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| <p>Institution: Glasgow Caledonian University</p> |
| <p>Unit of Assessment: 25</p> |
| <p>Title of case study: Title of Case Study: Improving progression routes from short cycle higher education to bachelor degree programmes.</p> |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Jim Gallacher and Robert Ingram’s research on the role of short cycle higher education (SCHE) has now had a significant impact on the development of policy in Scotland, within the European Union and beyond. This has led to initiatives in Scotland to enhance the role of Higher National Certificates and Diplomas (HNC/Ds), and strengthen articulation pathways between colleges and universities. This work has also been recognised at an international level in shaping policy within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and CEDEFOP (European Centre for Development of Vocational Training) on the ‘permeability’ between vocational and academic qualifications.</p> |
| <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Gallacher (Professor and Director of Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning (CRL) at GCU until October 2008, Emeritus Professor since 2008) has, since 2000, undertaken a programme of research investigating the role of the college sector in widening access to higher education in Scotland (Gallacher 2006; Gallacher 2009). This has increasingly focused on the role of SCHE in the college sector and the articulation links which exist between these programmes and bachelor degree programmes in universities (Gallacher 2009). It has included a comparative study of HNC/Ds in Scotland and Foundation Degrees (FDs) in England, based in CRL with co-operation from Fiona Reeve (Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education & Language Studies, Open University) (Reeve et al 2007; Gallacher et al 2012). This research investigated the changing nature of SCHE and established that they are now expected to address a range of agendas. In particular many have moved from being primarily a form of vocational education and training to having an increasingly important role in providing transitional routes into higher education. This then led to the programme of research undertaken by Gallacher and Ingram (Research Fellow CRL) to investigate further the role of HNC/Ds in enabling the transition of students from college through to degree programmes (Ingram & Gallacher 2011).</p> <p>Their tracking study (Ingram & Gallacher 2011) has provided, for the first time, systematic evidence of the extent to which many of these programmes are now used by the majority of students to enable progression to degree level study. It has also shown that there are important sectoral differences. In some subject areas, such as business studies and computing, the majority of students, are using their HNC/Ds to enable progression to degrees, in others, such as social care and hairdressing, they continue to have a primary role in providing vocational training. These changes have also been associated with a move from part-time to full-time participation in these programmes for many students, and full-time students are more likely to move on to further study. This work has led to the conclusion that these programmes should be modified and developed if they are to be more fit for the roles which they now have in the tertiary education system. The study of sectoral differences has enabled the identification of the priority programme areas where change is required. A second study, which identifies the problems which students experience in making the transition, and makes recommendations for change, is now being completed.</p> <p>This research has also contributed to the growing recognition of the important role which SCHE</p> |

Impact case study (REF3b)

qualifications, and articulation routes to degrees, have in widening access to higher education. This reflects the success of colleges in attracting students from areas of social and economic deprivation, and the role of HNC/Ds in providing 'second chance' routes into higher education for many students (Gallacher 2006; Gallacher 2009).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Key Publications:

Gallacher J & Ingram R (2012) College-university links and impacts on higher education in Scotland' in J Puuka (ed) *Post-secondary education and training: pathways and partnerships*. OECD Publishing <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264097551-en>

Gallacher J, Ingram R & Reeve F (2012) Are vocational qualification vocational? in Piltz M (Ed) *The future of VET in a changing world*. Wiesbaden, Springer VS DOI 10.1007/978-3-531-18757-0
 Ingram R and Gallacher J (2011) HN Tracking Study: Final Report. Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning, Glasgow Caledonian University.

<http://www.ggap.org.uk/media/ggap/content/reports/HN%20Tracking%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Gallacher J (2009) Higher education in Scotland's Colleges: a distinctive tradition? *Higher Education Quarterly* Vol 63 No4 pp384-401

Reeve F, Gallacher J & Ingram R (2007) A comparative study of HNs in Scotland and Foundation Degrees in England: contrast, complexity and continuity, *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol 20 No 4 pp305-318

Gallacher J (2006) Blurring the boundaries or creating diversity? The contribution of the further education colleges to higher education in Scotland, *Journal of Further and Higher Education* Vol 30 No 1 pp 43-58

Key Research Awards:

Tracking study of former HNC/D students

Institutions involved: CRLL GCU.
 Funded by: Scottish Funding Council: £70,000
 Project Dates: March 2009 - December 2011

Comparative study of Higher National Certificates and Diplomas in Scotland and Foundation Degrees in England

Institutions involved: CRLL, GCU and Open University
 Funded by: Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Universities UK, Sector Skills Development agency (SSDA) and the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE); Amount of Funding: £61,500
 Project Dates: August 2005 - August 2009

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

This research has had an impact at two levels. Firstly in influencing policy and practice in Scotland, and secondly in the wider international context.

The outputs from the research programme outlined above have provided systematic evidence

regarding the changing role of HNC/Ds, and their increasing importance in providing progression routes into degree level study in many cases. This has contributed to the evidence base which has underpinned the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) increasing emphasis on strengthening links between colleges and universities in its widening access policy since 2007. The SFC has now established six regional articulation hubs to develop the pathways from HNC/Ds to degrees. To ensure that their research contributes to the strengthening of these articulation links a communication programme was undertaken by the research team addressed to practitioners in colleges and universities, and policy makers in the SFC, Scottish Government and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). This led to a series of meetings, convened by senior staff in SQA, and involving staff from SFC and the Scottish Government responsible for widening access to higher education, to explore the changes in practice which would be required as a result of this research. This contributed to the recognition in the White Paper published by the Scottish Government in 2011 ('Putting Learners at the Centre') of the need to '...consider whether HNs need to be refreshed to improve their ability to prepare learners for university...' (para46). An important outcome has been a programme of work, beginning in autumn 2011, which is being co-ordinated by the SQA, with funding from the SFC, and involving college and university staff, to review and enhance the role of selected HNs in providing articulation routes into degree programmes. The research identified Social Sciences, Business, Computing and Engineering as key areas where change was required, and Qualification Review Teams (QRTs) have been established in these subject areas. These QRTs have undertaken a careful analysis of the curricula, and the approaches to learning, teaching and assessment within these programmes, which has enabled them to recommend the modifications which are required. Some indication of the impact of this work can be seen in that, in the subject areas involved in these QRTs, the numbers of HN students progressing to degrees have increased from 2761 in 2006/07 to 3857 in 2011/12. Gallacher has also been invited to present evidence to the Education and Culture Committee of the Scottish Parliament in September 2012 and September 2013 in their considerations of the implications of the Scottish budget for the work of Scotland's Colleges, reflecting the recognition of his work in this field.

In the wider international context the OECD has emphasised the importance of post-secondary vocational education and training (PSV) as contributing to skills development in a globalised economy, and the need to strengthen links between different parts of the education and training system (Pukka 2012). However the work of Gallacher et al has emphasised the complexities and ambiguities in the changing roles which these qualifications now have, and the different agendas which they now address, as they move from focusing mainly on vocational education and training to also providing pathways into higher education institutions (Reeve et al 2007; Gallacher & Ingram 2012). In this context CEDEFOP (The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) has been undertaking work to explore the concept of 'permeability', which refers to the opportunity to transfer qualifications between sectors, and in particular between vocational education and training and higher education. The work of Gallacher et al has been recognised as providing important examples of how this idea of permeability can successfully be operationalized (Pukka 2012). As a result Gallacher was invited to present this work at an OECD international seminar in San Sebastian on 17-18 October 2011, and a CEDEFOP Expert Workshop in Brussels on 23-24 January 2012, to assist colleagues in the development of policy and practice on this topic.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

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Impact case study (REF3b)

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