



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Investment Programme - Achieve: Belfast Bursary Award
Date:	3 December 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that Belfast City Council made £300,000 available through the Investment Programme for the Achieve: Belfast Bursary Fund. The Fund is administered through Belfast Metropolitan College (Belfast Met) and The Prince's Trust. Hundreds of young people are supported in the city to take part in further education and training and to improve their employment prospects.
1.2	The Prince's Trust bursary (with funding allocated through the charity's Development Awards programme) is open to young people aged 16-25 residing in the city who are not in education, training or employment. The scheme aims to help recipients overcome barriers which may prevent them from undertaking training and education or moving into employment.
1.3	At Belfast Met, full-time students who began their first year of study, who are resident in the Belfast City Council area, aged between 16-24 years and whose annual household income is £23,820 or less were eligible to apply for grants of up to £500. This award applied to students on one of the 10 recognised Achieve: Belfast Bursary Fund training courses. The courses identified were at Levels 2-5 and in some of the future growth sectors including IT, multimedia, renewable energies, science, tourism and hospitality. This is the first year of the programme and Belfast Met was allocated £120,000 to administer 240 awards at £500 each.
1.4	The Belfast Met scheme has just closed to applications but only around 50 applicants met the criteria for the bursary. Following engagement with the college, it is proposed that consideration be given to widening the bursary to other courses, still within the priority growth areas.

2	Key Issues
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2.1	<p>Applications for the Achieve: Belfast Bursary Fund opened on 2 September 2013 and closed on 15 November 2013. A targeted promotion and awareness campaign was undertaken to extensively advertise the Bursary Scheme from August to November 2013. The Bursary was promoted in the Belfast Met prospectus, on Belfast Met's website within the Student Finance section, online within Student's Blackboard Learning resource, through word of mouth and on notice boards. Belfast Met and Belfast City Council worked together to produce promotional flyers and application forms. These were distributed to the relevant course co-ordinators. Student Finance Officers gave presentations in classrooms and provided application forms to students enrolled on the 10 courses. All staff and students were sent an email reminding them of the closing date. The Bursary was promoted on Belfast City Council's website and Belfast Business Info Facebook page and ran alongside Belfast Met's Facebook promotion. Students were encouraged to apply for the award and also advised of the forthcoming closing date.</p>																					
2.2	<p>Despite extensive advertising and promotion, Belfast Met gave the following analysis as to why take up was lower than expected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Given that Achieve: Belfast Bursary Fund is a new pilot initiative, it was difficult to predict uptake levels of the award, particularly around the income level criteria at or below £23,820; - Belfast Met recruits a high percentage of students from outside the Belfast area who travel each day to the college. This is up to 50% in some of the courses identified and this has limited the pool of students who are eligible to apply for the Bursary; - It was difficult to determine the number of applicants as students typically tend to submit application for bursaries just a few days before or, on an award's closing date. All 350 printed applications were taken by students and a further reprint was required; - A large number of students on the two Access courses fell outside the 16-24 age range which restricted the number of eligible applicants; and - If the closing date was extended among students on the existing 10 courses, Belfast Met does not believe this would attract significant additional applicants, given the volume of promotion. 																					
2.3	<p>The following table shows the number of applicants received who met the criteria for each of the eligible 10 recognised courses.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="331 1556 1364 2031"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="331 1556 448 1680">Level</th> <th data-bbox="448 1556 1169 1680">Qualifying Courses Title</th> <th data-bbox="1169 1556 1364 1680">Number of eligible applicants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1680 448 1720">2</td> <td data-bbox="448 1680 1169 1720">Edexcel BTEC Diploma in Travel and Tourism</td> <td data-bbox="1169 1680 1364 1720">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1720 448 1800">2</td> <td data-bbox="448 1720 1169 1800">Edexcel BTEC Diploma in Creative Media Production (Games, Web and iMedia)</td> <td data-bbox="1169 1720 1364 1800">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1800 448 1881">3</td> <td data-bbox="448 1800 1169 1881">Edexcel BTEC Extended Diploma in Electrical/Electronic Engineering</td> <td data-bbox="1169 1800 1364 1881">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1881 448 1921">3</td> <td data-bbox="448 1881 1169 1921">Edexcel BTEC Extended Diploma in Hospitality</td> <td data-bbox="1169 1881 1364 1921">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1921 448 2002">3</td> <td data-bbox="448 1921 1169 2002">Edexcel BTEC Extended Diploma in Creative Media Production (TV and Media)</td> <td data-bbox="1169 1921 1364 2002">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 2002 448 2031">5</td> <td data-bbox="448 2002 1169 2031">Edexcel BTEC HND Diploma in Computing and</td> <td data-bbox="1169 2002 1364 2031">1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Level	Qualifying Courses Title	Number of eligible applicants	2	Edexcel BTEC Diploma in Travel and Tourism	1	2	Edexcel BTEC Diploma in Creative Media Production (Games, Web and iMedia)	12	3	Edexcel BTEC Extended Diploma in Electrical/Electronic Engineering	9	3	Edexcel BTEC Extended Diploma in Hospitality	6	3	Edexcel BTEC Extended Diploma in Creative Media Production (TV and Media)	7	5	Edexcel BTEC HND Diploma in Computing and	1
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2.4		Systems Development	
	3	Access Certificate in Foundation Studies Maths and Computing (QUB)	1
	3	Access Diploma in Computing with Business and Multimedia (UU)	3
	5	Foundation Degree in Building Services and Renewable Energies	3
	5	Foundation Degree in Product Design and Development	0
		Total number of eligible applicants	43

Belfast Met have undertaken further analysis of their registrations and have identified a potential 284 additional students on a further 27 courses within IT, multimedia, renewable energies, science, tourism and hospitality sectors.

Level	Course Name	Number of Belfast residents 16-24 years
2	BTEC First Diploma ICT Practitioner	18
2	BTEC Diploma Engineering (Electrical)	5
2	BTEC Ext Diploma Procom (Systems Support)	22
2	BTEC Diploma in Applied Science	14
3	BTEC Extended Diploma in Applied Science	22
3	BTEC Extended Diploma in Creative Media Production (Media)	16
3	BTEC Extended Diploma in IT	41
3	BTEC Extended Diploma Creative Media Production (Interactive media)	12
3	BTEC Extended Diploma Creative Media Production (Games Development)	15
3	BTEC Extended Diploma Creative Media Production (Games Development)	15
3	BTEC Extended Diploma Creative Media Production (Games Development)	15
3	BTEC Extended Diploma Creative Media Production (Games Development)	15
3	BTEC Extended Diploma Construction and Built Environment	8
3	Access Biological/Biomedical Science	15
5	BTEC HND Applied Science (Biology)	7
5	BTEC HND Applied Science (Chemistry)	3
5	BTEC HND Diploma in Graphic Design	6
5	Foundation Science Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management	6
5	Foundation Science Degree in Event Management for the Tourism Industry	8
5	BTEC HND Diploma in Creative Media Production (Computer Games Design)	12
5	BTEC HND Diploma in Electronic Engineering	5
5	Foundation Degree in I Media	7
5	Foundation Degree in Architectural Technology	3

2.5		with Sustainable Design	
	5	Foundation Degree Software Engineering	26
	5	Foundation Degree Travel and Tourism Management	5
	5	Foundation Degree in Sustainable Construction	3
	5	BTEC HND Electrical and Electronic Engineering	5
		Total	284
2.6	<p>The College's database has been used to collate information on the current intake of students and the following details have been considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The numbers of students who meet the age and Belfast domicile criteria who are studying full-time and in first year at the College; - More than 50% of students on the proposed courses live outside the Belfast City Council area and projected figures represent a potential pool of Belfast residents; - It is not possible to identify student income and whether it is likely to be above or below the £23,820 threshold. 		
2.7	<p>In the early planning stage of this bursary programme, a longer list of eligible courses had been included but this had been scaled back to 10 on the advice of Belfast Met staff who considered that the numbers could be met within the 10 identified courses. However staff now suggest that, this year in particular, there has been a significant increase in students from outside Belfast.</p> <p>Subject to Council approval, Belfast Met also propose to undertake immediate and extensive promotion of the Bursary Fund to students on the 27 additional courses and to set the closing date for end January 2014 to engage students' attention and ensure maximum participation. Current eligible applicants will have their funds administered as per existing arrangements before Christmas.</p>		

3	Resource Implications
3.1	An overall budget of £300,000 was allocated to Achieve: Belfast Bursary Fund over a 3 year period 2012-2015, with Belfast Met allocated £120,000 to date.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	No specific equality and good relations considerations at this stage.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to consider the request to extend the Achieve: Belfast Bursary Fund to a potential 27 courses in IT, multimedia, renewable energies, science, tourism and hospitality sectors to meet the targets set for sign-up.

6	Decision Tracking
6.1	An update on numbers, outcomes, progress and budget spent during year 1 of the programme will be brought back to Committee in March 2014.