

Annex C: Benchmark criteria

Listing of key benchmark criteria for a prototype bid for a Foundation Degree programme in Construction and the Built Environment

	Criteria	Evidence / Comments / Issues
Sector / discipline	<p>The programme should demonstrate through its content and delivery that it meets the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – needs of the national and local construction and the built environment economy – demand for intermediate level, technical, supervisory, management and professional skills across a range of employers including SMEs and specialists. 	<p>The programme will need to be innovative in its ability to deliver across the full range of pathways required in a region whilst maintaining a breadth of approach which meets the needs of the individual, the employer and the construction industry as a whole. Consideration might be given to a 'core + options' model.</p> <p>The consortium should utilise existing Employer Forecasts and Labour Market Information in support of its case.</p>
Progression into the Foundation Degree	<p>The target student groups should include and offer equal opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – new entrants – people already working within the industry in craft, commercial and technical occupations. <p>Students may have completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Modern Apprenticeships – academic and vocational A levels – National Certificates and Diplomas – work based qualifications such as NVQs. 	<p>There needs to be clear pathways identified within the national qualifications framework and careers guidance material which show the range of opportunities for progression into and following the Foundation Degree.</p> <p>Employers have a responsibility for providing a supportive learning environment in which people are encouraged to achieve their full potential.</p>
Credit Accumulation and Transfer	<p>Accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) should be offered to all students to ensure equal opportunities and wider participation.</p> <p>Learning contracts, agreements and plans should form the framework</p>	<p>Consortium should demonstrate that they have the necessary experience of providing AP(E)L including individual student profiling and drawing up and monitoring personal development plans and learning agreements.</p> <p>The roles and responsibilities of the HEI, the individual student</p>

	for the period of study and work based experience.	and their employer must be clearly identified in the learning plan/agreement.
Progression beyond the foundation degree	<p>The Foundation Degree is an end qualification with validity in its own right offering career and employment opportunities.</p> <p>There must also be clear transition arrangements for people wishing to progress onto:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an honours degree – a professional qualification – a higher level NVQ. 	There needs to be clear pathways identified within the national qualifications framework and careers guidance material which show the range of opportunities for progression into and following the Foundation Degree.
Place of delivery	Delivery of the provision will be varied. Although HEIs will validate the programmes, it is likely that Foundation Degrees will be delivered through FECs, at employers' premises, HEIs, training centres or a combination of these.	The consortium needs to demonstrate its track record in the planning, management, assessment and accreditation of a multi-location, multi-delivery mode programme.
Mode of delivery	<p>The Foundation Degree programme should comprise a variety of modes of delivery taking into account good practice that currently exists across the sector. Part-time, modular, distance, web-based and full-time learning should all feature. Other innovative practice may be necessary to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – develop a breadth of inter-disciplinary awareness – accommodate diverse learning needs – provide access to students and employers in rural areas – take into account the particular needs of SMEs and specialists. 	<p>The programme should demonstrate sufficient flexibility and range of provision to offer a tailored service to those students who are in employment.</p> <p>Consortium may wish to consider links with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Construction Industry Learning Network – Careers Service(s), Employment Services, curriculum centres and schools – Centre for Teaching and Learning in the Built Environment (based at Cardiff) – Centre for Teaching and Learning in Engineering (based in Loughborough).

<p>Student support</p>	<p>There needs to be evidence of strategies to provide technical and administrative support and guidance through tutors, mentors, coaches within both the educational institution and the workplace.</p> <p>The consortium / programme should provide access to a full range of well-managed and maintained resources that are in line with current and future working practices within construction. These may extend beyond the educational provider – employers should be encouraged to assist.</p>	<p>Prior to commencement of the programme there will be a need for staff development for both the educational institutions and the employer to meet the challenging requirements of foundation degrees including AP(E)L, mentoring and flexible modes of delivery.</p> <p>Students must also be made aware of their responsibilities and given the key skills required to manage the various elements of the programme and monitor their own progress.</p> <p>Students will need access to resources at times suited to their patterns of study and work including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – library resources – ICT facilities – specialist drawing and laboratory equipment.
<p>Employer involvement</p>	<p>Employers, CITB, other NTOs, CIC, professional bodies and Regional Development Agencies should be shown to be actively contributing to the design, review and ongoing quality assurance of the Foundation Degree to ensure that it meets the needs of those working in construction and the built environment.</p> <p>Employers have key roles and responsibilities in ensuring their specific needs are being met. In particular they need to be directly involved in the delivery of the Foundation Degree by providing work-based:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – programmes of planned, monitored and reviewed work activities and experience – assessment of key, generic and occupational skills using occupational standards / NVQs – mentors. 	<p>The consortium should be able to demonstrate existing, strong partnerships with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – companies having a proven track record of training at all levels – a diverse range of employers, including small and medium sized firms, specialists and consultancy practices possibly within a training group – employers' organisations – local FE college(s) – professional institutions – Regional Development Agency. <p>The consortium must demonstrate through the programme development, delivery and support that they have taken account of the key role played by employers in providing the supportive learning environment necessary for student success.</p>

Occupational and Key Skills	<p>In order to ensure a breadth of responsiveness to the needs of the industry, the programme should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – draw upon occupational standards to assist in the design of an integrated programme of academic and work-based learning. – deliver and assess the full range of key and generic skills listed in the HEFCE Prospectus – develop interdisciplinary awareness. 	<p>Reference needs to be made to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – innovative work undertaken by the CIC Standards Committee (CICSC) which seeks to map and match academic course content, key skills, knowledge and understanding against occupational standards. – common learning outcomes at sub degree level which are found within the Latham Working Group 9 Report 'Educating the Professional Team' – knowledge, skill and breadth of experience requirements of the relevant professional institutions.
Knowledge elements	<p>In order that students can respond effectively to future developments in the workplace they will require a thorough and broad-based knowledge of the discipline they are studying together with a breadth of interdisciplinary awareness.</p>	
Transcripts and personal development plans	<p>In the interests of life-long learning students should, throughout their studies, work-based experience and continuing professional development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – maximise their learning experience and continuing improvement through the use of a personal development plan as a reflective learning tool in conjunction with their learning agreement – be provided with a record of their learning and achievement. – benefit from a breadth of experience. 	<p>Use of tools such as the RAPID Progress File (http://rapid.lboro.ac.uk).</p>
Promotion and marketing	<p>The proposal should include implementation plans for the effective marketing and promotion of the Foundation Degree to ensure sufficient student numbers and employer support. Involvement of local careers groups, adult guidance and employment services is critical.</p>	<p>Prototypes must have a minimum of 20 students per group.</p> <p>Partners must not underestimate the ongoing work which will be necessary to develop, market and deliver such an innovative and integrated programme.</p>

<p>Arrangements for the development and evaluation of the prototype</p>	<p>The national CITB, CC and CIC partnership must be represented on the Steering Group of a prototype Foundation degree so that it can assist in the development and dissemination of best practice for Foundation Degree programmes.</p> <p>The mapping of learning outcomes against the occupational standards should be validated by the CIC Standards Committee (CICSC).</p> <p>The programme should include arrangements for Quality Assurance, including external assessment and verification / moderation arrangements in line with existing QAA, QCA and professional body requirements.</p>	<p>Prototypes should include Quality Assurance arrangements which may be used to inform future national / industry / professional body arrangements.</p>
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