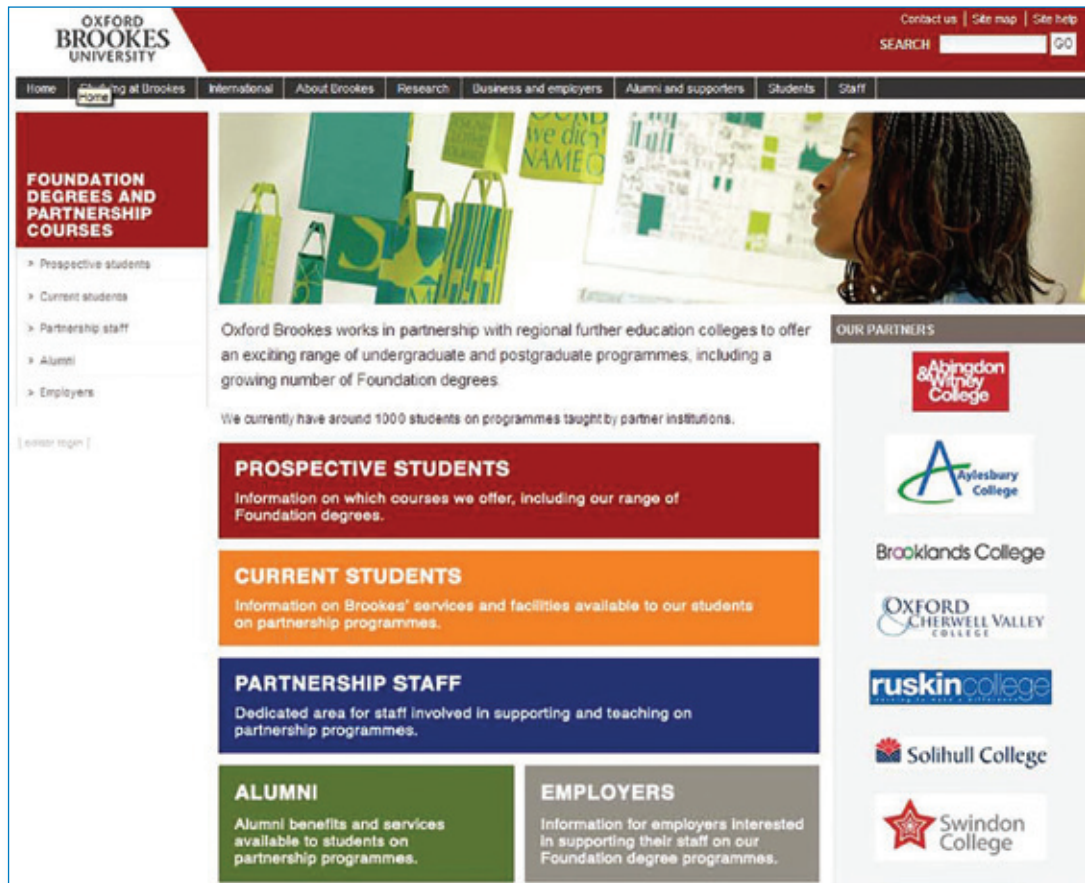


## New Associate College Partnership website



Progress South Central (PSC) has funded and supported the development of the new website for the Associate College Partnership, a partnership group led by Oxford Brookes University and including their seven partner further education colleges. This will be a valuable partnership resource which will sustain the work of the Associate College Partnership group, which PSC has been involved in since 2008, into the future.

The website incorporates a range of new media, including facebook groups and podcasts and is now live on [www.brookes.ac.uk/acp](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/acp)

The information is organised into five interactive audience sections:

- 1. Prospective Students** – Provides information about Foundation degrees and partnership courses, including profiles of current students. There is a podcast within this section with a Liaison Advisor talking through general student finance information (again supported by Progress South Central) and a video clip from Abingdon and Witney College.
- 2. Current Students** – Gives advice about the services on offer at the University. This section also contains
- 3. Partnership Staff** – Answers frequently asked questions from staff running Brookes courses and contains downloadable partnership resources and pop-up articles with latest news.
- 4. Alumni** – Advises on the benefits of becoming a part of an alumni group.
- 5. Employers** – Sets out what a Foundation degree is and how employers can become involved, together with an easy to follow qualifications diagram designed by Progress South Central.

# Land-based Industries

The School of Agriculture, Policy and Development (SAPD) at the University of Reading is the contracted lead for work in the land-based industries sector and has produced a number teaching resources for partner institutions:

- 30 minute DVD that demonstrates a full dissection of the major organs of a lamb and a piglet along with a brief discussion of the dissection process and the function of the organs. It includes teacher notes with timings for each section, a full script of the narration and also gaps in the narration to allow the teacher to supplement with further comments.
- A supplementary film is also available using the footage of isolated organs in the form of a quiz with educational slides. The purpose of this video is to allow students to answer a short quiz while watching the video to test their knowledge.
- animated PowerPoint presentation of a Woodland Survey that runs through the procedure used to assess the health of trees. There is also a table of example raw data with worked examples of the statistics and instructions for using the data if the students wish to try the calculations themselves.
- animated PowerPoint resource showing a simple laboratory assay;

the Enzymatic determination of glucose in porcine plasma samples using assay reagent of glucose oxidase peroxidase and o-dianisidine reagent. The procedure focuses on the skills to undertake a risk assessment and to demonstrate the generation and use of a standard curve.

- Wild African Animal Behaviour Video that uses non-copyright footage of safari animals in Tanzania. A teaching resource that shows how a normal behavioural study would be conducted. The second half of the DVD has a sequence of behaviours that the students have to identify.
- In development :
- invertebrate sampling in relation to the perceived steady decline of farmyard birds,
  - animated PowerPoint presentation demonstration of how to conduct a structured debate
  - an animated PowerPoint presentation to introduce the basics of statistics relevance to the land-based industries
  - molarity calculation tool
  - nutrition analysis tool
  - farm animal/companion animal behaviour video.

Apart from distributing these tools to our partner institutions, it is intended that they will be hosted online by an appropriate organisation.

## Land-based Industries in Action 2010

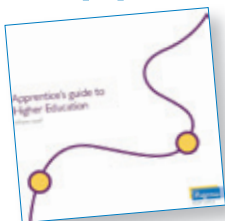


In July 2010 Progress South Central sponsored a four day residential programme for FE students thinking of studying HE courses in the land based sector. Current students at the university acted as mentors for the participants, guiding them through the week and answering their questions about higher education and student life.

The five students all studying land based subjects at level 3 had the chance to spend a week at the University of Reading, experiencing university life both from an academic and social point of view. The students enjoyed the chance to try a range of land based taster sessions including carrying out a woodland survey, making animal behaviour observations at a local wildlife park and a visit to Rushall Organic Farm. Each session had a different focus enabling them to find out more about the courses they might wish to study after college.

Not all the time was spent working. The students stayed in Halls of Residence and had the chance to socialise and relax with other students from a range of schools and colleges. To round the week off, the students worked together to produce a presentation demonstrating some of the skills they had learnt over the week and all participants were presented with a certificate to acknowledge their achievements.

## Apprentice's Guide to HE



Progress South Central is pleased to announce their new publication 'Apprentice's guide to Higher Education'.

It aims to answer the many questions relating to the flexible options open to apprentices into higher education and gives useful information on fees, entry requirements and the benefits of getting a higher education qualification.

In the changing economical landscape and with the government's commitment to apprenticeships, future higher education students will be coming from a variety

of progression routes including those from the advanced apprenticeship route. We hope that this booklet will help demystify higher education and encourage apprentices to consider that higher education is a real option open to them.

Over the next month Progress South Central will be sending a supply of the guide to Further Education Colleges and training providers throughout the network to distribute to their apprentices.

Further copies are available on request from Emma Mason via [e.c.mason@reading.ac.uk](mailto:e.c.mason@reading.ac.uk) or an electronic version can be found on the website [www.progresssouthcentral.org.uk](http://www.progresssouthcentral.org.uk)

# A taste of LLN research

Progress South Central has now both funded and undertaken a range of research projects, which we see as one way of providing foundations for the long term impact of the work of the LLN.

A selection of the research projects completed so far:

- **What makes work experience work?:** This research, led by Bracknell & Wokingham College on behalf of the Berkshire Skills for Care Group, set out to investigate the employer perspective of work experience in order to stimulate the offer of more placements for school/college students undertaking health and social care courses. The work gathered data from employers regarding their experience of student work experience placements, their perception of the barriers to work experience and the resources that they would like to see available. The resulting report produced clear guidance on where the barriers are to successful work experience placements and what might be done to address these.
- **Current and potential progression routes in Construction and Built Environment provision:** This study, carried out by Progress South Central, examined non-traditional progression routes into HE for the Construction sector, using as many sources of data as possible to illustrate possible learning pathways and progression routes from Level 1 through to Level 7. It considers the implications for longer-term planning, particularly in the light of plans to raise the school leaving age to 18.
- **Investigation into IAG provided for year 11 students regarding their post-16 options:** This research, led by the University of Reading Institute of Education, explored Year 11 students' perspectives of IAG provision, as well as their attitudes to the new Diploma and to vocational education and training. It made recommendations for IAG in the school context, particularly IAG specific to the Diploma in

the light of apparent lack of clarity around what this is and its potential as a progression route.

- **Higher Education for Slough and East Berkshire – reaching the right learners with the right provision:** This research, led by Thames Valley University, aimed to identify gaps in Higher Education provision for young people and adults in Slough. The report presents indicators of local HE demand and a summary of employer and community views, as well as a synopsis of the HE provision provided in Slough. The principal gaps in HE provision are identified and ways of overcoming the key barriers to access are discussed.

A selection of research projects still ongoing in 2010-11:

- **Research into the role and attitudes of secondary school staff:** This research, led by the University of Reading Institute of Education, is exploring secondary school teachers' level of familiarity with alternative post-16 routes into Higher Education. The intended outcome is an improved understanding of staff attitudes towards their role and responsibilities regarding post-16 IAG for their pupils.
- **The vocational student voice: experiences of the HE process:** This research, led by Progress South Central, is focusing on the vocational student perspective regarding experiences of accessing information about, applying to and studying on HE programmes. Learners targeted are those who have benefited in a variety of ways from Progress South Central's interventions.
- **Tracking the ECIF Learners:** This research, led by Oxford Brookes University, aims to track the progression routes of learners who have taken the Economic Challenge Investment Fund skills modules that have been run by the university since 2009. Data from this tracking project will be used to evaluate the success of the wider ECIF project in terms of progression to FE, HE or employment.

## The Creative Portal

The Creative Portal, a new website due for launch in the New Year, will be a one stop shop for students, parents and teachers wishing to gain information and knowledge about the creative industries in general and education and employment opportunities in particular.

Research, funded by Progress South Central, and undertaken by the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) investigated the range of information and resources currently available to potential students interested in the creative industries. It identified that the provision of a single, sustainable, on-line resource is required;

one which is easy to find, simple to use and provides relevant, up to date information for all target groups.

Currently internet searches reveal a mass of information from sources in education, social networking, careers and marketing which combine to offer a disjointed and confusing picture. Prospective students who 'didn't know where to start' and parents 'didn't have any idea how to find information or who to approach'.

The Creative Portal aims to solve this problem by explaining what the creative industries are, what people working in



the creative industries do and where to find the best information. There will be examples of people's personal journey into the creative industries and links to our partner universities and colleges.



## Art Factor Forum

Six inspirational speakers from the creative industries presented their work and accounts of their career journeys at the first Art Factor Forum held at Oxford Brookes University on October 16th. An enthusiastic audience drawn from Oxford Brookes University, Abingdon & Witney College, Oxford and Cherwell Valley College and local Oxfordshire schools were entertained and informed as the speakers, most of whom had studied on the Foundation Course at the University, spoke of how they made their degree choices, their first jobs and current work.

They were joined by Brookes' Foundation Art and Design alumni, now studying various art and design disciplines at institutions throughout the country. They brought along their portfolios for students to look at and shared their experiences of degree level study in response to questions from the audience.

Networking was encouraged throughout the day and a range of questions were put to the speakers on how to secure a work placement, how to overcome 'artists' block' and key steps for success.

Progress South Central was pleased to support this first Art Factor Forum, organised and hosted by Oxford Brookes University who hope to offer similar events in the future.

## Flexible Access Routes and Admissions to HE

On 9 November, PSC once again joined forces with Aimhigher MKOB to hold their third joint IAG conference at Burnham Beeches Hotel, near Slough.

The theme of the conference was Flexible Access Routes and Admissions to HE and intended for IAG practitioners and senior managers working in adult education, FE and HE.

The conference highlighted the increasing importance of flexible and part-time progression routes to HE and provided practitioners with information on how best to support students progress to HE via non-traditional routes.

Sixty-five IAG practitioners attended to hear presentations from Sarah Howls, Head of Widening Participation at HEFCE, Dan Shaffer from SPA, Alison King from UCAS, Steve Jenkins from National Apprenticeship Service and Donna Isard from Student Loans Company talk about HE and non-traditional progression.

Attendees also questioned an expert panel of HE admissions staff: Mike Nicholson, Director, Undergraduate Admissions, University of Oxford; Bob Cozens, Deputy Director of Student Experience, Bucks New University; Vanessa Combeer, Head of Undergraduate & Postgraduate Admissions, University of Reading plus our speakers Alison King, UCAS and Dan Shaffer, SPA.

The conference and speakers were well-received and audience left much better informed about HE admissions. For a full report and presentations, please see [www.progresssouthcentral.org.uk/iag](http://www.progresssouthcentral.org.uk/iag)

## DIARY

HEA/SHA/PSC event  
17 November 2010

HE Experience Day  
(Bucks New University)  
19 November 2010

Creative Industries Portal launch  
17 January 2011

Brookes ACP Staff  
Development Conference  
14 January 2011

Bucks New University partner  
colleges conference  
24 February 2011

National conference on  
progression to HE by Apprentices  
29 March 2011

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The Lifelong Learning Network for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey

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