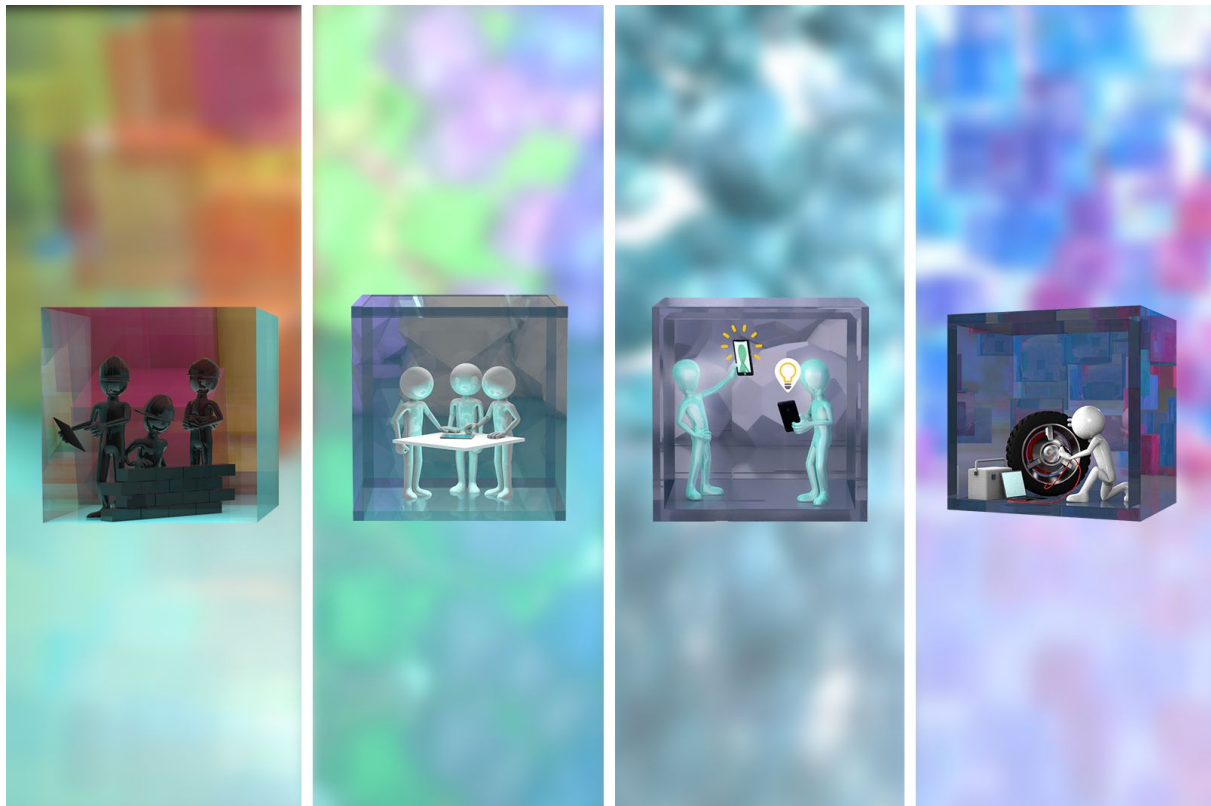


# Marketing and Engagement Plan

BLE Phase 2: Jan 2017 - Dec 2018



## Executive Summary

Blended Learning Essentials is a free suite of online courses for the Vocational Education and Training sector to promote effective practice and pedagogy in blended learning.

The courses were run and supported from 2016 onwards by a consortium of partners funded by [Ufi Charitable Trust](#). The lead partners were the [University of Leeds](#), the [UCL Institute of Education](#), the [Association for Learning Technology](#) (ALT), and [FutureLearn](#).

The [Blended Learning Essentials](#) (BLE) courses are for anyone working in further education, skills training, vocational education, workplace learning, lifelong learning or adult education, who wants to learn about and implement blended learning.

The course runs were supported by a group of dedicated Digital Champions, connecting participants with teaching and training professionals who understand the practical, everyday challenges of using blended learning in the sector.

Course participants had a number of ways to gain professional recognition and accreditation for participating in the course and as a next step in their professional development, detailed in the course [Accreditation Guide](#).

This report covers engagement and marketing work undertaken during this project phase to reach the courses' key audiences:

- Practitioners, i.e., teachers and trainers (and trainees of the profession), in both public and private training providers, apprenticeship providers, work-based or community learning, adult education, offender learning and other areas in the VET sector.
- Managers who manage and support staff across the sector.
- Leaders who have relevant strategic roles.

A mixed approach was taken to engagement and marketing work, combining targeted messages delivered in digital, print, and face-to-face contexts, alongside the recruitment and support of a network of Digital Champions, and the provision of support for local and specific activities and workshops, in order to engage harder to reach audiences such as practitioners who are not habitually online.

The report describes:

- Communication strategy.
- Engagement strategy, including events and work with Digital Champions.
- Impact on course sign-ups.

**Key outcomes of the report include:**

- Strong uptake of the course, demonstrating the market for this type of CPD offering and the continuing importance of skills development in this area in the sector. Total registrations exceeded the overall target of 60,000 for the project.
- Impact beyond the courses: the project has established a strong presence in the sector, and the courses and the curriculum are now being referenced by sector agencies as one of the frameworks used as a baseline to design digital skills development.
- Engagement of a broad range of target audiences through successful engagement activities by project team members and Digital Champions.
- Digital Champions have played a very significant role in advocating for the course, with excellent feedback on course mentors from active participants, and good in-course commenting rates.

This report is shared by ALT on behalf of the BLE Project under a CC-BY-NC-ND licence.

## Reporting for Project Board

This report was compiled sequentially across the period of the project phase, and is now ordered chronologically from January 2017 to December 2018, when it was last updated. This document can be viewed as a Google doc at <https://go.alt.ac.uk/2UVqsN6>.

*“This course has given me confidence that the strategies we have employed or are planning are suitable and similar to what other organisations are using. It also helps to see how other providers are addressing similar challenges to our own, such as EPA readiness. We are going to use Padlet more often and the journal feature within OneFile to record off the job activity and self reflections.”*

“we shouldn’t be reinventing the wheel all over the country ... for me it was really quite a revelation”

*“I have gained the confidence to use digital in the deployment of apprenticeship programmes. This is critical for me since one cannot deliver competitive results in today's training practice without digital. I downloaded a lot of tools which I intend to use as templates and reference materials when I need help in the future. This course has been a great help. Many thanks to the sponsors and everyone who facilitated it's provision”*

“the structure of it - lends itself to the way I like to learn things - to get involved”

*“There are so many tools out there that it can be very time consuming and confusing to find practical solutions. The course has been brilliant in offering more direction in which to use”*

“This course has helped me by opening up what is needed and available from an education perspective - exposing me to new apps, and ideas that I can implement in my job. I am glad I can go back and view some of the documents and videos again”

*Quotations from course participants in the Sep - Dec 2018 program run.*

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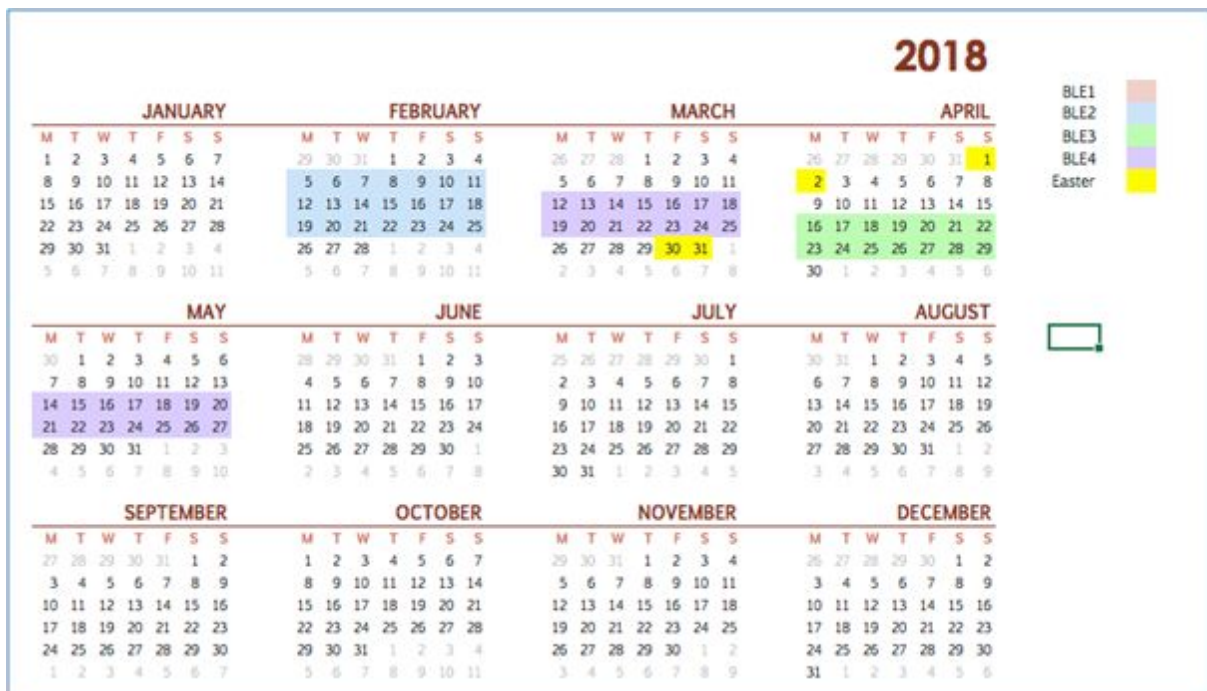
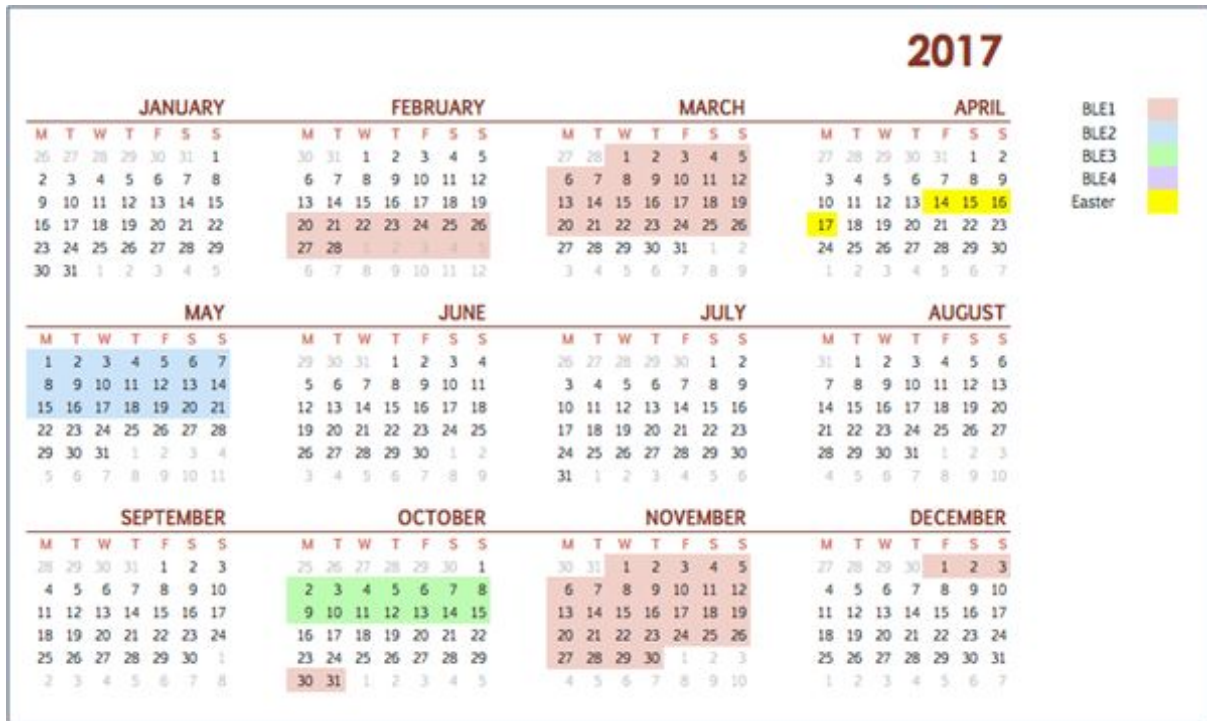
## High level overview

<b>Delivery date</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
13 Jan 2017 (2 months)	Marketing and Engagement Plan
26 May 2017 (5 months)	Marketing & Engagement 25 % complete
8 Dec 2017 (6 months)	Marketing & Engagement 50 % complete
6 April 2018 (5 months)	Marketing & Engagement 75 % complete
1 June 2018 (2 months)	Marketing & Engagement 100 % complete

Other milestones that will impact on the delivery of this work package:

- 17 Feb 2017: Accreditation proposal, which will inform an updated version of the Guide to Accreditation and related marketing materials;
- w/c 26 June for launch 3 July: new taster videos for BLE 3;
- Ongoing lessons fed into this work package from the evaluation reports.

Course dates for BLE 1,2,3 and 4



## Approach set out in the PID

The course will be listed on the Futurelearn platform as a University of Leeds course (see: <https://www.futurelearn.com/partners/university-of-leeds> ) with a list of partners provided under the 'in association with' section (as in the previous phase). In association will be UCL-IOE and other partners (such as private providers, employers, colleges, sector bodies and teacher training providers). Ufi will be named as the funding body on all FutureLearn course description pages (new functionality about to be released and we will provide an example of this as soon as it becomes available and include it in this document). All content within the course will be Copyrighted to Ufi, UCL-IOE and UoLeeds and acknowledgements will be provided within all course materials (e.g. video).

The University of Leeds will QA the courses as per normal arrangements for all online courses.

The target audience can be grouped into three main sections:

- Practitioners i.e. teachers and trainers (and trainees of the profession), in both public and private training providers, apprenticeship providers, work-based or community learning, adult education, offender learning and other areas in the VET sector
- Managers who manage and support staff across the sector
- Leaders who have relevant strategic roles.

Funds from the project will be used to reach our target audiences in the UK only.

In order to best reach the target audiences for the new courses being developed, we will implement the most effective strategies from first phase of work and we will work directly with sector experts and partners to:

- provide targeted input to key messages (for digital, face to face and print);
- embed within ITT and CPD courses
- recruit and work with Digital Champions and related events to promote the course via their networks and word of mouth;
- target print advertising in specialist publications;
- exposure at key industry events both face to face and online;
- and a consistent social media voice on Twitter using the course hashtags and existing account.

We will plan the communication strategy around the run dates of the courses utilising the existing video and marketing assets, which give us a strong basis from which to begin the campaign.

By targeting large providers in particular for apprenticeships and working with teacher training providers to include course information in their information for students, we will promote the courses to the harder to reach audiences such as practitioners who are not habitually online.

Building on the successful group of Digital Champions already active, we will identify and support sector-based professionals to act as a network of Digital Champions that will evenly



represent the public and private sector, as well as England and Wales. They will have materials and session designs based on the courses to help them run blended learning training sessions across public and private providers. Eileen will lead the delivery liaison with Digital Champions for course delivery and training workshops supported by Caroline. This way the process is at the heart of the project team.

From the first phase of BLE we have identified a number of strategies of working successfully with the champions which includes:

- Providing a clear support framework and regular communications;
- Guidance from the project team and support for attending and organising events;
- Incentives to join pilot routes for accreditation such as the CMALT scheme, for which a number of Digital Champions received free places and which we could look to expand with the cooperation of other provides to other routes.

An important part of our engagement strategy will be to develop and deliver workshops targeted at specific audiences, which Digital Champions and training consultants will deliver face to face, online or in a blended format.

This part of the strategy clearly responds to our experience from the first phase to provide stronger support for these types of local activities and will enable us to engage directly with new audiences as well as providing a more interactive route to promoting the courses and their impact. As in the marketing activities described above our aim is to work with (paid) partners (such as private providers, employers, colleges, sector bodies and teacher training providers) to support recruitment and embedding of BLE in ITT and CPD courses in colleges and other providers. We will include more details as we agree the partnerships in this and future phases so that each phase that includes that activity provides specific detail/example.

Scope of work includes:

- Developing customisable learning designs for workshops targeted at specific audiences, develop network of **Digital Champions and training consultants and work with trainers to deliver face-to-face or local online workshops.**
- Fees for DCs/membership bodies to support recruitment and embedding of BLE in ITT and CPD courses in all colleges and universities using online webinars **and f2f events.** The design and delivery plan for these activities will set out specific aims for the paid trainers/DCs. We will have a clear overview of costs involved, number of participants registered/reached for the workshops and collect feedback from participants. We will also add this as a route to hear about the course to course surveys. Through the reporting of lessons learnt we will be able to adjust the approach to increase its overall value for money.

We will also continue to use content from the courses, for example course videos hosted on YouTube, to help promote the course and engage potential participants. We can create a BLE playlist, such as the ones already existing at the University of Leeds for the course videos and the ones we use for marketing and include plans for a channel in the sustainability plan.



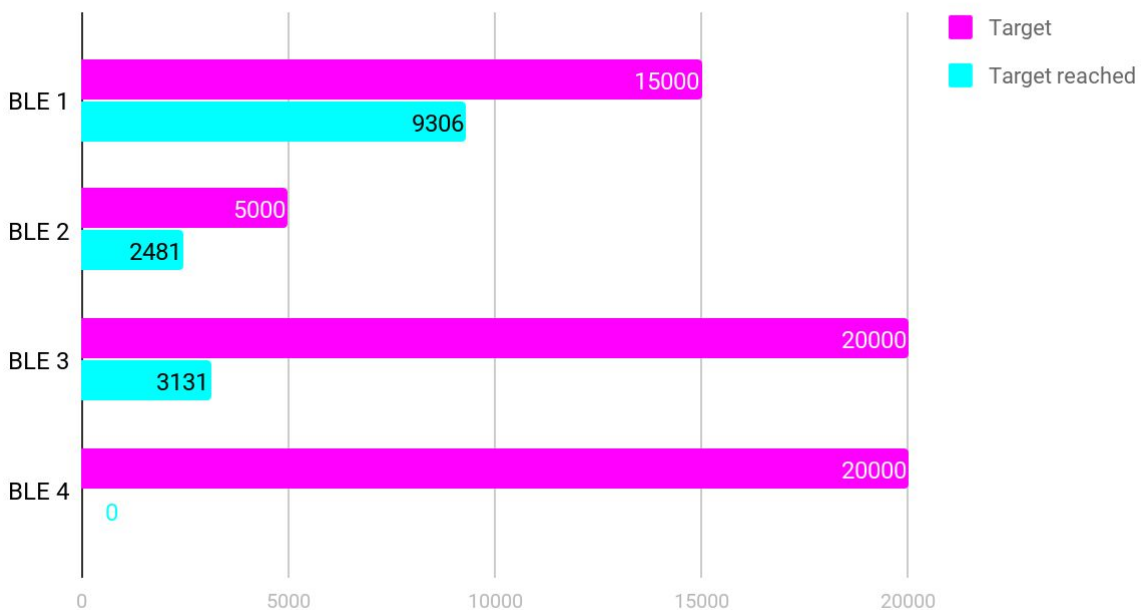
While platforms such as Facebook or LinkedIn seemed to have limited impact for the earlier courses, the use of content such as video helps partners, **digital champions** and individuals to spread the word about the course and we will continue to build on the lessons learnt over the past 18 months to strengthen impact. **DCs will actively promote the course online to their networks (via twitter, email etc.) as part of their role.**

We also want to continue to reach key influencers and the data and feedback from BLE 1 and 2 will be important for helping us reach new audiences – with the success and engagement from the earlier courses we will have case studies to share and headlines from the evaluation data. We will also provide briefing information for partners and the Trust to support liaison with policy makers and sector bodies.

### Success measures

The marketing campaign set out in this plan will contribute to generating 20,000 registered participants for BLE 1 and 2, 20,000 registered participants for BLE 3 and 20,000 registered participants for BLE 4. Reaching a total of 60,000 registered participants for the project overall.

#### Registered participants



*Table: Shows the target number of registered participants per course and the number of registered participants reached to date.*

In addition to the marketing campaign this plan includes work focused on engagement. Working with Digital Champions and partners to deliver 40 days of training targeted at specific audiences and to develop a network of Digital Champions and training consultants to deliver these.

The marketing campaign will also focus on promoting the programme of all 4 BLE course in the FutureLearn platform (March 2018) in the second year, providing a broader perspective on professional development with Blended Learning Essentials across target audiences.

The evaluation surveys and data that will be used to chart progress against other success measures, such as which audiences have been reached and registered for the course will further help inform the work on marketing and engagement.

## Marketing and Engagement: set up Dec 2016 - Jan 2017

Milestone: 10% completion

This shorter period is focused on project set-up and development of the Marketing and Engagement Plan. It also sees the launch of the new project, course dates and the official announcement.

### Task breakdown

This table provides an overview of activities planned for this period:

Activities	Aud	Start	End
Produce M&E plan	int	12/16	2/17
Launch campaign and promote start dates	ext	12/16	1/17
Set up internal M&E communication	int	1/17	1/17
Work package management and partner liaison	int	1/17	
Lessons learnt this phase	int	1/17	
Task breakdown for next phase	int	1/17	

### Campaign highlights:

Included in the breakdown above are the following highlights for the campaign:

1. The launch of the campaign includes the [official press release](#) issued by Ufi Trust;
2. Face to face promotion at events including Diana Laurillard at Online Educa Conference in Berlin, the largest educational technology conference in Europe.

### Working with partners:

The main work in this area is commencing formally in the next phase of the project. However initial conversations and informal conversations have been ongoing for several months.

### Internal M&E communication:

Whilst the core project team is smaller than in the previous phase we will still need to establish effective internal communication for the campaign and expand this to include a range of partners engaging with the project. As outlined in the PID we will be using Google Drive to host shared content as in the previous project, including the digital marketing pack and support materials for champions. Regular email communication will be put in place to keep everyone up to date about the campaign, sign up numbers and key deadlines for the campaign.

### **Engagement:**

See next phase. No engagement activities except for planning and set up were planned during this period.

## Lessons learnt:

As mentioned in the PID we identified a number of lessons learnt not solely for marketing, but also for internal communication and what works with our different groups.

There are two areas of change which we have reflected on and addressed: firstly the changes in the project team with new individuals joining and others stepping down and secondly the refreshing of the existing Digital Champions mailing list.

As the various parts of the project get underway we will monitor, review and adapt our approach to ensure that we can improve communication internally.

In addition to communication we have reflected on the political climate and how this has developed for policy makers in recent months, in particular in the context of the transition from BIS to DfE. Pro-active liaison with policy makers will need to take into account the changes that are going on and we will consider this further in our communication with senior stakeholders and attendance at the Bett Show will further help inform our work on this.

Upon completion of the evaluation of BLE 1 and 2 there may be further lessons to be learnt and we will review the report from a marketing and engagement perspective.



## Blended Learning Essentials New course dates for 2017!

A free course for the Vocational Education and Training sector to promote effective practice and pedagogy in blended learning.

**Part 1 'Getting Started' begins on 20 February 2017**

Sign up at: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/blended-learning-getting-started>



Funded by



Join and contribute to social media conversations about this course - #FLble1 (Part 1) / #FLble2 (Part 2)



*First flyer for the launch of the campaign*



**BellaAbrams**  
@angrybal

 Follow

Great news. Particularly the supporting apprenticeships module

**BLE Course** @BLECourse

BLE is expanding! See this press release from @UfiTrust for more info [ufi.co.uk/news/blended-l...](http://ufi.co.uk/news/blended-l...) & sign up for #FLble1 [goo.gl/6hhMXD](https://goo.gl/6hhMXD)

*Feedback from an FE IT Director on the launch announcement, Jan 2017*

## Marketing and Engagement: Jan 2017 - May 2017

Milestone: 25% completion

This part of the campaign was mainly targeted at the new runs of BLE 1 and 2. Using the video and other marketing materials we already have we have focused on broadening our reach.

### Task breakdown

This table provides an overview of activities planned for the coming months:

Activities	Aud	Start	End
Campaign (Jan - May) online, print & face to face	ext	1/17	5/17
Update BLE1/2 webpages	ext	1/17	1/17
Compile marketing pack		1/17	2/17
Direct marketing costs & partners	ext	1/17	5/17
Engagement and trainer recruitment	ext	2/17	5/17
Work package management and partner liaison	int	1/17	
Lessons learnt this phase	int	1/17	
Task breakdown for next phase	int	1/17	

### Campaign highlights:

Included in the breakdown above are the following highlights for the campaign:

1. The campaign for BLE1 in this period reached just over 50% of the overall target for registered participants and the campaign for BLE 2 reached over to 40% of the overall project target to date. Combined this means we have reached a total of 9,698 participants in this phase and this represents very good progress;
2. The face to face outreach activities at events continue strongly with both Digital Champions and BLE team members spreading the word about the course using the printed marketing materials, presentations slides and pop up banners that we have provided;
3. Supporting Digital Champions in the run up and during the course runs has been effective and Eileen leads on co-ordinating the work of the Champions within the course. Together with the videos, suggested tweets and Facebook posts the Champions have continued to help promote the course via their networks.

### Course webpages

Course webpages had to be updated twice. We first updated the pages as planned for the new course runs and then repeated this at short notice due to FutureLearn introducing a number of changes to the layout and format of all their courses. This had an impact on all previously agreed wording as well as the type of content now included in the new format.

The new style course pages can be viewed at the same URLs as before:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/blended-learning-getting-started>

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/blended-learning-embedding-practice>

It is important to acknowledge that the new format/style were difficult to manage as there is less flexibility, lower character limits and less opportunity to present courses in two parts.

We anticipate that some of the existing issues will be resolved once the programme page, which will link to all Blended Learning Essentials courses, is up and running next year.

### Changes to course participation (upgrades)

Another change that we have faced during this period was the introduction of the course upgrade option. This also required an additional review and update of marketing materials (and related also accreditation information, which will be covered in the relevant report.

These changes did not directly impact on the recruitment campaign for the last run of BLE1, but were introduced ahead of the run of BLE2. However, it is difficult to say at this stage whether there has been a significant impact on the campaign as sign ups for this part of the course have followed an established pattern over 4 runs, decreasing each time. This seems more to do with the perception of the course as “Part 2” rather than the changes introduced.

Regardless of immediate impact these changes have led to a big amount of extra effort in terms of marketing and communication and will also need to be considered in the materials for future courses.

### Working with partners:

Key liaison during this phase was with the team at Leeds in order to manage various changes and campaign materials. This was essential and limited our ability for external liaison somewhat.

However, we provided updated marketing materials and the course run dates to partners including AoC, L&W, Jisc, ETF, Good Things (Formerly Tinder Foundation), colleges, teacher training providers and others.

We have produced two briefing documents aimed at two of our key target audiences once the evaluation report data had been signed off.

The two documents are aimed at policy makers/senior decision makers and one for accreditation providers. These have been finalised in consultation with the project team and



used to establish further partners for the project. We are currently working for example with FAB, the Federation of Awarding Bodies.

In addition a similar briefing for teacher training providers has been produced for the accreditation work and will be reported on via the relevant report.

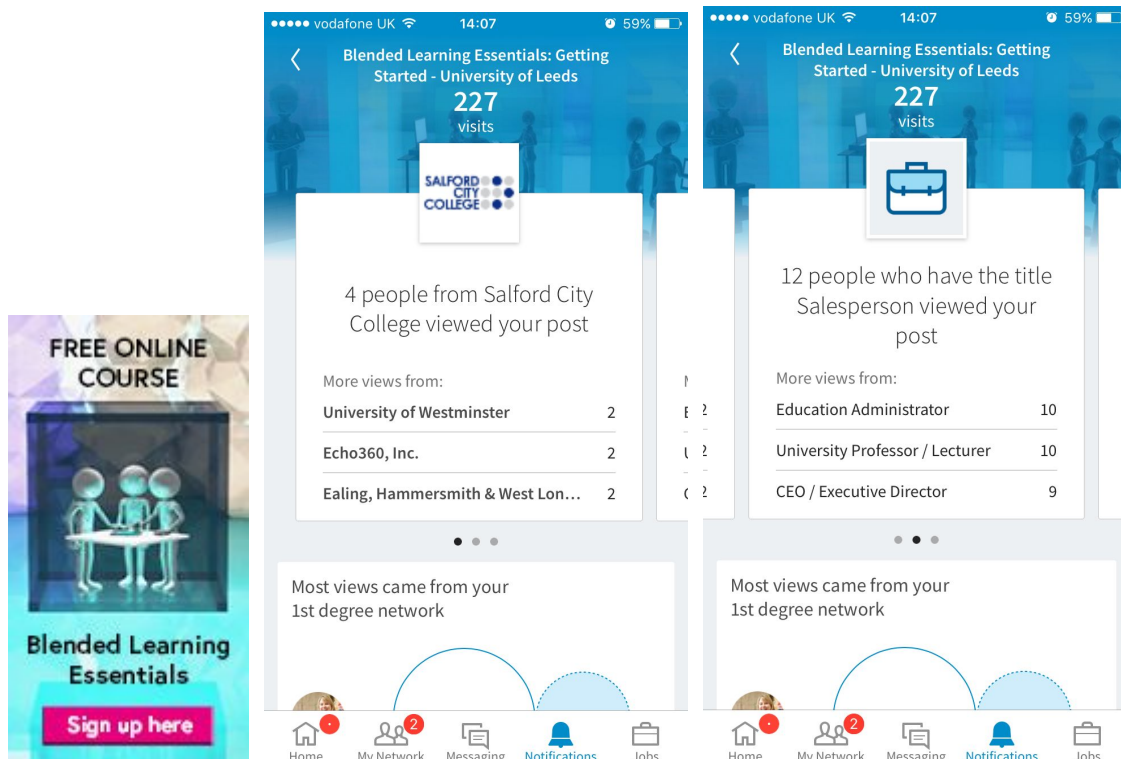
Both documents are included with this report and input to future iterations is welcome.

We need to acknowledge that both the continued uncertainty around Brexit and now the news of a General Election are significant issues for the sector and whilst the needs for workforce development are strong it is difficult to get much focus on these issues.

### Advertising and social media

We used a number of external suppliers to place high impact adverts for this run of the course. As well as a featured ad on the cover of FE Week we advertised online with FE News and plan to use a similar approach with the ETF's inTuition journal.

Twitter continues to be the most effective social media platform, but we have also used individual posts on LinkedIn to promote the courses:



### **Engagement:**

We have organised a day-long event for Digital Champions to design BLE workshop sessions to take place in London on June 16th 2017. Digital Champions will work together to create a series of learning designs that make use of and link to the publicly available materials from the Blended Learning Essentials courses (for example, the BLE videos

available in the UoL video repository, the Padlets and the downloadable crib sheets pack). Each workshop learning design will generate enthusiasm for blended learning, demystify the technology involved, and demonstrate how blended learning can help participants support their learners more efficiently and effectively. The workshops will conclude by encouraging participants to learn more by signing up to the courses. The aim is to introduce less technologically confident staff to the kind of learning experience they will encounter in Blended Learning Essentials in a supportive, local environment and thereby encourage them to take their learning further by enrolling.

Eileen will lead the event, which will make use of the highly successful ABC hands-on workshop developed at UCL to help groups plan courses/learning units that uses Diana Laurillard's six learning types from the Conversational Framework. This will produce a broad outline for several workshops to introduce participants to the concepts and tools that feature in the course tailored to specific VET sector contexts. These outlines will then be developed into detailed learning designs using the Learning Designer tool ([learningdesigner.org](http://learningdesigner.org)), creating shareable and adaptable digital workshop plans. Following the day in London, Digital Champions will refine and test the workshop designs by running the activity in their local context and the final designs will be rolled out to the remaining Digital Champions and made available to participants within the Blended Learning Essentials courses.

The Digital Champions have responded enthusiastically to invitations to take part in the event, and 15 Digital Champions have signed up to attend.

### **Lessons learnt**

The changes at the FutureLearn platform significantly shifted the focus in the last few months from focusing on external liaison to internal change management and communications.

It feels like we have made significant progress as a team working efficiently together, but the short notice given for each change, both the home pages and the paid option presented challenges for everyone involved and feedback has been given to FutureLearn.

Feedback from participants continues to be strong and positive. Sign ups continuing throughout the course runs shows that participants themselves help spread the word as they share their experience and get colleagues involved.

Digital Champions have continued to play an important role in advocating for the course and we anticipate that this will only increase following the first face to face workshop in June.

Filming for BLE3 taster video is underway and will be ready for review w/c 26 June, in time for the launch of the BLE3 homepage 3 July.

Engaging with partners can be patchy at times as organisations transition, rebrand and staff changes. The duration of the project requires partners to engage over extended periods and there is little continuity in the personnel involved for most of them. This is less the case with colleges and training providers, but continues to be time intensive.

Overall, the strong uptake of the course during this run shows how important this type of skills development continues to be.

## Marketing and Engagement: Dec 2017 - June 2018

Milestone: 75% completion

The changes in the project milestone dates have extended the duration of this period from April to June, increasing the time overall by 2 months.

### Task breakdown

This table provides an overview of activities planned for the coming months:

Activities	Aud	Start	End
Campaign (Dec - Jun) online, print & face to face	ext	12/17	6/18
Update BLE2 webpages	ext	1/18	6/18
Compile BLE 4 marketing pack and update web pages		2/18	6/18
Direct marketing costs & partners	ext	12/17	6/18
Engagement work led by Digital Champions	ext	12/17	6/18
Work package management and partner liaison	int	12/17	6/18
Lessons learnt this phase	int		6/18
Task breakdown for next phase	int		6/18

### Campaign highlights

There have been many highlights of the campaign over the past six months, including:



**A free course to support the development of digital skills in the workplace.** Almost every job now involves a range of digital skills, yet employers report a shortage in skilled new starters. We'll show you how to assist workers to create digital content and use tools for communicating effectively and working collaboratively.



<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/blended-learning-digital-skills>

*Slide from presentation at DCMS seminar, led by Dr Maren Deepwell*

Direct engagement with and support from policy makers, including a presentation at the DCMS in February following which we established a dialogue between policy makers and the course team and shared research of digital skills framework. There has also been liaison with the DfE working with Nick Lambert, focused on the sustainability of the courses going forward.



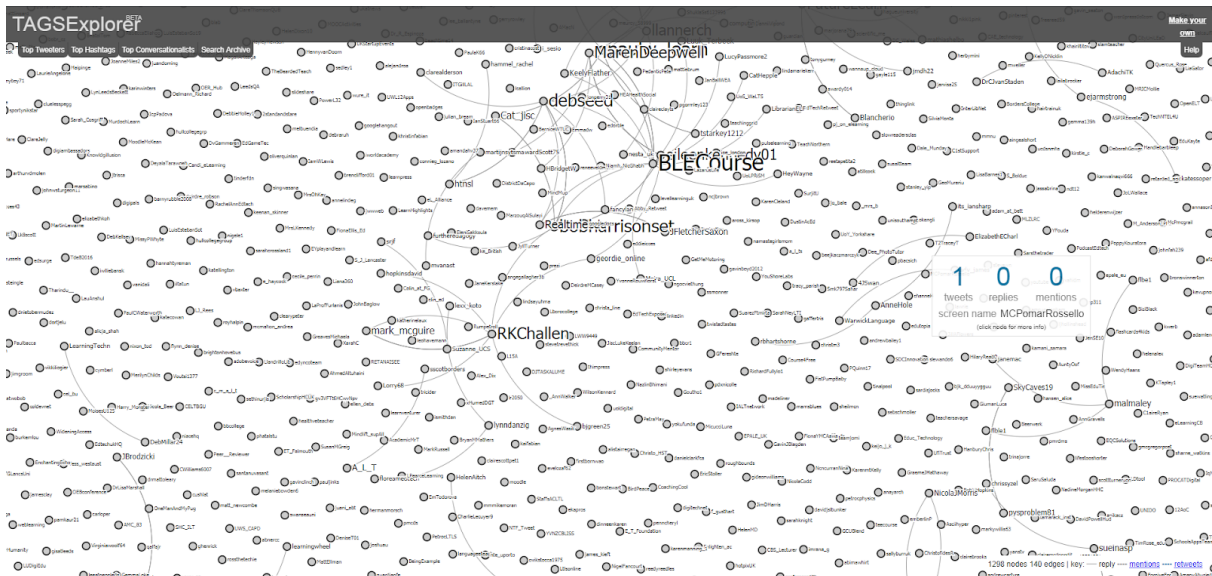
Amy Woodrow  
@amy\_woodrow1

A6. Mine was a little lightbulb moment after speaking to @stevekem realising how lacking my ed tech knowledge/usage is. Completed @BLECourse and learned so much. Have passed on ideas to others in my team #ukfechat

01/03/2018, 22:02

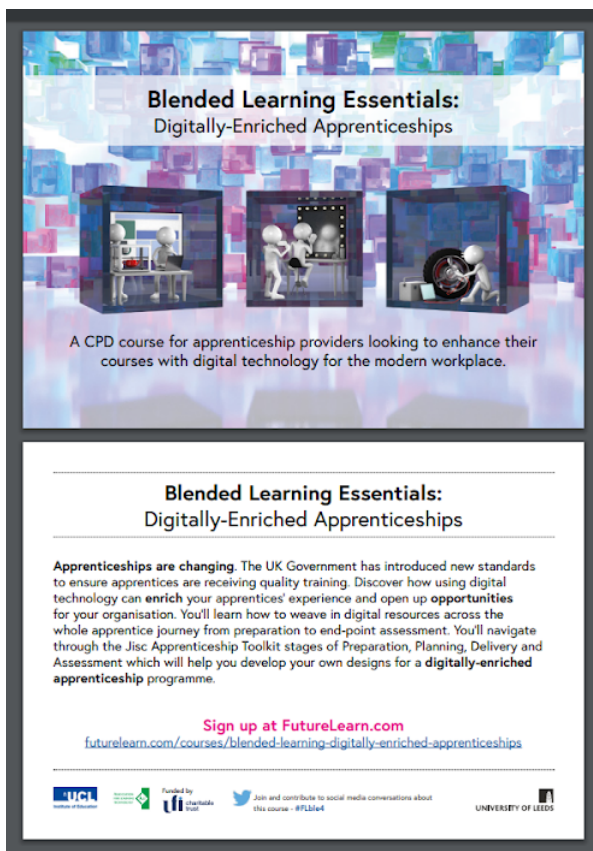
*Example of the feedback received via social media*

The campaign on social media continued and focused on engagement via Twitter. We continue to work in partnership with sector bodies and Digital Champions to create momentum about the courses both in the run up to start dates and during the course runs.



A screenshot of the growing network on Twitter. You can access this yourself [here](#).

We also now have a complete family of courses each with their own artwork that presents a coherent visual identity for Blended Learning Essentials. Digitally-Enriched Apprenticeships is the latest course for which new artwork was created as well as video content and printed materials:



Example of the flyer design for the course.

## Campaign progress overall

*Table: Shows the target number of registered participants per course and the number of registered participants reached to date.*

This phase of the project has thus far attracted 20,000 registered participants, which brings the total for the courses since inception to 51,925 registered participants overall.

Both BLE 1 and BLE 2 are performing well as expected, but sign ups for the newer courses launch are below what we hoped for.

With the launch of the full programme in the next phase of the project we anticipate that we will be closer to meeting our original targets for registered participants by the close of the project.

There are a number of factors however that have impacted on our ability to generate sign-ups:

1. The success of the courses has proven the market for this kind of cpd offering and competing initiatives, such as the ETF's bite-sized learning course or Jisc's digital training provision, are now a strong disincentive for partners to help promote the course;
2. Our strategy to embed the new courses in internal provision did not take into account that many providers wish to review the full course and try it before doing so. This has meant that the first runs of both new courses were not embedded as hoped for and we are working to make progress in this area for the new course runs;
3. Our strategy to reach the hard to reach audiences with the help of digital champions continues to be difficult to implement even with good resourcing and the number of workshops and sessions delivered remains below the expected level;
4. Working with the new marketing partners from the funding body has been welcome, but also time intensive and has resulted in a press release issued for the start of the course but unfortunately an opportunity to write a piece for FE Week was not realised.

There has also been some impact from continued changes in project staffing and delays with getting responses due to these changes.

### Impact beyond the courses

We can see that the project has established a strong presence in the sector as the courses and the curriculum, are now being referenced by sector agencies as one of the frameworks used as a baseline to design digital skills development, such as the ETF's recent Invitation to Tender for the development of an EdTech Competency Framework in partnership with Jisc.



Similarly, the AELP has started running a series of edtech focused conferences and events, which draw heavily on the example of Blended Learning Essentials to inform their development.

Independent membership bodies, such as ALT, continue to take a productive approach to partnering with the project, promoting accreditation pathways for course participants and sponsored places as well.

We recommend that in light of the broader impact that the course developments are having we consider the format of the course curriculum and information about its licensing to make it easy for others to correctly reference it in their work.

## Engagement

The engagement work is being led by Lynne Taylerson working with Digital Champions. During the past six months there have been a number of activities including the following promotional sessions engaging with 52 tutors, librarians and managers in total in HE and FE:

### Practical Workshop Events:

- Jocelyn Bailey (Digital Champion) - New City College London (tutors' event) April, 2018 - using Padlet with Phones and BLE course overview
- Jocelyn Bailey - New City College London (senior leaders' event), April, 2018 - Padlet value to learners, sharing practice in blended learning, signing up to BLE

### BLE Showcases:

- Lynne - presentation and discussion on BLE 4 programme with focus on BLE 4 at ALT West Midlands Learning Technology Group meeting, Birmingham University, February 2018
- Lynne - presentation and discussion on BLE 4 at ETF's ITT CPD programme at Reading College, April 2018
- Lynne - presentation and discussion on BLE 4 at the ETF's Professional Exchange 3 (West Midlands) meeting at Worcestershire County Council's Fairfield Centre, May 2018
- Lynne - presentation and discussion on BLE 4 to senior managers at Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association (HWGTA), an Outstanding Apprenticeships provider, May 2018

Going forward, engagement work will continue with the following activities already scheduled:

- Lynne will be hosting a presentation and discussion on BLE 3 at the next meeting of the ETF Professional Exchange 3 (West Midlands) at Halesowen College in the first week of September. The topic of the meeting is 'Digital Skills Frameworks' and at least 10 managers and teachers will be attending

- Lynne and Digital Champions will be providing a presence at the ALT conference at University of Manchester from 11th-13th September at a BLE stand allowing them to promote the new course programme. Lynne will be inviting all digital champions to come along to promote the 4 courses.

## Marketing and Engagement: June 2018 - December 18

Milestone: 100% completion

This phase of the campaign saw all four BLE courses run as a programme on the FutureLearn platform and the conclusion of the project as a whole. The changes in the project milestone dates have extended the duration of this period from for six months, until the project close in December 2018.

### Task breakdown

Activities	Aud	Start	End
Finalise programme	ext	6/18	7/18
Programme campaign	ext	6/18	11/18
Direct marketing costs & partners	ext	6/18	11/18
Engagement work led by Digital Champions	ext	6/18	11/18
Work package management and partner liaison	int	6/18	12/18
Final Report	int	10/12	12/18

### Programme dates during this phase

All four courses ran as follows:

- BLE: Developing Digital Skills -17 September
- BLE: Digitally-Enriched Apprenticeships - 8 Oct
- BLE: Getting Started - 29 Oct
- BLE: Embedding practice - 3 Dec

### Showcase event

This phase saw a showcase event run with a contribution from Rebecca Garrod-Waters and Bronwen Swinnerton and Lynne Taylerson as well as Digital Champions on Wednesday, 12 September hosted by ALT's Annual Conference, where BLE also had an exhibitor presence.

### Campaign priorities:

In this extended period of the campaign our key priority was to use the funds that we have to create maximum impact for the run of programme. Having a single entity to focus the campaign around will be a major improvement and working in partnership with partners and providers helped to embed the courses in existing provision. With the sustainability of the courses a key focus over this period, the campaign continued to provide a basis for promotion in print, digital and media to support those efforts.

## Campaign highlights

This phase has seen delivery of BLE 3 'Digital Skills', BLE 4 'Digitally Enriched Apprenticeships', and BLE 1 'Getting Started', and BLE 2 from 03/12/18.

Highlights of the campaign over the past six months have included course promotion and engagement at events including:

- ETF Professional Exchange 3, Halesowen, early September.
- BLE showcase event at ALT Annual Conference, 11-13 September.
- Digital Further Education: 5 Years on from FELTAG', on 26 September.
- Ufi showcase event, London, 21 November.
- SET Conference, Birmingham, 7 November
- AoC Conference, Birmingham, 20-21 November
- BLE showcase at ALT Online Winter Conference, 11 December.

Members of the team have been able to promote the remaining course runs to a broad range of audiences, and discuss the impact of the courses (see further [Engagement](#), below).



**Blended Learning Essentials Program**

A PROGRAM OF FREE ONLINE COURSES STARTING ON 17 SEPT 2018

# Blended Learning Essentials Program

An essential portfolio of free online courses for teachers, trainers & managers developing blended learning. This Program contains four courses that will help you develop your learners' digital skills and prepare them for the modern workplace.

- Getting Started
- Embedding Practice
- Developing Digital Skills
- Digitally-Enriched Apprenticeships

The BLE programme is aimed at those working in further education, skills training, vocational education, workplace learning and lifelong learning or adult education, commonly known as the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.

**Sign up at FutureLearn.com**

[futurelearn.com/programs/blended-learning-essentials](https://futurelearn.com/programs/blended-learning-essentials)



Use the hashtags #FLble1, #FLble2, #FLble3 and #FLble4 to join and contribute to social media conversations about these courses.



*New postcard to promote full run of BLE programme*

## Campaign progress overall

Available figures to date show 5,776 new joiners for the current full programme run, with BLE 2 yet to start. Total registrations are now over 61,000, exceeding the overall registration target for the project as a whole (60,000).

	Blended Learning Essentials: Embedded Practice	Blended Learning Essentials: Getting Started	Blended Learning Essentials: Developing Digital Skills	Blended Learning Essentials: Digitally-Enriched Apprenticeships	Total for all
Totals	14,983	37,411	6,368	2,281	<b>61,043</b>

*Total registrations for all courses*

BLE 3 and 4 sign ups have not reached registration targets, but show good conversion rate to active participants. Commenting rates are also healthy (see Evaluation report).

	Registered participants	Active participants		Completions		Statement purchased	
		n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
<b>BLE3.1</b>	3,444	1,978	57%	522	26%	54	10%
<b>BLE3.2</b>	1,582	949	60%	186	20%	22	12%
<b>BLE3.3</b>	1,335	706	53%	116	16%	22	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,361</b>	<b>3,633</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>12%</b>

	Registered participants	Active participants		Completions		Statement purchased	
		n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
<b>BLE4.1</b>	1,237	957	77%	132	14%	15	11%
<b>BLE4.2</b>	852	280	33%	53	19%	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,089</b>	<b>1,237</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9%</b>

Table shows total registrations across runs of BLE 3 and BLE 4. Almost 60% of registrations convert to active participants

BLE 1 'Getting Started' continues to attract registrations, with positive comments from course participants in this phase including:

*"I was skeptical at first but I now feel more confident that I could use these simple but effective ideas in my own teaching. I have found that blended learning is more than what I considered it to be and I feel more open minded."*

*"I have learned a lot about blended learning for teachers and students this week. This learning has helped reduce my levels of anxiety about this sort of learning. I think it helps to see this learning as a continuation of all the learning that has brought me to where I am today as a (quite effective) teacher and learner. Over my journey I have learned new skills and how to use different tools. Blended learning is another step of the journey, which will continue."*

*"There are so many possibilities, so much great work to be done! This first week has reinforced, but also broaden my perspective on BL. I can see great opportunities for the field in which I work."*

*"All very valuable and lots of useful tools. Feeling more excited about Blended Learning and the use of Technology in teaching!"*



## Direct advertising and social media campaign

Much of the direct advertising in this phase of the campaign was strategically aligned with events including:

- ETF Professional Exchange 3, Halesowen, early September.
- BLE showcase event at ALT Annual Conference, 11-13 September.
- Digital Further Education: 5 Years on from FELTAG', on 26 September.
- Ufi showcase event, London, 21 November.
- SET Conference, Birmingham, 7 November
- AoC Conference, Birmingham, 20-21 November
- BLE showcase at ALT Online Winter Conference, 11 December.



Meanwhile the conversation on social media has continued to grow and the network can be explored online [here](#).

## Impact beyond the courses

We can see that the project has established a strong presence in the sector as the courses and the curriculum are now being referenced by sector agencies as one of the frameworks used as a baseline to design digital skills development, such as the ETF's recent Invitation to Tender for the development of an EdTech Competency Framework in partnership with Jisc.

Similarly, the AELP has started running a series of edtech focused conferences and events, which draw heavily on the example of Blended Learning Essentials to inform their development.



Independent membership bodies, such as ALT, continue to take a productive approach to partnering with the project, promoting accreditation pathways for course participants and sponsored places as well.

We recommend that in light of the broader impact that the course developments are having we consider the format of the course curriculum and information about its licensing to make it easy for others to correctly reference it in their work.

## Engagement

Team members and Digital Champions have engaged a number of audiences during this phase, promoting the current course runs, and celebrating the wider impact of the BLE courses.

- Lynne Taylerson hosted a presentation and discussion on BLE 3 at the ETF Professional Exchange 3 (West Midlands) at Halesowen College in the first week of September. The topic of the meeting was 'Digital Skills Frameworks', with managers and teachers in attendance.
- Lynne Taylerson and Digital Champions provided a presence at the ALT Annual Conference at the University of Manchester from 11-13 September at a BLE stand. Digital Champions attended the stand, allowing them to promote the new course programme.
- Digital Champions took part in a BLE showcase session during the Conference programme, attended by Ufi Chief Executive Rebecca Garrod-Waters, celebrating the impact of the courses, and receiving certificates of achievement.
- Maren Deepwell gave a keynote at the Inside Government forum, 'Digital Further Education: 5 Years on from FELTAG', on 26 September, promoting the courses to college Chief Executives.



*Maren Deepwell promotes the courses during keynote at FELTAG forum, 26 September*

A number of events in November and December allowed team members to promote the two remaining courses and discuss the impacts that the MOOCs have had.

- A Ufi showcase event in London on 21 November provided an excellent opportunity for members of the team to promote the course to a wide range of sector stakeholders including educators, managers, researchers and representatives from industry. Lead Educator Bronwen Swinnerton and Project Manager Lynne Taylerson attended along with digital champions Sarah Copeland and Jocelyn Bailey.
- Two Digital Champions attended the SET conference in Birmingham at the NEC on 07/11 and one Champion attended the AoC conference also in Birmingham at the ICC on 20 and 21 to promote BLE 1 and BLE 2.
- All 3 events allowed team members to promote the 2 remaining courses and discuss the impacts that the MOOCs have had.
- The BLE Showcase from the ALT Annual Conference will be repeated at the ALT Winter Conference on 11 December, presented by Lynne Taylerson and Bronwen Swinnerton with Digital Champions.



*Digital Champions and Conference delegates at the BLE stand at ALT's Annual Conference in September.*

## Lessons learned

### Campaign impact

Total registration targets for BLE 3 and BLE 4 fell short of expected targets, but the total target for the project as a whole of 60,000 registrations has already been exceeded, with BLE 2 still to run from 3 December.

As noted throughout this report, there are some lessons to reflect on in terms of driving registrations. A number of factors impacted on our ability to generate sign-ups, including:

1. The success of the courses has proven the market for this kind of CPD offering and competing initiatives, such as the ETF's bite-sized learning course or Jisc's digital training provision, are now a strong disincentive for partners to help promote the course;
  - a. We recommend that in light of the broader impact that the course developments are having we consider the format of the course curriculum and information about its licensing to make it easy for others to correctly reference it in their work.
2. Our strategy to embed the new courses in internal provision did not take into account that many providers wish to review the full course and try it before doing so. This has meant that the first runs of both new courses were not embedded as hoped for and we are working to make progress in this area for the new course runs;
3. Our strategy to reach the hard to reach audiences with the help of Digital Champions continues to be difficult to implement even with good resourcing and the number of workshops and sessions delivered remains below the expected level;
4. Engaging with partners can be patchy at times as organisations transition, rebrand and staff changes. The duration of the project requires partners to engage over extended periods and there is little continuity in the personnel involved for most of them. This is less the case with colleges and training providers, but continues to be time intensive.
5. Changes to the FutureLearn platform may have impacted on perceptions of the courses and weakened sign up rates.
6. There has also been some impact from continued changes in project staffing, and working with new partners: for example, working with the new marketing partners from the funding body has been welcome, but also time intensive, and some marketing opportunities have been missed due to delays.

There are many positives to reflect on as well.

1. While it has been difficult to meet targets for face-to-face workshops and sessions, Digital Champions have played a very significant role in advocating for the course, with excellent feedback on course mentors from active participants, and good in-course commenting rates.



2. Engagement activities by team members and Digital Champions have engaged a broad range of target audiences.
3. Overall, the strong uptake of the course shows how important this type of skills development continues to be, reflected in the total registrations, which have exceeded the overall target of 60,000 for the project



We are pleased to announce that the hugely successful Blended Learning Essentials courses will be starting again from 17 September. In this session we share some findings on the impact of the courses so far, and preview some of the course content.

