

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

CATS Project Community of Practice Development Form: 15/02/13

Achievements to date

- Identified the content for the qualification
- Commenced triangulation of content with partner needs and opportunities
- Additional consultation with a Learning & Skills Improvement Service consultant.

Problems/Challenges of developing CATS

- Challenges continuing from previous CoP form:
 - A second key technical partner representative has changed organisations
 - Two of the key partner organisations have undergone Ofsted inspection within three weeks of each other – impacting on resource availability and also curriculum planning considerations
 - Information now available at UTC and College level on funding and performance policy has changed the tone, timing and ambitions for curriculum planning
 - Organisations seeking to achieve clear planning are more risk-averse, pushing CATS considerations towards the periphery
 - A number of high level curriculum announcements have been made
 - There is a general lack of clarity around funding and curriculum issues – a situation that has worsened considerably since the inception of the project

Working across the FE/HE interface

- The simple availability of staff resource to develop the project.
- The positioning of organisations as they try to adjust to increasing pressures on their offer and the cost of their offer.

Working with other agencies

- An LSIS representative has brought a fresh perspective to the project

'Eureka' moments/Key learning outcomes for the project

- One key learning outcome is the significance of aligning specific CATS initiatives to curriculum planning and time tabling - we aim to derive a feasibility formula from this that would help with future projects

Emerging themes?

- The importance of Engineering as a key sector in UK economy recovery has been highlighted to us by a number of individuals and organisations in the course of the project work
 - The amount of curriculum time given to practical engineering skills in the context of higher courses is under consideration
 - Sharing our CATS project aims with other partners and stakeholders not involved in the project has revealed a trend in the reporting of Level 3 skills needs in Level 4 programmes.
 - A number of colleagues and partners have commented that CATS ought to work better and have a higher profile and that this may be something that the market drives.
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