work and the costs involved in participating in such regional activity.

Activity 3 (2 hours)

Strengths and weaknesses of regional collaborations and partnerships

We compare two detailed case studies to explore the strengths and weaknesses of collaborations and partnerships and to understand the issues involved in their operation.

Case studies:

- Regional co-operation in post secondary technological education
University of Aveiro (PT)
- Competence Direct
Lund University (SE)

Activity 4 (1.5 hours)

How should we evaluate regional collaborations and partnerships?

We conclude this section by considering how we should evaluate regional collaborations and partnerships.

Case studies:

- Regional co-operation in post secondary technological education
University of Aveiro (PT)
- Competence Direct
Lund University (SE)

Working with the learning material

The learning material we have provided is designed to be useful and relevant for those who are relatively new to the area of lifelong learning as well as people with more experience. We hope that where you are already aware of the practical issues we raise, you will review your practice and extend your discussion to consider additional areas that we have not had space to cover. We also hope you may challenge our point of view in your discussion – we recognise that our approach is often only one of many legitimate ways to address a situation!

We recognise that those working on this material will have a wealth of experience in areas relevant to regional collaboration. The activities are designed to stimulate structured discussion about areas critical to this topic, supported by case study example – so we are not seeking answers to specific problems but assisting you to reflect on the issues and come to a deeper understanding of the topic.

We have designed this learning material to be used in small groups either with or without a facilitator. The material can also be used by individuals working alone, but most of the activities require you to reflect on different approaches to issues, so discussion with others will be helpful – perhaps you could organise to do this online?



Look out for this notepad icon, where you see it we have suggested a task for you to do to support your learning.

Aims of this section

- To identify the reasons why universities work in regional collaboration and partnership
- To present the wide range of partners involved and the scale of regional collaborations
- To identify the main purposes for regional collaborations
- To explore the practical issues and opportunities that arise from regional collaborations and partnerships including critical aspects of their success
- To consider appropriate way of evaluating regional partnerships and collaborations

Activity 1 (1.5 hours)

Why work in regional partnership or through regional collaboration?



Here is a selection of points and features taken from case studies collected in the BeFlex Plus project to help you think through this activity. Read them first before going on to produce a list of reasons why you believe universities work in collaboration or partnership. You can do this alone or in small groups.

The widespread development of recognition of formal, informal and non-formal learning (VAE) in the French speaking Belgian Universities. – CIUF (BE): Partners co-ordinate the VAE activities of the French speaking universities in Belgium in a project that ends in 2013.

Co-operation between a university and a private company in working and learning for a bachelor degree. Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL): The university co-operates with Yacht, a private company who provide temporary staff in specialist fields including IT. The co-operation aims to stimulate the development of IT skills in the personnel gaining employment through Yacht. The university work with the company to provide RPL ad tailored training for individuals.

Regional co-operation in post secondary technological education - University of Aveiro (PT): The University of Aveiro's special technological programmes combine vocational and academic learning (CET) are delivered in co-operation with a wide range of partners in the region. Partners include local councils, secondary and technical schools, centres for professional development and local companies.

Enjoying arts - Deusto University (ES): Collaboration with art institutions in Bilbao including the Fine Arts Museum, Guggenheim Museum and Arriaga that aims to provide opportunities for people to access the arts.

Competence Direct - Lund University (SE): Co-operation between Lund University and Akademikerförbundet SSR (SE). SSR is a union of university graduates whose members have a degree in economics, social science, social work or personnel management. SSR identifies competence needs among its member groups and Lund University finds the most suitable department to develop and deliver courses in response.

Developing the Market in Occupational Health and Safety – University of Strathclyde (UK): The Centre for Lifelong Learning at the university was approached by the Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland to provide continuing professional development courses for local authority enforcement officers. The courses have developed into a study programme recognised by the leading professional association in the UK, the Institution for Occupational Health and Safety.

Linking London Learning – Linking London Lifelong Learning Network (UK): A collaborative partnership of education, training, adult/voluntary organisations funded by the Higher Education Funding Council to improve progression opportunities for vocational learners into and through higher education and into employment. Partners include 15 universities, 15 further education colleges, 4 adult education institutions. The Sector Skills Councils created by the Government to lead on the development of skills in different occupational sectors are also represented.

In the case studies above, universities have used different words to describe the nature of the relationships they are involved in. We have underlined these words in the text (co-operation • partnership • collaboration • collaborative partnership).



We would like you to discuss whether you think there are differences between the relationships? You may find the following questions useful in guiding you through this.

- What is the purpose of the relationship?
- Over what period of time is the relationship expected to operate?
- Who are those involved?
- Do the roles and responsibilities of those involved differ?
- Does the relationship operate on a formal or informal basis?
- Do the risks differ?
- Can you think of an example?
- What are the indicators of success?



Finally for this activity we invite you to consider what the universities who responded to the BeFlex Plus questionnaire say is the main objective of their regional collaboration/partnerships. The table below lists the results. Do these reasons match those that you listed at the start of this activity?

What is the main objective of (your) regional collaboration /partnership (Questions 28)		
	%	Response
<i>Broaden the potential market for courses/services</i>	66	87
<i>Participation in regional economic development</i>	63	83
<i>Share resources</i>	36	48
<i>Address specific issues</i>	39	52
Answered the question		131

Discussion

There are a number of reasons why universities work in regional partnership or collaboration. These include the availability of funding relating to European, national or regional policy, to widen progression and access, to respond to specific market opportunity perhaps with private companies, or to increase the distribution of their courses and services.

There are no standard accepted terms defining types of lifelong learning relationships universities have with other organisations but there are identifiable differences between them such as the degree of formality and planned length of time that the relationship is intended to last. Partnerships are usually established through a formal agreement.

A further aspect to consider: question 26 of the BeFlex Plus questionnaire asked; 'Do you have more than one partnership or collaboration?'- the response was an overwhelming yes 92% of universities who responded said that they are active in more than one collaboration or partnership.



A number of problems might arise where a university is involved in more than one partnership or collaboration; for example courses developed in one partnership may be targeting the same market as courses or services developed in another. To explore what issues might arise try to answer the following questions.

- What are the implications for a university involved in several partnerships?
- Is there a need for collaboration and partnership activity to be co-ordinated across a university?
- If so, how might this be achieved?
- What are the likely benefits and risks for the university and for its partners?

Activity 2 (2 hours)

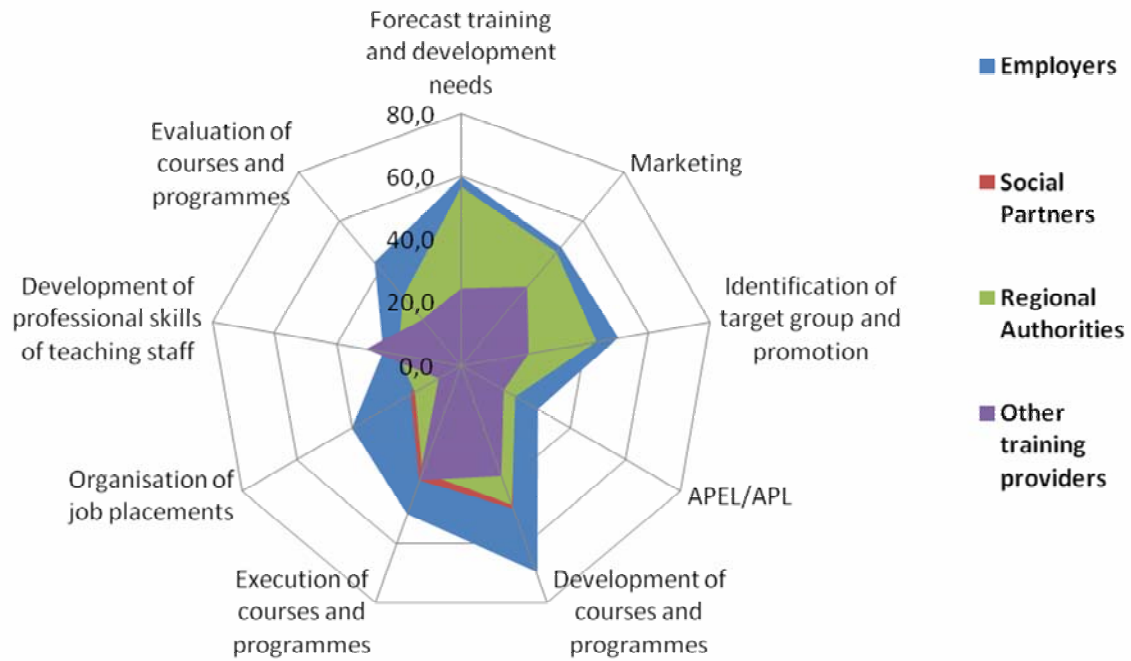
What, who and how? Steps in developing and maintaining regional collaboration and partnership work

Now that we have considered the broad purposes of regional collaboration and partnerships we can move on to look more closely at who is involved, and the specific outcomes that are expected of them. This will also enable us to begin to construct a clearer picture of the work and the costs involved in participating in such regional activity.

The chart below represents the percentage responses to question 25 of the BeFlex Plus questionnaire which asked what kind of collaboration are you involved in and with whom? Perhaps surprisingly it shows that among the respondents the most frequent type of collaboration is with employers and enterprises, with the purpose of developing new courses and curriculum, with a lesser emphasis on finding new markets for ULLL. It also shows that there is little collaboration on staff development.

Question 25

Types of Collaborations in ULLL



Question 27 of the BeFlex Plus questionnaire provided more information by asking universities who their key partners were. The chart below represents the answers of the universities who responded.

Question 27

Who are key partners in ULLL?



The most common purpose given for regional collaborations or partnerships is the development of courses and curriculum and the most common key partners are enterprises and employers. Using this as an example, we have completed the grid below to illustrate that collaboration and partnership is not always equal for all those involved even though it is often thought to be.

Purpose of the partnership /collaboration: Development of curriculum and courses		
	Those involved in the partnership/collaboration	
	University	Employer or enterprise
Benefit	External (expert) input to the design of new curricula. Market information gained and relevance of learning programmes to the target audience.	Ultimately courses will be more appropriate and effective for organisations.
Cost	Time to develop curriculum (but this would happen even without the collaboration). Limited.	Time away from work and off the job.
Time	Short term.	Medium to long term.
New skill requirements – what sort of things will be required?	Ability to negotiate with employers and sell concepts and value of ULLL Understanding the values of organisations and their learning needs. Development of new flexible curricula. Ability to manage and deliver activity for the collaboration and to deadline. Management of internal and external priorities and demands on resources. Joint staff development.	Understanding the language of university learning and university operations. Understanding the university's requirements. Joint staff development
Sustainability	Income from additional learners.	Depends on whether the curriculum brings real advantage or performance improvements to the employer /enterprise.
Responsibility for driving the collaboration /partnership	Yes, if the initial approach was made by the university.	Yes – where the approach was made by the employer or enterprises. Less likely if the approach was made by the university
Ownership /accountability for the performance of the collaboration /partnership. Are there consequences for the partner?	Yes – where the initial approach was made by the university.	Yes - where the curriculum is for a single or small group of enterprises. Time spent developing the courses will be lost as well as any fees.
How is success defined by those involved?	Development of courses or programmes. Recruitment to programmes. Financial viability.	Improvement in performance or in the abilities and competence of those undertaking the learning
Overall observations, critical aspects.	Short term benefit and limited/risk to the university. University needs to support the employer through the process.	Real cost to the employer. Employer needs to see the value of/return on the investment made.



Having read through the grid above, now complete one yourself for a partnership or collaborative activity of your university; or if you are not involved in one at present choose one from the following list.

- A) Purpose: marketing. Those involved: university – regional authorities
- B) Purpose: delivery of courses and programmes. Those involved: university – social partners
- C) Purpose: development of professional skills of teaching staff. Those involved: university-other training providers
- D) Purpose: identification of target group and promotion (to widen access and participation). Those involved: university-schools



Finally, for each grid you have completed discuss what are the critical elements that need to be in place before you would choose to go ahead with any of them (when would you decide not to go ahead)?

Discussion

Regional collaboration and partnerships are formed for a range of purposes, the most common of which are the development of new curricula with employers and enterprises. However, the scope is wide and extends to widening access to universities and developing the professional skills of staff. Further examination of the benefits and costs to the different organisations who may be involved reveals that aims and objectives may vary between partners. Where a university may be satisfied in the short term with the development of a course for example, the benefits and outcomes may take longer to filter through to employers and enterprises who were involved in its initial design. As this may be a key success factor for the employer this must be taken into account in the planning and evaluation of the activity, and the negotiations with the employer.

It is also apparent that working in partnership or collaboration demands new skills of university staff such as communication and negotiation with external organisations, project management and customer service.

Whether or not to work in partnership or collaboration depends largely on the risk and returns that the university will face. Where there is external funding the decision to go ahead is easier, but even then the impact of undertaking collaborative activity that ends when the funding ends may be damaging to a university's relationships within its region and particularly with employers and enterprises who have little time and resource available to them. The impacts, benefits and costs of success and failure must be fully considered for all involved before you start.

Activity 3 (2 hours)

Strengths and potential weaknesses of regional collaboration and partnerships



This activity is designed to explore the strengths and potential weaknesses of collaboration and partnerships in order to understand the issues involved in their operations. For this we have used two detailed case studies that we would like you to read carefully before going on to discuss and compare them.

Among other things you might wish to consider the following in your discussions:

- Impetus for the co-operation in the first instance
- Priorities and missions of partners involved in the collaborations
- Size and complexity of the collaboration
- Initial set up of systems and processes including communications with all organisations involved in the co-operation
- Time frame over which the co-operation is to work
- Administration and management
- Communication and marketing
- Capability and authority of staff in organisations to work in collaboration
- Funding and finance
- Degree of innovation required
- Sustainability and/or exit strategies



Once you have discussed the two case studies, list the relative strengths and potential weaknesses that you identified in each of them.

Regional co-operation in post secondary technological education - University of Aveiro (PT)

Portugal has seen a large increase in the number of students in higher education, from 30,000 in 1960 at 4 public universities and 2 public polytechnic institutes, to 340,000 in 2005 at 14 public universities, 10 private universities, 13 public polytechnic institutes and a large number of private polytechnic institutes. However there is still a great mismatch between employers' demands and the nature of study programmes offered, particularly important for vocational training and the development of the economy.

In 1999 the Government decided to address this through new specialised technological programmes (CET) which are professionally oriented, promote a training path that combines qualifications and professional skills and competences, and lead to a level 4 vocational qualification. CET have to be delivered in partnership with local councils, secondary, technological and professional schools and centres for professional development as well as companies, professional bodies and employers' associations; they are designed to be work-based. The labour force in general has low qualifications and many industries need to improve their performance. Therefore, the main objectives of CET are to promote technical and vocational education among youngsters, to encourage the return of mature people to professional requalification and to improve the cooperation between the university and the main sectors of regional economy.

In 2002 the University of Aveiro became one of the first universities to offer such programmes helped by the fact that the university already has both university and polytechnic studies. Partners in the whole regional network are the University of Aveiro through 3 of its 4 polytechnic schools, 11 municipalities, several secondary schools, one employers' association, 2 hospitals and over 100 companies, most of them small and medium enterprises (in fields like metal- mechanics, ceramics, auto parts, electronics and IT).

Development of the programmes took into account the leading economic sectors in the region (auto parts, moulding, metal-mechanics, shoe making and cork industry) and the fact that as well as big companies, the main economic sectors are comprised of many small and medium enterprises. The result is that cooperation in the network involves a large number of partners, which requires significant organisational effort.

The CET programmes are delivered in a decentralised way, in public and private training centres, in secondary schools and in the Polytechnic school of the university. Courses are offered out of normal working hours and are delivered by university staff, secondary school teachers and qualified professionals. All programmes however are the responsibility of a university teaching staff member. In Aveiro Norte the CET offer started with 9 courses in the areas of Design, Business, Production Technology and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

One of the characteristics of the CET offer is that it changes according to the changing needs of the socio-economic regional development. Thus some of the initial programmes are no longer offered while new ones appear each year. The number of programmes on offer has steadily increased, as the regional co-operation has developed and as new municipalities have joined the network. This academic year the offer includes 18 different programmes, 6 of which are new. Some of the programmes run simultaneously in different locations. In a total of 27, 14 programmes are co-ordinated by Aveiro Norte, 10 co-ordinated by the polytechnic school in Agueda and 3 by the accountancy school in Aveiro. The offer has expanded and now runs in 11 different locations which include most of the initial sites plus Estarreja and Aveiro in the Aveiro Norte region and Agueda, Vagos, and Oliveira do Bairro in the south-east Aveiro region.

The programmes are organised in a similar fashion, each receives between 20 and 30 students and around 25% of the training occurs in the work-place. In the current year there are 450 new students and there are 260 currently in their practical work in the partner companies. The main financing source is state and European Union funds, alongside some contribution from the regional authorities and in a few cases companies.

The whole process requires intensive and sometimes difficult negotiation with the different partners, who may have conflicting interests. However, outcomes of the regional co-operation help to bring together those involved and solve their differences. In particular for the university, co-operation with the regional economy has influenced internal research and development activity as well as contributing externally to the development of the region.

Although synergy between the different programmes that run in the different schools optimises the management of resources involved, main problems are some administrative aspects and constraints and the fact that financing is allocated often at a later date, making it impossible to start the programs at the beginning of the academic year.

And, even though their numbers are decreasing, there are still university professors who consider this activity a less important part of the university's mission

Competence Direct – Lund University (SE)

Competence Direct is a co-operation between Lund University and Akademikerförbundet SSR. Akademikerförbundet SSR is a union of university graduates whose members have a degree in economics, social science, social work or personnel management.

Commissioned Education is the unit at Lund University responsible for marketing, selling and administrating competence development for professionals. Lund University Commissioned Education represents all faculties and departments at the university and acts as a one-stop-shop for companies, organisations and authorities when they are looking for professional development of business and staff. Akademikerförbundet SSR is a union of university graduates whose members have a degree in economics, social science, social work or personnel management. The members of the union can be found in all sectors of society. Twenty-five percent of the professionals hold executive or managerial positions. The union consists of more than 300 local chapters and regional councils with one national office. Akademikerförbundet SSR is affiliated with SACO, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations, and a politically independent confederation of twenty-five unions of university graduates with a total of approximately 600,000 members.

The co-operation began in 2006 and is a combination of Akademikerförbundet SSR's deep knowledge about current competence needs among their members and Lund University Commissioned Education's ability to quickly develop and carry out courses in accordance with these needs. Akademikerförbundet SSR identifies a number of competence needs among their different member groups and Lund University Commissioned Education finds the most suitable department to develop and carry out these courses. Every course requires 15-20 participants in order to have a sufficient financial basis and each participant finances his/her participation via employer payment. The cooperation is branded under the name "Competence Direct".

To Akademikerförbundet SSR the cooperation strengthens their relationship with current members as well as providing a means to attract new members. In this regard it is interesting that approximately 60 per cent of the course participants so far have been non-members. To Lund University the cooperation is part of our third task – co-operation with society – providing different departments with valuable contacts with the surrounding society. These contacts have a positive impact on the undergraduate education providing it with "real-life" examples.

The cooperation involves the development of a number of courses in different areas, with a number of departments at Lund University involved. Cooperation between a union and a university often focuses on one area, but here we develop a variety of courses in many areas. In addition, the courses are delivered as distance learning with just a few face to face meetings in Stockholm. For the meetings we have so far primarily chosen to be in the capital Stockholm (600 km from Lund), since Stockholm is the best location if we want to reach as many participants as possible. Furthermore, the cooperation has raised the profile of both Akademikerförbundet SSR and Lund University.

Finally, our courses are ECTS-credit courses which is a very strong competitive edge in relation to other competitors in the educational area, often non-university organisations who cannot offer ECTS-credits.

Lund University Commissioned Education was established eight years ago and has facilitated access to education as a one-stop-shop and knowledge broker for different customers. Acting in this way we have facilitated and created a number of contacts between companies, organizations

and authorities and our different departments. Contacts that otherwise would not have been established.

The most important points drawn from our cooperation with Akademikerförbundet SSR:

- In developing courses for professionals, it is critical to have a partner such as Akademikerförbundet SSR to specify what kind of courses to develop. We work on a market and develop courses that are asked for.
- Marketing is essential. In our cooperation, Akademikerförbundet SSR informs about our courses via e-mail to their members, the courses are presented at Akademikerförbundet SSR's different conferences, presented on our web pages, Akademikerförbundet SSR write articles about the co-operation in their member magazine. Third parties having an interest in the courses are also marketing the courses. What we have learnt so far is that the e-mails sent to members has most impact.
- Agree on a brand for the co-operation in order to increase visibility and giving the cooperation an identity of its own. In this cooperation we have chosen the name "Competence Direct", since the word "Direct" is used in a number of other activities run at Akademikerförbundet SSR.

Discussion

Regional collaboration holds significant potential for universities to develop ULLL but as they are often large, complex projects, successfully establishing and operating them brings huge challenges for universities and their systems. For the most complex and perhaps ambitious regional collaboration, external funding and national policy drivers are critical aspects of their creation and development. Without such funds the projects are unlikely to go ahead. Not all collaborations need to be so large or complex however, and as with the Lund University example, similar benefits can be achieved where a single university is involved with fewer partners.

For larger scale collaboration it also seems that a relatively longer timeframe is required before intended outcomes, particularly those related to learners or employers are achieved. This is largely due to the significant amount of work that needs to be done to set up, establish and manage the partnership itself, work that is time consuming and bears considerable opportunity cost (time in which staff involved could be developing other more specific activities). As a consequence it is important that staff involved in large collaborative activity have the full support of the senior management of the university. It also highlights that new skills are required to develop and operate these partnerships.

The importance of collaborations to the mission of the university needs to be communicated internally too in order to counter the views of some academic staff who see this activity as less important than traditional teaching and research.

As far as sustainability of such activities are concerned, it is interesting to consider what would remain if external funding were to be withdrawn. Would the collaboration continue at the same or a lesser level? Or would it cease? It seems more likely that larger projects would be closed down than smaller collaborations which may be able to be accommodated or secure other income to sustain them.

Activity 4 (1.5 hours)

How should we evaluate regional collaboration and partnerships?

We conclude this section by considering how we should evaluate regional collaborations and partnerships. Any approach to such evaluation will need to address two overarching aspects:

- To what extent has the activity of the collaboration or partnership met its planned outputs?
- How successfully has the collaboration or partnership functioned?

It is important to recognise that a collaboration or partnership may achieve success in one of these aspects but not in another; so a university might recruit a target number of students for a programme designed in partnership for example, but might have found it challenging to work with the partners to achieve full collaboration in the design process. We would expect that successful partnerships would achieve their outcomes in terms of target outputs and collaborative working, so it is essential that we evaluate both aspects described above.



To explore how we might cover both aspects in evaluation we would like you to return to the case study in activity 3 which described regional co-operation in post secondary technological education led by the University of Aveiro. Having read through the case study you should try to identify what might need to be evaluated in each of the two aspects we have identified above. We have started this below and would like you to continue. Although we have included only three blank boxes for you to complete we expect you will be able to find many more critical issues for evaluation!

To what extent has the activity of the collaboration or partnership met its planned outputs?	How successfully has the collaboration or partnership functioned?
Numbers of students enrolling and completing	How effectively has the opinion of employers been canvassed and used in the decisions about which programmes to run?
Destination of students after study – are they finding work in areas with skills shortage?	What have been the most effective strategies when partners have voiced different opinions about which programmes to run?



When you have completed this we would like you to take just a few moments to think about the type of question you might ask to gather evaluation data. The questions you need to ask to gather data about outputs is usually quite straightforward – you will probably have spent some time deciding how you would measure outputs at the beginning of any work you have planned. However you may find it harder to write questions which will elicit the data you require about the process of functioning of the partnership. We know from the earlier work in this section that the way partners work can be complex and subtle.

Different points of view about what should be evaluated

When evaluating any collaboration and partnerships you may also find that partners have different views of what should be evaluated. In activity 2 we noted the variety of purposes of partnerships and also how the outcomes of work can affect partners in very different ways. In the case study from the University of Aveiro we can see that companies may need to wait far longer than the education providers to see the effect of better trained employees on their business.



To highlight how viewpoints about what needs to be evaluated can differ even amongst partners in the same project, we would like you to choose one of the case studies used in activity 3 and review the content. Then we ask you to put yourself in the position of the university and define the three most important aspects of the programme that ought to be evaluated. We would then like you to put yourself in the position of one of the partners and do the same thing. Do the aspects you have identified differ? We expect that in some cases they will – and have included an example of how we think this would happen with the Lund University case study below.

Lund University	Akademikerförbundet SSR
Financial viability of courses	Increase in membership and related income, increased profile among non-members



Having compared the way in which evaluation priorities might vary between partners you should conclude the activity by thinking how this difference of approach could be accommodated in collecting and reporting evaluation data.



Finally, the BeFlex Plus questionnaire provides a lot of interesting data on the main success factors and obstacles for regional collaboration and partnership. Look through the responses for question 31 and question 32 in the technical report (included in this pack or on the project website) and think about any the obstacles listed that you might encounter in your own partnerships. Now identify what you will do to avoid these difficulties.

Concluding comments

Working in collaboration has great potential to change education systems so that they better provide ULLL for individuals and enterprises. It does however demand careful planning and preparation and involves significant risks and changes to university staff and systems. It more usually occurs as smaller scale, specific collaborations with employers to develop new curricula but increasingly funding is available relating to large system wide partnerships. Universities should be aware of the commitment required for those involved in such partnerships, provide the appropriate staff development, and evaluate and monitor them relevant ways to ensure success for all involved.



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About BeFlex Plus

BeFlex Plus updates our knowledge about how ULLL is developing in Europe and what has changed over the last 2 or 3 years; it promotes the development of policy and practice in ULLL and the use of the Bologna tools; and it supports universities in the development and implementation of regional strategies for ULLL.

Outputs and products: regional seminars/workshops, training and dissemination events in association with national networks, recommendations to the Bologna Follow-Up Group, a Training pack, a Thematic Report and Executive summary, and a Technical Report analysing the data collected. All these are on the project website:

www.eucen.org/BeFlexPlus/index.html

Project partners:

- EUCEN - contractor and coordinator (BE)
- Université Catholique de Louvain (BE)
- Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg (DE)
- Universidad de Deusto (ES)
- Helsingin yliopisto (FI)
- Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille (FR)
- Kauno Technologijos Universitetas (LT)
- Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL)
- Universidade de Aveiro (PT)
- Lunds Universitet (SE)
- London Metropolitan University (UK)

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