Evaluation Of Potential Benefits To SMEs Employing Foundation Degree Students

Robin Graves-Morris
Hotel School City College Norwich

Project Overview

As foundation degrees (FDs) become more common place, the working relationship between employers, educational institutes and students gains importance. The quality of the learning experience will be directly influenced by the employers’ understanding of the programme content and the learning demands made on the student. It is recognised that some subjects such as healthcare have the benefit of working directly with large employers and have been able to involve these employers in the development of programmes specifically geared to their needs. Such arrangements are rare in an industry such as hospitality, tourism and leisure (HTL) which is dominated by Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and where staff development is managed at local level.

This project sought to critically evaluate the reality of employer involvement in HTL FD provision. It investigated the benefits that employers expect in return for supporting their staff on these programmes and the views of students in terms of support they have received from their employers.

The objectives were to:

- Determine reasons for employers supporting or not supporting staff in accessing FDs.
- Examine the support FD students receive from their employers.
**Rationale**

Foundation degrees were first offered as an alternative to conventional degrees and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) six years ago, thus forging an amalgam between academic provision and employers.

“Foundation Degrees are a new type of degree, first delivered in 2001 and the only new Higher Education qualification to be introduced in England in the last 25 years. They are developed and delivered by colleges, universities and employers”

http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk/students/page_5.shtml.

A number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) enrolled students on FDs rather than HNDs. The rationale was clear: industry will deliver practical skills and provide a platform from which academic study can be developed, the realities of practice and the role of theory will be obvious throughout the course and graduates will be work ready and in work. It was to be hoped that the benefits associated with FDs would add value to the positive aspects of HNDs.

“Providers also need to be encouraged to supply and stimulate demand for full-time Foundation Degrees. Both supply of, and demand for, Foundation Degrees are linked in part to the decline of Higher National Diploma (HND) courses. We expect that decline to continue and, subject to market forces, providers to replace HND places with new Foundation Degree programmes.”

“The foundation degree strategy of only offering programmes in response to market needs has been a fairly natural development, drawing on past practice. The university now considers that HNDs are “a thing of the past” and the foundation degrees are the preferred qualification for the future.” York Consulting Limited (YCL) report – case study 2004. Professor Leslie Wagner


There has been longstanding discussion regarding the content and relationship between industry and academic study in the context of vocational higher education. As explained by Alexander (2007: 21)

“...In practice there are links between scholarship, philosophical perspective and vocational practice in the hospitality curriculum and these will have differing emphasis from programme to programme...”

Conventional vocational higher education (HE) programmes typically started with a mix of academic and practical work, followed by a 26 – 52 week industrial placement in which students not only developed their practical skills, but were able to study vocational management practice in a “real” setting. The two settings of academic study and industrial experience with practical skills development had different, but harmonious purposes. The purpose of the academic programmes was clear and the benefits to employers and students was understood by all concerned. What was also clear, was where students’ loyalties and responsibilities lay. Whilst undertaking academic study, paid work, often
taken on for economic reasons, was expected to be the second priority. During the industrial placement period the employer’s needs took first place.

Foundation Degree students, who are both employed and enrolled on FDs, carry responsibility to both their employers and their HEI throughout their study programme. Shared responsibility has the potential to be of benefit to the student, the employer and the HEI. However, it can also create tension when the requirements of the students’ time by the employer and HEI are in conflict, thus potentially overshadowing the benefits derived.

There can be little doubt that education and industry need to co-operate in the development and delivery of programmes, but the role and loyalty of the student also needs to be managed. HE students are incurring higher debts investing in their future, and will expect a return. Employers providing work placements and mentoring support are investing in the student and will also want a return.

The importance of placements has long been a major factor in influencing a person’s decision to stay or leave the sector after graduation. Placements normally offer students a constructed and varied exposure to front and back of house operations. The same is true for students on FDs who benefit from a constructed personal development plan. The investment in developing the person’s training and academic study is shared and must be viewed as being a longer term investment. The lack of qualified management in HTL is long evident and by building a partnership to develop local industry/education relationships, there is a stronger chance of building local skills levels, retaining students and building managerial professionalism for the future.

One of the key factors in making FDs work is time management. It is not solely the students’ responsibility as the pressures applied by employers and HEIs are driven from bases that wield a high level of power over the student. The students need to satisfy both the employer and HEI, whilst needing to have a personal life themselves. The importance of work life balance must never be overlooked and employers and HEIs share the responsibility for this aspect of developing the industry’s future managers; too many vocational graduates fail to enter the industry.

If employers and HEIs see the development of people as a shared responsibility each will be investing and entitled to receive benefit in return. The change of attitude towards people when they are seen as an investment as opposed to being an expense in the profit and loss account is considerable. The theme of envisaging people as assets, even the “greatest asset,” is fully accepted in human resource management. However, the cost of employment is an accounting expense, so the management of people becomes a variable cost to be managed in line with changes in income, and an obvious target in the service industry for cost cutting. Employers require increased productivity and commitment, a passion for delivering excellent customer service, whilst offering zero hours contracts to ensure flexibility.

The conflict of interest is summed up by Watson (2005:81):

“Forget theoretical classroom-based study. Modern foundation degrees can save your company hard cash from day one, Young’s Bluecrest’s training and development manager tells Elaine Watson: …”but training graduates is also important, he says. There is still a view in the industry that spending money on
graduates is as useful as pouring it down the toilet as they are young, ambitious and they will leave. But if you recruit good quality graduates, you have to accept that they are not all going to stay. But while they are here, they more than make up for this in intellectual capability. We recognise that ambitious people want to move every two to three years. But if you don’t invest in them, you’ve got no chance of keeping them.”

It is evident that if employers and students can explicitly recognise the benefits that can be derived from their study programme there will be greater commitment by all stakeholders and an increasing number of students will complete and qualify. Employers will benefit from “engaged” staff, who are fulfilling the demands of achieving the aims of higher academic study alongside delivering specific demonstrable benefit (payback) to the employers within an operational context.

This project examined the level to which the potential and real benefits ascribable to FD students are understood and made explicit. The project also aimed to address concerns over the relationships between students – employers - college work within part-time cohorts (which have had a higher than anticipated withdrawal rate over the last 3 years). Whilst the absolute numbers are not large, FD philosophy builds on the tripartite relationship for students who were predominantly work-based and for whom part-time study was the route into becoming a graduate.

**Context**

The project was undertaken within the scope of the FD provision offered at City College Norwich (CCN) Hotel School in the academic year 2006-7. The FD provision includes Hospitality Management (37%), Licensed Retail Management (8%), Travel and Tourism Management (30%) and Leisure and Events Management (15%). Students can study on a full or part-time basis. All students are working within SME business units.

The FD courses are validated by the University of East Anglia (UEA). Full-time FD provision was introduced in 2006-7 in place of HNDs. The part-time FD was first introduced in 2004-05 and runs over 3 years with 1 day a week college attendance for 2 x 15 week semesters pa. The full time course is 2 years with 2 days a week college attendance, also for 2 x 15 week semesters pa.

Course enrolment statistics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-5</td>
<td>13 new</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-6</td>
<td>10 new</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-7</td>
<td>7 new</td>
<td>36 new</td>
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</tbody>
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The part-time students had all been in full-time employment and their employers initially agreed to support their participation on the FD. Whilst significant employer involvement was sought in the design of the programme the disparate nature of the industry is such that there was no single employer driving force to set the requirements with regard to employer support. Other service sector FDs, such as in Teaching Assistants and Health Studies, have benefited from well articulated and defined employer involvement in providing employer mentors, often recruited and trained specifically for the students on
related FDs. In these cases the FD is part of the member of staff's formal career or professional development plan. These programmes enjoy full integration of employers as module deliverers and assessors. Mentors are also normally given a specific handbook and supportive training.

The Norwich FD management team was concerned that too high a percentage of students who enrol for part-time study withdraw within the first 8-10 weeks of starting. It is believed that explicit articulation of benefits to employers may improve this position. Reasons for leaving cited in exit interviews included lack of time to study or prepare assignments outside of the scheduled college day, inability to attend college on the same day regularly, travel time, parking issues, and life-events. All students that started the second semester have been successful in their studies and 100% have progressed as planned. If employers can benefit from the outcomes of the student-staff member’s academic study/assessment there is more likely to be a strong rationale for students to stay on the course rather than withdrawing for the regularly cited “work reasons”.

Previous research at CCN

The foundation degree qualification benchmark (QAA, 2004::8-9) states that: “Foundation Degree programmes are designed to enable learners to benefit from the interpretation of ideas and the experience of practice, within the wider context of employment and one in which knowledge, understanding and skills are clearly integrated. In the interests of lifelong learning students should be encouraged to use personal development plans in conjunction with learning agreements where relevant, as a reflective learning tool throughout the programme.”

FD design advice does not however address the processes whereby these objectives might be achieved through the blending of experience of practice with knowledge and understanding. An earlier CCN project “To develop a Hotel School employer-mentoring programme and concept of industry pay-back” (Graves-Morris and Hingley, 2005) identified a number of criteria industry, students and staff considered relevant as appropriate return (pay-back) on the investment in a Hotel School employer mentorship programme. Employer comments indicated that they regarded the offer to support and mentor student groups in the same way as providing their staff on FDs with support. One of the conclusions from the 2005 research was:

“Pay-back is seen in a much wider context as evidenced in the 37 criteria developed by the 3 stakeholder groups. It must also be noted that there was little commonality amongst the criteria chosen and that those chosen were rated at different degrees of importance. Formalised evaluation has been highlighted as being an immensely important feature. Its introduction will serve to formally manage what has hitherto not been undertaken. Any evaluation at best has been exercised by individuals without discussion, liaison, and agreement with other participants and has not been undertaken with a view to establishing and sharing best practice. It is suggested that the absence of formal discussion, agreement, stating and evaluating objectives from activities such as contained in a mentorship programme will eventually lead to its decline and demise. “

This extract clearly identifies that formal evaluation is an integral element for the mentorship programme’s longevity and its absence is likely to lead to decline. The same
is true for supporting staff on FDs. The relationship needs to be formalised and performance evaluated across the three stakeholders. To this end a “Work Based Learning Module” provides a vehicle for establishing contracts which can articulate desirable objectives, responsibilities and mutual expectations.

**Project Methodology**

- Review of existing sources of relevant data from People 1st and Foundation Degree Forward (FDF).
- Identify appropriate employers and students for semi structured interviews and interview 10 HR/operational managers to determine reasons/benefits for supporting, or not supporting, staff on FD courses.
- Interview 10 enrolled FD students to examine the degree of support from their employers during their study.

**Existing sources of information**

There are many examples of the benefits that are achievable by all parties from FDs. Detailed cost benefit analysis seems elusive as is the use of the phrase “payback”. The only direct reference to payback found was in Alexander (2007) who cites Tribe K. (2003: 463-71) regarding “Demand for higher education and the supply of graduates…it would truly be a bleak future in which universities were populated by students whose sole aim was to gain appropriate accreditation for future employment selected on the basis of payback or on average rate of return.” Whilst this financial approach to student selection is inappropriate to educational establishments, the approach underpins the selection of staff for longer term development by companies. Staff costs are an expense, but investment in staff development should be assessed in terms of value for money, or where longer term development is concerned, payback.

Some of the many benefits to employers linked to the concept of payback are identified in FDF’s information to employers. Four FAQs offer examples:

**Q10. How much time commitment will the employer/employee have to invest week on week…..etc?**
A10. This will depend on the sector and the nature of the job and the work-based learning. Some of the learning will involve reflecting on everyday work. Some programmes require a certain amount of attendance at a university or college – perhaps a few hours a week or occasionally at weekends. Again, this investment needs to be seen in the context of efficiency gains.

**Q13. Who pays what and when?**
A13. Employers could choose to support their employees by offering them financial assistance or you may be able to get financial help from your Regional Development Agency or local Learning and Skills Council which provides grants for training and skills development. There are loans available for students taking full-time courses, part-time students may be eligible for grants towards fees and course costs. Payment times vary from institution to institution. Financial support for part-time students has improved recently.

**Q15. What return am I going to see for my business?**
A15. If your company has found it hard to fill vacancies, they'll also help you to grow your own: developing the people who already work for you by including Foundation Degrees as an option in your current training programmes. If taking on new recruits, you can put them through the Foundation Degrees and you will have employees with skills and experience which are relevant to your business sector. By offering such opportunities to their workforce, other employers have found that staff turnover decreases. Employers that have invested in Foundation Degree development for their workforce have been able to define clear productivity and efficiency gains.

**Q24. Is there a limit to how many employees?**

A24. There would be no limit for the course provider. Experience has shown there to be some real advantages in supporting small groups of Foundation degree students within one organisation – they gain a great deal of peer support. This can, however, create diseconomies for providing institutions and may need subsidy from the employer. Again, any decision on such matters would be decided on a cost-benefit analysis.

http://www.fdf.ac.uk/home/information_for_employers/frequently_asked_questions/faq_24/

These selected extracts refer to the benefits employers could derive by facilitating access to FDs. The term payback is rarely used in FD literature, cost-benefit and return are used and this acknowledges the cost as an investment, and as such there is at least an implication of a return.

**Primary research - employer based**

Initially, 3 employer interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach. The findings were evaluated and a final structure of 13 questions was developed and 10 employers were interviewed.

The employers included managers in hotels (5), restaurants (2), leisure and sports complexes (2), and on campus catering (1). Seven employers had staff members who were students on the first year of the HTL based FDs at Norwich. After determining unit size, type of employment contract offered, questions elicited employer understanding about the purpose of an FD, its suitability as a staff / management development tool, the development of expected knowledge and skills, an appropriate delivery structure, and finally regarding any potential difficulties in supporting staff on the programme now, or in the future.

**Findings**

Six questions were asked to establish employers' knowledge of the purpose of FDs and their suitability as a staff and or management development tool.

- 20% of respondents were unsure as to the purpose of FDs;
- 60% considered them to be suitable for staff development, 20% did not consider them to be appropriate, and 20% were unsure;
- 90% considered FDs to be suitable for developing managers, and 10% did not;
- 90% of employers offered in house development training 10% offered very little management training;
• 70% of employers had knowledge of the progress of their staff on FDs and 30% did not.
• It is evident that employers are generally engaged with the concept of FDs, but only one is using it as a management development tool, and is tracking their staff’s progress.

Responses that indicate the employers’ understanding of the purpose of FDs included statements such as:

“Educational support behind the work background. Valuable because of the ever changing business- new skills new behaviours…. Expect it to be a number of things like a step up from something vocational to something academic….. The entry point for those who do not want to enter via the operational base…… Provide people in the workplace access to HE from a non traditional access route (e.g. 3 A’s) It provides access to high level vocational qualifications and I expect such a qualification would enhance understanding of the world in which s/he works and their ability to perform effectively in that environment…… Students could undertake work that would add value to their personal development in the business and enhance their studies….. A basis for developing skills and knowledge.”

Responses that cause concern included statements such as:

“Some sort of course… Not entirely sure, not very familiar with the concept.”

Suitability of FD for staff development
• 60% considered the FD as suitable.
• 20% were not sure.
• 20% did not consider it to be appropriate. Reasons cited for this included the perceived cost, labour turnover, seasonality, provision of own in house or externally resourced short training courses focussed on operations.

Comments that provide insight into development needs:

“We do not use them enough. There is a need to demonstrate payback. We need to get involved early on in recruitment. A degree improves confidence and builds an ability to learn and find out information…. Often we recognise the value but …We are predisposed to say we cannot afford it, then we ask how much it costs, and then we say we can not afford it. We then consider that even if we paid 50%, what is the guarantee they stay - the trouble is we do not see the day to day value of what they are learning. We need to involve them in serious management conversation.”

Responses that cause concern included statements such as:

“Too expensive. … Too high a cost for us to pay for any one person.”

Suitability for management development
• 60% were very enthusiastic.
• 10% did not consider it to be appropriate.
• 30% considered it might be useful.
• The employer who had been involved in the design of the FD was enthusiastic over its application in management development.
Comments that provide insight into development needs:

“It is essential really, skills they learn will benefit them making them aware of the industry basis for comparison - taught v. reality; reality has a lot of examples of successful differentials. …..Valuable as they learn to manage within an ever changing environment……..Very useful for supervisors moving into management. Problem for full time managers to allow time for this. Find that operational people do not want to learn, but want to develop operational skills - want to be an NVQ assessor……. The FD could become the basis for a staff development programme.”

There were no responses that caused concern over the applicability of FDs as a management development tool.

Tracking how many staff are on HE courses.

- 70% of employers confirmed that they did track this, but 30% did not.

- One employer recognised that they had little knowledge of the skills that their staff might be developing outside of the work environment and saw this as a weakness. Discussion then revolved around the IIP principle that investment in staff could be supported in many ways and not necessarily job related, the importance was making the investment in a person’s development.

Expected knowledge and skills development on an FD

Responses varied from the general: “all basics that you would expect in a junior management position,” to the more specific “ IT; accounting; marketing; HRM; Information Systems.” The areas of Marketing, Finance and HRM were regularly mentioned as being important. Other responses supported those given in question 1 that addressed the purpose of FDs e.g. “to provide the theory behind work and evaluation of practice……Management theory; self development; confidence; communication these provide the theoretical background which you do not get when you are operational…Ability to think. Developing knowledge of customer segments, numeric skills; strategic appreciation and HR as well as operational skills.”

Yield Management was also mentioned by one employer. Only one response mentioned that operational skills should be included within the (course) content.

What would encourage employers to take FD students into their organisation

Responses tended to vary. Practical applicant perspectives comments were given, such as “They need to apply. Being on an FD would be an advantage.” The fact that if applicants were undertaking an FD would be seen as an advantage was echoed, “The FD would be an added bonus and we would like to support it.” The attributes of an FD applicant were summarised, “A willingness to learn is very important and a desire to use the brain - to think why I am doing this.” … If an applicant is on an FD and it is on their CV then the applicant would be flagged up to be interviewed.”

Discussion provoked recognition of the value of having staff on FDs and employers added:

“As employers we need to make provision in the payroll plan to pay the person and to make a position within the hierarchical structure for them to fit into. We need to make a commitment to them… We need to consider FDs as part of the employment package we offer.”
The interviews had started to highlight the positive advantages that having staff on FDs could bring to the employers and the FD was starting to be seen as a potential development tool. It is noteworthy that few of the employers surveyed identified the same benefits as those identified in the earlier research into payback criteria such as: attracting good students into the industry, building a committed and enthusiastic staff, and identifying rising stars.

**The potential difficulties of having staff undertake FDs**
- 30% raised concerns over staff scheduling.
- 70% saw no problems in scheduling the necessary time for FD students to attend to their studies.

It was recognised that as normal staff contracts have zero hours the students could legitimately identify that they were not free at certain times. Discussion moved towards the importance of the relationship between the students and their line managers. It was acknowledged that when line managers had problems in staffing rotas, then facilitating or agreeing to FD student/staff absence from work was potentially problematic.

Two employers were concerned that the students would leave their employment when they completed the programme “one day a week should not be a problem….the danger is that as a person becomes more qualified they become more dissatisfied with what they are doing…”

**The most appropriate course structure to enable staff to undertake FDs**
All employers were satisfied with current arrangements of one day a week for 30 weeks a year for three years of part time study, and two days a week over 30 weeks a year for two years of full time study.

**The extent to which it is possible to flex working hours to accommodate the peaks and troughs of academic study**
80% of employers stated that this was very easy and 20% stated it was moderately easy. This is in line with the responses received over potential difficulties above.

80% of the employers surveyed felt that they may have staff that would benefit from undertaking an FD, but they added caveats such as: “need to get my head around the practicalities…..but we need growth to support it…. we need time to think about it (to identify them)…. but I don’t think they would agree to it.”

One reply added a highly positive statement:

“yes the question is how to promote it more.”

Regarding interest in having an FD student on placement there was a mix of responses: “More conditional upon the time of year - on a flexible contract….there is the potential for establishing a junior management role that would include the FD…..cannot see why not - yes in F&B in the kitchen…..subject to job availability.”
This mixed response was surprising as the more traditional model of HE that included a one year placement has long been established as a working model providing mutually purposeful employment and experience.

Conclusions from discussions with employers

- Generally employers understood the purpose of FDs although few had a detailed working knowledge about them, and despite acknowledging them as an appropriate tool for management development, a majority were not predisposed to use them as a staff development tool.

- Benefits were based around the students’ abilities to manage in the future - in an ever changing environment where knowledge and a willingness to learn are essential.

- The concept of developing operational staff for later progression into management - supervisory development was only explicitly addressed by 50% of respondents. There is a need for FD providers to clearly explain the purpose, content and potential benefits that can be derived from staff having on FDs.

- Expectations regarding knowledge and skills that employers identified are in line with the QAA Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism subject benchmark statement.

- Employers engaging part time staff, mainly on short or zero hours contracts saw the benefits of these staff being on a related vocational FD. Matching the varied needs of study and work was not seen as being an obstacle with sufficient forethought.

- There are undoubtedly staff who can be identified as being appropriate for FDs, but there are still obstacles to be overcome. It appears that once a person is employed in a full time role, their regular release from work is difficult for the large majority of employers surveyed. Unsurprisingly, costs were cited as being an issue.

Primary research - student based

Before undertaking interviews with employers 29 first year students were asked to complete a questionnaire that identified their employer, average working hours and opportunities to negotiate flexibility, rates of pay, identification (or not) of an employer mentor, and the type of support that was given, or what support would have been valuable.

Findings

Figure 1 displays how students can be categorised according to their average weekly hours at paid-employer work and the degree of employer support given:
This highlights that support given to students with high work loads (64%) was split evenly between those who did get support and those who received little or no support (32% each). Of the students working 9-15 hours a week (27%) most (83%) received little or no support, and 17% received support. The students who worked a low number of hours (9%) all received considerable support. It is known that the support given was due to personal association with the employer. Whilst the average student’s hours at work were 20 per week, those in the higher bracket 16+ averaged 26.7 hours.

Students did not feel that they had undertaken any academic activities that they considered would give payback to their employers, rather they were working and eliciting information for their use. This of course ignores payback criteria that employers identified in earlier research on mentorship, which included softer issues such as attracting good students into the industry, building a committed and enthusiastic staff, and identifying rising stars.

Fifteen second and third year part-time students were then interviewed. All reported that they had geared many of their academic work assignments to their place of work. Examples of the type of work included development of new products, training and involvement of staff in up-selling, delivering training in basic culinary skills, financial efficiency measures and controls, investigating purchasing and instigating contracts, menu engineering, energy saving schemes, review of sustainability issues, devising planned refurbishment schedules.

Conclusions from research with students

- First year students are more involved in learning about the products and processes at their place of work. Work undertaken by students in subsequent years lends itself to meeting criteria associated with “payback”. The work in the first year requires input from employers and when this is forthcoming the students perform well.
Second and third year students are able to use factual knowledge gained in the first year and start to question practices, consider areas for improvement and tackle problems with a view to offering solutions. These benefits were recognised by their employers.

First year students are mainly employed on zero hours contracts and on average undertake 20 hours paid work a week. As many receive support from employers as those that do not. There was no link between the support given and the type or size of employer. Further research is needed to establish why some employers do and some do not provide the necessary support.

Conclusions

The project aim was to assess the potential benefits that can be achieved by SMEs employing FD students. There were two objectives: to determine reasons for employers supporting or not supporting staff accessing FDs, and to examine the degree of support FD students receive from their employers.

The benefits identified by employers were not seen as short term but more in medium term management development. Second and third year students, however, identified that their work related projects had delivered improved efficiencies in the workplace. There was little ongoing dialogue between students and their employers over the content and application of the FD.

There is a need to review the progress of those on FDs in a formal way and expressly identify benefits derived by employers from investing resources to support the students in their development. The terms of any such review must be agreed by all parties prior to enactment. The review must address the realities of the pressures caused when combining work and study.

Employers identified problems in providing support for their full time staff accessing FDs, but said they were able to be more flexible in their approach to students already enrolled on an FD, who then approached them for work. When the relationship between employer and employee-(student) grew positively the employer acted in a supportive mentor role. This may be to the initial advantage of the student, but with the potential to deliver benefits to the organisation as the student progressed in the programme.

There is no dispute over the fact that FD students need supportive employers who will provide factual knowledge and varied work experiences. Employers who are supportive of their staff on FDs have also been successful in recruiting other FD students. The benefits deliverable through FD development need to be explicitly addressed and progress in the programme needs to be reviewed regularly and formally.

Employers cited cost to be a reason for not considering FDs as an employee development tool. They did not recognise that there were external sources to cover some of the costs. Problems over staff scheduling were also cited as difficulties in this context.
References


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Quality Assurance Agency (2004) Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark

