FE to HE: Black Country University Technical College Higher Level Engineering Skills Credit Transfer Pilot

CATS Project Community of Practice Development Form: 19/10/12

Achievements to date

- Held successful early meetings with the partners (UTC, UoW, ASFI) and maintained the enthusiasm and focus to see the project through to fruition
- Produced a draft definition of an accredited pathway based on the triangulation of UTC curriculum, UoW 1st Year Mechanical Engineering Degree and extant QCF engineering units at Levels 3 and 4
- Successful creation of a project website on behalf of AoC/BIS/SFA for the CATS partners that incorporates descriptions of the pilot projects, resources for use by partners and a forum to facilitate Community of Practice activity - http://www.cat-pilot-projects.net/

Problems/Challenges of developing CATS

- Logistical problems of operating across educational institutions over the summer months
- Recognition of the use of similar terms but with differing definitions across FE/HE (e.g. 'credit')
- Curriculum assumptions made for project –based learning are impacted on by DfE decisions about Key Stage 3 curriculum (i.e. withdrawal of support for the Diploma)
- Not a well-established understanding of the QCF or CATS in general
- Additional research shows what universities practise in terms of CATS may differ in the detail from the overall policy.
- Mobility of key contacts within organisations presents continuity problems

Working across the FE/HE interface

- Within FE/HE this is a time of considerable challenge and uncertainty, both in terms of funding and curriculum offers. This has current resource implications for all partners involved
- Recognition of the use of similar terms but with differing definitions across FE/HE (e.g. 'credit').
- Recognition of the structured and regulated FE landscape whereas HE has much more autonomy on the acceptance of credit or prior learning

Working with other agencies

- Through our previous work with LSIS we have informal access to an additional resource which we may draw on to help with the project

'Eureka' moments/Key learning outcomes for the project

- The developmental nature of the UTC curriculum may mean that under this project we can develop a pathway that has benefit to the broader UTC sector

Emerging themes?

- Understanding of and confidence in CATS is not all it needs to be
- Mobility of key contacts within organisations presents continuity problems
- Genuine desire by partners to bring to the fore some product or activity to clarify this area of the agenda
- Sense of urgency with regard to optimising the UTC curriculum and delivering excellence for learners
- A growing recognition that employer input is key
- Acknowledgement that, when headline reports from the HE sector suggest that around 80% of this year's graduate cohort are not in graduate employment at the six month mark, consideration might be given to calibration issues