

Careers from Science Project Consortium Update

October 2006

Please find below a summary of the main project developments for the period June-Sept 2006. The Careers from Science project is being led by the Science Council but is very much a STEM community collaboration because all will benefit from increasing the number of students choosing to study science subjects at school. The project will only be successful if it has the full involvement of our partners and the expertise they can offer. Therefore if you have any queries, ideas or areas you wish to be involved in, please get in touch.

1) Finance

Despite the Government's commitment to "work with the Science Council on developing a science careers website" as stated in the Science & Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014" (p91) funding from the DfES has not been forthcoming. The Science Council is still keen to see the DfES honour this commitment and is engaged in correspondence with Lord Adonis. The House of Lords' Science and Technology Committee has also indicated interest in the project.

The Science Council wishes to see the project progress as soon as possible despite the issues with Government funding and other funding opportunities are actively being explored including the Gateways to the Professions Development Fund and approaches to industry, trade bodies, trusts and foundations. With regard to Gateways to the Professions we understand that Careers from Science is likely to be suited to the second round award criteria for this fund which are due to be set in Sept/Oct and the funding allocated by the end of Dec 2006. The Gateways scheme will require higher levels of matched funding so it is important to find additional resources. Although we will need to give some thought to how sponsorship will be acknowledged as the ethos of the project will not allow for overt branding. A list of potentially interested parties has been drawn up and member organisations will be contacted for assistance in expanding this list.

The original intention for the project was to launch a fully completed version. However, to produce the site as a complete entity would require the full extent of the funding to be available from the start. In order to bring some aspects of Careers from Science online as soon as possible the project is being broken down into phases. The intention is to begin by building the core information areas and to add levels of interactivity as further funding is acquired. Planning is taking place to develop this model and to assess the funding required for each stage.

2) Consortium Meetings

Since the appointment of the project manager in June various meetings with Science Council members have taken place to establish expectations for the project, existing careers work and possible areas for collaboration. These meetings have helped establish working relationships and provide an oversight of the material available for potential inclusion in CfS. In addition to this there have been discussions with the Science Learning Centres, RCUK, NESTA and the CBI. A meeting with representatives from the Institute of Careers Guidance and Association for Careers Education and Guidance has also yielded a consultation group of careers advisors who will be valuable in guiding the project.

3) Project Governance and Support

The scoping phase of CfS was guided by a Steering Group and an Operations Group. To take the project forward it is felt that a broadly based Advisory Group would add value and support. This group will include some members from the original Operations Group and additional

representatives from other organisations. The membership of this is intended to be reasonably fluid to adapt to different project stages; the group constitution can be found as Appendix A. In addition a small governance group with responsibility for strategic and financial oversight will be formed from two or three Science Council Board members and representatives of the major funding partners, membership of this group is yet to be decided.

4) Teacher Resources

With the generous contribution of ASE's £37k Pfizer grant for teacher resources this section of the project can move forward. Discussions have taken place with ASE and a selection of their members regarding the best use of this grant and the general issues around careers. The group felt that because science is compulsory it suffered from a lack of promotion at the Year 9 options stage although this may be assisted by GCSE changes in England. The general consensus was that careers was not generally discussed in science lessons, pupils were more likely to have individual conversations with form tutors but that occasionally questions were prompted by stimuli such as posters. At this stage suggestions include:

- An options/parents evening promotional tool, probably a PowerPoint presentation (this could also be made available to Science and Engineering Ambassadors.)
- Worksheets potentially using real life data to link a career to the curriculum and including a short scientist/engineer profile
- Information highlighting jobs that wouldn't normally be associated with science e.g. hairdressing, catering industry roles, science requirement for primary teachers.
- Posters illustrating groupings of jobs rather than just one role e.g. a variety of animal care jobs rather than just a vet, a hairdresser being linked to scientists that work on the production of dyes, the testing of chemicals, the engineers designing the manufacturing of large scale quantities. Examples of this are yet to be worked up and, as with all areas, ideas are welcome.
Teachers could be encouraged to regularly update their displays by staggering release of new poster versions throughout the year (costs permitting).
- Talking head video snippets to act as starter activities or a way to show the real world relevance of a particular curriculum area.
- Producing a selection of ASE UPD8 activities (see <http://www.upd8.org.uk/>)
- A roaming trainer to showcase the resources produced at ASE regional meetings, Science Learning Centres and other teacher network meetings.

5) Role Profiles

A set of questions has been drawn up in partnership with the Engineering and Technology Board (etb) who have an existing role profiles project. Working together on this allows us to populate a joint database and draw in as many scientists and engineers as possible; their technology set up also allows syndication of this database to other websites so organisations can still publish their members' profiles on their own site as well. The questions have been drawn up with input from their advisory partners and have been trialled with potential participants; the next stages are to assess whether the questions need to be refined, trial completed versions on school students, put these questions to the etb's Careers Advisory Panel and appropriate Careers from Science consortium members.

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Appendix A

Advisory Group Constitution

Background

In the research phase of the project the governance has taken the form of a Steering Group and an Operations Group. Now that the scoping research has been completed and a project manager appointed the governance has been revised to reflect the requirements for taking the project forward. The project will be guided by an Advisory Group and will report to the Science Council Board four times a year. In addition to this the project manager will consult as appropriate with the wider consortium members.

Advisory Group

Group Purpose

The Advisory Group will provide expert advice and guidance to support the CfS project manager in the direction and delivery of the CfS project. The group will ensure the project maintains relevance for all areas of science, technology, engineering and maths, and will use their knowledge and contacts to make sure the project draws on the experience of the STEM community.

Frequency of Meetings

The Advisory Group will meet approximately every two months or as required. It is anticipated that consultation will also take place by email between meetings and, less formally, on an individual basis.

Group Membership

The group membership aims to represent a variety of perspectives and experience and is intended to, as far as possible, cover the broad range of subjects incorporated in the CfS project. The initial membership below has been chosen to give a range of organisation views and also for their personal range of experience. Additional individuals may be co-opted on to the group when required for a specific phase or project area as gaps in expertise are identified.

Nicola Hannam	Project Manager, Science Council - Chair
Kristy MacDonald	Deputy Chief Executive, Science Council
Marianne Cutler	Association for Science Education
Adrian Talbot	Engineering and Technology Board
Jane Westwell	BioScience Federation (Soc. For General Microbiology)
Colin Osborne	Royal Society of Chemistry
Daniel Sandford Smith	Institute of Physics
Peter Cooper	London Mathematical Society (Board Representative)
David Evans	British Computer Society
Neil Roscoe	Institute of Biology
Mike Carpenter	British Psychological Society
Careers Advisers Representative	(to be chosen)