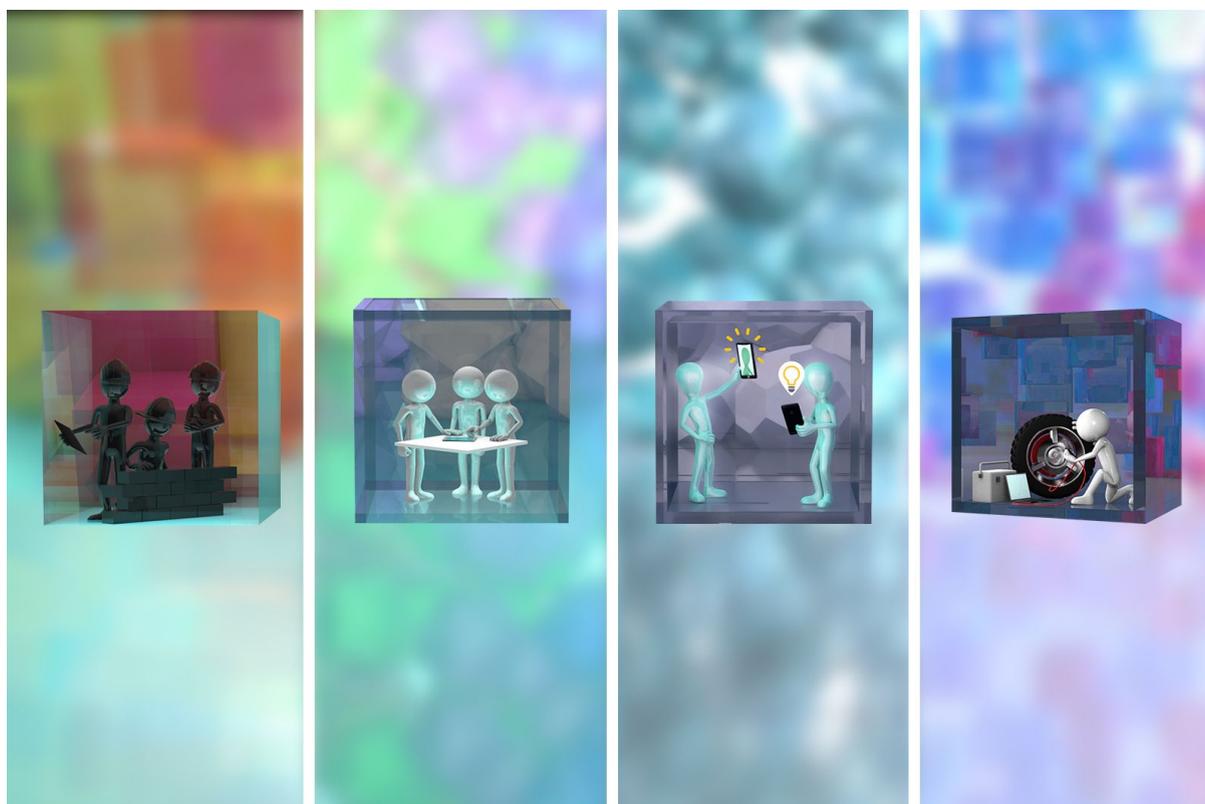


Accreditation Report

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](#). These included a FutureLearn Statement of Participation; certified CPD hours; accreditation via professional bodies such as

ALT and the Education and Training Foundation (ETF); and post-graduate qualifications offered by the University of Leeds and the UCL Institute of Education.

This report covers work undertaken during this project phase to develop and promote the pathways to accreditation available to course participants. Accreditation work focused on two principal strands: liaison with training providers and sector bodies to increase awareness of the CPD resource embodied within the courses themselves; and promotion and support of the pathways to further professional development contained within the Accreditation Guide.

The large number of course users (over 60,000 sign-ups on the FutureLearn platform) evidences the demand for CPD in the sector, and work described in this report further demonstrates the need for well-structured and supported routes to relevant and appropriate professional accreditation for individuals working with Blended Learning in the VET sector.

Key outcomes of the report include:

- Evidence of BLE course use by training providers, including post-compulsory PGCE course providers; and evidence of impact on learners.
- Successful progress of BLE course participants to further accreditation, including Certified Membership of the Association for Learning Technology (CMALT), a rigorous, portfolio-based accreditation in educational technology administered by ALT.
- Increased awareness of accreditation pathways available to VET practitioners working with blended learning through promotion by Accreditation Guide partners and other sector bodies.
- Amplification of impact both through public advocacy and through open sharing of professional portfolios by course participants who progressed to further accreditation.

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.

Table of Contents

[Reporting for Project Board](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

[High level overview and success criteria/deliverables](#)

[Approach set out in the PID](#)

[Course dates for BLE 1.2.3 and 4](#)

[Accreditation: set up Dec 2016 - Feb 2017](#)

[Task breakdown](#)

[Lessons learned](#)

[Accreditation: Feb 2017 - Dec 2017](#)

[BLE 1 and 2](#)

[BLE 3 and 4](#)

[All courses](#)

[Embedding BLE in PGCE courses](#)

[FutureLearn Programme](#)

[Working with partners](#)

[Task breakdown](#)

[Overview](#)

[BLE Pathways to CMALT](#)

[Tutor-marked assignments](#)

[Accreditation liaison and engagement](#)

[Lessons learned and planning for next phase](#)

[Accreditation: Dec 2017 - June 2018](#)

[Task breakdown](#)

[Overview](#)

[BLE Pathways to CMALT](#)

[Tutor-marked assignments](#)

[Accreditation liaison and engagement](#)

[How Can This Free Course Help You?](#)

[As an apprenticeship training provider you know all about the challenges and constraints you face when compared to full-time FE provision:](#)

[Blended learning approaches can help by:](#)

[Lessons learned](#)

[Accreditation: Jun 2018 - Dec 2018](#)

[Task breakdown](#)

[Liaison with partners](#)

[BLE 4: Liaison with apprenticeship and training providers and sector bodies](#)

[Promotion of accreditation pathways](#)

High level overview and success criteria/deliverables

Delivery date	Milestone
17 Feb 2017	Accreditation plan
8 Dec 2017	BLE 1 (x2), 2 and 3; refreshed guide for BLE 1 & 2; new accreditation pathway for BLE 3
June 2018	BLE 2, 3 and 4
Dec 2018	All course

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

- March 2017: Curriculum & course design for BLE 3 and 4
- Sep 2017: BLE 3 production
- March 2018: BLE 4 production

In addition to the milestones set out above, pathways to accreditation will contribute to the following success criteria:

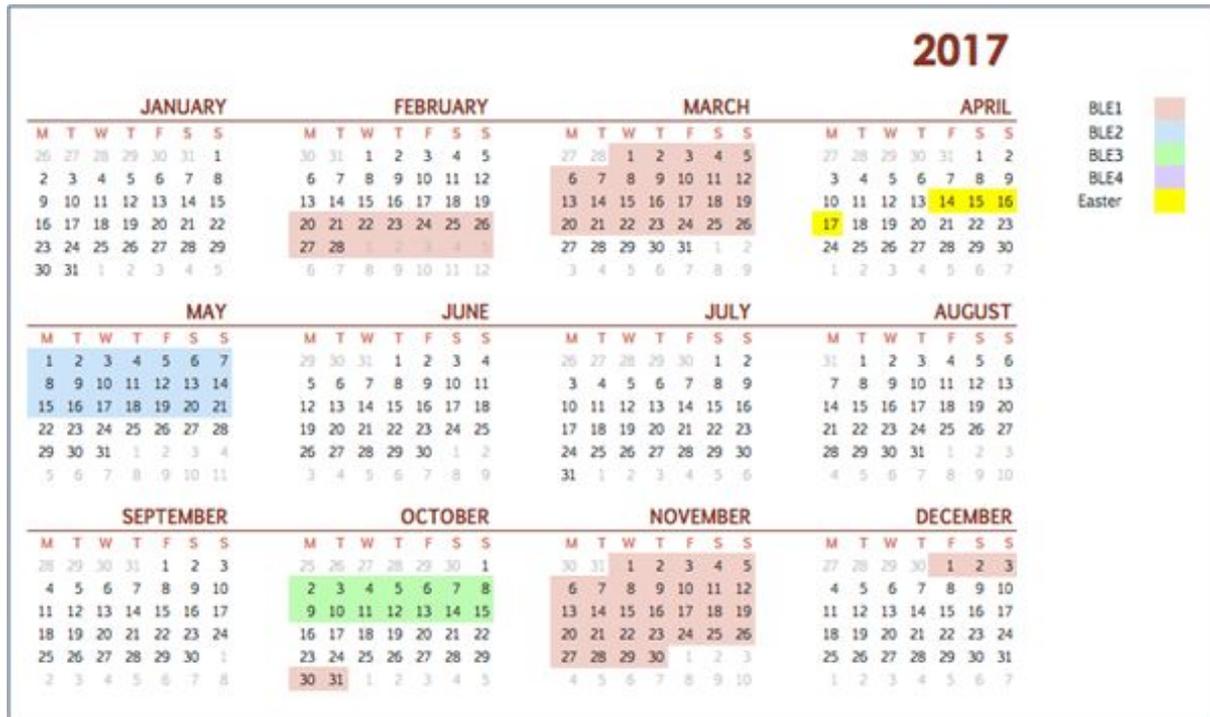
- Participants have embedded the MOOCs in a variety of provider-based CPD courses for the sector, both f2f and online, e.g. the main post-16 PGCE courses in the UK. Participation would primarily be through the scheduled course runs;
- Participants are able to submit evidence of impact with their learners through the accreditation pathways;
- A FutureLearn CPD Program of the four BLE courses once all courses are available (March 2018) will be listed on the FutureLearn site.

Approach set out in the PID

Information about accreditation pathways will be included on each course 'landing page' and on the FutureLearn Program page. The existing guide to accreditation pathways will be updated for the existing courses and developed to include individual sections for each new course, providing detailed information for participants from each course as well as an overview of the opportunities overall. We aim to build a more direct pathway to QTLS working in partnership with the Society for Education and Training which will reflect the new approach to accreditation recently launched. We will aim to inform how use of digital technology underpins all areas of QTLS.

Accreditation will provide an updated guide to accreditation pathways for BLE 1 and 2; external liaison and working in partnership with ETF, City & Guilds and ALT as well as possible other partners; and new accreditation pathways for the new courses providing flexible options for participants within the overall Futurelearn programme.

Course dates for BLE 1,2,3 and 4



Accreditation: set up Dec 2016 - Feb 2017

Milestone: 25% completion

This initial phase has an emphasis on updating accreditation information for participants and planning for the accreditation activities for the project. We also welcome Tom from ALT where he manages CMALT and who is now leading on the majority of the accreditation work with guidance from Maren.

Task breakdown

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

Activities	Start	End
Produce Accreditation plan and interim updates for BLE 1/2	12/16	2/17
Check/update BLE1/2 course pages/info	12/16	2/17
Check/update BLE1/2 course steps/delivery	1/17	2/17
Interim BLE1/2 updated guide for participants	1/17	2/17
Work package management and partner liaison	1/17	2/17
Lessons learned this phase	1/17	2/17
Task breakdown for next phase	1/17	2/17

Lessons learned

Reflecting on the evaluation report from the previous project it seems clear that the broader range of pathways we provided worked well and that was reflected in the lower than anticipated take up for FutureLearn certificates.

The Evaluation report noted specifically, “take-up of the accreditation pathways is also positive, **15% opted to buy a statement of participation** and the CMALT pilot, run by ALT, was full.”

In relation to the CMALT pilot, the evaluation report further mentioned: “The three teacher trainers we interviewed provided evidence of the impact of the course on helping their trainees meet their professional development goals in blended learning. In addition, there were several other participants who reported they had used the content of the courses to help them complete a PGCE or other teacher training qualification. Research projects focused on the course were conducted by 2 PGCE students among the interviewees, which they were happy to share with us. Another participant was using experience of the course in

a CMALT application. One of the PGCE students moved into a teacher training role herself after gaining her award, which shows the course’s positive impact on the career progression of participants.”



Reflecting further on this in the context of concluding the first phase of the project, the first two CMALT BLE participants, Emily Armstrong, Libraries & Learning Manager at the Hull College Group and Tharindu Liyanagunawardena, Instructional Designer at the University College of Estate Management, achieved the accreditation in October. We have been able to share and showcase the portfolios, and a further seven portfolio submissions are currently under assessment. Below is a screenshot of Emily’s portfolio which includes as evidence her Statement of Participation from the Blended Learning Essentials course:

During this phase we have liaised with partners to establish that there are a number of changes for both the QTLS and CMALT information in the guide which required updating for the first runs of BLE 1 and 2. Other partners who have contributed to previous versions of the guide have also been contacted and are providing updated information.

Accreditation: Feb 2017 - Dec 2017

Milestone: 50% completion

This phase includes runs of BLE 1, 2 and 3 and saw the publication of a refreshed guide to accreditation pathways for participants from BLE 1 & 2 as well as work to establish the new accreditation pathway for BLE 3.

BLE 1 and 2

In addition to updated materials (in particular the accreditation guide for participants) and updating the course content we will be supporting the Digital Champions for BLE 1 and 2. We will be using examples from the successful CMALT pilot and the accredited portfolios to showcase that accreditation pathway and ALT will run a webinar for interested participants as in the previous year. We will also aim to establish similar activities with partners like the Society for Education and Training.

Work in this phase will also include a tutor-marked assignment for Digital Champions aligned with the new CMALT pilot scheme, which will provide an additional incentive for Champions. We will be working in collaboration with the Champions to fully define the assignment process, but we currently plan to use one part of the CMALT framework, which has a focus on teaching, learning and assessment as a basis. The assignment will enable Champions to use their course participation to provide evidence for the assignment and encourage critical reflection on their practice. The assignment will undergo peer review in the same way as CMALT assessments are usually carried out and feedback will be provided alongside a certificate. Champions will then be encouraged to use the assignment as a starting point for an accreditation pathway to CMALT or another framework depending on their role.

BLE 3 and 4

The course development of BLE 3 and BLE 4 will help inform our work to build appropriate pathways to accreditation routes for participants in these courses. As we have established with BLE 1 and 2 we will need to have the course outline and some course materials to share with awarding bodies in order to provide them with something to work on. Once the evaluation case studies have been published we will also include these as an example of the quality and impact of the courses.

All courses

Embedding BLE in PGCE courses

With the evaluation of phase 1 of the project complete we are now also able to move ahead with efforts to embed the BLE courses in PGCE programmes nationally. It has been clearly recognised that this is a priority for the funder and one idea we want to explore is to show the completion of the BLE materials maps to the accreditation in a post-16 PGCE course. As we have seen that the approach modelled at the UCL Institute of Education course is successful, we will use that as a starting point to provide guidance and information to other providers. The case studies and feedback collected during the evaluation phase will be a valuable resource to give providers a sense of the uptake and completion of the course

alongside with clear insight into the engagement generated and impact made. This work will continue over the duration of this phase of the project.

FutureLearn Programme

We are also awaiting an update on the implementation of the FutureLearn programme capability to assess how this can be used to improve the accreditation pathways for course participants in the long term.

Working with partners

Partners will include: Learning & Work Institute, Association of Colleges, Education & Training Foundation, AELP, Jisc, individual providers including FE colleges, employers, apprenticeship providers and the National Apprenticeship Service, awarding bodies such as City & Guilds, policy makers.

Task breakdown

This table provides an overview of activities which we have undertaken in recent the months:

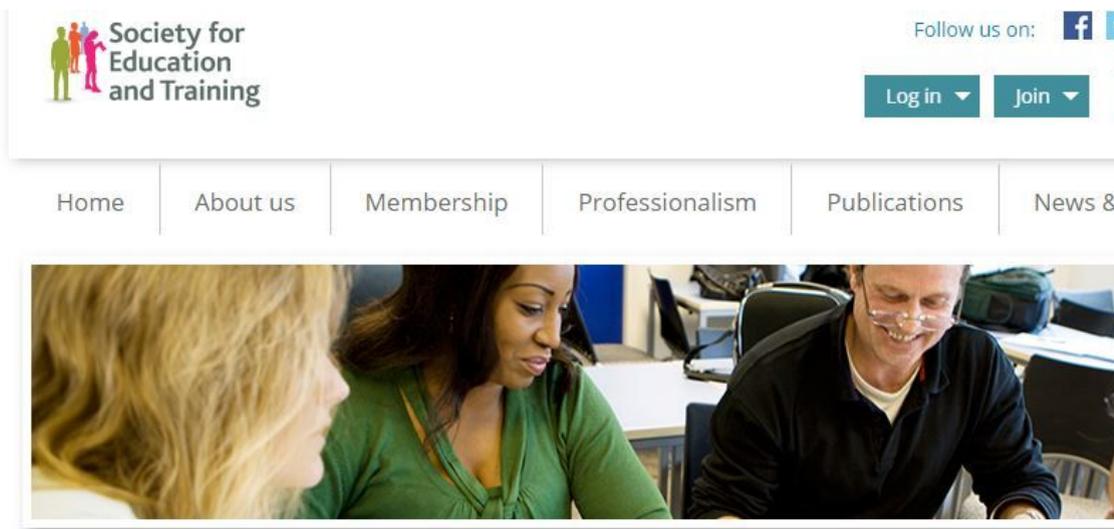
Activities	Start	End
BLE1/2		
Tutor-marked assignment for Digital Champions	2/17	12/17
Provide accreditation info & liaison for course delivery over 2 runs	2/17	12/17
BLE 3/4		
Liaison with partners and development of accreditation pathway for BLE 3 & 4	2/17	8/17
Working with awarding bodies (e.g. ETF, City and Guilds)		
New CMALT pilot	2/17	12/17
Provide accreditation info and liaison for course delivery (BLE 3)	8/17	10/17
All courses		
Work package management and partner liaison	2/17	12/17
Lessons learned this phase (after each completed run)	2/17	12/17

Task breakdown for next phase	2/17	12/17
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Overview

This phase has seen liaison with accreditation partners to provide updated information in the course Accreditation Guide for two runs of BLE 1, the second run of BLE 2, and the first run of BLE 3. This included work in advance of BLE 2 in May to incorporate new information on the FutureLearn Certificate of Achievement/Statement of Participation in line with the change to the FutureLearn pricing model.

Partners were contacted in advance of each course run with the opportunity to provide updated or additional information. The Accreditation Guide has been successively updated with current information from FutureLearn, the Society for Education and Training (QTLS pathway), ALT, CPD Certification Services, UCL Institute of Education, and University of Leeds. Conversations are ongoing with potential future accreditation partners including Jisc.



SET > News & events > Blogs and articles > SET news > Free online blended learning course now available

Free online blended learning course now available

A free online course for the Vocational Education and Training sector, 'Blended Learning Essentials: Getting Started', is now available.

This course, developed by the University of Leeds and UCL Institute of Education (IOE), is designed to help anyone teaching or supporting learning in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector understand the benefits of blended learning and how to use technology effectively to support learners.

[Post by Society for Education and Training](#)

BLE Pathways to CMALT

During this phase we have launched a new pilot providing dedicated support to BLE participants following the CMALT accreditation pathway, with webinars, a Google group, and

an increasing number of successful examples available to draw on. Three successful portfolios from the CMALT pilot are now accessible through ALT's Open Register of CMALT portfolios. Seven candidates, out of 30 registering as BLE participants, have now gone on to achieve CMALT, with a further four portfolios currently being assessed. CMALT is a professional accreditation, with only 30-40 awards on average made annually, and the uptake among BLE participants both reflects the course's important role in highlighting and meeting demand for meaningful accreditation in the sector, and suggests that this accreditation pathway has been appropriately designed and supported.

Primary sector		Primary Specialist Area	
Further Educations and skills (FE) ▾		<input type="text"/>	
		<input type="button" value="Go"/>	

Name Role/Affiliation	Primary sector	Specialist areas	Shared Portfolio
Emily Armstrong Hull University	Further Educations and skills (FE)	Primary: Flipped learning Secondary:	Open
Rachel Challen Nottingham Trent University	Further Educations and skills (FE)	Primary: e-portfolio - Pebblepad Secondary:	Open
Howard Scott West Lancashire College	Further Educations and skills (FE)	Primary: Blended learning Secondary: Engagement withing Communities of Practice	Open
Lynne Taylerson Real Time Education Limited	Further Educations and skills (FE)	Primary: Teacher Education and CPD, curriculum design Secondary:	Open

Openly shared CMALT portfolios

Tutor-marked assignments

In this phase we also launched a new CPD opportunity for Digital Champions in the form of a tutor-marked assignment based on the CMALT framework. Drawing on the increasing number of successful models from BLE participants undertaking CMALT, and in consultation with Lynne Taylerson and Emily Armstrong, an assignment has been designed based on two sections of the CMALT portfolio, covering the constraints and benefits of different learning technologies, and an understanding of target learners.

The assignment is marked by CMALT assessors, and DCs completing it receive a digital badge. Content from the assignment can be incorporated into, and the badge used as evidence in a future full CMALT submission. The opportunity was communicated to DCs and a webinar ran in November. There is active interest, with a number of DCs due to complete the assignment before Christmas, and another opportunity to run in 2018.



Badge gained by DCs completing the assignment

Accreditation liaison and engagement

Liaison work during this phase has concentrated on reaching accreditation providers and awarding bodies, with particular focus on Post-Compulsory PGCE providers. In collaboration with project partners we have produced an Accreditation briefing to share with relevant organisations, as well as a case study, on the UCL IoE's embedding of BLE in their Post-Compulsory PGCE training, for sharing with course convenors in institutions providing Post-Compulsory PGCE courses.

Existing accreditation partners have been offered opportunities to develop the pathways to accreditation in the course Accreditation Guide. The Society for Education and Training have publicized the course [via their website](#).

Conversations are ongoing with other potential accreditation partners, including Jisc.

Building on examples of BLE participants' success in gaining further accreditation, the course and accreditation pathways have been promoted at a number of relevant forums and events, including presentations by Tom Palmer at the [Blended Learning Consortium 2020 Vision Conference](#) at Heart of Worcestershire College and Maren Deepwell at the Inside Government FELTAG 2017: Embracing Digital Technology in Further Education forum, and webinars facilitated by ALT.

A workshop run by Lynne Taylerson and Tom Palmer for FE course coordinators at the Trades Union Congress is scheduled for 7 December, to demonstrate how BLE and the course accreditation pathways can help them to implement blended learning successfully.

The following Post-Compulsory PGCE providers have been contacted with the UCL IoE case study and course accreditation briefing:

Oxford Brookes University
Nottingham Trent University

Birmingham City University
City of Oxford College

Greenwich University
Canterbury Christ Church University
University of Wolverhampton
Huddersfield University

University of Portsmouth
Cardiff University
Cardiff Metropolitan University
University of Exeter
University of Derby

We have followed up with contacts at regular intervals in order to explore interest in embedding BLE in PGCE provision, seeking feedback on interest in the course content as well as any reasons why the course might not be felt to be a useful resource. The response has been disappointing, with most institutions failing to respond to repeated enquiries. Two institutions indicated that the information sent would inform internal conversations, but again have not volunteered further feedback, either positive or negative, in response to prompts. This is reflected on further in the Lessons learned section below.

A number of accreditation providers and awarding bodies have been contacted with briefings and course information, including the Federation of Awarding Bodies. There have been positive responses from organisations including Knowing How, WhiteHat, Jisc, and the TUC. As noted above, a workshop for course coordinators at the TUC will take place on 7 December 2017, and we anticipate roll-out to their learners as a consequence. Further conversations are expected with Jisc around connecting their work with the accreditation pathways offered to BLE course participants.

Lessons learned and planning for next phase

Face-to-face events with course participants and with teachers and trainers in the sector continue to underline that the course is well received and perceived by practitioners to meet a need for professional development in blended learning. Excellent uptake of the CMALT accreditation pathway by course participants, and enthusiasm from DCs for the CMALT-based assignment, show that practitioners welcome the opportunities for further accreditation and recognition which the course provides. In continuing Accreditation work into the next project phase, we should continue to focus on engaging practitioners through events and workshops and by showcasing the successful examples we have seen to date.

There are some negative lessons to reflect on in relation to liaison with accreditation providers and partners, where the response has been disappointing in proportion to the effort expended. Despite repeated attempts to engage Post-Compulsory PGCE providers in conversation we have had no feedback about how the UCL IoE case study has been received or about perceptions of the course's usefulness for PGCE training.

As in other areas of the project, this may be related in part to the impact of the changes to the FutureLearn platform, as the knowledge that content will become inaccessible is likely to affect interest in embedding it. Going forward, with the academic year fully underway it seems unlikely that course convenors will be more disposed to think about curriculum design or content during the period covered by phase 3. This does not mean, however, that individuals studying for a Post-Compulsory PGCE qualification, or engaged in teaching

PGCE courses, are not currently using BLE, and as liaison work continues, efforts can be made to capture such instances alongside engaging course providers.

Liaison with accreditation providers has been more successful, with strong interest in the course and related accreditation from the TUC, and conversations ongoing with Jisc in relation to the possibility of expanding the accreditation pathways currently offered to candidates. As noted above, a workshop is taking place at the TUC on 7 December which is anticipated to lead to a roll-out to their learners. Again, work during phase 2 has shown the importance of face-to-face engagement with relevant constituencies, and resources should continue to be focused on this.

TUC Course Co-ordinator Meeting

Thursday 7th December 2017, 10.30am to 1.00pm
Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

Sharing best practice in trade union education

10.30 Welcome and introductions

10.35 What does a successful TUC trade union studies centre look like?

Vicky Knight, The Manchester College

11.20 Partnership working with local authorities

Gus Grubb, TUC Education officer, Scotland

11.35 Blended learning in action

Tom Palmer and Lynne Taylerson, Association for Learning Technology (ALT)

The importance of having the course outlines and some course materials in good time to share with institutions and potential partners has already been established. The course mapping for BLE 3 was not available very far in advance of the course run, which may have had an impact on efforts to engage accreditation providers. The mapping for BLE 4 is already available, and with course materials will allow for timely and relevant liaison in early 2018.

With BLE 4 focused on digital apprenticeships, accreditation liaison during the next project phase will focus on liaising with partners such as the Association of Colleges, the Education and Training Foundation, the Learning and Work Institute and Jisc to ensure that we engage apprenticeship providers and relevant audiences at events such as the [AAC Annual Apprenticeship Conference](#) in March and the [AoC Apprenticeship Conference](#) in June.

Accreditation: 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.

This phase sees the next run of BLE 2, lessons learned from the run of the first new course, BLE 3, in October, and preparations for the launch of BLE 4.

Work in this phase has focused on completing tutor-marked assignments for Digital Champions, with another opportunity offered in conjunction with the course run in March; we continued to support BLE participants undertaking CMALT; and continued to liaise with accreditation providers and awarding bodies. In particular, with BLE 4's focus on digital apprenticeships, liaison has focused on working with partners such as the Association of Colleges, the Education and Training Foundation, the Learning and Work Institute and Jisc to ensure that we engage apprenticeship providers and relevant audiences.

Task breakdown

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

Activities	Start	End
BLE 2		
Tutor-marked assignment for Digital Champions	12/17	2/18
Provide accreditation info & liaison for course delivery	12/17	2/18
BLE 3		
Provide accreditation info and liaison for course delivery	2/18	4/18
Liaison with partners and development of accreditation pathways	2/18	6/18
BLE 4		
Provide accreditation info and liaison for course delivery	4/18	6/18
Liaison with partners and development of apprenticeship-focused briefing	12/17	6/18
All courses		

Working with awarding bodies, e.g. TUC	12/17	6/18
Work package management and partner liaison	12/17	6/18
Lessons learned this phase (after each completed run)	12/17	6/18
Task breakdown for next phase	12/17	6/18

Overview

In this phase the course Accreditation Guide has been successively updated for each new course run in collaboration with project and accreditation partners.

Events incorporating promotion of accreditation pathways have been run, including a workshop at the Trades Union Congress, and webinars previewing each new course run ([BLE 2 overview](#), [BLE 3 preview](#), [BLE 4 preview](#)).

CMALT-based tutor-marked assignments have been offered for Digital Champions, with one successfully completing the assignment. Discounted CMALT registration remains available to BLE participants, along with targeted support, and more candidates have gained CMALT through this pathway.

Liaison with partners is ongoing, including conversations around digital apprenticeships with Jisc, the Learning & Work Institute and AELP to secure promotion of the courses through relevant networks. Promotion of accreditation pathways will be included in a series of workshops coordinated by Lynne Taylerson over the next phase as well as at the ALT Annual Conference in September and the AoC Conference in October.

BLE Pathways to CMALT

Discounted CMALT registration remains available to BLE participants, and support continues to be offered through a dedicated Google group and examples of successful portfolios from previous BLE candidates. 12 candidates have now submitted a CMALT portfolio for assessment since 2016, with 7 successful candidates and 5 preparing re-submissions. It is worth emphasising again that CMALT demands considerable commitment of time and labour. The number of candidates coming through the BLE courses has contributed to a material increase in the overall proportion of candidates from the FE/VET sector undertaking CMALT, and demonstrates the demand for forms of professional accreditation in learning technology/blended learning within the sector. Candidates are able to access support and resources through ALT, including openly shared portfolios which have made use of the BLE - CMALT mapping, as reported above under the previous phase.

Tutor-marked assignments

CMALT-based tutor-marked assignments were made available to Digital Champions in conjunction with the 2018 runs of BLE 2 and 3 and with BLE 4. This was an opportunity for DCs to draw on their course mentoring experience to gain a record of CPD as well as completing a section of a CMALT portfolio with feedback from a CMALT lead assessor. There was interest from a number of DCs, although in the event only one took up the opportunity. This candidate successfully completed the assignment, and indicated that it represented a welcome opportunity in the context of a lack of institutional support (their line manager considering that 'CMALT is not geared towards FE'). This is a barrier often reported by learning technology professionals working in FE, so it is positive to note the opportunities created by the BLE courses.

Certifications	
Blended Learning Essentials: Getting Started — University of Leeds	Jul 2016
See certification	
Getting a grip on mathematical symbolism — Loughborough University	Jun 2014
See certification	
CPD Tutor-Marked Assignment - Blended Learning Essentials Digital Champion	Nov 2017 - Jan 2018
Blended Learning Essentials - Embedding Practice	Apr 2017 - May 2017
See certification	

Tutor-marked assignment listed on Digital Champion's LinkedIn profile

Accreditation liaison and engagement

Project and accreditation partners have been contacted for updated information, and updated versions of the course Accreditation Guide published, in advance of each course run in this phase: BLE 2 (February), BLE 3 (April) and BLE 4 (June). The most recent version incorporates a further change in the FutureLearn offering, with Statements of Participation no longer offered.

Liaison with partners is ongoing. Approaches to post-compulsory PGCE course coordinators (as reported in the previous phase) have been followed up. Beyond some expressions of interest in the course content, however, there has again been little sign of appetite for further conversations on embedding of the course in curricula. Liaison with the TUC resulted in a workshop delivered at Congress House in early December, reaching an important audience with information on course content and accreditation pathways.



Images from TUC workshop, 7 Dec 2017

Another strand of liaison in this phase has looked forward to the launch of BLE 4 (originally scheduled for March 2018). Conversations with Jisc have focused on synergies with their current work on apprenticeships and digital capabilities, including the digital discovery tool. We will publish a joint blog post during the next phase promoting BLE 4 on Jisc's [Building Digital Capability Blog](#). The Society for Education and Training continue to promote BLE via the Accreditation Guide and [their website](#), and we have liaised with partners including the Learning & Work Institute and AELP to secure promotion of the courses through relevant networks. Promotion of accreditation pathways will be included in a series of workshops coordinated by Lynne Taylerson over the next phase as well as at the ALT Annual Conference in September and the AoC Conference in October.

Previous experience has demonstrated the importance of targeted information and resources in liaison with potential partners, and work in advance of BLE 4 has included the preparation of a briefing document incorporating a more targeted message as well as examples of course steps, course mapping, and course evaluation. Valuable feedback has been sought from contacts working in training providers such as JTL Training and from partners which may have some wider applicability in terms of the language used around BLE 4 (see Lessons learned, below):

How Can This Free Course Help You?

As an apprenticeship training provider you know all about the challenges and constraints you face when compared to full-time FE provision:

- Workplace assessment: travelling to the apprentice's workplace or work environment and associated time and resource constraints;
- Accessing learners: apprentices are employed, difficult to get hold of during working hours and less accessible than full-time FE students;
- Engaging employers: they are busy people and not always available when you need them.

Blended learning approaches can help by:

- taking the learning to the learner, rather than the other way around;
- engaging and communicating by flexible, accessible, and often more efficient means.

Blended Learning Essentials: Digitally-Enriched Apprenticeships Apprenticeships briefing

This is a briefing for apprenticeship providers.



Briefing for apprenticeship providers, focusing on problems they face and solutions offered by BLE.

Lessons learned

This phase has again seen an underwhelming return on investment in liaison with partner organisations, with persistent efforts required to secure minimal collaboration from relevant sector bodies such as AELP. This contrasts with positive feedback from course participants and from audiences engaged in face-to-face workshops or webinars. Nevertheless, there have been some positive conversations on which to build in coming months, for example with Jisc, where we will publish a joint blog post on apprenticeships and BLE 4.

In relation to BLE 4 valuable feedback has been received on the language used to describe and promote the course to apprenticeship providers. It has been suggested that a more focused message, emphasising how the course can help address the practical challenges faced by providers and individual trainers through blended learning approaches, could help to engage the intended audience more effectively. We therefore begin the briefing with a section on 'how can this free course help you?', setting out how the course addresses common problems around accessing learners, engaging employers, and managing workplace assessment. We will continue to seek feedback and to refine supporting materials

such as the course briefing in liaising with individuals and institutions involved in apprenticeships delivery over the final project phase.

Accreditation work continues to prove demand for professional recognition among course participants, with over 30 registrations for CMALT and 9 successful candidates. As the project enters its concluding phase continued support for participants currently seeking accreditation, through CMALT or other accreditation pathways, must remain in place, and successful examples should be promoted widely. Efforts should also be made to capture information about uptake by course participants from course accreditation partners: SET, CPD Certification Services, UCL IoE, and the University of Leeds.

Accreditation: Jun 2018 - Dec 2018

Milestone: 100% completion

This was the concluding phase of the project which was expanded for an additional 6 months, and which saw the new course BLE 4 launched and run in June 2018, with new runs of BLE 3 from 17 Sep, BLE 4 from 8 Oct, BLE 1 from 29 Oct, and BLE 2 from 3 Dec.

Task breakdown

This table provides an overview of activities now completed:

Activities	Start	End
Programme		
Provide accreditation info & liaison for course delivery	6/18	10/18
Liaison with partners and promotion of accreditation pathways	6/18	10/18
BLE 4		
Liaise with apprenticeship and training providers and sector bodies to promote course and accreditation pathways	6/18	10/18
Programme		
Work package management and partner liaison	6/18	12/18
Final Report	6/18	12/18

Work in this phase was planned to concentrate on: supporting tutor-marked assignments offered to DCs on the BLE 4 course; supporting remaining BLE participants registered as CMALT candidates to submit portfolios for assessment, and building on the growing base of models and exemplars for future CMALT candidates with a background in FE and VET; liaising with sector bodies and with accreditation and apprenticeship providers to promote the courses and accreditation pathways; promotion of accreditation pathways at events including the ALT Annual Conference in September and the AoC Conference in November; gathering data and feedback from course participants and accreditation partners to inform evaluation of the impact of the course accreditation pathways.

All tasks within this work package will be completed before the project end date.

Final report and lessons learned

In this phase tasks have been completed according to the work package outlined above, with a focus on liaison to promote accreditation alongside the full programme launch in September, and continuation of support for individuals pursuing further accreditation.

Summary

Work to develop, promote, and support accreditation pathways has:

- Promoted engagement with the BLE courses and awareness of CPD opportunities and pathways to further accreditation across the sector;
- Demonstrated the demand for meaningful forms of accreditation among the courses' core audiences, as also illustrated by moves from other sector bodies to develop accreditation offerings in digital skills;
- Achieved demonstrable impact in meeting this demand, particularly in relation to ALT's Learning Technology-specific professional accreditation, CMALT.

Accreditation Guide and Accreditation partners

Partners were contacted in advance of the launch of BLE 4 and the full programme of courses beginning in September with the opportunity to provide updated or additional information. The Accreditation Guide has been successively updated with current information from FutureLearn, the Society for Education and Training (QTLS pathway), ALT, CPD Certification Services, UCL Institute of Education, and University of Leeds: see <https://go.alt.ac.uk/AccreditationGuide>

Accreditation Guide partners, including the ETF, promoting the Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) accreditation pathway, the UCL Institute of Education, promoting its MA in Education and Technology, and the University of Leeds, promoting two Digital Education MA courses, were contacted for evidence of uptake from BLE course participants. Regrettably, none were able to provide evidence in response to this request. However, there is evidence, for example through engagement on social media, of awareness of the accreditation pathways promoted through the course Accreditation Guide. Previous evaluation reports have documented instances of impact on professional development, for example use of course materials by trainee teachers.



Pathways to accreditation

As a course participant you have a number of ways to gain professional recognition and accreditation for participating in the course and as a next step in your professional development. The different pathways include:

- FutureLearn Statement of Participation
- Accreditation via professional bodies and CPD
- Paths to accreditation via other bodies, e.g. the UCL Institute of Education.

The course Accreditation Guide is available at <http://go.alt.ac.uk/Accreditation-Guide>



BLECourse retweeted



Alice Bingham @x_bingham91

Aug 9

Highly recommend doing a distance learning MA with Leeds, especially whilst working in digital learning- I had a fantastic 2 years and wish I could do it all again!

Neil Morris @NeilMorrisLeeds

Looking for a #Masters in #TEL and #digital #education? Come and study with me at @Education_Leeds on our new MA Digital Education and MA Leadership...

[Read More](#)



4



10



Pathways to Accreditation Guide partners

Twitter engagement

Blended Learning Essentials and Digital Skills frameworks

With reference to the wider impact of the BLE courses on professional practice, the curricula have been cited by both Jisc and the ETF in relation to digital skills frameworks currently under development, and their influence is evident in edtech focused events being run by the AELP (further detail in the Marketing and Engagement project report). As described below, the curricula have also been fully mapped to the Association for Learning Technology's CMALT learning technology accreditation framework.

Accreditation liaison and engagement

In this period the launch of the full course programme has been used as a basis for further liaison with a number of partners and training providers.

Course information has been shared with and disseminated by organisations and networks including AELP, ETF, L&WI, Jisc, and the Digital Innovation Roundtable (a network for London-area FE colleges).

The ETF has recently launched its Advanced Teacher Status (ATS), with digital literacy as a core component and required skill that ATS practitioners must demonstrate in their portfolio: <https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/professionalism/ats/>. The ETF have undertaken to signpost the BLE courses from the eportfolio provided for cohorts completing the programme, giving candidates the opportunity to complete BLE courses as part of completing ATS.

Course convenors at providers of Post-Compulsory PGCE training (listed above, p. 11) were contacted again, in advance of the full programme launch, with relevant briefings on how the BLE courses and the resources they contain can be used within their provision, and an offer of face-to-face workshops on embedding the courses. As noted previously, the information

has generally been welcomed, but there has been no indication of a willingness to pursue further conversations around embedding BLE in Post-Compulsory PGCE course delivery.

During this phase course accreditation pathways have been promoted at events including:

- Face-to-face workshops run by Lynne Taylerson.
- ALT Annual Conference in September, including a BLE stand, and a showcase celebrating the impact of the courses, with contributions from Digital Champions who have undertaken further accreditation, including CMALT, as a result of their participation in BLE:
<https://altc.alt.ac.uk/2018/sessions/blended-learning-essentials-showcase/>
- FELTAG forum in September, with keynotes from Maren Deepwell and Bob Harrison.
- Attendance of Digital Champions at the Association of Colleges Annual Conference in November <http://www.aocannualconference.co.uk/>.



Dario van Gammeren @DvGammeren

Sep 13

Likewise! And it was great to meet some of my fellow @BLECourse mentors

Patsy Quinn @PQuinn17

Proud to receive my Digital Champion certificate at the ALTC conference yesterday in recognition of the work we have done as mentors on the Blended...

[Read More](#)



BLE at the ALT Annual Conference, Manchester, 2018



CMALT

Demonstrable impact has been achieved through the pathway to CMALT accreditation supported by ALT (see <http://go.alt.ac.uk/2ryCehl>). As described in previous reports, a successful pilot group was run in 2016, and a discounted CMALT registration rate has been available to BLE course participants thereafter. 33 BLE course participants have registered for CMALT, and 11 have gone on to achieve CMALT or Associate CMALT accreditation to date, with a number of individuals still to submit portfolios for assessment.

↻ dewiparry_LT retweeted



BLE Course @BLECourse
Nov 13

If you are doing the the Blended Learning Essentials programme @FutureLearn you can get a over 20% off your #CMALT registration fee - discount available till 31 December 2018. Further info at go.alt.ac.uk/2ryCehl



Candidates for CMALT have been supported by provision of a full mapping document, mapping the BLE curriculum for all four courses to the CMALT portfolio framework; by provision of openly-shared examples of successful portfolios from BLE participants; by provision of support and guidance in the form of a dedicated Google Group and regular webinars.



ALT Certified Membership (CMALT) and Blended Learning Essentials. Guidance and mapping for a route to accreditation

About

CMALT is a peer-based professional accreditation scheme developed by ALT to enable people whose work involves learning technology to:

- have their experience and capabilities certified by peers;
- demonstrate that they are taking a committed and serious approach to their professional development.

[Blended Learning Essentials](#) is a programme of four open courses for Vocational Education and Training funded by the [Ufi Trust](#) and delivered on Futurelearn. If you are working in further education, skills training, vocational education, workplace learning, lifelong learning or adult education, the course is designed to help you understand the benefits of blended learning and how to make more effective use of technology to support your learners. The programme helps you:

- understand the main principles of blended learning;
- understand how to embed blended learning in your practice;
- understand how to develop your learners' digital skills for the modern workplace;
- understand how to use digital technology to enhance apprentices' experience;
- find practical advice from teaching and training professionals on how to overcome challenges and find and use resources you need to make digital technology work for you.

Blended Learning Essentials participants are eligible to register for CMALT at a discounted price
<https://www.alt.ac.uk/certified-membership/cmalt-registration>

Blended Learning Essentials - CMALT mapping

As noted above, CMALT is a rigorous and reflective form of accreditation. The eleven successful candidates to have taken this route represent a significant increase in representation from the VET sector among CMALT holders, and are testament to the impact of the BLE courses in providing motivation, tools, and support for VET practitioners seeking further professional development.

A session on 'Blended Learning Essentials and CMALT' at the 2018 ALT Online Winter Conference, on 12 December 2018 (<https://altc.alt.ac.uk/online2018/programme/>), sees four individuals reflect on the impact which gaining CMALT through the BLE course accreditation pathway has had on their personal and professional development.

Lessons learned

Liaison with partners

Despite difficulties which have been noted in engaging sector bodies promoting and developing their own digital skills offerings, engagement of partners through the course Accreditation Guide, and sustained liaison efforts, have resulted in promotion of the BLE courses and accreditation pathways across a wide range of relevant networks. Along with the engagement and commitment of the Digital Champions, and the work of project team members in representing BLE and disseminating accreditation information in a variety of contexts, this has contributed to the overall reach and impact of the courses.

BLE 4: Liaison with apprenticeship and training providers and sector bodies

There have been productive relationships with contacts at apprenticeship or training providers, such as JTL Training and the TUC, helping us to develop effective and targeted messages to support liaison. There has been welcome engagement from sector bodies, in

particular Jisc, who have helped us promote the courses and reach a large proportion of relevant audiences.

Reflecting on liaison with training providers overall, while the BLE courses have been uniformly welcomed as free resources, there has been less readiness to invest in exploring more structured forms of partnership. Training providers may have been willing to recommend the courses to learners, but none, for example, responded to the offer of face-to-face workshops on embedding BLE in their delivery during this phase.

Promotion of accreditation pathways

Previous evaluation reporting, and feedback received in the course of face-to-face or online events and via social media, has highlighted many individuals for whom the BLE courses have functioned both as a valuable tool in their own right, and as a spur to further professional development.

In relation to progression through accreditation pathways signposted in the Guide, the absence of evidence available from some accreditation partners makes direct comparison difficult. Relatively low uptake of FutureLearn Certificates of Achievements (23 during phase 4 of the project - see Evaluation report), however, may reflect the value of offering a broader range of pathways: as this report documents, the uptake of CMALT by course participants was very healthy.

The success of the CMALT pathway suggests an appetite for specific professional accreditation for learning technology/blended learning skills in the sector. The support offered for VET practitioners to gain CMALT, through the pilot group run by ALT and opportunities and support offered to BLE course participants throughout all course runs, has resulted in the accreditation of numerous individuals who may not otherwise have pursued this form of professional development. Along with the Digital Champions, some of whom have either gained CMALT, or taken advantage of tutor-marked assignments offered in 2017 and 2018, these individuals are eloquent advocates for Blended Learning Essentials in the sector, and provide successful examples - with some sharing their professional portfolios openly - for others to follow.

For future work we would therefore recommend continued links with professional bodies such as ALT who can offer further accreditation to meet demand in the sector. We would also recommend early planning on data collection with accreditation partners to better inform future development.