

# Supporting Employer Engagement through E-Portfolios (the HE5P Project, 2008-10)

**CRA** CENTRE FOR RECORDING ACHIEVEMENT

[www.recordingachievement.org](http://www.recordingachievement.org)

ePortfolios Supporting Workforce Development



The CRA is leading a national workforce development project with universities:

- Universities working with partner employers
- Developing evidence-informed practice
- Informing national policy
- Supporting continuing professional development
- Links to professional associations & lifelong learning networks
- HEFCE funded

As a national network organisation and registered educational charity, we seek to promote the awareness of recording achievement and action planning processes as an important element in improving learning and progression throughout the world of education, training and employment.

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# Introducing the CRA...

- A cross-sectoral network organisation and educational charity with institutional and individual members.
- Supporting the implementation of Personal Development Planning (PDP) and e-portfolios across UKHE.
- Core partner in the National Co-ordination Team for Student Employability (ESECT, 2002-5)
- Supporting work on the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).
- Core member Europortfolio Project. [www.europortfolio.eu](http://www.europortfolio.eu)



# **Almost a decade old but still a key agenda...**

**“To penetrate the vocational and professional training markets many universities will have to make fundamental changes to the content and delivery of their provision. There is now an expectation that training can be tailored to the needs of an individual business and delivered at a time and place that is convenient to the employer. The challenge for universities is to develop a more flexible approach to delivery without compromising the quality of course content”.**

**‘Beyond Known Unknowns: a further exploration of the demand for higher level skills from businesses’, CFE Research 2009**

**“More progress needed on collaboration between employers and universities to fill STEM skills gaps”**

**Report from the University Alliance (UK), October 2015**

# **‘HE5P’: the ‘Employer Engagement Agenda’: key UK policy drivers**

- **Economic**

The pressing national need for a more highly skilled workforce in order to compete in the world economy

- **Social**

To create a more equal, inclusive and therefore harmonious society

Independent review commissioned by UK Government in 2004, *'to identify the UK's optimal skills mix for 2020 to maximise economic growth, productivity and social justice, set out the balance of responsibility for achieving that skills profile and consider the policy framework required to support it.'*

Final report recommended that UK should urgently and dramatically raise achievements at all levels of skills and recommended that it commit to becoming a world leader in skills by 2020, as benchmarked against the upper quartile of the OECD - effectively a doubling of attainment at most skill levels.



**Prosperity for all  
in the global economy  
- world class skills**

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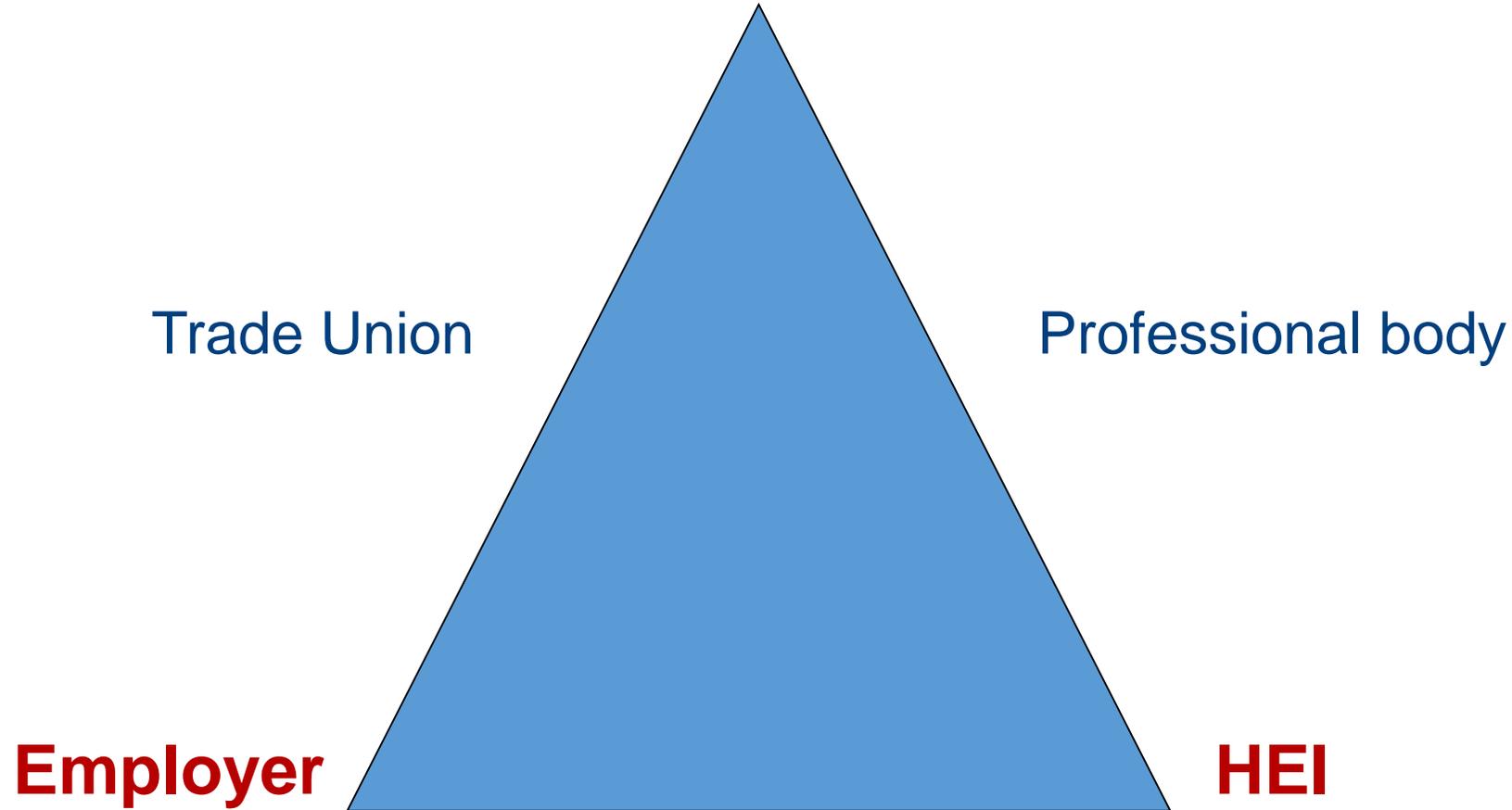
## 2008 Policy themes/enablers...

- **Widening access** to 'traditional' higher education (contributes to social inclusiveness but also economically driven by the need to ensure all talent is fully utilised).
- **Upskilling** the existing workforce to develop Higher Level Skills through access to higher level learning while in employment (increasingly important as age cohort for traditional entry to HE shrinks).
- **Greater personalisation** of learning (both improving the quality of the student experience and also aimed at maximising the development of talent/potential).
- **Technology-enhanced learning** (for efficiency gains, to promote inclusivity, to enable better personalisation).

➤ **Are these what matter to you now...**

# 'Test the tools' take 1: Appreciating Stakeholder needs...

## Work based Learner



# “Can e-portfolios support the employer engagement agenda, and if so how?”



**Key proposition...** ‘E-portfolio technologies and PDP practice are central to marrying the requirements of employee, employer and institutional stakeholders. It is essential to facilitate the **planning, recording and reviewing** of learning across distributed learning environments (academic institutions and workplaces). **Ready and secure communication** between learners, their peers and their academic and workplace mentors are vital. The simultaneous **personalising of learning to the individual** and **monitoring of connectivity to organisational needs and requirements** has not yet been achieved.’

## **In that context...four overlapping aims:**

1. Collate and analyse existing practices in work-based learning e-portfolio practice(s), specifically via a review of literature and existing practice.
2. Build capacity to develop and promote best practice in using e-portfolio technology to support employer and learner engagement in higher level learning, specifically via the development and support of a national partnership.
3. Disseminate key lessons and experiences which will inform/shape policy and transfer practice.
4. Provide an evidence base and national e-portfolio specification to contribute to policy and practice to ensure the effective implementation of the employer/employee engagement agenda, via data collection and reporting and the provision of an Information Architecture Model.

# Our Project Partners

## Universities

- Bedfordshire
- Bradford
- Cumbria
- Hull
- Leeds Metropolitan
- Leicester
- Liverpool
- Northumbria
- Plymouth
- Portsmouth
- Wolverhampton

## Other Organisations

- Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
- Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance
- Institute of Physics

## Employer Partners (including)

- Merseyrail
- DeBeers
- Hampshire Fire Service
- HM Prison Service
- Royal Navy
- St Mary's Hospital (Portsmouth)
- Price Waterhouse Coopers

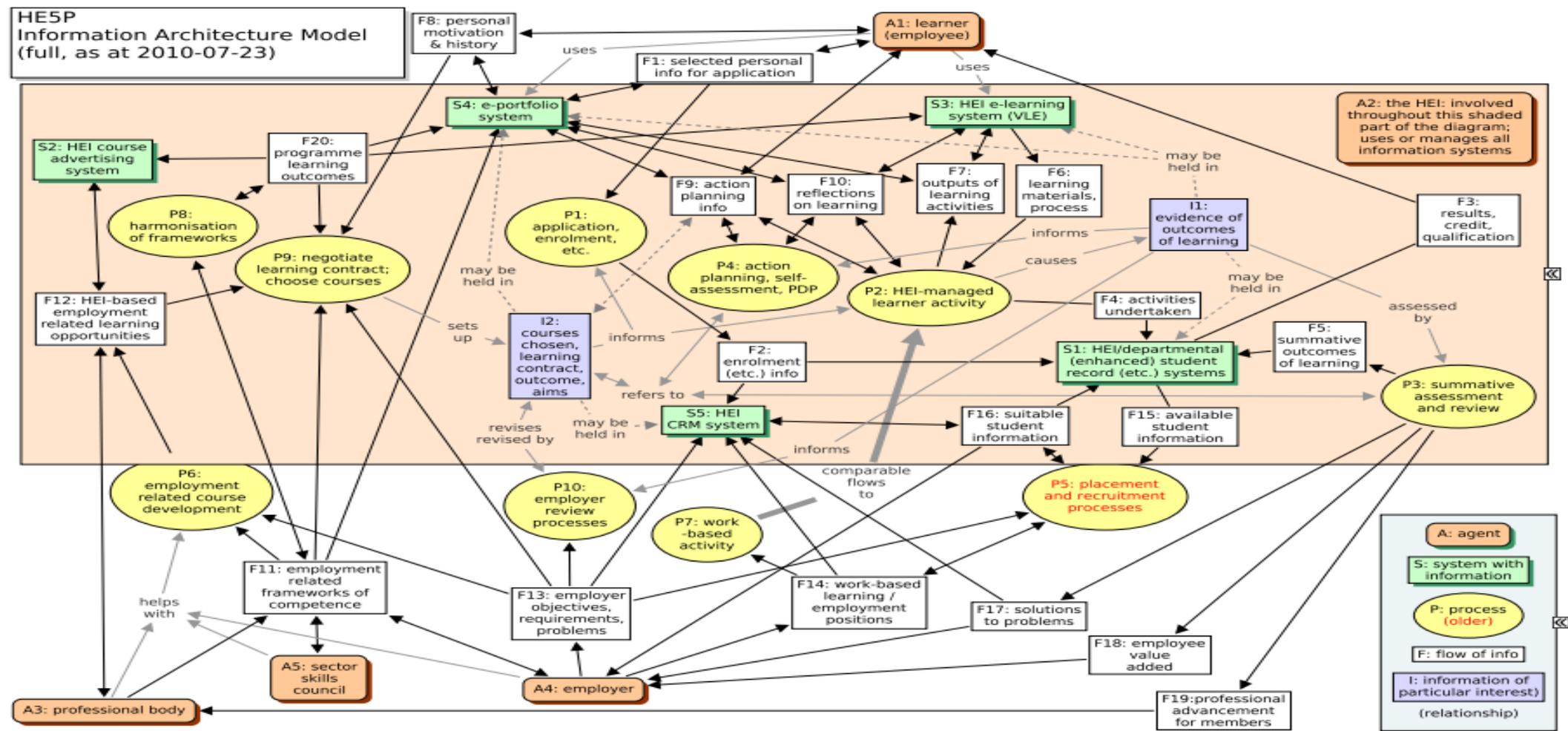
# Our key propositions:

- Linking planning, review, recording and reflection improves learning performance (is this true; for all 'shapes and sizes');
- E-portfolio technologies (where it supports such practice) is central to marrying the requirements of employee, employer and institutional stakeholders.
- "e-portfolio practice has the capacity to provide the 'glue' in the development of such provision, connecting key stakeholders (employer/workplace mentor, employee/learner and academic/institutional support) and facilitating learning and assessment".

# A flavour of the Literature Review (Richardson, 2009)

7. Current issues identified in implementation of technology to support portfolio practice for employee learners relate to **practice being at an early stage**, planned or under development; lack of an appropriate model or tool to suit the particular context; or concerns about resources for sustainability, including for staff development.
8. To date, there has been **little evaluation of the impact of e-portfolio practice** on learners' progress or achievement of intended learning outcomes. Elements of effective practice or relevance of practice to adult, discontinuous learners have rarely been identified. Instances of evaluation of elements of effective use have indicated **critical reflection on learning** as a key element, especially where there is a **peer collaborative element** in the process. Examples articulated of how practice has demonstrated relevance to adult, discontinuous learners are: **maintenance of membership of a professional body, peer support in CPD, and self-discovery** (e.g. recognition by learners through self-audit of skills, that their skills are wider than those of which they had been previously aware.)

# And of the Information Systems Architecture model we produced!



# Test the tools workshop 2: come try the outcomes of projects!

Using technology to support workforce development

- two opportunities to see how your ideas now relate to our thinking then (different decade, different workplaces)



# Key functionalities we identified...

Technologies which support:

- **Communication** – between peers, tutors and workplace mentors,
- **Collaboration**
- **Reflection**
- **Integration**
- **Using diverse evidence and**
- **Presentation...**

**Are these important in your thinking now, and how have the technological possibilities evolved...**

# Thanks and farewell...



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## Understanding the essence(s) of portfolio- based learning

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A collaborative international seminar  
The University of Edinburgh, 6-8 June 2016.