

Foundation degree prospectus

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Foreword by Tessa Blackstone, Minister for Higher Education

British higher education has a reputation which is second to none. Our honours and masters degrees attract students from every corner of the world. We are rightly proud of what our universities and colleges achieve.

In higher education as in manufacturing, maintaining that competitive edge requires us not just to develop and improve existing products but to diversify into new ones.

In February of this year, David Blunkett announced a range of bold new adventures for higher education. Key was the launch of the foundation degree.

I have been heartened by the reaction since then to our consultation proposals. There is wide acknowledgement that, as the British economy continues to expand, we need a flexible higher education sector ready to meet the skills needs of the 21st century at all levels. The foundation degree has the potential to raise the skill level of our workforce, particularly in the new industries. It will forge new alliances between universities, colleges and employers. It will bring more people into higher education with a richer mix of backgrounds than ever before. It will fuse the academic and vocational paths to high-level qualifications. In short, it is a new qualification for a new age.

This prospectus, drawn up by senior academics and employer representatives, invites bids for the first prototype courses. The consortia approach that underpins these prototypes provides a marvellous opportunity to unlock vast potential and to generate creative responses to the delivery of higher education. We will want to watch and learn how these prototypes develop to help us to shape future plans for foundation degrees.

I urge all universities, colleges and National Training Organisations to come together and seize this opportunity.

Tessa Blackstone

Foundation degree prospectus

To

Heads of HEFCE funded higher education institutions and further education colleges
Heads of National Training Organisations and Regional Development Agencies

Of interest to those responsible for

Academic and strategic planning, funding, learning and teaching, access

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Executive summary

Purpose

1. Section one of this document describes the framework of core features that will define the new foundation degree, while section two invites innovative proposals to deliver the qualification from 2001-02. The foundation degree is intended to help education providers supply the labour market with the high-quality graduates needed to address the shortage of intermediate level skills, as well as making higher education (HE) more affordable, accessible and appealing to a wider range of students – thereby widening participation in HE and stimulating lifelong learning. The Government envisages that a significant proportion of the future resource available to expand HE will be focused on foundation degrees.

Key points

2. A package of development funding and guaranteed additional student numbers (ASNs) will be made available to high-quality proposals to develop prototype foundation degrees. Bids to develop prototype foundation degrees must be made by a consortium comprising a minimum of: a higher education institution (HEI) with degree-awarding powers; employer representatives; and institutions that will deliver the foundation degree, typically further education colleges (FECs).

3. It is intended that the development of prototype foundation degrees will help generate good practice for dissemination, thereby enabling more effective and efficient implementation of this qualification by other providers. The prototypes will also be subject to external evaluation during both their design and delivery phases to inform longer-term decisions about the future development of foundation degrees.

4. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) intends to support the delivery of prototypes by approximately 10 to 20 consortia through an initial allocation of up to 2,000 ASNs for 2001-02. A further 1,000 places will be made available that year subject to student demand. The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) will allocate between £3.5 and £5 million of development funding for the prototypes, in addition to funding national promotional and evaluation activity.

5. In addition, all HE providers – whether or not engaged in the prototypes - will be able to bid for ASNs for foundation degree places from 2001-02 onwards. Further guidance will be issued through the annual invitation to bid for ASNs, to be issued later this year. Such bids will be subject to the usual funding conditions and not those applied to the prototypes. All bids must conform to the guidance on core features provided in this document in order to be eligible.

Action required

6. Bids must be submitted by **11 October 2000** to:

Graeme Rosenberg
HEFCE
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BRISTOL
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For further information please contact Graeme Rosenberg on 0117 931 7487 or Nicola Dowds on 0117 931 7471, or e-mail us at foundationdegree@hefce.ac.uk. In addition, a regularly updated list of questions and answers will be available from late July on the HEFCE's web-site, www.hefce.ac.uk, under the Learning and teaching section.

Section one: The foundation degree

Introduction

7. Earlier this year, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment launched a consultation exercise on proposals for the introduction of a new HE qualification, the foundation degree. At the same time he established a Foundation Degree Group (FDG) to develop these proposals further, taking into account responses to the consultation exercise. The membership of the FDG is listed at Annex A.

8. Overall, there was a very positive response to the proposed foundation degree, and the detailed comments have helped shape the framework described below. The main points made in response to the consultation are summarised at Annex B.

Purpose

9. The advent of the knowledge economy offers enormous opportunities to enrich people's lives and enhance our national prosperity. If we are to seize these opportunities, we must increase the numbers of highly skilled technicians and associate professionals in the workforce. People working at this level, such as graphic designers, legal executives and finance analysts, make an important contribution to our economy, and it is vital that they receive the appropriate education and training. Skills at higher technician and associate professional level are already in short supply, and will be in still greater demand in the next decade. Evidence produced by the National Skills Task Force shows that sectors likely to experience the greatest demand for these skills are financial services, the health professions, tourism and leisure, IT and culture, media and sport.

10. The foundation degree will respond to this need by equipping students with the combination of technical skills, academic knowledge, and transferable skills that employers are increasingly demanding. Foundation degrees will be valued HE qualifications in their own right, equipping people with skills for tomorrow's jobs. They will also be a valuable contribution to the ladder of lifelong learning, attracting people from different starting points and providing opportunities for progression to an honours degree and further professional qualifications. Finally, this new qualification will combat social exclusion by providing a route into HE for groups that are currently under-represented.

Potential students

11. We expect foundation degrees to appeal to a wide range of students. Given the vocational focus of these degrees, we anticipate that a high proportion of applicants will be employees seeking to open up new career horizons by enhancing their education and skills. These individuals are likely to want flexible modes of delivery such as part-time or distance learning provision that enables them to both 'earn and learn'. Foundation degrees will be particularly relevant to Advanced Modern Apprentices who have an appreciation of the theory underpinning their practical skills, as evidenced through specific technical qualifications. In addition, the prospect of an applied HE course offering a quicker route to

employment should be attractive to young people leaving schools and colleges, especially those with vocational A-levels and those seeking to study on a full-time basis. Foundation degrees will also provide a valuable route into employment for labour market returners and the unemployed.

Subject of study

12. Foundation degrees are intended to meet intermediate skills needs across all sectors of the economy. Prospective foundation degree programmes should prepare students for employment in specific areas of the economy where there is evidence of a demand for higher technical and associate professional skills.

Rationalisation of provision below honours degrees

13. It is widely recognised that some rationalisation of qualifications below honours degree level is desirable. Foundation degrees will build upon the best of the existing two-year HE programmes, and it is expected that over time the foundation degree will become the dominant qualification at this level. It is the Government's intention that the bulk of any further growth in HE be achieved through foundation degrees. In addition we anticipate that many institutions will wish to re-develop existing programmes to conform with the foundation degree framework set out below. To facilitate this rationalisation further, Graduate Apprenticeships will in future focus on provision at honours degree and higher levels.

The foundation degree framework

Core features

14. As with honours degrees, there will be no one single model for the foundation degree. Curriculum design and teaching methods are matters for the institutions validating and delivering the qualifications. However, if this new HE qualification is to respond to labour market needs, it must be widely respected and its value must be understood by employers and prospective students alike. To that end, all foundation degrees must have a readily identifiable and distinctive set of core features. This framework is summarised in the table opposite. Below we offer further guidance on each of these core elements and highlight other desirable practices that will further enhance the value of foundation degrees.

Essential features of the foundation degree

Employer involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the design and regular review of programmes • to achieve recognition from employer and professional bodies • with both local organisations and national sectoral bodies, to establish demand for foundation degree programmes
The development of skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical and work specific skills, relevant to the sector • underpinned by rigorous and broad-based academic learning • key skills in communication, team working, problem solving, application of number, use of information technology and improving own learning and performance • generic skills, for instance, reasoning and work process management • should be recorded by a transcript, validated by the awarding HEI and underpinned by a personal development plan
Application of skills in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students must demonstrate their skills in work relevant to the area of study • work experience should be sufficient to develop an understanding of the world of work and be validated, assessed and recorded • the awarding HEIs should award credits, with exemptions for students with relevant work experience
Credit accumulation and transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foundation degrees will attract a minimum of 240 credits • individual consortia should agree and apply credit accumulation and transfer arrangements • individual consortia should recognise appropriate prior and work-based learning through the award of credits
Progression - within work and/or to an honours degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there must be guaranteed articulation arrangements with at least one honours degree programme • programmes must clearly state subsequent arrangements for progression to honours degrees and to professional qualifications or higher-level NVQs • for those students wishing to progress to the honours degree, the time taken should not normally exceed 1.3 years for a full-time equivalent (FTE) student

Employer involvement

15. Foundation degrees will play a vital role in meeting labour market needs for higher technicians and associate professionals. Employer needs are constantly evolving, and it is important that HE keeps pace with these changes. This calls for close collaboration between employer and provider.

16. Employer bodies, such as the relevant National Training Organisation (NTO) and professional bodies, should be actively involved in the design and subsequent review of these new programmes. Individual consortia will wish to consider how they engage employers in the development of their programmes, but as a minimum we would expect the employer representation to involve a number of employers reflecting a cross-section of the relevant sector.

17. NTOs have developed a cohesive framework of national occupational standards across all major sectors of the economy. In order to ensure responsiveness to skill needs, we would expect providers to draw upon these standards to inform the design of foundation degrees.

18. In addition, it would be highly **desirable** if employers took an active part in the delivery of foundation degrees. This could take many different forms; for example, the development of work-based modules, provision of work experience placements, and assessment of student performance against key and generic skills. Such employer participation will enhance the learning experience of foundation degree students and ensure that the qualification reflects the changing needs of the sector.

The development of skills and knowledge

19. Employer expectations of graduates entering the labour market are rising. Knowledge alone may not be sufficient to secure a job in today's employment market. Instead employers are looking for a combination of skills and knowledge that makes their workforce more versatile and adaptable to changes in the workplace. The foundation degree seeks to respond to these needs by offering a programme with the following distinct set of features:

- specialist technical knowledge and skills
- underpinned by rigorous and broad-based academic learning
- assessed or accredited key skills, covering: communication, teamworking, problem solving, application of number, use of information technology, and improving own learning and performance
- other generic skills that employers are also seeking, such as reasoning and work process management
- an informed employment perspective.

20. It is expected that the precise balance between key skills, generic skills and specialist knowledge will vary according to the sector of the economy that the foundation degree is intended to address, and the specific needs articulated by potential employers. Key and generic skills will be an integral part of all foundation degree programmes, and should be recorded by a transcript of learning outcomes, validated by the HEI and underpinned by personal development plans. Foundation degrees will provide HEIs with the opportunity to build upon the flexibility that Curriculum 2000 (including key skills) offers schools and colleges.

Application of skills in the workplace

21. Despite recent headway within HE, a significant number of students still enter the labour market without a thorough understanding of employment. A hallmark of foundation degree courses will be the requirement for students to have not only acquired the requisite knowledge, but also to have applied these skills in the workplace. For most students this will be achieved through part-time study, whereby their academic studies are naturally complemented by the demonstration of these skills in their current jobs. Many others will be able to demonstrate their skills by reference to prior employment in the same occupational area as the subject being studied.

22. Where an individual has no experience of work or has not had the opportunity to work in the area relevant to the subject of study, the provider will need to secure an appropriate work placement. The National Centre for Work Experience can offer guidance and good practice.

23. In addition to work experience, it would be **desirable** if foundation degree programmes integrated study and work, for instance through work-based modules and meaningful project work that addresses real business needs. We would also encourage consortia to develop programmes that give students insights into the prospects of self-employment and develop entrepreneurial qualities.

Credit accumulation and transfer

24. Foundation degree courses will be demanding HE programmes attracting a minimum of 240 credits. These credits should provide a platform for swift and effective progression to a higher level.

25. If we are to promote lifelong learning, it is important that full recognition be given to an individual's past achievement, whether this be through structured learning or acquisition of competencies at work. Each consortium offering foundation degrees should therefore agree and apply common arrangements for accrediting prior learning. This will facilitate both entry to foundation degree programmes and, for those wishing to advance further, progression to an honours degree.

Progression

26. Foundation degrees are an important rung in the ladder of lifelong learning. Although we anticipate that many foundation degree graduates will wish to either enter employment or remain in work, there should be routes for further progression. These routes should be both occupational (for example, through further professional qualifications and higher level NVQs) and academic (for example through further study towards an honours degree).

27. There should be guaranteed arrangements for articulation and progression to honours degree programmes within individual consortia. Although the duration of the progression period might need to differ between institutions, and between students, it should normally be designed to take a foundation degree graduate a maximum of 1.3 FTE years to complete an honours degree. In practice, we expect that many foundation degree graduates will wish to pursue a progression route to an honours degree on a part-time basis. Irrespective of this, arrangements for progression should be clearly articulated in both the course programme and the prospectus.

Delivery and modes of provision

28. Foundation degrees are an exciting and innovative addition to the HE portfolio. They will be an important rung on the ladder of lifelong learning, facilitating entry to HE and, where appropriate, progression to an honours degree. This new qualification will also bring academia and employers closer together. To meet these objectives, we must develop innovative approaches to delivery.

29. While universities and higher education colleges with degree-awarding powers will award foundation degrees, the successful delivery of these programmes depends on the active involvement of several other partners. For this reason we have put a consortia-based approach at the heart of our initial prototype phase. Besides the degree-awarding body, employer representatives and the institutions delivering the foundation degree will be an integral part of any consortium. It is anticipated that further education colleges will play a large role in delivering this qualification since they have strong links with local employers and easy accessibility to potential learners. However, we recognise that some awarding HEIs may wish to deliver a proportion of, and perhaps all, of the foundation degrees.

30. The foundation degree should be delivered across the widest possible range of modes to accommodate the learning needs of diverse student groups. We expect that the foundation degree will be particularly attractive to those who want to 'earn and learn' at the same time. These individuals are likely to want part-time, modular, and distance or web-based learning that enables them to maintain progress towards their qualification alongside their work commitments. Conversely, labour market returners and younger students leaving schools and colleges are more likely to want full-time provision.

Illustrative models

31. Although the core features provide a framework within which to develop foundation degrees, we anticipate that consortia will welcome further illustrations of the type of programmes to be developed. Annex C therefore offers an aide-memoire of factors that

prospective consortia may wish to take into account when formulating their bid to deliver foundation degree prototypes. In addition to the core features, this aide-memoire covers other desirable features that we would encourage consortia to build into their programmes; for instance, employer delivery of learning and measures to increase student understanding of the world of work.

32. To further assist consortia, Annex D offers a set of illustrative models. These models are based on the core features of the foundation degree and have been informed by international best practice, feedback from employers and the views of HE practitioners. The models cover a range of sectors and seek to demonstrate a range of approaches to the factors described in the aide-memoire.

33. It should be noted that both the aide-memoire and models are **purely illustrative**. Indeed, we hope to receive many innovative and exciting proposals from consortia that go well beyond these models.

Section two: Funding to develop prototype foundation degrees

Delivering foundation degrees

34. This document invites bids to develop prototype foundation degrees. Institutions which do not receive funding to deliver prototypes may nevertheless provide foundation degrees by making a successful bid to the mainstream ASN competition, or by converting existing student numbers currently allocated to other types of provision. This invitation to bid does not apply to them, though they will wish to note that all foundation degree programmes should comply with the core features described in section one of this document.

Funding prototype foundation degrees

35. Successful bids to develop prototype foundation degrees will be supported through a package of development funding and ASNs. Institutions that might wish to convert their existing student numbers rather than expanding their overall volume of provision can bid for development funding only. Unsuccessful good-quality bids for prototype funding can be transferred to the competition for ASNs only, at the request of the consortium.

Development funding

36. The Government is making available between £3.5 and £5 million to fund 10 to 20 consortia to establish prototype foundation degrees across the breadth of HE institutions. The Government will also provide additional funding to support a national advertising campaign to promote the foundation degree in general and the prototypes in particular. This additional funding will also support an extensive evaluation of early models of foundation degrees.

37. We expect that the cost of developing a foundation degree programme will differ between consortia according to, for example, the complexity of the partnership; the relative experience of the providers in developing similar provision; and the different economies of scale open to different sizes of provider. Therefore, consortia are invited to bid for development funds according to need. Consortia may offer up to a maximum of three programmes of study. Bid levels are expected to reflect the number of programmes to be offered.

38. The development funding is intended to cover all reasonable costs. Consortia are encouraged to consider each of the following cost categories in constructing their case, and to specifically account for staff time and indirect costs as distinct from any other type of resource.

- a. **Establishing demand for the programme** – including: outreach to the local business community, not least small and medium-sized enterprises; marketing foundation degrees to all local stakeholders (note that this strategy should

complement the separately funded national promotional campaign); and liaising with local or regional organisations and national sector bodies.

b. **Project management** – including: the development and management of new consortia; the implementation of data systems to monitor actual costs, record progress made by students, and help evaluate the success of the scheme; facilitating work-based placements; designing internal examinations; and recording transcripts of achievement.

c. **Programme development** – including: making the best use of current practice in work-based learning and, if necessary, establishing new forms of work-based learning; developing internal guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning; designing summer school provision or alternative bridging arrangements; involving employers in designing materials; writing materials to ensure delivery of key and generic skills (all with reference to appropriate national standards); designing distance learning materials; and establishing transparent credit ratings for different aspects of the programme.

d. **Academic support to students** – both for students during the programme, and for students seeking to progress into employment or further study post-graduation.

e. Any **unusual aspects of programme delivery**. For example, we recognise that part of the programme development may need to include staff development activity - particularly for employers involved in some way in delivery of the provision.

39. A core feature of the foundation degree is a high degree of employer input into the programme, and therefore consortia are encouraged to think creatively about the roles of different partners. Innovative approaches may include some provision on employers' premises. Such arrangements must be available to all students able to benefit. For example, the Council could not fund a company's specific provision open only to its own employees.

Additional student numbers

40. Initially the HEFCE expects to allocate approximately 2,000 ASNs between the prototypes, depending on the quality of the bids and anticipated recruitment levels. The volume of provision available reflects the fact that consortia will have a relatively short period of time in which to market their programmes for 2001-02. However, the Council expects demand for foundation degree provision to expand rapidly and is also keen to provide institutions with sufficient flexibility to accommodate increasing student demand for the foundation degree. Therefore, the Council will guarantee to meet the cost of up to an additional 50 per cent of the consortium's initial allocation should a consortium find itself able to recruit more than its allocated numbers in its first year.

41. Further ASNs will automatically be allocated for the second cohort of students, subject to satisfactory recruitment levels in the first year, thereby doubling the volume of students

enrolled on prototype foundation degree programmes in 2002-03. Each consortium will be entitled to the number of students recruited in its first year.

42. There is currently no evidence available to help determine the cost of providing the foundation degree relative to other qualification aims. Therefore, the HEFCE intends to evaluate the costs of delivering the prototypes in order to inform its decision on the most appropriate long-term funding rate for the foundation degree. In the meantime, prototypes will be funded in the normal way - at the sector standard rate in the relevant price group or groups.

43. For the initial prototype phase, the student numbers provided to prototypes and the associated funding will be temporarily 'ring-fenced' rather than consolidated in the core of the institutions concerned. This is intended to protect HEIs' current funding rates from any potential short-term distortion, and will also allow the Council to create separate funding agreements with institutions in respect of the prototype student numbers and funds. Funds and student number provided through the prototype phase will automatically be transferred to an institution's core following completion of the evaluation.

44. In order to create as effective an initial phase as possible, the Council expects nearly all consortia to begin delivery of the foundation degree prototypes in September 2001. However, the Council recognises that it would be wrong to recruit students to courses that exist in name only, and therefore programmes should only be proposed for a September 2001 start if it is likely that they will be sufficiently developed in time to be marketed to potential students. This is most likely to be the case where institutions are building on similar aspects of provision.

45. On the other hand, the Council is keen to see the prototype foundation degrees delivered in the widest possible range of institutions in order to reflect the diversity of the sector. This includes bids from consortia that incorporate, or are led by, HEIs with less directly applicable expertise - for example, those with the highest reputation for employable graduates but with little or no experience in delivering vocationally orientated provision at a level below the honours degree. Such HEIs may need to construct a completely new programme. Therefore, the Council will consider requests from consortia putting forward high-quality bids to defer the take-up of their ASNs until 2002-03. However, such requests are expected to be exceptional.

46. Providers operating a semester system or accommodating students studying on a part-time basis may wish to phase the start of their programme(s) throughout 2001-02. This should be stated clearly in the bid.

47. A core feature of the foundation degree is that it must articulate with one or more specified honours degree programmes - thereby providing foundation degree graduates who have the ability to complete an honours degree with guaranteed access to accelerated progression arrangements. Although the progression period should not exceed 1.3 years of FTE study, the precise nature of the progression phase is not prescribed. However, we anticipate that many institutions may wish to provide some form of bridging arrangement to

help the foundation degree graduate progress to the final year of an honours degree. The Council can confirm that such provision will be supported. Therefore, from 2002-03 institutions will be able to bid for ASNs to enable foundation degree graduates to progress to honours degrees, and at the rate of 1.3 FTE student numbers, where the provider intends to put bridging arrangements in place.

Bidding rules

Eligibility

48. All bids to develop foundation degrees must comply with the core features described in section one of this prospectus.

49. Consortia bidding to develop prototypes must comprise the awarding body (the degree-awarding university or higher education college), employer representation, and the organisations involved in the delivery of programmes. To facilitate wider participation we would normally expect FECs to be partners within consortia. However, we do not rule out the possibility of provision being offered wholly by HEIs, and therefore not all consortia will necessarily include FECs. Similarly, more than one HEI may participate in a consortium, although no foundation degree programme should be jointly awarded. All consortia must involve employer representation.

50. Bids to develop prototype foundation degrees must be submitted by a consortium led by the university or degree-awarding higher education college validating the foundation degree(s), for the purpose of contracting with the Council. To ensure clear lines of accountability, development funds and ASNs will be allocated to the lead institution, which will then be responsible for distributing them within the consortium according to the prior contracts made with each of the other members. Where the validating HEI is partnered with an FEC or a higher education college without degree-awarding powers, this will take the form of an indirect funding relationship. The ASNs must remain associated with the validating HEI to ensure clear responsibility for quality assurance, and the HEI will be responsible for student data return.

51. Consortia involving more than one HEI may intend that the lead HEI should not validate all of the provision made. In such circumstances the bid must state which institution is responsible for validating the programme(s), and hence which is responsible for quality assurance. The Council will allocate ASNs directly to the HEI validating the programme to ensure that there are clear lines of responsibility for the quality of the student experience. Those HEIs to whom ASNs have been allocated will make individual student data returns. If more than one validating HEI is involved in a consortium, then a lead must still be identified for the purposes of contracting with the Council and the distribution of development funding.

52. In all cases the Council will wish to see evidence of a strong equitable partnership, and institutions are expected to follow the principles previously set out in 'HE in FE colleges: Code of practice on indirectly funded partnerships' (HEFCE 99/63) and 'HE in FE colleges: Draft code of practice for consortia' (HEFCE 00/02). In particular, consortia members are

strongly advised to reach an early agreement on the internal distribution of funds and ASNs: non-lead HEIs and FECs must be guaranteed any agreed portion of the allocated ASN at the point of consolidation, or should the consortium dissolve sometime in the future.

53. Consortia may include up to three foundation degree programmes in their prototype bids, and may include any number of modes in which a single foundation degree programme can be delivered.

54. There is significant potential for the development of foundation degrees in the areas funded by the Teacher Training Agency and the National Health Service. While the HEFCE cannot consider bids for prototypes in these areas, there are others, such as classroom assistants, which are eligible for HEFCE funding. If in doubt, bidders should check with the relevant funding agency.

55. Partners are not restricted in the number of consortia in which they can participate. However, since we aim to see the prototypes delivered in the widest possible range of HEIs, it is unlikely that we will fund any HEI as a lead institution more than once.

56. There is no limit on the number of HEIs and FECs that can participate in any one consortium. However, we do believe that it is important, both in terms of the student experience and the quality of the evaluation, that there is a critical mass of provision delivered in each location. Therefore, members should ensure that there is a minimum of 20 students per cohort at each location where a foundation degree programme is delivered.

57. We would normally expect consortia to be composed of clusters of HEIs and FECs in the same geographic area, but do not rule out consortia being formed on other bases. However, institutions should consider carefully how they would ensure that a non-local partnership did not have a negative impact on students' progression opportunities. Funding is only available for consortia where the lead HEI is located in England.

58. All consortia are expected to adhere to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. The section on collaborative provision is particularly relevant.

Timetable

59. Bids must be submitted by **11 October 2000** on an electronic template to be provided. We also require six versions in hard copy. The electronic bidding template will be sent to all HEIs in August and is intended to facilitate the construction of a bid that provides the assessment panel with easy access to the information they need.

60. Funding outcomes will be announced in mid-November.

Summary of bid structure

61. In order to be eligible, bids to develop prototypes must include the information listed below.

- a. A summary of the ASNs requested broken down by programme and expected mode of study. Consortia planning to use existing places rather than apply for ASNs should indicate the number, mode and level of study from which the numbers will be drawn.
- b. Details of the funding required to develop the proposed programme(s), broken down into the categories described at paragraph 38.
- c. A brief work-plan and management arrangements, including the timescales for setting up partnerships and structures, development and design of the curriculum, advertising and recruitment, and other key tasks. This should be cross-referenced to the case for development funding.
- d. An evaluation plan, which shows how the consortium intends to evaluate locally the prototype foundation degree programmes. In putting this plan together consortia should refer to the sections below on monitoring and evaluation which indicate the type of data that will be required by national evaluators.
- e. Supporting evidence that demonstrates the high quality and added value of the proposal. The nature of the evidence required is detailed in the following section on bidding information.

Bidding information

Consortia partnerships

62. Where a bid is for more than one foundation degree programme it should make clear any variations in the roles of consortium partners regarding the different programmes. In particular, consortia should consider the relevance of employer-related involvement in each programme.

63. Bids should provide the following information:

- a. Contact details of the lead member of the consortium.
- b. An outline of the structure of the consortium, including its management structure.
- c. A table of all partners involved in the consortium. For each programme, this should indicate the roles of partners in validation and quality assurance, design and development, and delivery – including the progression phase. It should also indicate any other key roles of the partners. Since FECs are normally expected to be part of consortia, members are asked to provide an explanation of their strategy where this

will not be the case. Similarly, a consortium will need to explain its rationale where the institutions making the provision are not all geographically proximate.

- d. Evidence that all partners have a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities. A statement of agreement from each partner should be appended to the bid.
- e. Details of the arrangements between partners related to funding and student numbers.
- f. Bids may wish to include any additional evidence of the strength of the partnership.

Student supply

64. Since the foundation degree is a new qualification, consortia will not be able to provide clear evidence of student demand for the qualification. However, the assessment panel will nevertheless still wish to be satisfied that the courses will be taken up and that the institutions have been able to deliver their recruitment targets in the past. It will also wish to be satisfied that the numbers of students requested are appropriate to the proposed foundation degree programme(s).

65. Consortia should supply the following information:

- a. Clearly identified target student groups, for each programme.
- b. A description of the strategy for recruiting these students.
- c. An assessment of the particular features of the consortium that make it well placed to attract students.

66. In addition, the assessment panel will have data on the past patterns of recruitment for institutions, and, where relevant, how these relate to their previous allocations of ASNs as an indicator of their past success in delivering planned recruitment. Institutions should comment on their past recruitment patterns in the bid.

Entry and progression routes

67. Consortia should supply the following information for each programme:

- a. Specified entry routes, including Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L).
- b. Details of guaranteed arrangements for progression to at least one honours degree programme, including the means by which the programme will ensure that able students can progress to complete a honours degree in no more than 1.3 years

of FTE study. Details of credit transfer arrangements and threshold criteria that foundation degree graduates need to meet in order to be eligible to progress are also requested. A statement from the relevant HEI(s) agreeing to these arrangements should be appended to the bid.

c. A broader assessment of how the foundation degree will provide opportunities for further study towards academic, professional or vocational qualifications. This should include opportunities within and outside the consortium.

68. In addition, assessors will have available for HEIs performance indicators (PIs) on access and progression, to inform the context of the bid. Institutions may wish to comment on how the bid relates to these data.

Employability

69. Bids must demonstrate clearly that their programmes will meet employer and skills needs, and show how they will develop students' employability.

70. Consortia should supply the following information:

a. Evidence of the market opportunity for the programme in both a national and local context. In particular, an analysis of regional priorities and/or sectoral skills shortages and employment needs. This could be information from Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), sector-wide employer bodies, or relevant research and labour market information. This analysis should also demonstrate how the programme would add value to the existing portfolio of provision available in the region.

b. An outline of the expected roles of employers or employer bodies in identifying the need for foundation degree programmes, and in the design, review and delivery of foundation degrees. Clear evidence of their integration in the development of the programme should be included, such as evidence of existing partnerships, or statements of commitment from employers.

c. A strategy for ensuring the continuing involvement of employers or employer bodies in the development of the programme(s). In particular, we would like to see that consortia have given some thought to how they might respond to potential future changes in patterns of employment – for example, increased patterns of home working or increased demand for entrepreneurial skills.

d. A description of the programme elements that aim to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes that will enhance students' employability. This could refer to the information submitted in relation to paragraph 73a, and must include the contribution of work experience to specified learning outcomes, such as an understanding of the world of work. Where consortia plan to offer significant numbers of work placements, bids should explain how these will be secured.

- e. A description of the employment opportunities that the programmes are intended to lead to, and any evidence in support of this.

71. In addition, assessors will have available data on the employment record of HEIs' previous students, to inform the context of the bid. These data will be drawn from the HESA first destinations survey and will take into account relevant factors such as subjects studied and students' previous educational attainment. The Council recognises that at present this provides only tentative information, and consortia are encouraged to include in the bid supplementary evidence of their students' success in employment. This should state the extent to which such evidence has been quality assured. Institutions could also comment on how the bid relates to their students' previous employment records.

Programme structure and student support

72. All programmes should deliver outcomes related to the acquisition of academic knowledge, key/generic and specialist skills. Assessors will want to see how the balance between these contributes to the stated opportunities for progression and employment.

73. Consortia should supply the following information for each programme:

- a. A programme specification in accordance with the guidance provided by the QAA. This should include the balance of learning outcomes to be delivered and how they will be assessed. Bids could comment on the extent to which existing modules or materials will be used as building blocks for the new programme.
- b. The arrangements for the recording of learning and achievement.
- c. A description of the intended mode(s) and location(s) of delivery, such as elements of work-based, distance or web-based learning, and how this will accommodate diverse learning needs.
- d. A description of proposed student support arrangements, including: learning resources; careers guidance; support for personal development; support from tutors and mentors.

Quality

74. We wish to ensure that there are more opportunities for students to experience high-quality HE, and therefore we will examine evidence about the quality and standards of providers' learning and teaching. Since the bids are for new programmes we will look for evidence of quality across a range of current provision at the providing institution and for information about current quality assurance arrangements.

75. Consortia should provide the following information:

- a. The quality assurance arrangements of the validating HEI for each programme and an assessment of its ability to quality assure any remotely located provision.
 - b. Evidence of good practice or innovation in learning and teaching that the programme(s) will draw upon.
76. In addition, assessors will have the following information available:
- a. Summaries of QAA (and its predecessor bodies) institutional and subject review reports and FEFC inspection reports, as evidence of the quality and standards of existing provision in related subject areas, and of the robustness of institutions' quality assurance procedures. Bids may wish to comment on these reports, and refer to any relevant external assessment reports from professional and accreditation bodies.
 - b. For HEIs, PIs on student progression and learning outcomes, and for FECs, PIs on retention and achievement. These data will be considered alongside the access PIs and will provide background information for assessors. Consortia may wish to comment on how the bid relates to these data.

Strategy

77. The Council is seeking to ensure the long-term sustainable development of this new qualification across a diversity of institutions. Bids to develop foundation degree programmes will need to demonstrate that all members of consortia are committed to the long-term growth of the qualification. They will also need to draw out the links between HEIs' corporate plans, their sub-strategies for learning and teaching, widening participation and links with the business community, and with FECs' HE development plans.

78. Consortia should provide a specific explanation of how the bid builds on or further develops institutions' strategic priorities. HEIs are expected to refer to their corporate plans and strategic aims relating to widening participation, learning and teaching, and building links with the business community. Where relevant, FECs should refer to their HE strategy statements.

Assessment criteria

79. Bids will be assessed by a sub-group of the FDG and some representatives from the HEFCE's ASN advisory group. The assessors' advice will then be presented to the ASN advisory group before it makes its funding recommendations to the Council.

80. Bids will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a. The strength of the bid in meeting employer and skills needs, and the degree to which employers are integrated into the development.

- b. The contribution of the proposed programmes to developing students' employability and enhancing their employment prospects.
- c. The strength of the proposed partnerships and management structure that will underpin consortium relationships.
- d. The contribution of the proposed programmes to widening access into, and offering progression routes through, higher education, including their capacity to be adapted to the flexible learning needs of students.
- e. The quality of provision.
- f. The overall coherence of the bid.
- g. The feasibility of the bid in meeting its recruitment targets.
- h. The feasibility of the development and implementation plan, and associated costs.
- i. The value for money of the bid.

81. Since the purpose of the prototype is to highlight good practice that can be disseminated more widely, the assessment panel will seek to fund a combination of prototypes that between them cover the many characteristics that might potentially have an impact on the nature, success and cost of the qualification. We will seek to include a broad range of HEIs in the development and delivery of prototypes.

Evaluation, monitoring and quality assurance

82. The Council will commission an evaluation of the prototypes during their prototype phase in order to:

- a. Ensure that the provision is of high quality. The QAA will help design an assessment tool that is consistent with its own teaching quality assurance processes and this will be applied to all foundation degree prototypes.
- b. Evaluate the relative success of the prototypes in meeting employer and student needs and developing high-quality sustainable programmes.
- c. Identify good practice in developing a variety of foundation degree models that can be disseminated to other providers of HE.
- d. Estimate future demand for the new qualification following market testing of the prototype product with students and employers and the completion of a high-profile national campaign to promote the qualification.

- e. Identify any longer-term impact on institutions' strategic priorities.
- f. Cost the development and delivery of the foundation degree relative to other qualification aims in order to determine its long-term funding rate.

83. The Council is also likely to extend this evaluation to include a sample of non-prototype foundation degree programmes funded through the mainstream ASN exercise.

84. We will publish details of successful bids.

85. The non-consolidation of the ASN and associated funding allocated in respect of prototypes will allow the Council to closely monitor progress against recruitment targets. All institutions will be subject to the other mechanisms normally used by the Council to monitor the impact of allocating ASNs (previously described in HEFCE 99/56).

86. Foundation degree programmes will, in due course, be reviewed by the QAA alongside other HEFCE-funded provision. The QAA's Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education should, from the outset, be used to inform decisions about arrangements for assuring the quality and standards of foundation degree programmes. Although institutions involved with prototype provision are encouraged to be innovative in their proposals, the quality and standards of the programme must be secured.

Annex A

Membership of the Foundation Degree Group

Professor Ivor Crewe (Chair)	Vice-Chancellor, University of Essex
Tony Allen	National Education Manager, Whitbread Plc
Bahram Bekhradnia	Higher Education Funding Council for England
Paul Cohen	Department for Education and Employment
Richard Coldwell	Consultant, The National Grid Plc
Judith Compton	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Dr Geoffrey Copland	Vice-Chancellor, University of Westminster
Joe Eason	Manager of Training and Education Development, The Corus Group
Leigh Hackel	Department for Education and Employment
Professor Michael Harloe	Vice-Chancellor, University of Salford
Chris Humphries	Director General, British Chambers of Commerce
Caroline Neville	Principal, City College Norwich
Andy Powell	Chief Executive, National Training Organisation National Council
Professor David Robertson	Head of Policy Development, Liverpool John Moores University
Irene Scott	Regional Director, National Health Service Executive
Ruth Silver	Principal, Lewisham College
Julie Swan	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Dr Sheila Watt	Higher Education Funding Council for England
Professor Dianne Willcocks	Principal of the College of Ripon and York St John

Observers

Professor Bart McGettrick University of Glasgow (Observer for Scotland)

Professor P G McKenna University of Ulster (Observer for N. Ireland)

Graeme Rosenberg Higher Education Funding Council for England

Professor Adrian Webb University of Glamorgan (Observer for Wales)

Secretariat

Cate Dixon Department for Education and Employment

Nicola Dowds Higher Education Funding Council for England

Annex B

Key issues arising from the consultation

1. The consultation on foundation degrees was launched by the DfEE on 15 February 2000 and closed on 25 April 2000. The consultation attracted 310 responses, of which 93 were from HEIs, 83 from FECs, and 64 from employers or employers' representatives.
2. The overwhelming majority of respondents supported the introduction of foundation degrees. In particular, there was widespread support for the following proposals:
 - a. The foundation degree should be targeted at a wide range of potential students including school leavers and individuals already in employment. The provision should therefore be designed to meet the needs of potentially diverse student groups, with part-time, full-time, modular, and distance learning modes made available according to student demand, and delivery at a variety of locations – including employer premises, outreach centres, FECs and HEIs.
 - b. Employers must have an integral role in the consortia developing foundation degrees to ensure that the new programmes meet labour market needs. In particular, it is important that a range of employer perspectives should inform the development of foundation degrees; including local employers as well as the national employer representative bodies that are able to identify skills needs across a sector. Moreover, clear evidence of employer demand should dictate the subject provision made through the foundation degree: this should not be prescribed in advance.
 - c. All foundation degrees should have the following core features:
 - i. A programme that delivers the specialist knowledge which employers require, yet is underpinned by rigorous and broad-based academic learning.
 - ii. Accredited key skills.
 - iii. Credits for appropriate qualifications and experience.
 - iv. Active links between a student's work experience and academic study.
 - v. Guaranteed arrangements for articulation and progression to honours degree programmes for able foundation degree graduates, and which are normally not expected to exceed 1.3 years of study for an FTE student.
3. While respondents generally endorsed the proposals set out in the consultation paper they also raised a number of issues that the FDG considered in more detail before providing its advice to Ministers and the HEFCE. These key issues are summarised below.

Progression

4. There was clear agreement among respondents that efficient and effective articulation and progression arrangements between the foundation degree and honours degree are essential characteristics of the new qualification and are necessary to stimulate student demand for the qualification. However, there was no consensus on the timescale for progression. It was strongly argued that, without some flexibility, academic standards could be at risk. Therefore, the FDG determined that, while guaranteed progression arrangements for able students should remain a core feature of the foundation degree – and that the length of time needed by a foundation degree graduate to complete an honours degree should not normally last more than 1.3 years of FTE study – the exact duration of the progression period should remain an academic rather than a bureaucratic judgement.

Qualifications framework

5. The consultation exercise asked respondents to comment on the appropriate level of the foundation degree within the QAA's proposed three-tiered qualifications framework for undergraduate study. However, during the course of the consultation exercise the QAA revised its proposed undergraduate framework to include four rather than three tiers, thereby raising the question of whether the foundation degree should be assigned to the new level two or three. (The honours degree will be assigned to level four of the new framework.) The FDG's initial view is that the foundation degree be placed at level three in the four tier undergraduate framework. However, it will seek advice from the QAA in the light of responses to its position paper on the national qualifications framework for HE.

Nature of consortia

6. Respondents clearly supported the proposal that universities and degree-awarding colleges of higher education should award foundation degrees, and agreed that FECs should typically play a major role in the delivery of the qualification as a means of ensuring greatest access to the qualification. However, some respondents argued convincingly that the delivery of the foundation degree provision by HEIs would not by definition restrict access to the foundation degree and therefore should not be excluded as an option – indeed in many cases it might help to stimulate demand for the foundation degree from both students and employers. Therefore, delivery of the foundation degree provision by HEIs is not ruled out.

7. The consultation document proposed that consortia bidding to develop foundation degrees should always be led by an HEI with degree-awarding powers. However, both colleges of higher education without degree-awarding powers and FECs with a proven track record of delivering HE programmes, were concerned that they might become junior partners in consortia led by HEIs. In particular, they felt this might lead to inadequate transfer of resource between lead HEIs and their partners. The FDG recognises these concerns, and is determined to fund only those bids to develop prototypes founded on strong equitable partnerships. However, HEIs with degree-awarding powers are still expected to lead consortia in order to ensure clear lines of responsibility for validation and quality assurance of the prototypes.

Demand

8. The consultation exercise highlighted some respondents' concern about low initial demand for any new qualification. The FDG expects the close partnerships between employers and education providers to quickly establish employer demand for the foundation degree, which is the key to attracting students to programmes. The DfEE also intends to support a national advertising campaign to complement consortia's local recruitment strategies.

Funding

9 The consultation document raised the possibility of premium funding for providers to be linked to the number of students progressing quickly into employment. However, only a minority of respondents supported this proposal due to concerns that an outcome-dependent premium would encourage providers to recruit only those students who were most likely to progress rapidly to employment – thereby potentially discriminating against non-traditional students who might be attracted by the foundation degree.

Annex C

Aide-memoire for the development of foundation degree programmes

Sector/discipline	The product should reflect the needs of the local and national economy and the demand for intermediate skills.
Progression into the foundation degree	It is expected that target student groups will be varied. It will be necessary to articulate the various progression routes into foundation degree programmes. These should be agreed by the providers.
Credit accumulation and transfer/Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning	This is a core feature of the foundation degree and AP(E)L should be offered to students to encourage wider participation. Learning contracts and agreements could form the framework for the period of study.
Place of delivery	Delivery of the provision could be varied. Although HEIs will validate the programmes, it is likely that foundation degrees will be delivered through FECs, at employers' premises, at HEIs, or a combination of these.
Mode of delivery	<p>The foundation degree could be delivered in a variety of ways, and good practice currently exists across the sector. Part-time, modular, distance, web-based and full time, and their various combinations, should be considered. Other innovative practice may be necessary to accommodate diverse learning needs.</p> <p>Learning, teaching and assessment strategies should be innovative, flexible and build on existing good practice. The strategies should clearly articulate with the aims and objectives of the qualification.</p>
Student support	<p>Learning resources – for instance, library and IT facilities, and access to specialist equipment – should be articulated. These may extend beyond the educational provider.</p> <p>Technical and administrative support, as well as career guidance, are likely to feature strongly. The nature and timing of student support may be critical to prevent them terminating their studies prematurely. Support from tutors and mentors from the participating sectors are seen as having a crucial role.</p>
Employer involvement	This is critical to the success of the qualification and is a

	<p>core feature.</p> <p>Employer and professional bodies should actively contribute to the design and review of the foundation degree. It is expected that foundation degrees will be designed to meet the needs of business sectors and regional economies. Employers have a key role in ensuring their needs are being met. We expect employers and other bodies, for instance NTOs and RDAs, to work with education providers and other agencies to agree the design of the qualification.</p> <p>Employers are strongly encouraged to become directly involved in the delivery of the foundation degree. This may take many forms, for instance, offering work-based learning and the assessment of key and generic skills.</p> <p>Existing good practice should be explored to maximise the involvement of employers and the relevant bodies.</p>
Occupational and key skills	<p>The foundation degree is expected to meet occupational requirements and cover generic and key skills. The key skills are identified in the core features section of this document. The generic skills of reasoning, work process management and personal values and attitudes (such as motivation, discipline, judgement, leadership and initiative) are also highly valued.</p>
Knowledge elements	<p>In addition to the occupational skills, students will require a thorough and broad-based knowledge of the discipline they are studying. The academic underpinning is essential to enable students to respond to future developments in the workplace.</p>
Understanding of the world of work	<p>Besides work experience, we would encourage consortia to offer vocational modules that explain how enterprises work and promote self-employment.</p>
Transcripts and personal development plans	<p>In the interests of life-long learning, students should be provided with a record of their learning and achievement, possibly in the form of a transcript. Personal development plans are a reflective learning tool and, in conjunction with learning agreements, can provide a framework for the period of study. The use of personal development plans is not uncommon in the workplace and is often a feature of continued professional development. Existing good practice</p>

	could be explored to maximise the learning experience and ensure continuous improvement.
Progression beyond the foundation degree	Although the foundation degree is a qualification in its own right, there should be clear transition arrangements for those wishing to progress within their profession or onto an honours degree.

Annex D

Illustrative model one

Administrator in a medium-sized electronics wholesaler

1. Sam is an administrator for a medium-sized wholesaler in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The company is growing and needs to undergo further computerisation of its operations. The employer has experienced difficulties in finding staff locally with the necessary skills in information technology (IT) and knowledge of its business, and has therefore identified a need to develop the skills within the company.
2. Sam would like to move into this new area of work. She has agreed with her manager that a foundation degree is the best option to develop the skills and knowledge required by the company and as a way to enhance her future prospects. Sam will move into her new area of work, which will give her the opportunity to apply her learning to the workplace.
3. The North-East RDA in its skills strategy for the region has identified a need for an adaptable and highly skilled workforce with increased skills and knowledge in this area of IT. Local HEIs and FECs could therefore work with the North-East RDA and other partners including the Information Technology NTO and local Learning Partnerships to develop a part-time foundation degree in Business Information Technology.

Sector/discipline	Business Information Technology
Progression into the foundation degree	Sam has an NVQ level 3 in Business Administration, and six years' experience in the workplace. She works in an environment where more IT skills and knowledge are required. Her employer has agreed access to the necessary technology to allow her to complete her degree, and to duties which are relevant to Sam's area of study.
Credit accumulation and transfer/Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning	The university accepts Sam's qualifications and experience as meeting the admissions criteria for the programme of study. This has been agreed through AP(E)L.
Place of delivery	The foundation degree will be delivered through a joint partnership between her local FEC and HEI and a large employer in the city. The main source of contact will be her local FEC, with which Sam has a learning agreement.
Mode of delivery	Her chosen foundation degree in Business Information Technology is delivered through part-time study, two evenings per week, with further modules delivered by the HEI through distance learning. Her learning will include

	work-based modules directly related to her area of study and most likely involving her current employer.
Student support	<p>As part of her learning agreement, Sam will receive access to the libraries of both the FEC and HEI and to other facilities, for example, computer access through her local FEC. In addition she will have a tutor based in the college and an employer mentor in the IT industry.</p> <p>Student support will be offered at entry and exit to the foundation degree and at agreed points throughout the period of study. Careers guidance will be available through both the FEC and HEI.</p>
Employer involvement	Employers in the IT sector have been involved in the design of this foundation degree – especially the distance learning materials. Her own employer and other locally based employers will be involved in the delivery. Employers involved in the design will participate in the review of the course and of the learning materials. An employer will also be available as a mentor and possibly assessor of her course work.
Occupational and key skills	The development and accreditation of key and specialist skills will form an integral part of the programme of study. These skills, for instance communication skills and customer awareness, will be delivered as part of the taught elements of the course as well as part of the work-based study. Accreditation and assessment will be in line with the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) key skills and national occupational standards frameworks.
Knowledge elements	<p>The skills development will be underpinned by theoretical knowledge, delivered through academic modules, and related work-based study.</p> <p>Sam will be expected to undertake such modules as business systems analysis and design, business environment and policy, and database systems.</p>
Transcripts and personal development plans	The HEI will provide a transcript of the final award identifying modules, work-related study and skills development. Throughout her study Sam will complete an IT-based progress file reflecting on her development.
Progression beyond the foundation degree	Following completion of the foundation degree in Business Information Technology, Sam will have the opportunity to

	widen her career options within the company. At some stage she may wish to undertake further study for instance to NVQ level 4 or to an honours degree with one further year of study.
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4. This illustrative model has been developed in conjunction with the IT NTO.

Illustrative model two

Employee in a small, recently established design company

5. The North-West RDA's 'Investing in Business' strategy has identified a number of sectors with outstanding potential for growth, including the creative industries, multimedia, film and TV. Such sectors are expected to require higher-level generic and specific skills. Although they will require skilled people at all levels, there will be a particular demand at the intermediate level.

6. In order to address skills needs in the region, the RDA intends to work more closely with its local HEIs and enhance the connections between HE and small to medium-sized enterprises, to ensure they are not placed at a disadvantage by the lack of skills necessary in a knowledge-driven economy. One such collaborative exercise between the regional partners could result in the production of a foundation degree in video production.

7. Hussam is an employee of a small, recently established design company who has work-based experience of computer-aided design but no formal training or qualifications. The employer wishes to diversify into video production and to provide the employee with opportunities. Regular day release, however, is not practicable, whereas some periods of full-time study are possible.

Sector/discipline	Cultural industries/video production
Progression into the foundation degree	Hussam has AP(E)L through one of the University for Industry (Ufi) centre's modules. AP(E)L and the learning contract is agreed between the candidate, HEI, FEC and employer.
Credit accumulation and transfer/Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning	The learning contract specifies the learning pathway based on credits for specific components, including key skills development and academic content.
Place of delivery	Learning will take place in a variety of locations: the workplace; FEC and/or HEI; and completion of specialist training based at the premises of the employer or employers specialising in video production.
Mode of delivery	Hussam's learning contract specifies flexible provision, which includes: workplace learning; several periods of one- or two-week blocks of full-time study at the FEC or HEI; three weekend courses and the completion of practical experience training using the facilities of other employers.
Student support	Learning resources of the HEI and FEC are fully available, and will include access to their libraries, specialist equipment and IT. Employees involved in delivering work-

	based learning will be trained; a link tutor is in place and there will be full access to the HEI and FEC support services. A mentor is appointed to Hussam who is especially important in monitoring the periods of practical training with other employers.
Employer involvement	Employer input to the learning contract and programme delivery is vital, as are employer-employee links. This input is delivered through the individual employer and through the Regional Cultural Partnership in liaison with the local Learning and Skills Council.
Occupational and key skills	The development and accreditation of key skills will be an important element of the learning contract. These will be both generic and discipline specific, for instance professional skills in camera operation, lighting, sound, editing and direction. There will be direct links to the existing national occupational standards.
Knowledge elements	Knowledge elements will be crucial to the programme. They are relevant to areas of employment which are rapidly moving and hence must be up-to-date. Modules covering such areas as research methods, documentary video production, and digitisation of video and sound will be on offer to Hussam. The application of knowledge through work-based projects will be a key component of the programme.
Transcripts and personal development plans	The HEI will provide a progress file including a transcript detailing the knowledge and skills acquired on the programme, and an assessment of the level of achievement reached.
Progression beyond the foundation degree	An outcome of the programme will be the identification of future career progression routes, for instance, into a specialist career in video, training and production work. Routes for lifelong learning and continuing professional development, for instance, leading to an honours degree or to a professional qualification, were made clear at the outset.

8. This illustrative model has been developed in conjunction with the Cultural Heritage NTO.

Illustrative model three

Part-time foundation degree in communications technology

9. The 1998 Skills Needs in Britain survey identified the South-East of England as reporting the highest proportion of hard-to-fill vacancies. Over a quarter of employers in the region reported recruitment difficulties and over a fifth identified a skills gap among those already in employment. The CBI's Regional Trends survey identified the skills shortage in the South-East as a restricting factor on business growth.

10. The communications equipment sector is one such sector, reporting that both specific and generic skills shortages have a detrimental effect on performance and output. Within this sector, qualifications at the higher level are required, and within the next five years it is forecast that 120,000 people will need training in skills at NVQ level 3 and above. It is thought that the majority of this additional training will need to be taken up by those already in the workplace.¹

11. The relevant professional bodies, NTOs, the RDA, the local HE and FE providers and other relevant bodies could form a consortium to address the needs of this particular sector and to design a foundation degree in communications technology. The part-time foundation degree would offer progression within employment and towards professional registration.

Sector/discipline	Communications Technology
Progression into the foundation degree	Jo has been working within the telecommunications industry in fixed telephony systems maintenance. She has a National Certificate in telecommunications engineering, gained several years previously. She is now moving into mobile telecommunications systems development with an employer who is keen to integrate on- and off-the-job learning.
Credit accumulation and transfer/Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning	<p>Jo's National Certificate is an accepted entry qualification and therefore did not require assessment of her prior experience by the foundation degree providers, although this is available to the programme candidates.</p> <p>As part of the learning agreement Jo has with the college, there will be an assessment of her previous training, to see if this qualifies for any credit within the foundation degree programme.</p>
Place of delivery	Jo will continue to be employed and will attend the FEC and HEI on a part-time basis. The programme will also have a

¹ 'Building a World Class Region' A Skills Action Plan for the South East of England.

	distance learning element, with full use of web-based materials where appropriate. The work-based modules will be directly linked to the area of study.
Mode of delivery	Jo's attendance will be through a mixture of day and block release. Other learning will be work-based. The latter element, and any home-based study, will include internet-based study.
Student support	Jo will have full access to the HEI's and FEC's libraries and all other facilities, including the HEI's careers service (and guidance facilities) as specified in a learning agreement. She will have an individual college tutor, and an employer mentor.
Employer involvement	Jo's employer, and others, will have contributed to the design of the programme and distance learning materials in collaboration with the validating institution, and will be represented on the validation committee to review course and learning materials.
Occupational and key skills	<p>The programme will start with a unit on 'managing own learning'. Subsequent units will relate to the appropriate nationally agreed occupational standards, especially those developed by the telecommunications NTO and the Occupational Standards Council for Engineering, to published statements of competence for the engineering profession, and to the Institution of Incorporated Engineers requirements for accredited courses.</p> <p>Key skills will be integral to the course, as will employability skills. They will be sign-posted within both the taught and work-based components. Accreditation and assessment will be in line with the HEI, QCA and national occupational standards frameworks.</p>
Knowledge elements	These will be delivered through academic modules, and related work-based study. They will be based wherever possible on the cognitive elements of the relevant national occupational standards, and of the professional competencies for engineering set out by the Engineering Council and the Institute of Incorporated Engineers.
Transcripts and personal development plans	Jo will have transcript information and personal development summaries, in line with forthcoming QAA/CVCP guidance on progress files, to assist the development of continuing professional development as an

	ongoing lifelong learning activity.
Progression beyond the foundation degree	After successfully completing the programme, Jo will continue in full-time employment, with an enhanced role. She will either combine this with further study to meet the requirements for registration as an Incorporated Engineer, or progress to a Graduate Apprenticeship which might lead to both an honours degree and professional registration.

12. This illustrative model has been developed in conjunction with the Engineering Council, the Institute of Incorporated Engineers, the Telecommunications NTO and the Engineering and Marine Training Authority.

Illustrative model four

Full-time foundation degree in Business Administration

13. In the Yorkshire and Humberside Region 30.4 per cent of businesses in public administration, education and health reported hard-to-fill vacancies. Forecasts for the region identified continuing expansion of managerial, professional and associate professional occupations, resulting in considerable growth in demand for individuals qualified to NVQ level 4 and above.

14. Over one-third of CBI member companies in the region identified problems with communication skills, a lack of work experience and an understanding of the needs of business from their graduate intake.¹

15. A consortium of local partners with a central core of the NTO Council for Administration, the Regional Development Agency, local FECs and a validating HEI could be formed to develop a new full-time foundation degree course in business administration for delivery in either the local FEC or HEI.

Sector/discipline	Public Administration/Business Administration
Progression into the foundation degree	A group of potential students approach their local HE provider following a local promotional campaign. The entry routes into the course are varied, as are the qualifications and backgrounds offered by those applying. These include one or two A-levels (some with English, in this case a preferred subject); Advanced GNVQ (or national diploma) in Business; Advanced Modern Apprenticeship; relevant professional qualifications; or two years relevant work experience.
Credit accumulation and transfer/Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning	The HE provider will make initial assessments of the individuals to identify current skill needs and interests. Potential students without these entry qualifications will be assessed by the provider to give credit for previous experience and qualifications against the entry requirements. If 'gaps' are identified then advice will be offered on how they can be addressed. For some students, their previous experience and qualifications may be sufficient to allow them direct entry to the foundation degree. If relevant previous experience and qualifications are identified and are acceptable, credit awarded will allow exemption from some modules or units of the foundation degree.

¹ Skills Action Plan for Yorkshire & the Humber 2000 - 2002.

Mode and place of delivery	This is a full-time course based at the HEI or FEC and with practical work experience and employer projects throughout the two-year programme. Flexibility is a feature of the programme and individuals will have the freedom to move to part-time study if they secure relevant employment during the programme.
Employer involvement	<p>The Council for Administration (CfA) will have worked with and through employers at a national level to identify appropriate subject areas for the foundation degree. The CfA will collaborate with RDAs to ensure the national picture responds to local and regional labour market trends. The CfA will support HEIs and FECs to ensure that the design and development of foundation degrees relate to national occupational standards and respond to employer needs. The CfA will work with employers to identify existing good practice and examples of employer projects and structured work experience that could be taken forward through foundation degree programmes.</p> <p>Local employers will be represented on course design and development groups. Employers will endorse their approval of the course by making formal statements that priority will be given to recruitment of students meeting their needs and completing the programme. (This was used in material promoting the course to potential students.)</p> <p>The Business Administration foundation degree will include employer projects and accredited work experience.</p>
Student support	All the students who have applied for the programme have full access to all HEI and FEC facilities, for example library, IT and careers guidance facilities. They are further supported by personal and subject tutors, employer mentors, residential schools, and computer conferencing where required.
Occupational and key skills	There will be an emphasis on key transferable skills and technical and work related skills. These include communication, IT, application of number, team-working, career management, negotiation and leadership skills.
Knowledge elements	The Business Administration foundation degree will contain broad-based knowledge of business administration and will be delivered through: core and optional academic modules (provided by HEIs); workshop training; case studies and

	employer-based project work.
Progression beyond the foundation degree	On completion of the foundation degree, students will have several alternatives, including moving into: full-time employment coupled with accelerated on-the-job training to Senior Administrator level (fulfilling all requirements for NVQ Level 4); full-time academic study to achieve an honours degree; full-time employment coupled with part-time study towards an honours degree or higher level NVQ.

16. This illustrative model has been developed in conjunction with the Council for Administration NTO and its partners.

Glossary and list of acronyms

AP(E)L

Assessment of Prior (Experiential) Learning. This is a means of assessing a student's suitability to enter higher education, as an alternative to formal qualifications.

Advanced Modern Apprenticeship

These framework-based training programmes for young employed people centre around the achievement of NVQs, key skills and other qualifications, at further education level. These are available in over 80 sectors of industry and business.

ASN

Additional Student Number. Additional funded student places, over and above an HE provider's existing level of funded provision, are normally allocated by the HEFCE through an annual competition.

Associate professional and technician occupations

These occupations typically require a high-level vocational qualification, often involving substantial training or education. These occupations include, for example, air traffic controllers, graphic designers, legal associate professionals, brokers, tax experts, finance analysts, and careers advisers.

Consortia

Providers of HE may form different types of consortia for different purposes. In this document the term refers to partnerships of employer representatives and HE providers, typically both HEIs and FECs, that collaborate to develop and deliver prototype foundation degrees.

DfEE

Department for Education and Employment.

FEC

Further education college.

FEFC

Further Education Funding Council.

FDG

Foundation Degree Group. The group was established in March 2000 to advise Ministers and the HEFCE as to the core features of the foundation degree and the appropriate funding arrangements. Membership of the group is listed in Annex A.

Foundation degree programme

A course of study related to a particular occupational sector, leading to the award of a named foundation degree qualification. An individual programme could be delivered in more than one mode.

FTE

Full-time equivalent. Numbers of part-time students are converted to full-time equivalents for comparison and funding purposes.

Generic skills

These are transferable skills that can be used across occupational groups. In addition to the key skills, the National Skills Task Force defines these as: reasoning skills, work process management skills, and personal values and attitudes such as motivation, discipline, judgement, leadership and initiative.

Graduate Apprenticeship

These are sector-specific framework-based programmes which centre on the achievement of a higher education qualification, and additional NVQ and key skills units.

HE

Higher education.

HEFCE

Higher Education Funding Council for England.

HEI

Higher education institution. These include universities and colleges of higher education.

HESA

Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Intermediate level skills

Those skills regarded as being needed for intermediate level occupations, that is; for associate professional, technician, administrative, and skilled trade occupations. They also include the skills required at junior management level.

Key skills

The QCA, which is developing specifications for key skills units, and the National Skills Task Force, define these skills as: communication, team working, problem solving, application of number, use of information technology, and improving own learning and performance.

Mode of delivery

In this document this refers to the range of ways in which programmes can be delivered, including; part-time, modular, distance or web-based learning, and full-time.

NTO

National Training Organisation.

NVQ

National Vocational Qualification.

PIs

Performance indicators. For HEIs, these are published by the HEFCE, and for FECs, they are published by the FEFC.

Prototypes

The initial foundation degree programmes that will be supported by the package of development funds and ASNs described in this document.

QAA

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

QCA

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

RDA

Regional Development Agency.

Technical skills

These are specific skills needed to work within an occupation or occupational group.

Vocational education

Education or training directed at a particular occupation and its skills.