

**Summary of the activities to be supported under the Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF)**

The aim of this collaboration is to deliver a coherent and comprehensive package of support for both individuals and businesses that have been hit by the economic downturn.

This support programme incorporates the specialisms and strengths of individual partners and fills gaps in provision that have been identified with external agencies (e.g. Job Centre Plus and Business Link).

The objective of this collaboration is to ensure that support is available at the point of need. Independent research commissioned by University of Derby (Hobsons, 2008) found that many individuals prefer to access services at their local FE College. Thus, this programme will offer co-ordinated services through both University of Derby and a linked network of HE centres in FECs and local authority managed business/innovation centres across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire which have been developed through Regional Development Agency projects by the Collaborative Higher Education Alliance (CHEA and its successor A2CHEA).

	<b>Aim of Activity</b>	<b>Target Groups</b>
<b>Strand One: Higher Level Career Development Support</b>	Deliver a local, specialist careers support service that is accessible and fills a gap in current provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newly unemployed graduates and professionals</li> <li>• Graduates and professionals at risk of redundancy</li> </ul>
<p><b>A specialist support centre to be offered to unemployed graduates and professionals aiming to help clients through 200 workshop sessions and 60 employer internships/mentorship's.</b></p> <p>The University's Career Development Centre will work with other project partners to use a network of outreach centres to offer one-to-one support from higher education career specialist advisors, career coaching activities and workshops and activities to develop confidence and networking skills.</p> <p>This group will also oversee the delivery of 4 to 10 week internships with employers, and provide clients with access to a range of on-line resources to build networking, presentation and communication skills.</p>		
<b>Strand Two: Support for Individuals</b>	Provide unemployed individuals with access to HE to support their reintegration into the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployed graduates and professionals</li> <li>• Unemployed people with no HE qualifications who could benefit from HE</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support for unemployed people with no higher education qualifications, or unemployed graduates or professionals who need to update and diversify.</b></p> <p>500 free places on higher education taster days and 250 funded short courses in higher education will be offered in the area on courses to specifically enhance their employability and</p>		

meet career change goals.		
<b>Strand Three: Support for Businesses</b>	Deliver flexible, rapid responses to meet the needs of businesses including advice, consultancy, training and development	SMEs and large companies that need support to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survive the recession</li> <li>• Plan and implement downsizing / short time working</li> <li>• Develop and implement redundancy support programmes</li> <li>• Retain a skilled workforce and emerge competitive for the upturn</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coordinated support will be provided to businesses.</b></p> <p>More than 100 businesses will be supported and 300 spaces for learners on short courses will be provided.</p> <p>Other support will include advice from specialist consultants with experience of handling business change with input from career development specialists, a voucher scheme for the development of bespoke packages of support such as training programmes to offer short courses for businesses appropriate to the needs of business in the current economic climate.</p>		
<b>Strand Four: Enterprise</b>	Provide access to HE enterprise schemes for groups currently excluded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newly unemployed graduates and professionals</li> <li>• Graduates and professionals at risk of redundancy</li> </ul>
<p><b>The University's own Enterprise Scheme will be extended to currently excluded groups such as redundant professionals and graduates, or those at risk of unemployment.</b></p> <p>There will be 20 incubator access grants and 12 enterprise bursaries offered to encourage new businesses to start up.</p>		

**Partners involved are: ~ University of Derby (Host), University of Derby Corporate, Chesterfield College, Derby College, North Nottinghamshire College and West Nottinghamshire College.**

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