**PTAS Project Report (for SMALL PROJECT GRANTS)**

**Project Title:** Archaeology at the Centre for Open learning (COL): developing an accessible and inclusive pedagogical approach to fieldwork

**Principal Investigator :** *Rachael King*

**School / Department :** Centre for Open Learning

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Grant recipients are expected to submit a brief report at the conclusion of their project which outlines briefly the following : nature of work completed; outcomes; benefits to student learning/student experience; dissemination activity (where relevant – actual and planned) and how the activity could inform future work or be transferred to other subject areas in the University. The brief report will be published on the IAD web pages.

**Brief Report (maximum 500 words)**

**What did you do?**

The Project aimed to address the following question, in order to inform future course development at COL: *How does archaeology at the Centre for Open Learning (COL) broaden participation and engage a diverse range of participants by developing a pedagogical approach to the subject in the 21st century?*

We reviewed existing literature, met with the UoE’s Disability Service, and met with a local community group, Royston Wardieburn’s Power to the People and considered the following questions:

1. What are the barriers to engaging in archaeological activity?

2)      How can we make (field-studies) as accessible as possible?

3)      How can we best work with existing and new partners to design a unique experience that is fun, meaningful, relevant, inclusive?

4)      How can undertaking field-work enhance employability / ‘internal capacity’?

5)      Analyse marketing data (COL)

6)      What might a field-studies course look like: the strengths / weaknesses of a traditional weekly COL model, an intensive international summer school course and a one-week intensive course.

**What did you find out?**

1. *What are the barriers to widening participation in archaeology.*

There are a number of misconceptions that require addressing here:

* what is archaeology*?*  general assumption that archaeology = excavation is incorrect, widespread and needs addressing. A course that demonstrates and enables people to engage with a much **broader range of archaeological techniques** from desk-based map analysis to artefacts sorting, understanding archival processes and recognising the creative opportunities that archaeology can support, would go some way to start to re-balance this widely held misconception.
* assumptions that archaeology is undertaken by white, middle class, educated, able-bodied people. Whilst in the past this may have been true, things are changing (Mahoney 2015, Philips & Gilchrist 2007**). Archaeology can be undertaken by anyone**. Course development should promote archaeology as socially-engaged, and address issues of participation.
* **taking archaeology to people**, rather than COL assuming that people will want/be able to come to the University.  The UoE aims to widen participation (<http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/SRA/WP/WPatUoE.pdf>) and archaeology as a deliverable subject is well-placed to contribute to this strategy. By delivering courses across Scotland, through phased approaches (consultation to gather community needs followed by course design that is suitable for the needs of specific participants) COL could develop new models of subject-specific relevant courses.
* archaeology is costly, can only be undertaken by experts and is the preserve of certain elites. There have been examples of this in the past. Like many arts and humanities and social science subjects, archaeology has become critically reflective in the recent past and is undergoing a period or ‘democratisation’ (Richardson & Almansa-Sánchez 2015). This has resulted in it considering a much broader range of temporal and spatial subjects, applying new and emerging technologies and recognising that it can be a socially-engaged subject.

2)      How can we make (field-studies) as accessible as possible?

- Learn from existing good practice (see appendix).

- Engage with the broad range of archaeological organisations across Scotland and beyond who can provide specialist training.

- Ensuring the costs for any field-based courses are appropriate to COL students.

- Consider how we measure success and ensure any assessment and credit-attainment is appropriate, flexible, achievable and meaningful.

- develop partnerships with organisations and individuals who can demonstrate that they can deliver specific aspects of field-based training in archaeology. This will range from short-term projects (single season/event) to longer-term collaborations, which take time to develop and will require sustained nurturing.

- Flexible course design

3) How can we best work with existing and new partners to design a unique experience that is fun, meaningful, relevant, inclusive?

- We have engaged in early discussions with private / social enterprise organisations such as AOC Archaeology and Archaeology Scotland. As course development progresses, these organisations have shown willingness to work in partnership, especially in those areas where specialist space or equipment may be required.

4)      How can undertaking field-work enhance employability / ‘internal capacity’?

Field skills allow individuals and groups to read their environment with insight. Our discussions with HCA, AOC and Archaeology Scotland uncovered a strong indication that even among graduates, there is a gap in relation to archaeological ‘field’ skills.

5)      Analyse marketing data (COL)

Student questionnaires, and marketing research show a thirst for practical skills courses (see appendix)

6)      What might a field-studies course look like: the strengths / weaknesses of a traditional weekly COL model, an intensive international summer school course and a one-week intensive course.

- See appendix for our strengths / weaknesses evaluation.

After due consideration of the above, in the first instance, we aim to develop a 20 hour course, which can be taught flexibly, on campus and off-campus.

**How did you disseminate your findings?**

We have shared the findings with senior colleagues who have, in response, awarded further course development funding.

**What have been the benefits to student learning?**

We believe we are now in a strong position to develop a unique course, one which can be offered both locally and further afield, to a diverse student demographic.

**How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university?**

Through contacts in HCA and through Widening Participation.

**Who can be contacted for further details?**

[**Rachael.king@ed.ac.uk**](mailto:Rachael.king@ed.ac.uk) **(Course organiser)**

**Financial statement (please delete as appropriate):**

**Either**

This project has utilised the funding awarded to it by the PTAS adjudication committee and the Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.

**Or**

This project has remaining funds unused and we require details of how to return the balance. The Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.

**Please send an electronic PDF copy of this report to:**

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