

Case Studies



BLC – THE FINANCIAL CASE



Introduction

The Blended Learning Consortium is a collaborative democratic partnership involving over 140 colleges and other learning providers. Member colleges pay in £5,000 per academic year and this money is pooled to develop high quality online learning content in subject areas voted on by members. Member colleges download and keep all content they have contributed to even if they no longer subscribe to the BLC.



The benefits of collaborative working

The BLC model of pooling funding from each college means that each college benefits from a development budget of £5,000 x the number of colleges paying in during the academic year. e.g. if 100 colleges pay in during an academic year each college benefits from £500,000 of content development.



Savings through blended delivery

Many colleges in the BLC have adopted a blended learning curriculum model. This can lead to significant savings in delivery of study programmes. Many colleges in the BLC deliver between 10 and 20% of study programmes online which allow significant efficiency savings. It also has added benefits of freeing up teaching spaces and making courses with borderline numbers of learners more viable to continue.



Savings through absence cover

Each BLC resource is designed to deliver 1 hour of independent learning. These can be used for absence cover saving money on costs of agency or hourly paid staff. Based on typical costs of £50 per hour for absence cover, covering just 3 hours per week across the college during term time means that the membership fee will be paid for by these savings.

Savings through exclusive offers

The BLC uses the potential group buying power of more than 140 colleges to negotiate exclusive offers at the request and on behalf of members. We have over 50 of these with major suppliers of digital platforms, services, content, and training. Savings typically range from 20 to 50%. Many colleges in the BLC have saved more money during an academic year through making use of these than they pay in to the consortium.

See <http://blc-fe.org/exclusiveOffers.html> for more details.

Income from development work

The BLC model works through recycling the pooled money paid in across member colleges who chose to get involved in writing and developing content or producing videos. How much your college does or doesn't get involved in this is entirely up to yourselves. Colleges that do get involved in writing or developing content can earn back some, all or even more than their membership fees according to how much work they take on.

Improving bidding opportunities

The partnerships and relationships through membership of the BLC between different colleges has led to many successful bidding partnerships. The BLC manager has also helped colleges looking for partners for bids they are writing find suitable colleges across the whole UK find other colleges to work with on funded projects. For any college that already looks for funding through partnership bids or would like to get more involved in this kind of work the BLC can be a very useful resource.

Finance

**Glasgow
Clyde**


GLASGOW CLYDE
COLLEGE

In these challenging financial times for colleges, our BLC membership has enabled us to maximise our content creation budget by giving us access to a wide range of relevant and high-quality resources. In particular, the cross-curriculum resources have provided opportunities to deliver more online skills training without needing to commit extra staffing resource. This has been a key saving for the college.

We have a full-time digital content developer, so I am very aware of the time and costs of developing quality digital learning materials. As the BLC content is funded by sharing the development costs with many colleges, it means that we get excellent value and a high volume of ready-to-use content for what is a small annual cost. We have also benefitted from a 70% saving on licence fees for the authoring tool Articulate Storyline through the BLC exclusive offers.

Niall Hardie
e-Learning Manager

**Milton
Keynes
College**


We have found real financial benefits from our BLC membership. We have looked at buying other digital learning content and the BLC resources are superior both in cost and quality. We have also been paid by the BLC for creating video resources.

The largest financial benefit however is through moving to a Blended Learning Curriculum model where a significant number of study programme learning hours are achieved through independent online learning using the BLC content.

Penny Langford
Head of eLearning

**Solihull
College &
University
Centre**


In 2019 we benefitted from the combined buying power that the BLC offers through working with them to negotiate an exclusive offer on the Accessibility software “Blackboard Ally” for BLC member colleges. The saving on this was more than our membership fee for the year and was taken advantage of by other BLC colleges who made a similar saving.

Emma Ball
Head of Learning Technologies, Open Access & Library Services

**Hull
College**


In 2019/20 we were able to demonstrate a saving of at least £36,800 through the usage of BLC content. This is based on it being used to deliver 1600 hours of trackable e-learning with a saving of £23 per hour on teaching costs.

With us increasing the amount of online learning alongside the growth in uptake and the size of the BLC content collection it is expected this saving will significantly increase in future years.

Khaled Al-Ankar
Head of Elearning & Libraries

Being a member of the BLC has bought Pembrokeshire College many financial benefits. Through moving our full-time vocational courses to a blended learning model, we have been able to maintain our provision despite reductions in funding. Significant savings in delivery have been made by moving between 10 and 20% of delivery online supported by the BLC content.

We have also made use of the partnership opportunities available through the BLC network in several successful externally funded project bids. The income from these has benefitted not only Pembrokeshire College but also a number of other colleges throughout the UK.

Geoff Elliot
Learning and Technology Development Manager

**Pembrokeshire
College**
