

Employer led Engagement in Foundation Degree Programmes

Dr Anne Wheeler



Introduction

- ▶ Experience developing FD programmes in Electrical Power Engineering (EPE)
 - ▶ Delivery partnerships
 - ▶ Flexibility
 - ▶ Employer-led programmes
- ▶ Current Status of EPE Programme
- ▶ SDF Project – Foundation Degree Centre
- ▶ Partnership with LLN

Background

- ▶ Aston University track record with ESI:
 - ▶ Electrical Engineering, Energy Utilisation, Electroheat
- ▶ Skills shortages – HE development opportunities
- ▶ Proposal – to develop a new Foundation Degree in Electrical Power Engineering
- ▶ Euskills, National Grid, and *fdf*



Foundation Degree Concept

- ▶ Flexibility – candidates, partnership, content, delivery
- ▶ 2 years full time
 - ▶ 1st Year - grounding
 - ▶ 2nd Year – Business Specific
- ▶ Alternative option of block and/or day release
- ▶ Employer engagement and lead
- ▶ Progression to final year of a relevant Bachelor's programme

Candidates

- ▶ School leavers
- ▶ Mature candidates – existing staff
- ▶ Advanced Modern Apprentices
- ▶ First chance to see training progression



Programme Content & Delivery

- ▶ Employer specific (variable to suit transmission, generation or distribution business requirements)
- ▶ Six modules per level, 20 credits each
- ▶ Mix of teaching and consolidation (project work and assignments)
- ▶ Level 1 – HNC derived – FE Partner lead
- ▶ Level 2 – Aston lead
- ▶ Delivery:
 - ▶ Day release, block release or mixture
 - ▶ Location
 - ▶ Integration into the workplace



Partnership

- ▶ Employer specific
- ▶ HE/FE Collaboration –
Aston/Walsall/Reading
- ▶ Distribution Engineering
Training Facilities via Company
or Third Party
- ▶ Programme development
- ▶ Work-based learning
- ▶ Mentoring and Tutoring



External influencers

- ▶ First FD for Accreditation towards I Eng
- ▶ First FD for ESI
- ▶ Acknowledged as pioneering by FdF and euskills
- ▶ Complementary to the Power Academy
- ▶ First means to achieve training progression for AMAs
- ▶ Continuity in FE/HE progression
- ▶ Consolidated partnerships



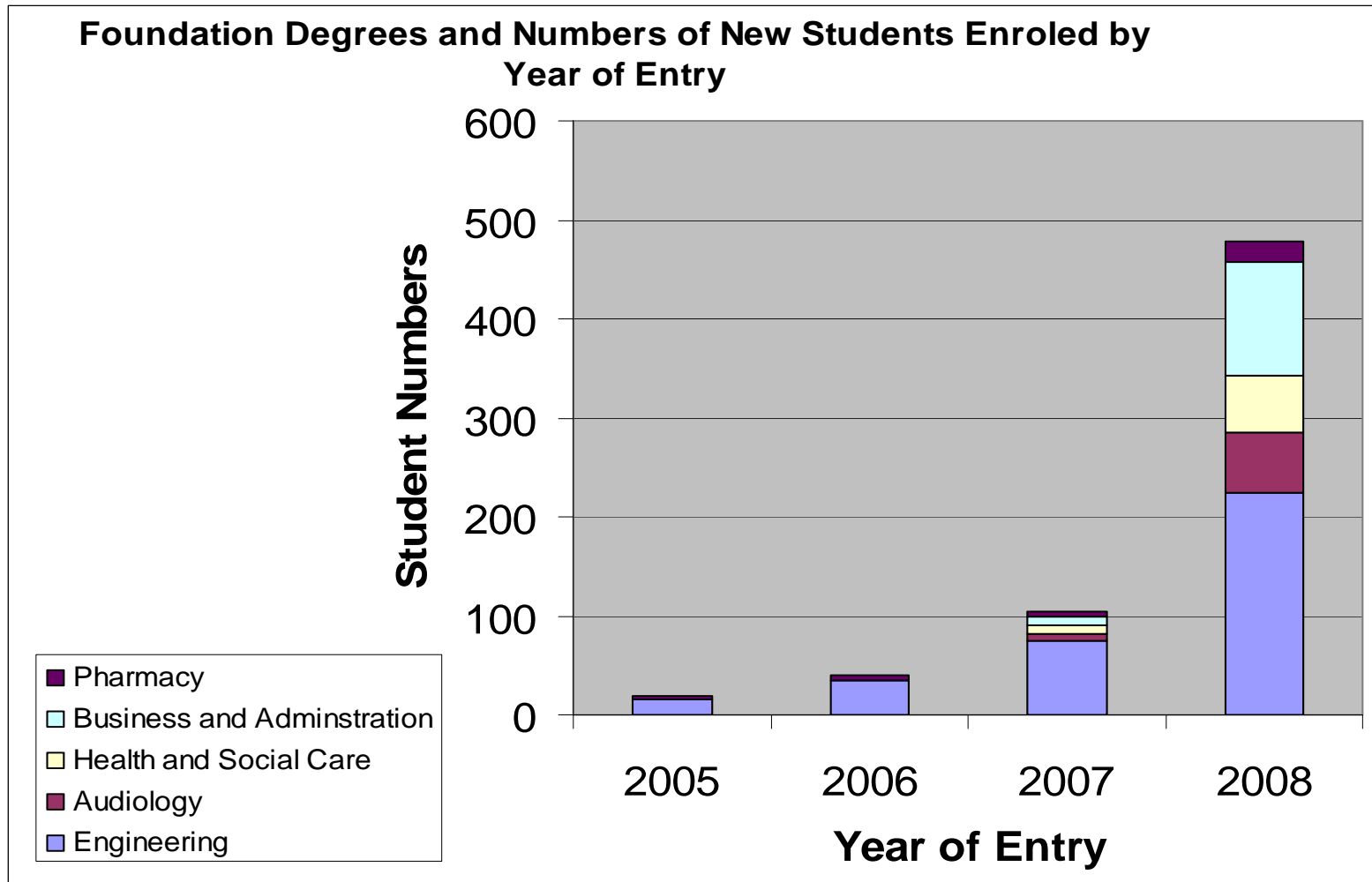
EPE Progress to date 2007/8

- ▶ 3 existing programmes:
 - ▶ Scottish and Southern Group with Reading College (TVU) as FE Partner
 - ▶ 11 students - Feb 2007
 - ▶ 11 students - Oct 2007
 - ▶ National Grid with Walsall College
 - ▶ 14 students - April 2007
 - ▶ 9 students – Oct 2007
 - ▶ E.ON UK and SPG with Walsall College
 - ▶ 20 students started Oct 2007

EPE Progress - 2008 onwards

- ▶ New programme developments
 - ▶ SSE - Power Generation Programme
 - ▶ National Grid – Power Systems Management
- ▶ 9 cohorts – Approx 160 students by November 2008
- ▶ Additional Partners – Loughborough College
- ▶ Part-time progression to B Eng
- ▶ Other new developments:
 - ▶ Renewable Energy Technologies
 - ▶ Gas Engineering

Growth in Employer led Foundation Degrees



Foundation Degree Centre SDF Project

Key Points

One of 15 pilot projects on Employer Engagement

- ▶ £1.598M budget (inc. FEC)
- ▶ “Develop practice and policy on employer engagement in HE”
- ▶ 2007/8 100 ASNs – achieved (funded by LLN)
- ▶ 2008/9 Target – 334 ASNs (+ LLN numbers!)
- ▶ 2009/10 - 25% co-funding target + growth in ASNs (429)
- ▶ Sustainability

Co-funding

- ▶ Cash and/or in-kind?
 - ▶ Partnership Agreement/Learning Contract
 - ▶ Annual Financial Schedule
 - ▶ Student salary
 - ▶ Mentor costs
 - ▶ Training Development/Liaison Officer/Project Manager
 - ▶ Travel/Accommodation Costs
 - ▶ Books/PC
 - ▶ Specialist Training Facility/Equipment
- £s per student p.a.

Partnership with LLNs

- ▶ Key partner in development of regional LLN
- ▶ Agreement to access ASN Funding
- ▶ Lead on Employer Engagement for FDs
- ▶ Development of new Engineering FDs in collaboration with Worcester and Sutton Colleges (34 ASNs)
- ▶ LLN Project activity
 - ▶ Maths tutorials – novel e-learning resource
 - ▶ New FD Programme developments
 - ▶ IAG Process development
 - ▶ E-learning Distance Learning Packages - Mentor and Supervisor Training
 - ▶ Novel progression delivery – intra-regional proposal

Advantage West Midlands

- ▶ Aston one of the leading HEIs working with *fdf* to develop a new WM-orientated FD programme around Business Operations and Leadership in Engineering
- ▶ The project has been identified as a key component HEI delivery within the Regional Skills Agenda, and is in the final stages of a major funding application with AWM. If approved the target will be to deliver more than 5,000 students with Level 4 skills and above into the WM by 2011.
- ▶ Aston also engaged with AWM directly in identifying components of teaching strategy at Aston that are consistent with, and contribute to, the RSA.

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