

# GEES Subject Centre Update for CHUGD: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009

## General GEES Subject Centre Activities 2009

### EVENTS

#### Small-Scale Learning and Teaching Research and Development Funding 2009-10

Call for Subject Centre funded small-scale project proposals 2009-10 now open. Deadline June 17.

<http://gees.ac.uk/funding/smallcall.htm>

#### Assessment for Learning Conference; Monday 22nd June, 2009 9.30 am - 4.30 pm

Venue: Manchester; registration deadline 15 May.

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/events/2009/assess09/assess09.htm>

#### Residential workshop for newly-appointed and aspiring lecturers 2009

18/19 May 2009 Birmingham

### INITIATIVES

#### Sharing and reusing learning materials in the GEES disciplines - HE Academy / JISC Open Educational Resources (OER) Programme

GEES successfully bid for 250k on the theme of 'Climate change and sustainability'. Six institutions sub-contracted via 25k awards. Some funding for repurposing UKESCC modules for a more appropriate platform.

<http://gees.ac.uk/funding/oerpilot.htm>

#### Earth Science Activities 2009-10

##### Geological Field Skills Staff Training Course

Chesterfield 23rd - 27th March 2009

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/events/2009/geolskills/geolskills.htm>

The course was fully subscribed and involved one day at Curbar Edge in the Peak District followed by four days mapping in Grave's Park, Sheffield. Formal presentations, exercises and time for inking-in were provided at the hotel accommodation in the evenings. The course was received extremely positively by the majority of participants, for example:

*The course content was at the correct level for non-geologists and the geology terms were explained very well. The practical exercises allowed us to work as a group as well as to think at our own pace. I enjoyed the evening sessions where I could use all the observations I had made during the field tasks to understand the geology of the area.*

The Earth Science Senior Advisors recommend that a second course be run in the Autumn of 2010 using academic staff as the main tutors in a locality frequented by UK departments (e.g. Ingleton). Participants from the first course could be invited back both as a follow-up and to act as peer-mentors to new colleagues.

##### Employer Engagement Survey

A 'state of play' / baseline audit into the role of employer engagement was conducted as part of a wider project with Environmental Sciences funded by the HE Academy. A summary of the project was published

in the January 2009 edition of 'Planet' and can be downloaded from the GEES website at <http://gees.ac.uk/pubs/planet/p21/sg.pdf>.

For geosciences this exercise was conducted as a series of telephone interviews with colleagues from ten Earth Science departments in English higher education institutions. Most interviewees were not familiar with the specific term 'employer engagement' but all suggested that it meant something along the lines of: *...a two-way flow of information between us and employers to ensure that the appropriate knowledge and skills are developed to prepare students for employment.* The full report from the Earth Sciences is available at <http://www.gees.ac.uk/home/discearth.htm>

#### **Earth Science Recruitment / Outreach Survey 2008**

16 responses were received from 15 departments out of a possible 39 CHUGD members. Respondents were asked to outline what they thought was their department's most effective strategy for promoting Earth Sciences to potential students. The most common responses involved **potential students visiting the department** and the **department interacting with schools**. Respondents were asked to select from a list which recruitment / outreach activities their department undertakes. The whole range of options were selected across all the departments responding, the most popular were **staff giving talks to schools** (9 departments) and **staff contributing to careers events in schools** (8 departments).

Four departments are involved with the **BGS Schools Seismology project** but **most departments use their own resources**. 8 departments stated that they were involved in **Ambassador-type outreach schemes**, the most popular (6 departments) being the Undergraduate Ambassador Scheme.

If members approve, the full report will be published on the GEES website.

#### **Earth Science Learning & Teaching Event**

This one day event will have the theme of 'Breaking Barriers to Student Learning' with a particular focus on issues such as alternative conceptions and threshold concepts. The event will take place at the end of **January 2010** and will be hosted by an Earth Science department. The event will address two key themes: 'curriculum issues' and 'promoting motivation and scholarship in Earth Science students'.

#### **Higher Education Specialist Group of the Geological Society**

The Geological Society hosts a variety of specialist groups for its members in geological sub-disciplines and other relevant colleagues. An education group does not currently exist and the Senior Advisors propose to scope out the possibility of setting up such a group. Safeguarding and raising the profile of geoscience learning and teaching forms part of the rationale behind this initiative.

#### **Geological Society Website**

Helen King now has editing rights to a page on the Higher Education section of this website. <http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/gsl/op/preview/education/highered/heresources>

## **PUBLICATIONS**

#### **Teaching Geoscience Through Fieldwork**

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/pubs/guides/eesguides.htm#fwgeosciguide>

#### **Jan 2009: Planet Special Edition - Issue 21 - Employability, Employer Engagement and Enterprise in the GEES Disciplines**

<http://gees.ac.uk/pubs/planet/index.htm#P21>

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