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Group of national experts on the AHELO feasibility study : consortium progress report, Paris, 25-16 October 2010

Hamish Coates

ACER, hamishc@unimelb.edu.au

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Recommended Citation

Coates, H. (2010). Group of national experts on the AHELO feasibility study : consortium progress report, Paris, 25-16 October 2010. OECD. <https://research.acer.edu.au/ahelo/4>

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**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNING BOARD**

Group of National Experts on the AHELO Feasibility Study

CONSORTIUM PROGRESS REPORT

Paris, 25-26 October 2010

This document was prepared by the Consortium.

The AHELO GNE is invited to:

- *TAKE NOTE of the progress report*
- *COMMENT on progress as necessary*

Contact:

Consortium: ahelo@acer.edu.au

OECD Directorate for Education: Diane.Lalancette@oecd.org

JT03289932



**AHELO Feasibility Study
Consortium Progress Report
September 2010**



Assessment of
Higher Education
Learning Outcomes

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INTRODUCTION

1. This AHELO Consortium Progress Report provides an update of work undertaken between July and September 2010. This document provides background that will be elaborated on with an oral report at the fifth AHELO GNE meeting to be held in Paris on October 25 and 26.
2. The AHELO GNE is invited to:
 - TAKE NOTE of the progress report
 - COMMENT on progress as necessary
3. The AHELO feasibility study involves carefully integrated work that is designed to maximise efficiency and ensure successful project outcomes. Design of the work has been underway since 2008. Work on the project progressed between December 2009 and March 2010, and then from July 2010 after the revised contract was signed.
4. As the following notes show, the ACER-led AHELO Consortium has made significant progress on:
 - working with OECD, partners and experts to establish resources, infrastructure and operational procedures for AHELO;
 - establishing technical plans and foundations for the project;
 - setting foundations for framework and instrument development;
 - designing and developing implementation systems; and
 - communicating with a wide range of stakeholders.
5. The following update summarises progress on Modules B, C, D and E. A separate project report has been provided for Module A (the selection, development, adaptation and validation of the generic skills instrument).

MODULE B

Management activities

1. Confirmed ETS as the AHELO Consortium's lead partner for the Economics strand.

2. Assigned staff to the project and provided instructions to begin work.
3. Negotiated and entered into contracts with expert consultants.
4. Reviewed work plans, project schedules and budgets.
5. Contributed to the establishment of work groups and synergies across partners.
6. Confirmed membership of the Economics Expert Group, and held discussions with all members.
7. Held detailed discussions with Cecilia Conrad (Chair, Economics Expert Group) to specify goals and general principles. Planned the first Economics Expert Group meeting, scheduled to be held in Paris on 29 and 30 October 2010.
8. Worked with partner organisations on sampling, technical specifications, and technology.
9. Helped revise the AHELO Assessment Design.
10. Contributed to the drafting and revision of the draft AHELO Analysis Plan.
11. Reviewed draft AHELO Reporting Guidelines.

Framework development

12. Prepared a rough draft of an assessment framework document based on the 'Tuning-AHELO Conceptual Framework of Expected and Desired Learning Outcomes in Economics' and the United Kingdom 'QAA subject Benchmark Statement for Economics 2007'.
13. Conducted further background research relevant to a global assessment of Economics.
14. Had Assessment framework document reviewed by the Chair of the Expert Group and circulated to the members of the Expert Group so that it can be used as a starting point for discussion.
15. Mapped around 90 GRE (Graduate Records Examination) items against the draft framework, and used this to make changes to the framework, and to identify facets of the framework that may not be able to be measured in a standardised assessment.
16. Lodged framework on the AHELO Exchange for Expert Group review.

Instrument development

17. Audited available Economics items in preparation for the first Economics Expert Group meeting.
18. Revised existing economics items in light of framework considerations and project requirements.
19. Developed new items to provide coverage of content areas targeted for measurement.
20. Began preparation of both long and short constructed response tasks and scoring guides.
21. Lodged draft items on the AHELO Exchange.

MODULE C

Management activities

22. Confirmed ACER, the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) and the University of Florence (on behalf of the European EUGENE network) as the AHELO Consortium's lead partners for the Engineering strand.
23. Appointed dedicated research support staff to research, review, revise and collate materials.
24. Engaged consultants to provide expert advice on the assessment of Engineering capability.
25. Reviewed work plans, project schedules and budgets.
26. Contributed to the establishment of work groups and synergies across partners.
27. Set up a collaborative online workspace with engineering educators for developing and sharing item materials.
28. Negotiated detailed work plans with partner organisations.
29. Mapped global stakeholder communities to consult with for framework and instrument development.
30. Assisted with the coordination of the Engineering Expert Group and their first meeting.
31. Held detailed discussions with Robin King (Chair, Engineering Expert Group) to specify goals and general principles. Planned the first Engineering Expert Group meeting, scheduled to be held in Singapore (coinciding with World Engineering Education Forum 2010) on 22 and 23 October 2010.
32. Helped revise the AHELO Assessment Design.
33. Contributed to the drafting and revision of the draft AHELO Analysis Plan.
34. Reviewed draft AHELO Reporting Guidelines.

Framework development

35. Initial review and development of the assessment framework, building on the Tuning AHELO document.
36. Reviewed previous scholarly and applied work in Engineering assessment.
37. Convened workshops and meetings with Engineering education experts in Melbourne.
38. Met with European partners at the University of Florence.

Instrument development

39. Collected and analysed existing assessment materials.
40. Developed draft assessment content, topics and tasks.
41. Conducted a review of item requirements in light of expectations and proposals from the Engineering education communities.
42. Reviewed online system capabilities against study scope and requirements.
43. Reviewed alternative test designs.
44. Initiated plans for item testing and validation.
45. Developed draft assessment content, drawing on materials supplied from global experts.

MODULE D

46. Progress on the context instrument has been deferred since March 2010.
47. Module D Consortium partners (Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), ACER and the Center for Postsecondary Research (CPR)) advised of delay.
48. Drafted plans for development of a reduced-version context instrument for the October GNE meeting.

MODULE E

Management activities

49. Confirmed the following organisations as the AHELO Consortium's lead partners for the project and fieldwork management strand: ACER, CapStAn, CAE, IEA DPC, SoNET Systems, Statistics Canada, Westat (and collaborations with CPR, CHEPS, ETS, NIER, and the University of Florence).
50. Convened numerous planning teleconferences with partner organisations in July and August 2010.

51. Worked with OECD and other stakeholders to source and initiate funding opportunities, including from the World Bank to cover possible participation of India.
52. Worked with OECD, partners and expert consultants to establish the overall coordination, implementation, analysis and quality control of the AHELO feasibility study.
53. Convened weekly (and in certain instances twice-weekly) teleconference meetings with OECD, and maintained minutes.
54. Initiated and managed daily communications from a wide range of study participants and stakeholders (such as partners, GNE delegates, NPMs, experts, representatives of peak bodies).
55. Scheduled a meeting of National Project Managers (NPMs) for 27 and 28 October in Paris.
56. Developed subcontracting arrangements, and commissioned specific work from experts.
57. Recorded all variations made to project scope between June 2009 and March 2010 to inform project management and subsequent determinations of feasibility.
58. Drafted and delivered to OECD text for a revised AHELO Brochure.
59. Drafted and delivered to OECD a media backgrounder on the AHELO Consortium
60. Negotiated detailed work plans, schedules, budgets and payment schedules in close collaboration with OECD and all partner organisations, including detailed planning revisions to achieve significant budget cuts.
61. Prepared summary work plans for Modules B, C, D and E.
62. Established project management arrangements for AHELO's International Centre at ACER, including setting up staffing and management structures, developing risk management procedures, and setting up computing and communication facilities.
63. Developed a communications architecture for AHELO, including implementation of the AHELO Exchange – the online tool to be used to manage AHELO.
64. Finalised membership and making detailed plans for the AHELO Technical Advisory Group (TAG).
65. Set two September teleconference meetings for AHELO TAG.
66. Communicated with country representatives (initially via GNE delegates) to establish contact lists and communication processes.
67. Developed specifications for National Centres, National Project Managers, and Institutional Coordinators.
68. Developed overall quality assurance and management regimes, including for instrumentation, translation and verification, sampling, fieldwork, administration, and analysis and reporting.
69. Developed and verifying detailed contact lists for AHELO (currently containing around 200 active contacts).

Study design

70. Undertook detailed project planning with OECD and all partners, and used this to convert tender documentation into a comprehensive AHELO Assessment Design.
71. Drafted and reviewed a detailed AHELO Analysis Plan to function as the study's evaluation framework.
72. Undertook research, consultation and development of AHELO Reporting Guidelines.
73. Prepared early design prototypes of the AHELO Institution Report.

Software requirements

74. Finalised system requirements for operationalisation and future delivery of instruments.
75. Reviewed requirements for software to be used for managing translation, sampling and fieldwork operations.
76. Worked with OECD to obtain permission to use translation software developed for the PISA ERA.

Sampling and fieldwork operations

77. Designed draft specifications for next implementation phase of AHELO.