



## **NW Higher Level Skills Pathfinder November 2006**

On November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006 the HEFCE Board gave the final approval to the NW Higher Level Skills (HLSP) Business Plan. This secures the HLSP funding from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

The project is being led by the North West Universities Association (NWUA), as the representative body of the fifteen North West Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), in partnership with the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA), Government Office North West (GONW), the Association of Colleges (AoC), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and the NW Regional Skills Partnership (RSP).

During the first month of the project NWUA has undertaken the following activities:

- Recruitment of HLSP Team – the HLSP team positions were advertised during October with a closing date of November 6<sup>th</sup>. Interviews for the posts are in the week commencing November 20<sup>th</sup> and it is hoped that staff will be able to take up these posts early in 2007.
- Other Regional Initiatives - the HLSP Project Manager, Dr Celia Brigg, has met with colleagues from FDF, Aimhigher, LSC, SSCs and three of the regions LLNs during October to ensure that there is coherence between the HLSP and other regional initiatives.
- The HLSP Steering Group - the group met on October 30<sup>th</sup> and discussed the Terms of Reference and membership of the sector panels along with Terms of Reference for the Steering Group and the general guidance of project activity.
- Brokerage – initial discussion have been had with a variety of partners around the training for brokers on HE. NWUA has discussed sharing resources with Aimhigher and FDF who have both undertaken similar work and also with Ufi regarding the potential for using the Learning Through Work platform. Work has also begun on the development of the database of HE provision.
- Intelligence Gathering – NWUA has started work on analysis of SSC and regional intelligence with regard to higher level skills needs in the HLSP key sectors (Advanced Engineering and Materials, Construction, Digital and Creative Industries and Business and Professional Services).
- Much work has also been undertaken around the initial set up of the project, ensuring all partners are kept informed of activity and ensuring that the required systems and records are in place.

During November NWUA will be working across the following areas:

- Sector Panels – NWUA will contact organisations to obtain representatives for the sector panels and convene the first meeting of these panels to produce the guidance for the commissioning of HE provision relevant to the needs of their sector.

- Marketing – NWUA will be meeting with the LSC to discuss the potential for incorporating marketing activity with the LSC Train to Gain programme.
- Evaluation – NWUA will be working on the evaluation strategy for the HLSP in preparation for discussion with the other two HLSPs (NE and SW) and HEFCE in December.
- Brokerage – NWUA will continue to develop the database of HE provision and will be contacting providers to discuss this in more detail. Further discussions around broker training are also planned and this again will be discussed by the three pathfinders when they meet in December as there is significant potential for collaboration on this aspect of the HLSP. NWUA also plan to meet with the LSC and NWDA to discuss the integration of the HLSP and brokerage in more detail.
- Intelligence Gathering – the work around intelligence regarding higher level skills needs within the four HLSP key sector will continue.

NWUA will continue to produce regular monthly updates on activity until all staff are in post and a formal communications strategy is developed. These will be available via the NWUA website at [www.nwua.ac.uk](http://www.nwua.ac.uk)

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