

Partnerships and collaboration for Lifelong Learning

REAP (Regional Enterprise-Academic Partnership) Project

BUILDING CAPACITY BY ENGAGING PRACTITIONERS IN DESIGNING AND DELIVERING ONLINE AND BLENDED LEARNING.

GREG LARKIN, SINEAD SPAIN, ANN LEDWITH

REAP : Project Objective

to develop a best practice framework to integrate practitioner tutors into the process of delivering flexible upskilling programmes for enterprise and the public service and community sectors.

Overview

- Background to the project
- Methodology
- Summary of findings
- Conclusions and recommendations

Background

National skills shortage (National Skills Strategy, 2025)

- ICT, Biopharma, Smart Manufacturing and Finance
 - ↳ Enhancing access to lifelong learning to assist in addressing these skills

Agenda to modernise Europe's HE systems (European Commission, 2011)

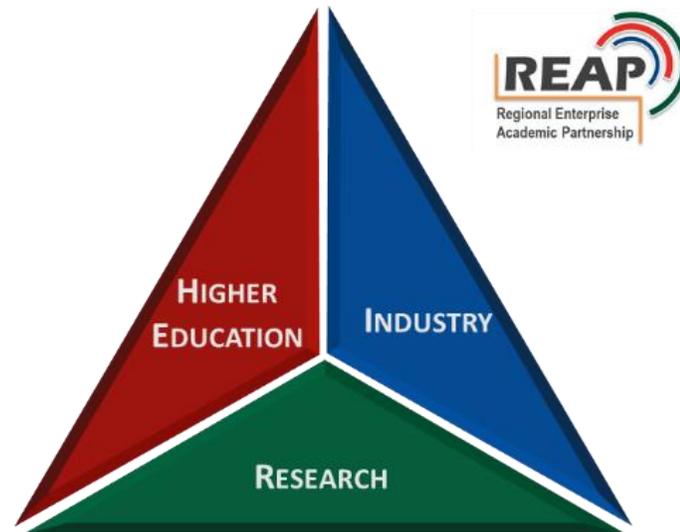


Figure 1.1: The Knowledge Triangle

Industry - Academic Partnerships

- What are Industry – Academic Partnerships?
 - collaborations that bring Higher Education Institutions, businesses and research together
- *The modernisation of Europe's higher education systems* (European Commission, 2011)
 - Focus on collaborations with industry, research and HE to improve:
 - The quality and relevance of HEIs
 - Enhance the contribution of HEIs to jobs and growth

Collaborations with HEIs

Midwest region HEIs:



Collaborations with HEIs



Timeline

Jan 19

Funding awarded

Aug/Sep 19

Recruitment of programme implementation team

*UL - Project Manager
- Research Fellow
- Educational Technologist*

MIC - Academic Developer

*LIT - Educational Technologist
- Academic Industry Liaison
Officer (to be recruited)*

Oct 19

Project work (eight work packages) to be implemented over the project lifetime.

Methodology

- Defining the practitioner tutor
- Data gathering (so far..)
to outline the current landscape and to identify needs:
 - Cataloguing programmes relevant to REAP
 - Interviewing key professional education personnel
 - Feedback from HEI corporate offices on governance of practitioner tutors

Summary of Findings

1. Cataloguing “REAP-profile” programmes and modules
 - profile: flexible professional education programmes; module (developed) or delivered by practitioner tutors;
2. Interviewing key HEI professional education personnel
3. Discussions relating to governance of practitioner tutors – with HR, Quality, Finance (corporate HEI offices...)

Cataloguing “REAP-profile” programmes and modules

	UL	LIT	MIC
Programmes	24	3	3
Modules	112	13	12



	UL	S+E	KBS	EHS	AHSS
Programmes	12	10	1	1	
Modules	42	62	6	2	

Programme	Detail
Lean sigma suite of programmes / 30 ECTS L9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully running 12 years • 4 modules delivered by enterprise practitioners/experts
BSc in Quality & Regulatory Affairs / 60 ECTS L8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 modules with enterprise/ practitioners experts involved. Some modules have multiple enterprise practitioners /experts involved • Successfully running in its third year
MSc in Artificial Intelligence / 90 ECTS L9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 modules developed and delivered by enterprise practitioners /experts • Over 75 students this year (2019)

Programme	Detail
Specialist Diploma in Aviation Leasing and Finance / L9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 modules developed and delivered by practitioners /experts
MSc in Project and Programme Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online delivery • 4 modules with practitioner tutors
Supply Chain Management suite of programmes (Diploma L8, Specialist Diploma L9, MSc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blended delivery • MSc (5 modules), Specialist Diploma (3 module), Diploma (4 modules) - practitioners in module delivery

Programme

**Professional Diploma in
School Leadership / 60 ECTS L9**

Detail

- Inter-institutional collaboration, blended learning
- 10 centres; more than 40 practitioner tutors per year;
- Over 300 students this year (2019)

Programme	Detail
Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) programme / L6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modules delivered by early childhood practitioner tutors and academic staff • In partnership with NUIM and early Childhood Ireland - nine locations
Graduate Certificate in Autism Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modules delivered by academic staff in partnership with practitioner experts
MA/PhD Applied Linguistics L9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modules delivered by academic staff in partnership with literacy experts

Programme	Detail
Certificate in Near Zero Energy Buildings / L6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully taught by LIT academics and practitioner tutors. • Bended delivery mode
Higher Diploma in Arts in Food Management and Innovation / L8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taught fully by practitioner tutors. • Bended delivery mode
BEng in Manufacturing Technology / L7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully taught for 15 years by LIT academics and industry experts. • Upskilling those working in manufacturing sector.

Interviews: induction theme

Practitioner Tutor induction – Role and responsibilities, policies and procedures, IT systems

need a **defined process/framework/online induction** programme

should be **an induction for externals** but there isn't

Externals should **receive their roles and responsibilities** as part of their on-boarding

“**Induction would need to be flexible** because you're not going to be able to bring everyone in for half a day

Onboarding for external practitioners should be “**essential and light**”

IT Systems **induction could be more stream-lined** and “off-the-shelf”

Interviews: induction T+L theme

Practitioner Tutor induction – Teaching and Learning, Academic processes

...compulsory training processes [are] needed, **Industry experts do not necessarily understand pedagogy**

...linking the learning outcomes to the assessment, that's the **key message** in any conversation with the tutor

“**Grading is fundamentally the most important thing** that a tutor will do on a module. It is the one that causes most trouble. So they [practitioner tutors] have to be aware of grading and assessment, and marks and standards then as a result of that.”

Fundamentals of the HEI's T&L is essential – key issues are around assessment and academic regulation

Training needs to be succinct just on what's required...

“the external practitioner doesn't **necessarily care too much about being accredited for this**”

Interviews: module development

Module Development (where practitioner tutor developed module)

A **standardized operating procedure for design** “would make life a lot easier.”

“Between end of approval and rollout, design, development and quality assurance should be **between three and six months** realistically.”

Practitioners need to be aware the **design process is a lengthy front-loaded process**

the program manager/ project manager needs to have, I believe, kind of a frank discussion as to what is expected as part of the overall program design, **the level of commitment and if the external is able to commit**

There is...very little recognition of the **effort and expense** goes into developing a module

“You cannot get external tutors to come in for nothing. you have to **pay them for their time...**”

Interviews: module ownership

Practitioner Tutor and module ownership by HEI academic

Externals are not let off on their own first, **most will co-present** with someone else like a module lead first. “They are mirrored with someone who knows what they are talking about”

All modules need to be supported by a UL academic

Externals **should have an academic advisor** but it is not always the case

Module Quality Assurance is one of the **course director’s** top responsibilities.

Interviews: community of practice

Practitioner Tutor and a community of practice

There is a need for **external tutor** to feel more valued to encourage sustainability. **‘Part of the UL community’**

In our onboarding and training we encourage the idea of a **Community of Practice**

Feedback on governance of practitioner tutors - themes

Tutor
Selection

Payment
/Contracts

Induction/
Professional
Development

Development
& delivery

Does the engagement of practitioner tutors meet the applicable guidelines and respective regulations, policies and procedures set by the HEI's internal Quality, HR, Finance, Academic and other relevant offices?

Discussion issues - summary

the **ad-hoc approach** to the engagement of practitioner tutors across the faculties (in UL);

the **lack of a standardised framework** for practitioner tutor engagement ;

the **governance, compliance and quality** gaps that exist in current engagement processes - that can be addressed.

Practitioner Tutor Selection process

Role advertising ?

What's the CV review, vetting, interview process? Does the process comply with HR procedures?

Is a formal public "e-tender" type panel required and how is this operated?

Practitioner Tutor payment & contracts



Using HEI hourly-rate contract?
Comply with HR Policy
Sufficient to meet the needs of
practitioner tutors

QA



Does the standard contract address
QA issues relevant to the
development or delivery of a module?
Are roles and responsibilities
addressed
Does the agreement address all the
relevant quality issues



Using HEI PO System
Does this comply with HEI
Procurement rules
Do standard T&C's apply
Is there a formal written agreement?

Practitioner Tutor Induction (HR aspects)

does it address:

- HEI policies and procedures (e.g. student interaction, GDPR)
- tutor role and responsibilities
- IT systems access, e.g. email, LMS, library, payroll system, IT Security awareness
- Establishing a community of practice
- Blended?

Who manages it?

Practitioner Tutor professional development (T&L)

HEI practices in T+L for Professional education, blended learning issues

assessment and grading

T&L PD delivered in a blended format?

LMS training

Need for concise, focussed “light” professional development

Who manages this? The CTL ?

Module Development by practitioner tutor

development process to align with the HEI's blended/online process

significant time commitment to develop a blended/online module

HEI academic "ownership" of the externally developed module – a Module Manager role

Practitioner Tutor Delivery / module ownership

ongoing oversight and quality assurance during the module delivery phase

an academic to act as Module Manager

Framework draft for practitioner tutor engagement

1. Approved policy documentation on recruitment of practitioner tutors
2. Approved contracts and related agreement documents
3. HEI Teaching and Learning induction
4. Systems, Role + Responsibilities induction
5. HEI blended(or online) module design process
6. Academic module manager delivery
7. Tutors part of programme and module review processes

Next Steps for REAP project Q1-Q2 2020

Further interviews and feedback

- *HEI Professional Education Personnel*
- *Practitioner Tutors*
- *HEI Central offices*

Analysis of Interviews

- *Themes*
- *recommendations*

Examine National and International Practice

- in engagement of practitioner tutors

New framework to reflecting feedback;

Develop and detail the individual components of the framework.

Thank you.

