

CATS Project Community of Practice – Submission 4, 12 April 2013

Achievements since COP Submission 3

- Partner meeting held at which the common credit model was revisited – a revised version has been circulated for agreements.
- Steering Group meeting held at which the dates for staff information and launch events were agreed. CMI/ILM confirmed their intention to push attendance strongly with centres. The common base line credit model was discussed further to secure as wide a range of partner agreement as possible.
- Mapping received from 7 of 9 partners engaged (increase of 2 from February CoP).
- Credit transfer offers received (subject to final QA approval) from 6 of 9 partners (increase of 3 on February CoP).
- One fully agreed and 6 agreements in principle from partners to a 'common baseline credit transfer' agreement, provisionally set as 20 credits for CMI/ILM Certificate holders and 40 credits for CMI/ILM Diploma holders.
- Attendance at AoC HE in FE Conference, contributing to discussions in the workshop and discussing projects at the poster presentation in the exhibition.
- CATS Colloquium led by Bradford College was undertaken to disseminate project progress to date and to explore scalability and transfer to other disciplines. Particular potential identified for engineering and construction.
- Staff information / training session is scheduled for 12 June 2013.
- Launch event established for 26 June 2013. Invitations and information being issued by CMI. ILM to issue mid-May (based on prior experience, a six week lead provides best results for attendance).
- Draft progression agreements issued to 7 partners with confirmed mapping process completed.
- Three partners have approved agreements through internal QA channels and these have now been issued to CMI/ILM for their consideration.
- Web development agreed and contracted to enable simplified presentation of progression and credit transfer offers.
- Attendance at project lead meeting in Walsall enabled contributions to evaluation focus group.
- Issue of notional learning hours and small volumes of credits on CMI and especially ILM units discussed with AoC project management team, resulting in AoC pursuing a meeting with CMI/ILM to discuss.

Problems/Challenges of developing CATS

- Issues identified since COP Submission 3:
 - At the CATS Colloquium and following input from Anthony Hudson (UEL) the issue of how learners enquiring about courses and potential value attached to prior learning was discussed. Despite the availability of CATS for many years it is still the case that much depends on who answers the phone/who the prospective student first talks to as to what response is received. The staff information event planned in June is designed to try and overcome this issue.
 - As progressing/credit transferring candidates from CMI/ILM awards are likely to have not only certificated learning but also experiential learning the issue of assessing how best to support learners in a holistic way and capture all potential learning for transfer was discussed.
 - The CATS Colloquium also highlighted the importance of providing additional support to those transferring in with substantial vocational experience alongside CMI/ILM credit but not necessarily having the academic skills to be successful on degree/masters programmes. The concept of bridging modules is one way of dealing with this.

Working across the FE/HE interface

- Relations have been overall strengthened through the project and peer support between partners is clearly visible through frequency of dialogues and joint work in progress. The CATS Colloquium enabled staff from a wide range of disciplines to engage in learning from the project with both FE and HE partners and also from business.

Working with other agencies

- Regular communications continues with the North, South and East Yorkshire partnerships, appraising them of progress.
- An initial meeting with the new Chair of the Institute of Directors (IoD) in Yorkshire & Humberside was held and details of the project provided. An invitation to the launch event has been issued and the concept of CATS in a wider context discussed. Interest in CATS was strong although subsequent exploration indicates that this will not be possible without changes to the national IoD qualification and licensing structure currently in operation.
- Leeds City Region (LCR) Skills Network and Local Enterprise Partnership Director were invited to the CATS Colloquium and have been invited to the launch event. The membership of the LCR LEP is currently undergoing change. By the time of the launch event the newly appointment members will be known.

'Eureka' moments/Key learning outcomes for the project

- Agreement in principle from the majority of partners engaged to move toward a common base line credit agreement.
- Really helpful input to debate and discussion by Anthony Hudson from UEL and David Smith (Dean of HE at Bradford College) at the CATS Colloquium assisting participants to reflect on current practice and consider the potential from changes in practice.
- Decision to back away from a complicated matrix structure on the web for presenting the detail of offers to a much simpler model that will rapidly guide learners to the potential routes and credit offers.

Emerging themes?

- From input by Anthony Hudson, the issue of the lack of tracking of CATS activity nationally is something that we have not considered previously and certainly our local partners would be no different to the national picture. How we develop such a system when it is not a required data set by any agency is uncertain but it will be raised with partners at the next partner meeting.