THE PROJECT TEAM

Professor Bob Johnson

Bob Johnson is a Senior Consultant with Johnson Associates*, (email bobjohnson@northwoodha6.fsnet.co.uk*) specialising in advising on, validating and auditing education, training and development programmes. He is a subject reviewer for QAA and QCA in Business and has acted as consultant on quality matters for a number of universities.

Until 1999 he was Head of APEL in the Quality Centre and Professor of Operations Management at Thames Valley University. Bob has extensive experience of the HE sector, including a wide range of External Examiner posts He is active practitioner and writer in many aspects of credit related practice, with specific focus on APEL and the credit rating of work-based learning and in-house training. Bob, who has led a succession of projects for SEEC during the past four years, has been an external adviser for a project to establish a FE credit framework for Lincolnshire and Rutland. His in-company work includes advising and supporting the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy in their successful applications to obtain credit rating for their officer training courses.

Dorothy Haslehurst has a Faculty Head role at the University of Portsmouth where, since 1994 she is responsible for quality assurance across a wide range of subject and professional areas in the Humanities and Social Sciences. This includes not only curriculum approval, monitoring and review within an HE and QAA context but also responding in policy and operational terms to the expectations of other bodies such as the QCA, OfSTED and the Home Office. She has experience of external examining, external verifying and subject reviewing. She is a member of the SEEC Governing Council. She retains an academic position as the course leader of the University's ILT accredited PgCert and MA Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and has an ongoing interest in issues in Post-Compulsory Education.

Dr Jenny Moon works in educational development at Exeter University where she has a number of roles that overlap the further and higher education sectors – for example as evaluator of a group of Foundation degrees and as a board member of the Joint Universities Centre at Yeovil College. In recent years she has written four books, and two SEEC 'How to' Guides. Several have concerned levels and learning outcomes in higher education. The others have concerned reflection and learning processes.

In previous work in Wales in the mid 1990's, Jenny was a joint leader in a project to develop the original SEEC (and Welsh) level descriptors of which the current work is a further development.

Credit level descriptors and FE/HE partnerships

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Annex

Issues in the use of credit affecting FE/HE partnerships: an investigation

1. An outline of the project

1.1.   Project team
Project leader Professor Bob Johnson, Johnson Associates
Members   Dorothy Haslehurst, University of Portsmouth
                Dr Jenny Moon, University of Exeter

1.2.   The project, funded entirely by SEEC, was designed to:-

- support SEEC member institutions to develop and sustain FE partnerships by sharing 'best'/'good' practice
- contribute to the national agenda of moving to an all-through (FE and HE) credit framework.

1.3.   Context

The divide between HE and FE provision is becoming more blurred and irrelevant by the day. Most SEEC member institutions are directly or indirectly involved with a mix of HE and FE provision, for example

FE provision within the institution

Franchised delivery in FE colleges

Partnership agreements with a network of FE colleges

Access programmes, both within the HE institution and FE colleges and HE provision in FE colleges (leading to entry with advanced standing)

The relationships between HE and FE providers are strengthened further by initiatives such as widening participation, Partnerships for Progression and Foundation degrees.

If the transition of students from FE programmes to HE programmes is to become 'seamless', then there is a need for a common language in terms of describing, evaluating and recognising the learning experienced. Good work has been done already by both QAA and QCA in defining the requirements for qualifications at HE and FE respectively. However, there is still a need to supplement the excellent

work of the credit consortia which, having developed a guidance document for the use of credit in HE qualifications, see the benefit of extending this to cover FE provision.

1.4. Aims

a) To investigate the viability of having a common structure for the (credit) level descriptors bridging the FE/HE divide and for FE in general.

b) To identify

- the scope and potential for the use of credit in the provision of HE/FE currently and in the future
- 'good'/'best' practice of the use of credit in HE/FE partnerships
- the issues raised by the use of credit
- broader credit-related issues that facilitate/inhibit the development of partnerships across the HE/FE interface

1.5. Method

a). Examine the various FE level descriptors available, principally NICATS, NOCN and UfI together with those being developed by QCA, to determine whether they could/should be transposed into the form and format of the SEEC HE Credit level descriptors and if so

b) Devise and propose an all-through (FE and HE) set of credit level descriptors

c) to test out the acceptability of the proposals by holding consultation meetings/focus groups (principally of SEEC member institutions)

d) Carry out face to face interviews with a small but representative sample of SEEC institutions and partners to identify

- best/good practice in FE/HE partnerships
- the issues raised by the use of credit
- how the use of credit might facilitate the development of FE/HE partnerships

S)E)C

e) SEEC staff development workshop and other dissemination activities

f) Publish a report on the use of credit in HE/FE cross boundary activity

1.6.   Conclusions and recommendations

Learning, particularly that derived from work-related, experiential and other non-standard and informal situations, does not recognise the artificial divides, FE v HE, based upon funding and organisational structures. The credit level descriptors (annex 3) combining both the FE ones devised as a result of this project, and the HE ones published previously, go some way in breaking down the real and perceived barriers. In section 3, some of the potential uses of the credit level descriptors are identified.

However, in defining the terms of reference for the project, devising and testing the acceptability of credit level descriptors, the project team recognised, though a significant step forward, was only the first stage. There are still a number of other aspects to be developed. Some relate to the embedding of the credit level descriptors, for example

development of workshops for staff in HE, but especially in FE where the subject is still relatively new.

provision of detailed case studies

provision of staff training materials

Others are based upon aspects of credit which can assist in overcoming the barriers to the further development of successful FE/HE partnerships.

2. Design and testing of FE CREDIT level descriptors

2.1   Background

In 2001 SEEC published a set of credit level descriptors for higher education programmes and qualifications (1) and, published by the

credit bodies, a guidance document on the use of credit in HE qualifications (2). Both documents were well received by the sector with the advice being adopted by the majority of those institutions using credit. In following current initiatives on widening participation, many institutions have or are developing partnerships of one form or another with FE providers. Thus there was a demand from HE institutions for further development relating to credit and level descriptors particularly at the FE/HE interface, viz. FE level 3 (HE level 0) and HE level 1. Those same institutions were aware of, and some even used, the FE levels descriptors already in existence. However, since the descriptors were designed for a variety of purposes and differ in structure and format, there seemed to be scope to investigate the possibility of devising a set which could be used across the sectors.

2.2 Examination of existing FE levels descriptors

The first task of the project team was to collect and examine the variety of FE level descriptors available, ranging from regulatory bodies, e.g. QCA and SQAA to national (e.g. Scottish and New Zealand) and regional credit frameworks (e.g. Credit Link East, Lincolnshire Local FE and Derby). (A list appears in annex 1).

Although there are similarities between them, there are also some quite big differences. In the main, the level descriptors investigated are or appear to be designed to define the requirements for whole qualifications, rather than their constituent parts. There are notable exceptions, for instance National Open College Network where the level descriptors are used to define units of learning. In addition the level descriptors vary in their thrust and in the degree of detail. However none is as detailed as the SEEC HE credit level descriptors, which are widely used by HE institutions in the UK.

2.3 Draft FE credit levels descriptors

The first thing to note was the intention to devise *credit* as opposed to qualification level descriptors. In addition, it was intended to make them more accessible by structuring them in a familiar format c.f. the

well-used SEEC HE ones, which are based upon the suggestions laid down in the Dearing report (3), viz.

- development of knowledge and understanding (subject specific)
- cognitive/intellectual skills (generic)
- key/transferable skills (generic)
- practical skills (subject specific)

The original project remit had been in terms of the FE/HE interface which would have required the design of a credit level descriptor for FE3(HE0). However the team felt that there would be added value to member institutions in designing credit level descriptors for FE1 and FE2 as well. Subsequently, the project team examined the various FE level descriptors available and, summarising them, re-cast them into the format outlined above.

2.4   Piloting the draft FE credit level descriptors

A major aim of SEEC is to provide advice and support to its members on credit-related matters. Consequently the piloting of the draft FE credit level descriptors was aimed at SEEC member institutions and their representatives. The pilot stage of the FE credit levels descriptors involved two groups

- SEEC Governing Council members
- Attendees at the SEEC 2002 Annual conference

2.4.1   SEEC Governing Council members

Each of the 36 member institutions is represented on the Governing Council. The draft FE credit levels descriptors were an agenda item at the Governing Council meeting in July 2002, where they were discussed and a number of minor, mainly drafting amendments were suggested. The few who were unable to attend the meeting, were invited by letter to contribute, within a two weeks, to the consultation process. A couple of further responses were received.

2.4.2   SEEC Annual Conference 2002

All 86 attendees at the SEEC 2002 Annual conference held in September at the Greenwich campus of the University of Greenwich were circulated with the draft FE credit levels descriptors and invited to participate in the consultation. (see annex 2 for the covering note). In addition the project leader ran a workshop at which the participants were invited to comment upon the draft and make recommendations for alterations. A number of changes were proposed and those supported by the majority were incorporated into the text.

2.5 THE SEEC FE Credit Level Descriptors

Following the consultation process the document was revised and presented to the SEEC Governing Council meeting in November 2002, where it was ratified.

The final version of the SEEC FE Credit Level Descriptors, together with the previously published HE ones is to be found in annex 3.

3.   Use of the FE/HE Credit Level Descriptors in developing FE/HE partnerships

3.1 Interviews

The next and final stage of the project was to carry out face to face interviews with a small but representative sample of SEEC institutions and partners. The aims were to identify

- how the use of credit might facilitate the development of FE/HE partnerships
- the issues raised by the use of credit
- best/good practice for successful partnerships

3.1.2   Interview method

Following the experiences on previous SEEC projects it was intended to use two interviewers for each interview, so that as one asked questions, the other could be taking notes and vice versa. However following a trial interview with the use of a series of prompt questions

sent out in advance, it was decided that only one interviewer was necessary. A letter was sent in advance to the contacts at the institutions to arrange the dates of the interviews and to give the potential respondents an indication of the types of questions which would form the bulk of the interview. The questions were set out in such a way that the interviewees could fill out 'answers' in advance of the interview. The letter and the list of questions are shown in annex 4. The project team thank the various people who have taken time either to fill in the pro forma on which this paper is based, or to discuss the issues in an interview. A list of the institutions represented is given in annex 5.

3.2.   Some outcomes of project interviews
3.2.1   Introduction
This survey followed the development of descriptors of learning and the management of learning at three levels preceding those in higher education (HE) provision. These are described as FE (further education) 1, 2 and 3 since they are largely designed to match further education provision. However, we recognise that there is a wide variety of provision in this post 16/pre-HE sector of education (see section on final comments at the end of the summary).

A particular reason for the chosen focus of FE provision in these descriptors is the current emphasis on the development of partnerships between further and higher education and the delivery of higher education in further education colleges. This factor is reflected in the range of people who were interviewed in this brief survey. All had personal professional and usually institutional interests that span the higher and further education sectors. None work exclusively in further education.

A short pro forma was used to guide the questioning in the interviews. It was largely designed to elicit information about the kinds of relationships that exist between further and higher education and examples of good practice in those relationships. Above all it sought information about how the FE/HE descriptors might be used to support learning in those stages which precede that covered by the HE Credit

Level Descriptors. It is important to note that the survey was not attempting to elicit normative material, but to provide a basis of information, and some ideas that others might use.

We discuss these issues with the following model in mind

Sector	Levels
HE levels (existing descriptors)	Two Postgraduate levels)
	3
	2
	1
FE levels (new descriptors)	3 (or HE 0)
	2
	1

The new work has been done on FE levels 1, 2 and 3.

3.2.2 The nature and qualities of FE/HE relationships in this brief survey

The relationships represented among those interviewed, fall into a number of general areas that may, sometimes, overlap –

the provision of traditional FE progammes in HE contexts (e.g. HND);

widening participation arrangements in HE where prior learning is accredited or where there is support or bridging provision/access provision (sometimes in the context of extra-mural provision – see below);

defined or specific access arrangements within HE institutions;

membership of organisations or consortia that work to facilitate joint or collaborative working at least between FE and HE (eg South West Association for Education and Training; the Lincolnshire Pathways project);

direct partnerships between HE and FE institutions (e.g. HE franchise arrangements with FE or Foundation degrees with agreed progression to level 3 in HE);

SEEC

partnerships between HE and other organisations or bodies in which there is FE level provision (eg LEA's, the Services, Police etc);

schemes in which there is accreditation of prior learning and in particular, prior experiential learning (APL/APEL).

It is important to note that those interviewed worked across the FE/HE boundary, however none worked solely in FE with FE provision. There are also several 'driving forces' behind these arrangements with sometimes the interests of the partners differing but corresponding sufficiently to allow a symbiotic relationship. Some of the interests for the HE elements of partnerships follow. Clearly there are again overlaps – and the first point may be a basic element in most of the others:

the drive to meet recruitment targets related to funding;

the adult education ethos – broadly – of opening initially level 1 HE provision to (usually) local people on a part-time basis, sometimes via lower level study;

access initiatives;

continuing professional development interests;

the pressure on HE to widen participation and increase HE provision largely through work with FEI's;

specific arrangements such as the (pre HE) Art and Design Foundation Diploma;

APL/APEL schemes.

3.2.4 Good practice

There were situations in which these arrangements between the sectors were working well. Some apparently good practices that were identified were:

formalisation of existing links between institutions (though equally, the attempt to formalise less formal links can sometimes cause failures);

where the arrangement facilitates the entry of local students to HE (e.g. where family pressures prevent entry to HE, beyond the local area);

where the interests of the learner is taken as central. This is facilitated by using students as ambassadors, mentors and tutors in 16+ provider institutions;

where there is discussion of issues between partners in a trusting atmosphere with transparency of intentions and guiding policies;

where there are mechanisms agreed for resolving misunder-standings;

where there are jointly agreed support and professional development opportunities to underpin changes in staff roles etc.

where staff from the different sectors meet on a regular basis while the programme is running and not just at examination board times. This should imply a meeting of all programme staff, not only those involved in modules;

3.2.5 Less successful

Where partnerships and collaborations are not successful, they tend to dissolve. Reasons for lack of success are:

the lack of a full understanding of possible progression routes and their demands on the learner. For example, there are currently situations in which much (too) fast thinking is having to be done in HE-in-FE situations and in HEI's to ensure appropriate progression between Foundation degrees and HE level 3 provision;

situations where one partner does not recognise the parity of status between the institutions, in particular, where HE treats itself as carrying higher status;

similarly where there is a mutual or one-sided lack of understanding about the different cultures of learning, of quality assurance and of staffing in the different sectors; which results in the poor articulation between the two;

where the staff of one partner (usually HE) considers the students of another to be of different 'quality';

the distortions brought about by the different funding arrangements in FE and HE.

3.2.6 Discussion of issues arising over the development of the Credit Level descriptors for Further Education

With such a variety of different arrangements, it is not surprising that we cannot generalise about the degree to which credit is involved in the arrangement – sometimes it is, and sometimes it is not. It makes sense to suggest that the lack of reference to credit might often be because the same credit system has not covered the two sectors of HE and pre-HE – because level descriptors have not been available. Where credit is involved, it is usually where collaboration is from one HE level to another – for example, progression from HND (and now, too, Foundation degree provision) to level 3 (HE). Sometimes, however, there is a notional or more definite identification of level 0 (or FE3) learning and the management of learning.

There are several points to consider here. Firstly work on this development of credit level descriptors is done primarily in the interests of higher education institutions where the drive for collaboration with preceding levels of education provision may be largely encouraged through funding mechanisms. If this were properly a collaborative effort between the FE and HE sectors, the descriptors might be based on the language and format of existing descriptors in other systems that are represented in further education such as NVQ's. The new descriptors cannot be said really to provide a link with NVQ levels. However, the latter are governed by descriptors for full qualifications, whereas credit level descriptors are helpful when seeking to define the entitlement to parts of qualifications, particularly where these comprise of different levels

Secondly, the study touches only some aspects of HE/FE collaboration. In different forms of collaboration, there will be different concerns because the focus of transition is at different stages and as result, the issues differ. For example, where the concern is with HE in FE in Foundation degrees and HND's the levels of concern are HE 2 and 3. The 'issues' may be more to do with the experience of learners (e.g. FE/HE culture, methods of teaching, experience of class size and support) rather than those of levels of learning. In other

relationships, for example, where access is a central concern, it is the transition between FE3 (or HE0) and HE1 that is central. Here the new descriptors are likely to have a more important role. Cultural issues may then not be so important because students will have expectations of a new experience in HE, and normally there would be adequate induction. Where widening participation is the rationale for collaboration, there may be level issues at lower than FE3 level – as well as continuing concerns about providing support. In the case of non-traditional HE students the cultural divide should be seen as an ongoing one between HE experience and the culture of the background from which the student has come.

Thirdly, we should reiterate provisos about the value of descriptors themselves. Learning is slippery and not easily amenable to meaningful description. Level descriptors are an attempt to pin down some meaning about learning – but we should recognise their limitations. They do not clearly identify learning levels – but their considered use facilitates discussions about learning and their existence is better than having nothing at all (Moon, 2002, 2002a).

Fourthly, although no respondents had an interest solely in further education development, helpfully it was pointed out that much of traditional FE provision is based on curricula that are provided by agencies outside of the institutions (e.g. Edexcel, OCR, City and Guilds). In these situations there is no incentive for concern by staff about the definition of level in generic level descriptors. This represents a considerable difference in the nature of HE and FE provision.

Fifthly, the development of new level descriptors does not solve issues such as that of overlap between FE3/HE1 where, for example, a student has studied 'A' level Psychology enters an HE programme which does not require this qualification, but includes a Psychology module at level 1. It is possible that she will largely repeat the learning already achieved. Should such a student be awarded HE1 credit for here (technically) FE3 level study? This becomes more of an issue with multi-disciplinary degrees e.g. Business Studies.

3.2.7   The possible uses of FE/HE Credit Level Descriptors

General uses of level descriptors have been explored elsewhere (Moon, 2002, 2002a). This section focuses on the 'uses' of the new FE credit level descriptors

The purposes identified represent a mixture of practical uses and psychological 'aids' to facilitate different aspects of the collaboration between the HE and FE sectors. It is worth recalling that a primary purpose of the project was to define FE level descriptors particularly to further the interests of the HE sector in its relationships with FE.

Descriptors may help to ensure that HE staff do not think that 'important' learning for qualifications starts at level 1 HE!

They facilitate progression across the sectors – the policy environment of HE makes it increasingly important that many transitions between sectors can be made to seem possible and (in jargon terms) 'seamless'. Often the nature of transition is well understood, but the existence of the descriptors allows HEI's to determine specific routes between identified FE provision and specific HE programmes.

The descriptors provide a means of describing and validating access or foundation i.e. level 0, (not 'Foundation degree) provision at HE level 0/FE 3. Structuring and describing access programmes in the same language as much of HE provision will save staff effort in writing descriptions of individual programmes.

FE level 2 may help in the selection of students for access programmes.

They provide an important help to staff in FE who are going to teach in HE. Because they span both sectors, it makes HE feel less alien and help them to understand what HE is. They provide a basis for curriculum structure and development.

They provide an language for staff development – allowing colleagues in FE to find the appropriate words to use to describe their HE work that is unfamiliar in terms of standards (perhaps more of an advantage of the HE descriptors!). They provide material to underpin staff development work on exploring cultures of learning in the sectors.

The development of lower level descriptors to match the previously published HE descriptors may facilitate the use of APEL in higher education because it provides a more detailed 'map' of learning at preceding levels.

It may also help with the work-based and work related learning agenda by assisting the definition of learning outcomes at FE levels 1, 2 and 3.

They provide a structured approach to widening participation by allowing the better identification and definition of part time, work-based, APL and APEL routes (for example for Foundation degrees).

They help staff and students to think in terms of the 'added value' of programmes or individual modules or units. They provide a sense of progression.

They cause people to check their understanding of education words (e.g. analysis) at different levels.

If explained appropriately to students in language that they understand, they can help them to see what they need to achieve in a programme – either at a current level, or in levels ahead of their current position.

They may help to prevent the development of two tiers in HE – HE in HE and HE in FE.

It is possible that the descriptors will be useful within the post 16 (pre-HE) sector to facilitate a greater unification of the disparate forms of provision and might be of value to the work being carried out by QCA.

4. Final comments

4.1   It is worth noting that discussion between sectors might be facilitated by the development of common vocabulary with which to describe the 'post 16/pre HE sector'. This sector is not just 'FE'. It represents adult as well as teenage learners (so 'post 16' is misleading).

'Post 16' is misleading also since we are not referring to higher education that is also 'post 16'. Nor is the sector just further education because it includes a mass of different forms of non-FE provision and experience – (e.g. short professional development courses, personal experience, school, adult and community learning and NVQ's).

4.2.   Conclusions and recommendations

Learning, particularly that derived from work-related, experiential and other non-standard and informal situations, does not recognise the artificial divides, FE v HE, based upon funding and organisational structures. The credit level descriptors (annex 3) combining both the FE ones devised as a result of this project, and the HE ones published previously, go some way in breaking down the real and perceived barriers.

However, in defining the terms of reference for the project, devising and testing the acceptability of credit level descriptors, the project team recognised, though a significant step forward, was only the first stage. There are still a number of other aspects to be developed. Some relate to the embedding of the credit level descriptors, for example

- development of workshops for staff in HE, but especially in FE where the subject is still relatively new
- provision of detailed case studies
- provision of staff training materials
- provision of information to students about the level of achievement expected of them requires further development

Others are based upon aspects of credit which can assist in overcoming the barriers to the future development of successful FE/HE partnerships, e.g.

- a common understanding of the phrase 'notional learning hours' in the definition of credit
- the use and application of work-related learning and AP(E)L.
- the identification of 'overlapping' learning
- the impact of funding mechanisms

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Annex 1

List of sources of level descriptors considered

Credit and qualifications Framework for Wales Generic LDs

Credit Link East

Derby Regional Network Credit Framework-

Lincolnshire and Rutland FE Credit Framework

National Open College Network: outline descriptors

National Vocational Framework

New Zealand Qualification Framework

Northern Ireland Credit and Accumulation Scheme: Summary of levels descriptors

Northern Ireland Credit and Accumulation Scheme: Detail of levels descriptors

QAA Qualifications framework

QCA 2000 Key Skills levels

University for Industry: Draft level descriptors

Annex 2

1. Letter distributed to SEEC 2002 Annual Conference attendees

SEEC project: DRAFT SEEC FE credit level descriptors

The SEEC (Southern England Credit Accumulation and Transfer Consortium) credit level descriptors have been in existence and widely used in Higher Education for over seven years. Last year they were revised in line with the ideas expressed in the Dearing report. As many SEEC institutions have developed relationships of one type or another with Further Education (Institutions), it became apparent that there was a need to consider devising consistent, appropriate credit level descriptors.

SEEC therefore decided to fund a small project to investigate the feasibility of devising an all-through set of level descriptors and to determine how they are and might be used to overcome some of the barriers to the continued integration of FE and HE learning.

The descriptors were developed in discussion with some people who are involved in the HE/FE interface and after consideration of other level descriptors that apply to the sector. It is intended that the workshop* on Friday, will provide an opportunity for consultation on the level descriptors and go on to explore their potential for institutions.

For those of you who will not be attending the workshop, we would appreciate your assistance in the SEEC project by spending a few moments completing the form below and returning it to us.

Thanking you in advance

Bob Johnson and Dorothy Haslehurst

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*Workshop Widening Participation: An all-through set of level descriptors
Presenters   Professor Bob Johnson, Consultant and Dorothy Haslehurst, University of Portsmouth

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Draft SEEC Credit Level Descriptors Project

Name (please print) …………………………………………. Institution ……………………….

Contact details Tel ……………………………… Email ………………………………………..

Please briefly describe

a) the current HE/FE 'partnerships'/consortia at your institution

b) the developments in say the next 2-3 years

The key person(s) (please give name and position) at my institution are

Other observations (e.g. on the draft SEEC FE levels descriptors

Thank you
Bob Johnson and Dorothy Haslehurst

Annex 2

2. SEEC Conference workshop

Widening participation: An all-through (FE/HE) set of level descriptors Facilitators: Professor Bob Johnson and Dorothy Haslehurst

As an essential element in the SEEC-funded project I*nvestigating the issues surrounding the use of credit that facilitate and inhibit FE/HE partnerships*, the aims of the workshop are to

- subject the draft FE/HE credit level descriptors to scrutiny and

- receive feedback on the definitions, aims, purpose and potential uses

In addition participants will be able to contribute to the next stage of the project by assisting in the refinement of the terms of reference for subsequent interviews to be carried out with four HEIs .In brief, these are

- review the potential uses of FE/HE credit Level Descriptors

- analyse FE/HE partnerships (basis for case studies in the final report).

Annex 3

Level 1: FE Level 1

Development of Knowledge and Understanding (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Knowledge base:** has a given and uneven knowledge base. This is largely factual and while the learner will be encountering theory, its meaning in the broader context of the discipline may be absent. S/he has an elementary awareness of the discipline and some knowledge of the terminology.

Cognitive/Intellectual skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application)
Within the limits of his/her knowledge and understanding of the discipline:
- The learner can begin to operate skills of manipulation of knowledge (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application). There is a growing awareness of how knowledge is processed in order to achieve informed judgements. Within the limits, the learner can use simple processes in routine/guided contexts such as the application of rules, explanation, the combination of given ideas to inform a task.
- The learner works within a routine and defined context.

Key/transferable skills (generic)
The Learner:
- **Group working**: can usually meet obligations to others (tutors/peers); can work co-operatively with others.
- **Learning resources**: is mostly guided in use of learning resources.
- **Self evaluation**: is beginning to develop the ability to evaluate own strengths and weakness within criteria largely set by others.
- **Management of information**: with guidance and a defined context, can manage information, is learning to collect data from a range of straightforward sources.
- **Autonomy**: can exercise a limited level of discretion and judgement about possible actions. Operates under general supervision and quality control systems.
- **Communications**: is developing ability to communicate in the academic context and there is evidence of progress towards reporting practical procedures in a clear manner.
- **Problem solving**: with guidance can apply given tools/methods to a well-defined problem.

Practical skills (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Application:** can operate in predictable, defined contexts that require use of a specified range of standard techniques.
- **Autonomy in skill use**: is able to act with limited autonomy, under direction or supervision, within defined guidelines.

Level 2: FE Level 2

Development of Knowledge and Understanding (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Knowledge base:** has a largely given knowledge base that is probably uneven and tends to be factual but there is an awareness and increasing understanding of some areas of theory. S/he has a growing familiarity with the structure of knowledge and terminology of the discipline. The learner has a general awareness of any issues concerning values in the main areas of study.

Cognitive/Intellectual skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application)
Within the limits of his/her knowledge and understanding, the learner:
- Within the limits of his/her knowledge and understanding, the learner is becoming aware of/familiar with the use of the skills of manipulation of knowledge (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application) and how they are applied to knowledge in order to make an informed judgement. For example, within routine or guided contexts there is an ability to extract information, the ability to interpret and combine a range of ideas for communication to others.
- Works largely within routine and defined contexts.

Key/transferable skills (generic)
The Learner:
- **Group working**: can generally meet obligations to others (tutors/peers); can work co-operatively with others and is learning the effect of groups on own behaviour.
- **Learning resources**: is mostly guided in use of learning resources but when challenged, can begin to seek own resources and to use them critically.
- **Self evaluation**: is beginning to develop the ability to evaluate own strengths and weakness within criteria largely set by others.
- **Management of information**: with guidance and a defined context, can manage information, collect data from a range of straightforward sources and is beginning to learn how to undertake simple research tasks.
- **Autonomy**: can undertake directed activity with limited autonomy and accept increasing responsibility for outcomes within time and other constraints.
- **Communications**: is developing ability to communicate reasonably effectively in the academic context and there is evidence of progress towards reporting practical procedures in a clear concise manner.
- **Problem solving**: with initial guidance can apply given tools/methods to a well-defined problem.

Practical skills (Subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Application:** can operate in predictable, defined contexts that require use of a specified range of standard techniques.
- **Autonomy in skill use**: is able to act with limited autonomy, under direction or supervision, within defined guidelines.

Level 3: FE Level 1/HE 0

Development of Knowledge and Understanding
The Learner:
- **Knowledge base:** has largely given, possibly uneven and limited factual and conceptual knowledge base. He/she has an appreciation of the breadth of the field of study and the relevant terminology The learner has some awareness of any the ethical issues in the main areas of study. Is developing the ability to discuss these and to relate them to own personal beliefs and values.

Cognitive/Intellectual skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application)
Within the limits of his/her knowledge and understanding, the learner:
- is learning to use the skills of manipulation of knowledge (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application) to make informed judgements. Her/his abilities to use these skills can be applied independently in relatively simple and familiar contexts or with guidance or structure when working with greater complexity.
- begins to work beyond routine and defined contexts.

Key/transferable skills (generic)
The Learner:
- **Group working**: meets obligations to others (tutors/peers); usually adapts in recognition of the effects of groups on own behaviour.
- **Learning resources**: is gaining in confidence in use and access to a range of learning resources with some ability to evaluate the source.
- **Self evaluation**: is generally able to evaluate own strengths and weakness within criteria largely set by others
- **Management of information**: within a defined context, can manage information, collect data from a range of straightforward sources and is gaining in confidence to undertake simple research tasks with external guidance.
- **Autonomy**: can engage in self directed activity with broad guidance and evaluation, accepting responsibility for the quality and quantity of output.
- **Communications**: is developing ability to communicate effectively in a format appropriate to the discipline(s) and there is evidence of progress towards reporting practical procedures in a clear and concise manner. Can present familiar information to an audience.
- **Problem solving**: can apply given tools/methods to a well-defined problem and shows emerging recognition of the complexity of associated issues.

Practical skills (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Application:** can operate in predictable, defined contexts that require use of a specified range of standard techniques.
- **Autonomy in skill use**: is able to act with limited autonomy, under direction or supervision, within defined guidelines.

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Level 4: HE Level 1

Development of Knowledge and Understanding (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Knowledge base:** has a given factual and/or conceptual knowledge base with emphasis on the nature of the field of study and appropriate terminology;
- **Ethical issues:** can demonstrate awareness of ethical issues in current areas of study and is able to discuss these in relation to personal beliefs and values.

Cognitive/Intellectual skills (generic)
The Learner:
- **Analysis:** can analyse with guidance using given classifications/principles.
- **Synthesis**: can collect and categorise ideas and information in a predictable and standard format.
- **Evaluation**: can evaluate the reliability of data using defined techniques and/or tutor guidance.
- **Application**: can apply given tools/methods accurately and carefully to a well defined problem and begin to appreciate the complexity of the issues.

Key/transferable skills (generic)
The Learner:
- **Group working**: can work effectively with others as a member of a group and meet obligations to others (for example, tutors, peers, and colleagues).
- **Learning resources**: can work within an appropriate ethos and can use and access a range of learning resources.
- **Self evaluation**: can evaluate own strengths and weakness within criteria largely set by others.
- **Management of information**: can manage information, collect appropriate data from a range of sources and undertake simple research tasks with external guidance.
- **Autonomy**: can take responsibility for own learning with appropriate support.
- **Communications**: can communicate effectively in a format appropriate to the discipline(s) and report practical procedures in a clear and concise manner.
- **Problem solving**: can apply given tools/methods accurately and carefully to a well defined problem and begin to appreciate the complexity of the issues in the discipline.

Practical skills (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Application:** can operate in predictable, defined contexts that require use of a specified range of standard techniques.
- **Autonomy in skill use**: is able to act with limited autonomy, under direction or supervision, within defined guidelines.

Level 5: HE Level 2

Development of Knowledge and Understanding (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Knowledge base**: has a detailed knowledge of major theories of the discipline(s) and an awareness of a variety of ideas, contexts and frameworks.
- **Ethical issues**: is aware of the wider social and environmental implications of area(s) of study and is able to debate issues in relation to more general ethical perspectives.

Cognitive/Intellectual skills (generic)
The Learner:
- **Analysis**: can analyse a range of information with minimum guidance using given classifications/principles and can compare alternative methods and techniques for obtaining data.
- **Synthesis**: can reformat a range of ideas and information towards a given purpose.
- **Evaluation**: can select appropriate techniques of evaluation and can evaluate the relevance and significance of the data collected.
- **Application**: can identify key elements of problems and choose appropriate methods for their resolution in a considered manner.

Key/transferable skills (generic)
The Learner:
- **Group working**: can interact effectively within a team/learning group, giving and receiving information and ideas and modifying responses where appropriate.
- **Learning resources**: can manage learning using resources for the discipline. Can develop working relationships of a professional nature within the discipline(s).
- **Self evaluation**: can evaluate own strengths and weakness, challenge received opinion and develop own criteria and judgement.
- **Management of information**: can manage information; can select appropriate data from a range of sources and develop appropriate research strategies.
- **Autonomy**: can take responsibility for own learning with minimum direction.
- **Communications**: can communicate effectively in a manner appropriate to the discipline(s) and report practical procedures in a clear and concise manner in a variety of formats.
- **Problem-solving**: can identify key areas of problems and choose appropriate tools/methods for their resolution in a considered manner.

Practical skills (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Application of skills**: can operate in situations of varying complexity and predictability requiring application of a wide range of techniques.
- **Autonomy in skill use**: able to act with increasing autonomy, with reduced need for supervision and direction, within defined guidelines.

Level 6: HE Level 3

Development of Knowledge and Understanding (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Knowledge base:** has a comprehensive/detailed knowledge of a major discipline(s), with areas of specialisation in depth, and an awareness of the provisional nature of knowledge.
- **Ethical issues**: is aware of personal responsibility and professional codes of conduct and can incorporate a critical ethical dimension into a major piece of work.

Cognitive/Intellectual skills (generic)
The Learner:
- **Analysis:** can analyse new and/or abstract data and situations without guidance, using a range of techniques appropriate to the subject.
- **Synthesis**: with minimum guidance can transform abstract data and concepts towards a given purpose and design novel solutions.
- **Evaluation**: can critically evaluate evidence to support conclusions/recommendations, reviewing its reliability, validity and significance. Can investigate contradictory information/identify reasons for contradictions.
- **Application**: is confident and flexible in identifying and defining complex problems and can apply appropriate knowledge and skills to their solution.

Key/transferable skills (generic)
The Learner:
- **Group working**: can interact effectively within a team/learning/professional group, recognise, support or be proactive in leadership, negotiate in a professional context and manage conflict.
- **Learning resources**: with minimum guidance can manage own learning using full range of resources for the discipline(s). Can work professionally within the discipline.
- **Self evaluation**: is confident in application of own criteria of judgement and can challenge received opinion and reflect on action. Can seek and make use of feedback.
- **Information management**: can select and manage information, competently undertaking reasonably straight-forward research tasks with minimum guidance.
- **Autonomy**: can take responsibility for own work and can criticise it.
- **Communications**: can engage effectively in debate in a professional manner and produce detailed and coherent project reports.
- **Problem solving**: is confident and flexible in identifying and defining complex problems and the application of appropriate knowledge, tools/methods to their solution.

Practical skills (subject specific)
The Learner:
- **Application of skills**: can operate in complex and unpredictable contexts, requiring selection and application from a wide range of innovative or standard techniques.
- **Autonomy in skill use**: able to act autonomously, with minimal supervision or direction, within agreed guidelines.

Level 7: Masters

Development of Knowledge and Understanding
The Learner:
- **Knowledge base**: has depth and systematic understanding of knowledge in specialised/applied areas and/across areas and can work with theoretical/research-based knowledge at the forefront of their academic discipline.
- **Ethical issues**: has the awareness and ability to manage the implications of ethical dilemmas and work pro-actively with others to formulate solutions.
- **Disciplinary methodologies**: has a comprehensive understanding of techniques/methodologies applicable to their own work (theory or research-based).

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills
The Learner:
- **Analysis:** with critical awareness can undertake analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge communicating the outcome effectively.
- **Synthesis**: with critical awareness, can synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of the discipline/practice.
- **Evaluation**: has a level of conceptual understanding that will allow her/him critically to evaluate research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and argue alternative approaches.
- **Application**: can demonstrate initiative and originality in problem solving. Can act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level, making decisions in complex and unpredictable situations.

Key/Transferable Skills
The Learner:
- **Group working**: can work effectively with a group as leader or member. Can clarify tasks and make appropriate use of the capacities of group members. Is able to negotiate and handle conflict with confidence.
- **Learning resources**: is able to use full range of learning resources.
- **Self evaluation**: is reflective on own and others' functioning in order to improve practice.
- **Management of information**: can competently undertake research tasks with minimum guidance.
- **Autonomy**: is an independent and self critical learner, guiding the learning of others and managing own requirements for continuing professional development.
- **Communications**: can engage confidently in academic and professional communication with others, reporting on action clearly, autonomously and competently
- **Problem solving**: has independent learning ability required for continuing professional study, making professional use of others where appropriate.

Practical Skills

The Learner:

- **Application of skills**: can operate in complex and unpredictable and/or specialised contexts, and has an overview of the issues governing good practice.
- **Autonomy in skill use**: is able to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in professional practice.
- **Technical expertise**: has technical expertise, performs smoothly with precision and effectiveness; can adapt skills and design or develop new skills and/or procedures for new situations.

Level 8: Taught Doctorate

Development of Knowledge and Understanding

The Learner

- **Knowledge base**: has great depth and systematic understanding of a substantial body of knowledge. Can work with theoretical/research knowledge at the forefront of the discipline at peer reviewed standards/publication quality.
- **Ethical issues**: can analyse and manage the implications of ethical dilemmas and work pro-actively with others to formulate solutions.
- **Disciplinary methodologies**: has a comprehensive understanding of techniques/ methodologies applicable to the discipline (theory or research-based).

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

The Learner:

- **Analysis**: with critical awareness, can undertake analysis, managing complexity, incompleteness of data or contradictions in the areas of knowledge.
- **Synthesis**: can synthesise new approaches, in a manner that can contribute to the development of methodology or understanding in that discipline or practice.
- **Evaluation**: has a level of conceptual understanding and critical capacities that allows independent evaluation of research, advanced scholarship and methodologies. Can argue alternative approaches.
- **Application:** can act independently and with originality in problem solving, is able to lead in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.

Key/Transferable Skills

The learner:

- **Group working**: can lead/work effectively with group. Can clarify task, managing the capacities of group members, negotiating and handling conflict with confidence.
- **Learning resources**: is able to use full range of learning resources.
- **Self evaluation**: is reflective on own and others' functioning in order to improve practice.
- **Management of information**: can undertake innovative research tasks competently and independently.

- **Autonomy:** is independent and self-critical as learner; guides and supports the learning of others and can manage own continuing professional development.
- **Communication**: can communicate complex or contentious information clearly and effectively to specialists/non-specialists, understands lack of understanding in others. Can act as a recognised and effective consultant.
- **Problem solving**: can continue own professional study independently, can make use of others professionally within/outside the discipline.

Practical Skills

The Learner:
- **Application of skills**: can operate in complex and unpredictable/specialised contexts that may be at the forefront of knowledge. Has overview of the issues governing good practice.
- **Autonomy in skill use:** can act in a professional capacity for self/others, with responsibility and largely autonomously and with initiative in complex and unpredictable situations.
- **Technical expertise**: has technical mastery, performs smoothly with precision and effectiveness; can adapt skills and design or develop new skills/procedures for new situations.

SEC

Annex 4

Letter and Questionnaire sent to interviewees

University of ....

Date 08 November 2002

Dear ....

SEEC Project: Credit and FE/HE collaboration
Thank you for contributing to the workshop on FE credit level descriptors at the SEEC annual conference in September where we discussed this project. You will recall that once we had consulted widely on the FE credit levels descriptors FE1 to FE3, our intention was to discuss with a few institutions their FE/HE partnerships.

Our aims are to identify
the scope and potential in the provision of HE/FE currently and in the future (and related use of credit and level descriptors)
'good'/'best' practice of the use of credit in HE/FE partnerships
the issues raised by the use of credit
broader credit-related issues that facilitate/inhibit the development of partnerships across the HE/FE interface

At the conference, you indicated that you would be happy to participate in this project. During the next month or so we would like to visit your institution and meet with you and any other appropriate colleagues who might be able to offer around an hour or so of their time. We would be able to come on any of the following dates* and hope that one might be convenient for you. I would be grateful if you would suggest (via email bobjohnson@northwoodha6.fsnet.co.uk, tel/fax 01923 822160) the dates and times which will be convenient for you.

* Dates ....

....

I will then confirm the arrangements with you.

With best wishes

Bob

Professor Bob Johnson, On behalf of the SEEC project team
Bob Johnson, Dorothy Haslehurst and Jenny Moon

Attachments

1. Following consultations at the workshop in September and other discussions, some further amendments were made to the draft and I attach the latest version for your information. (not attached in the report)

2. Interviews: Indicative areas for discussion

Attachment 2.   Indicative areas for discussion with institutions and FE partners

1. What is the nature of your current and proposed FE/HE collaboration? For instance, how extensive is/will it be in terms of, for example, numbers of programmes, fte's, FECs etc.? f

2. What are the key purposes of these links? Are they through consortia, franchises or neither? If neither please explain.

3. Does the way the collaboration operates depend upon the use of credit and/or involve any mechanisms whereby the expectations of standards achieved in FE for the purpose of progression are discussed between FE/HE partners. If so, please elaborate.

4. What are the positive features of any mechanisms that appear to work? Please explain the basis for success.

5. Are there areas where results of FE/HE articulation have been less than successful? If so, please explain.

6. In general, what do you see as the barriers to increased FE/HE co-operation

7. Is there a role for the SEEC FE credit level descriptors in your FE/HE collaboration? If so, please elaborate.

8. Any other aspects

Please return the completed questionnaire to Bob Johnson,
preferably via email bobjohnson@northwoodha6.fsnet.co.uk
Or by post 45 Woodhouse Eaves, Northwood, Middx HA6 3NF

Thank you for your co-operation.

Bob

On behalf of the project team
Bob Johnson, Dorothy Haslehurst and Jenny Moon

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Annex 5

List of institutions/associations interviewed

London Metropolitan University

University of Kent at Canterbury

University of Luton

University of Portsmouth

Truro College

SWAFET South West Association for Education and Training

Yeovil College