



Phoenix

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ACADEMIC ALIGNMENT

Employability?
Isn't that what Careers do?

A joint approach to curriculum
design and development

Raising graduate outcomes
through academic partnerships

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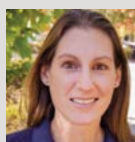
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message from the GUEST EDITOR



ACADEMIC ALIGNMENT

At the time of writing, Philip Augar's long-awaited independent panel report for the review of post-18 education and funding has just been published. It is a thorough and serious piece of work. However, given the current political uncertainty, and since the recommendations within the report are just that – recommendations, not policy – no one is quite sure what will happen next.

That said, many AGCAS colleagues will recognise that, in a highly politicised and metric-focused environment, planning service delivery and setting targets is challenging many of us. We need to manage significant change, do even more with less, demonstrate impact and value – all of this while delivering better highly-skilled employment outcomes.

Consequently, careers and employability services are now seen within many institutions, both large and small, as key strategic partners – whether as part of an institution-wide employability ecosystem or through more localised plans and activity in partnership with academic colleagues and other stakeholders. This has provided careers and employability professionals with opportunities to engage more effectively and meaningfully with academic colleagues. It is also presenting challenges; being relevant, credible, innovative and impactful has never been more important.

AGCAS members have always worked collaboratively with academics, students and employers but, increasingly, we are involved in the co-design and delivery of employability in the curriculum. We are being asked to contribute to the narrative for Access and Participation Plans and subject-level TEF, provide employability business partnering and expert careers education consultancy, develop training programmes for academics and contribute to university-wide employability governance structures. In many member services, we are also seeing the creation of new roles with specific responsibility for aligning employability with academic learning.

Academic alignment is becoming such an important part of our work that it is vital that AGCAS, as an increasingly broad and diverse community of careers and employability professionals, acknowledges and embraces this direction of travel.

There is clearly enormous interest and appetite from within the AGCAS community for AGCAS's new Academic Alignment strategic theme. This has been reflected in the exceptional response from members to the call for articles for this issue. I have been hugely impressed, although not surprised, by the inspiring, innovative and potentially transformational collaborative practice that is being developed and delivered by members in a wide variety of institutions.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue. In doing so, you have helped to create an edition of Phoenix that truly captures the potential of AGCAS's new strategic theme to identify and share innovation and best practice in the integration of employability in partnership with academic colleagues. I look forward to building on this work and, supported by the newly-established [Academic Alignment Working Party](#), contributing to further discussion, policy development and professional practice.

Simon Thompson

AGCAS Director of Academic Alignment

EMPLOYABILITY? ISN'T THAT WHAT CAREERS DO?



Dr Joy Perkins, Educational & Employability Development Adviser in the Careers Service, **Dr Darren Comber**, Senior Educational Development Adviser and **Dr Mary Pryor**, Senior Academic Skills Adviser in the Centre for Academic Development, at the University of Aberdeen, share their approach to the alignment of mainline academic subjects with employability.

Embedding employability is often viewed by academics as just one more imposition on an already crowded curriculum. We sympathise; we are all current or previous academics ourselves. However, we are also responsible for offering a mandatory, two-day course at the University of Aberdeen, which helps new academics learn how to design, deliver and evaluate their teaching. Our challenge in crafting the course was to think of creative ways not only to bring into academic discourse the importance of employability, but also to align it in a sensitive and collaborative way.

WEAVING EMPLOYABILITY INTO ACADEMIA

We designed our Introduction to Learning & Teaching course to be interactive and practical. We felt it was important to offer the opportunity for new and established staff to network and we wanted to provide the tools to help new academics to do their job effectively in the context in which they work. This led us to the question of alignment: how could we make employability part and parcel of an academic module, rather than being viewed as different or, worse still, bolted-on?

Our course is structured around elements of effective module design in higher education, introduced in a stepwise manner. In terms of embedding employability, rather being a single topic, this is woven implicitly into other, more 'important' (to academics) topics. To give just two brief examples:

1. Writing learning outcomes: to encourage students to think about what skills they have developed in parallel with acquisition of academic knowledge.

“ WE ACCEPT THAT EMBEDDING EMPLOYABILITY IN THE CURRICULUM CAN BE A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE ”

2. Equality and diversity: to prepare students to work effectively with a diverse range of individuals in non-academic environments, for example through work placements.

THEORY INTO PRACTICE

To put all of these emerging ideas about skills and knowledge into practice, we created a consolidation task as part of the course, which requires participants to design a short programme of four modules. The fictitious programme is then assessed informally, which exposes participants to the level of scrutiny that their own modules will face when produced for real. It also highlights that it is not just the careers service that cares about employability.

CRAFTING AN EMPLOYABILITY CULTURE

Our core messages are:

- Be explicit regarding the knowledge and skills developed in learning activities and assessments.
- Engage students in student-centred, deep learning activities to enable critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative working, effective communication and reflection on their learning.
- Involve employers in the curriculum to help students understand how to apply their discipline-specific knowledge and skills in the workplace.

STRIKING A BALANCE

We accept that embedding employability in the curriculum can be a contentious issue. An appropriate balance is needed between centralised support, traditionally delivered by careers services, and the connections to employability woven into the curriculum. Our experience demonstrates that the key to engaging academic staff in their share of responsibility is to introduce it implicitly at the initial stages of programme and module design: *early and subtly* is our take-away message for others working in this field.

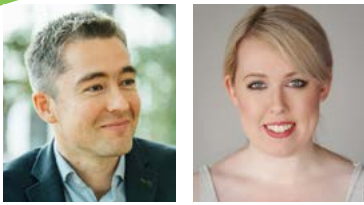


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academic alignment: LET THERE BE LIFE!



Chris Traynor, Guidance Team Manager, and **Laura Brown**, Careers Adviser, at Newcastle University, reflect on how constructing and implementing a new university-wide employability and enterprise strategy has raised awareness and recognition of employability as a university initiative and helped to promote in-curriculum employability education.

In recent years, the BBC has produced some groundbreaking television moments through natural history documentaries such as Blue Planet and Planet Earth. Whilst watching a baby iguana successfully escape a nest of racer snakes can make for some gripping Sunday night viewing, the impact of these programmes has gone far beyond light entertainment; they also encourage a wider appreciation of our fragile ecosystems. But what does this have to do with careers and employability?

GROWING ECOSYSTEM

The ecosystem analogy is very relevant to our work. Ecosystems can be defined as 'all living things in an area and the way they affect each other and their environment'. In a university environment, we are particularly dependent on interrelationships and our ability to engage academic colleagues in taking active roles to champion and embed employability in student life – we cannot do this in silos. Over the past few years at Newcastle University, we have been working

towards the vision of an active employability and enterprise ecosystem comprised of empowered colleagues from across the institution. It is a vision that will continually present challenges, and we certainly haven't arrived at an end point yet, but the progress since embarking on this journey three years ago has been energizing with several examples of shifting culture and practice.

CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIC PRIORITY

2016 marked the genesis of a new employability and enterprise strategy. From the outset, this was developed as an institutional strategy with widespread consultation. The strategy raised awareness and recognition of employability as a university-wide imperative and led to the creation of a new role, Academic Lead for Employability and Enterprise. This role sits alongside other well-established academic positions, such as Director of Excellence in Learning and Teaching, and provides greater visibility and ownership for employability in academic schools. Crucially, it also offers greater recognition, training, and allocated work time for academic colleagues leading on this work. A principle responsibility of the Academic Lead is to collaborate with the careers service and other stakeholders in developing an evidence-based Employability and Enterprise Action Plan for their area. This

“ WE NOW HAVE **POWERFUL STORIES** FROM FINALISTS AND GRADUATES WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE MODULE AND CAN CLEARLY EXPLAIN ITS **BENEFITS** TO NEW STUDENTS ”



shared, data-led exercise has challenged colleagues to review their approach in making employability an embedded yet visible offer.

STRATEGY INFORMING PRACTICE: MATHS MODULE CASE STUDY

To give one example, close collaboration with the Academic Lead for the School of Maths, Statistics and Physics has resulted in the shared development of an in-curriculum module, which explicitly embeds employability. Mathematical Skills and Career Management is a compulsory module for all Stage 2 students with a cohort of roughly 180 per year. The module has run for the last three years but has continually evolved and changed based on feedback, reflection and student engagement measures.

According to Careers Registration data, maths students are the most likely to be in the 'Decide' phase of career planning across the university. On learning these insights, we amended the module content to focus more upon self and occupational awareness rather than the usual job application skills. The module aims to develop students as individuals who are more confident in their job search and more articulate in defining what they want in their career. We now place greater emphasis upon 'doing' rather than 'teaching': we encourage students to

“ A COMPULSORY MODULE DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN STUDENTS WILL ACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH IT OR SEE ITS RELEVANCE ”

undertake various activities that take them out of their comfort zone (and give them the space to do this). In turn, this enhances their skillsets - so they have more to put on their CV, rather than simply showing them how to write a CV. We place significant emphasis upon reflection, within both teaching and assessment. Structured reflection enables students to identify their skills, interests and values, which in turn supports career planning and their ability to articulate their qualities to employers

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Whilst a compulsory module ensures students participate in employability learning, it does not necessarily mean they will actively engage with it or see its relevance. In moving away from practical to more reflective activities, some of the activities have felt quite alien at times to this particular student group. Herein lies the importance of close

collaboration with academic staff. The module is co-delivered between careers professionals and the Academic Lead, who plays a vital role in contextualising the learning as important professional development whilst linking it to other subject-specific learning outcomes in the curriculum. Having an engaged academic present an evidence base for the module within the School has also been crucial. Moreover, after three years we now have powerful stories from finalists and graduates who have completed the module and can clearly explain its benefits to new students.

NEXT STEPS

The growing employability ecosystem has led to colleagues in Physics requesting a similar compulsory module; this will provide consistency across the subjects and set a model for others across the institution to consider.

In developing and delivering a new employability and enterprise strategy the last few years have at times been characterised by toil and turbulence, but ultimately resulted in a real sense of achievement. Now we're a little closer to knowing how that iguana felt.



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promoting co-ownership: EXTRACTED EMPLOYABILITY



Careers service colleagues know that making employability engagement a 'structurally unavoidable' part of the curriculum for all students is a huge win. However, persuading academics that something structurally unavoidable is also non-threatening, understandable, accessible and even engaging, is a different matter. **Kate Daubney**, Head of Careers & Employability, and **Morag Walling**, Embedding Employability Consultant, outline the work they have undertaken at King's College London (part of The Careers Group, University of London) to support academics in co-owning employability.

M

any of us have worked with academics who argue that teaching employability is not their job.

So, how do we manage these conversations when trying to embed employability in the curriculum? At King's College London, we have developed a new concept to support academics through new processes that oblige them to do so, with the aspiration of engaging them better with the outcome.

EMPLOYABILITY VALUE

Academics, students, employers and careers services all agree that we want students to love their degree and be able to benefit from it in the longer term. However, students often don't know what within the academic experience is valued by employers. Degrees are traditionally seen as knowledge assets, but if the majority of graduate employers in the UK are not looking for graduates from particular subjects, it must be some other aspect of the academic experience.

The academics we were working with could not settle on or be persuaded by any existing definition of employability. So, we went back to the curriculum and read all the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements that form the backbone of UK higher education teaching. If academics didn't want to teach employability, what was the employability value of what they were already teaching?

The benchmarks inevitably focus on knowledge content, but close reading harvests over 200 different transferable skills on top of the specialist skills of subjects. They

“EXTRACTED EMPLOYABILITY HELPS ACADEMICS CO-OWN EMPLOYABILITY WITH THE STUDENT, EMPLOYER AND THE CAREERS SERVICE”



also reveal a wide range of attributes as well as the range of actual or quasi workplace experiences developed in the academic context. We identified common employability assets from the benchmarks across four key categories. We call this the KASE Framework.

EXTRACTED EMPLOYABILITY

We define this as 'extracted employability' because these employability assets are extracted from the curriculum and articulated through existing teaching and learning. The KASE Framework can be built bespoke to a subject, programme, module, level of study, learning style and to the student. It is an entirely adaptable model and one which the academic or student can create themselves or co-create with careers colleagues. However, the scope of these assets needs articulating by academics, because otherwise students can find it challenging to identify them for themselves.

In contrast to a traditional model of 'adding' employability to the curriculum, extracted employability helps academics co-own employability with the student,

employer and the careers service. Furthermore, it enables students to articulate the longer-term value of their academic experience in the workplace.

After a pilot year using this approach, there is definite evidence of increased creativity in engagement by academics around embedding employability within King's new policy context. There has also been a spin-off of more unsolicited engagement by academics generally with the faculty careers consultants who support existing programmes.

A KASE STUDY IN IMPLEMENTATION

When implementing the framework we found that some disciplines are more introspective, not looking beyond their own subject area, and do not look for connectivity within, from or across their programmes. Other disciplines are all about that connectivity and actively look beyond their subject. And then there are those that focus on critiquing and the role of the bystander and there is a sense of powerlessness towards the world outside.

“OUR AIM WAS ALWAYS TO ENABLE CO-CREATION OF SOLUTION BY MEETING THE ACADEMIC WHERE THEY WERE AND WALKING WITH THEM ON THE JOURNEY”

We didn't expect to find that our approach could stem the initial resigned call of "tell me what to put on the form" that can mean new initiatives become a tick box exercise that rarely lead to significant change.

Our aim was always to enable co-creation of solutions by meeting the academic where they were and walking with them on the journey. Techniques that helped to move these conversations forward were:

- Supporting academics to imagine the reality of employability in their context
- Defining, clarifying and exploring 'employability' vs. 'careers'
- Connecting programmes' employability value to career progress models.

KASE FRAMEWORK

Knowledge:

- The ability to learn in depth
- Content, source, means of gaining, bigger picture

Attributes:

- Qualities, behaviours, beliefs
- Awareness of self, others, and context

Skills:

- Cognitive – analytical, problem-solving, decision-making
- Practical – research, organisational, technology-based
- Communication – written/verbal, interpersonal, teamwork, leadership
- Specialist – subject-based, career management, languages/coding, etc.

Experience:

- Of applying academic knowledge within the degree
- Of the workplace during the degree



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500 days as an academic director:

EMPLOYABILITY DRIVING STEP CHANGE



In 2018, **Paul Heys**, Employability Lead for the Department of Art & Design, and **Esther Kent**, Placement Lead for the Academy of Sport and Physical Activity, had the opportunity to contribute to what would become Sheffield Hallam University's recalibrated approach to employability. As academics from two very different backgrounds, here they outline their shared ambition to delivery meaningful student experiences by placing employability at the heart of the curriculum.

Through the creation of two new senior posts and assuming dual roles as Academic Directors - Employability, we were tasked with designing and delivering an institutional step change that would revisit and validate Hallam's ambition, celebrate existing good practice, and redefine the university's position and understanding of what our students need to succeed in highly skilled employment.

MEANINGFUL AND SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

The newly-established Directorate of Business Engagement, Skills and Employability (BESE) and the Student and Graduate Employability team are the conduit for this work. This is a hub of expertise and innovation providing a direct line into the curriculum through our well-established and multidisciplinary faculty employability teams.

In order to create something meaningful and sustainable, we needed to adopt a clear and defined approach that both students and staff would understand, appreciate and recognise as 'change for good'. More importantly, it needed to offer Hallam's biggest, most important stakeholders – students and staff – a real chance to review, inform and evolve their curriculum, to create their own space, identity and develop learning experiences that would prepare students and give them the confidence to access and gain future employment.

STAKEHOLDER-INFORMED

The student voice and student-focused research has been implicit and explicit within the process – and continues to be at the heart of Hallam's employability promise, acknowledging just how important our student community is in influencing change. We also turned to graduate interns: an institutional Intern Steering Group was set up to feed into groups, boards and the student community at large, both inside and outside the university.

We also reached out to experts inside and outside the university. Collaborating with our industry partners alongside our academic and professional experts has also allowed us to strengthen our offer to create a clear and more consistent experience for both students and staff.

“**THE ENERGY AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CHANGES ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY HAVE BEEN INCREDIBLE TO WITNESS**”

TRANSFORMATIVE AMBITION

Nothing ambitious comes without risks, but we accept that change and risks are the new norm. Once the evidence was presented and plans outlined to staff and student focus groups, buy-in was exceptional. The energy and attitude towards the changes across the university have been incredible to witness. However, this is where the real work begins; in the implementation, the day-to-day and the evaluation.

We are confident and determined that our students will benefit hugely from our transformative ambition. Here's to a future where our students' journeys, experiences and prospects will be the evidence of our success.



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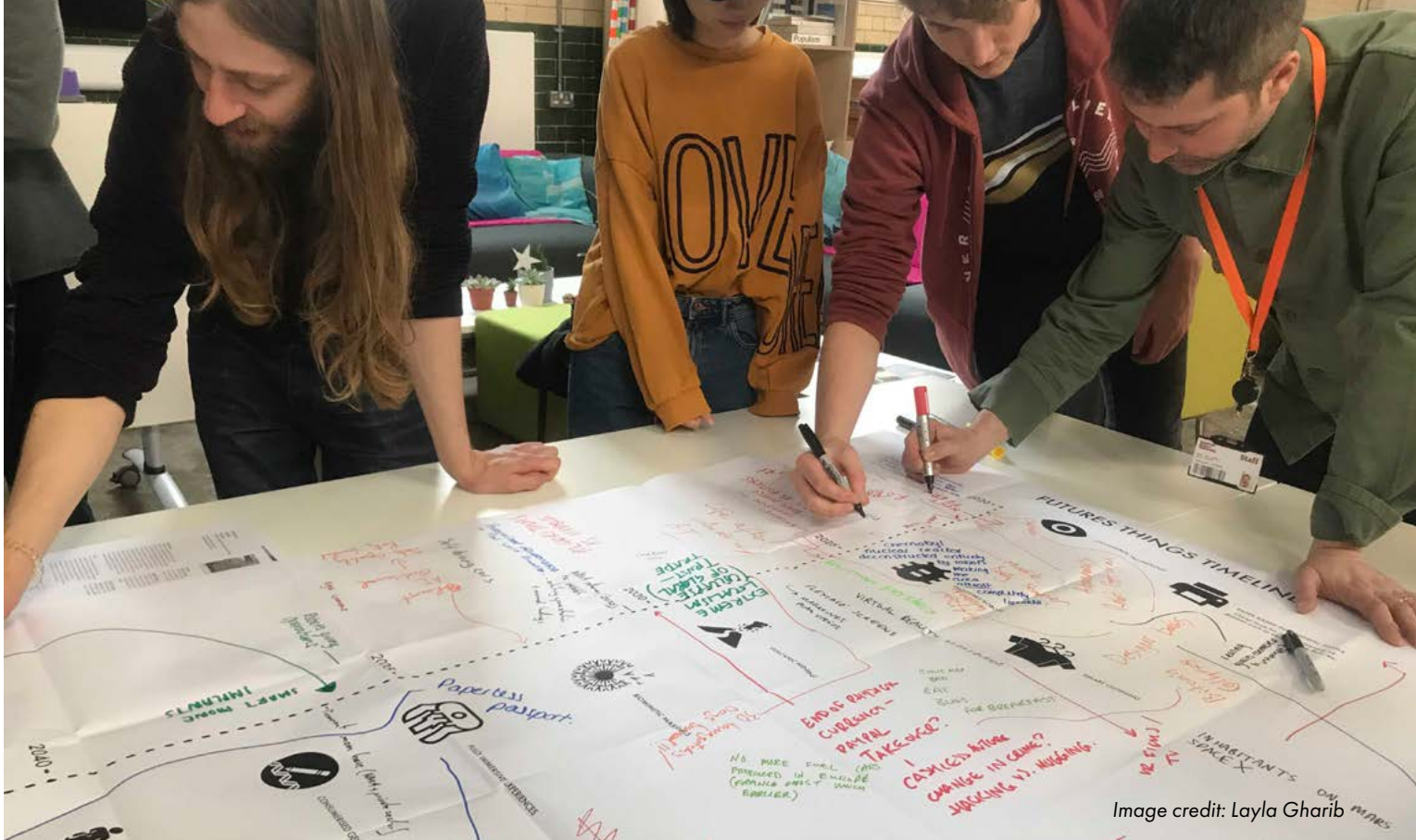


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NEW MODEL

Our new and evolving model consists of four crucial components:

1. WORK EXPERIENCE

Engaging and involving students with employers is a proven success indicator associated with highly skilled employment. Hallam is committed to delivering an ambitious promise of work experience as a core module in every course and at every level of study. Students undertake work experience within a series of identified 'settings' linked to the university's strategic plan and aligned to one of six defined 'categories' at every level of their course. Sandwich placements are an option for all students, recognised through an Applied Professional Diploma. This not only provides flexibility for courses to bring their subject area to life, but also enables economies of scale, clarity for all stakeholders and a powerful message that our students are 'work ready'.

2. DIGITAL SKILLS

Our new digital skills vision is to recognise the nuances and needs around students' capabilities within the digital skills landscape. Hallam is committed to delivering a dynamic digital skills-focused work stream through its curriculum. This will apply to all students,

regardless of course. The university offers the opportunity to engage broadly through an institutional core offer, Hallam Digital Skills, as well as a tailored in-course Digital Skills 'Curriculum Commitment'. Establishing these baselines demonstrates a commitment to delivering digital skills that will create digital confidence and the capability students need to gain highly skilled employment.

To strengthen and evolve our digital skills offer and commitment, work is being carried out with graduate employers, professional bodies, students on (and returning from) placement, alumni and other stakeholders defined by courses. This will enhance staff insight, course development and highlight current trends and expectations.

3. CAREER READINESS

The Career Readiness pathway will provide students with a personalised and impactful programme, equipping them with the career management and employability skills to create their own future success by supporting transition into highly skilled employment. Career readiness ensures that work experience makes sense to students. It will build upon existing good practice and ensure the key components of preparation for work experience are fully integrated and accessible at every level.

4. GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

The (3+3) Graduate Attributes model allows courses to revise, define and position their programme of learning alongside a shared institutional vision. Courses adopt three core graduate attributes and then select an additional three from an elective suite of attributes. This forms an autonomous, but institutionally-aligned approach to course identity. The model provides structure to gain a deeper understanding and articulate the experiences staff and students have inside and outside the curriculum; it promotes awareness of the core skills and capabilities that an education at Sheffield Hallam provides. The model contributes to course development and highlights current trends and expectations in the curriculum alongside employer markets.

“ THE STUDENT VOICE CONTINUES TO BE AT THE HEART OF HALLAM'S EMPLOYABILITY PROMISE ”

a joint approach to CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT



With the majority of students in work, looking to change or progress their careers, employability at The Open University (OU) is more nuanced than elsewhere. **Dr Eddie Tunnah**, Subject Matter Specialist, Enhanced Employability and Career Progression, and **Ayesha Peeran**, Senior Careers and Employability Consultant, both based within OU Careers and Employability Services, outline how a new employability framework has enabled collaboration between careers professionals and academics to refine the curriculum and better support students' personal and career goals.

Supporting the employability needs of The Open University's (OU) unique student population is a challenge. Around two thirds of OU students are in employment and looking for study to either help them progress in an existing career or change to a new one. Many have a wealth of personal, study and work experiences, yet feedback from employers suggests some struggle to effectively articulate this during the recruitment process.

EMPLOYABILITY REVIEW

In 2016-2017, employability became a strategic objective at the OU with the launch of a three-year Enhanced Employability and Career Progression (EECP) programme. This occurred alongside a substantial investment in Careers and Employability Services (CES), more than doubling in size to almost 60 permanent members of staff in under three years.

“THE PILOT MAPPING OF TEN QUALIFICATIONS WILL LEAD TO IDENTIFYING BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES THAT CAN BE SHARED ACROSS FACULTIES”

The EECP programme commenced with an employability review carried out by the Higher Education Academy (HEA), which identified:

- the need for an institutional strategy for employability
- that employability is not well understood across some staff groups
- the need to increase employer engagement, building on areas of good practice
- the need to broaden the OU's existing skills-based employability approach to a framework that includes behaviours, values and attributes.

NEW FRAMEWORK

Employability has been defined at the OU as not simply about supporting students attain their career goals, but also about helping them to achieve their personal goals. Building upon the previous seven CBI-based employability skills approach (CBI, 2011), a new employability framework was produced during 2017-2018, designed by level of study (from access through to postgraduate).

The core curriculum of ten qualifications is being audited against the new framework. The work is being led by EECP, with associate lecturers (staff teaching OU modules) conducting the audit and careers and employability consultants (learning and teaching) assessing the outcome and sense checking the mapping of selected modules for each qualification. Careers professionals are using their expertise to assess how well the curriculum prepares students for the graduate labour market and for achieving their goals. The audit is designed to obtain a snapshot of the current employability-related



“ THE LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS INITIAL AUDIT WILL INFORM HOW THE REST OF THE CURRICULUM IS REVIEWED ”

content across the 10 qualifications; the long-term aim is to inform future curriculum design and development.

LEARNING AND CHALLENGES

For the careers and employability consultants an early challenge was being confident in assessing best practice examples as ‘well met’, ‘partially met’ or ‘not met’ and providing solid evidence on the judgement. Focusing on employer expectations and research of the labour market helped in providing useful detail for each competency. Managing the time taken for the exercise also proved difficult. Researching the module and reviewing the assignments, assessment methods and online activities and tasks was more challenging according to the level of the module, familiarity with the module materials and the examples given.

Providing opportunities for collaboration (a core skill in the framework) is a challenge in the context of the OU, but the audit has highlighted good examples of how students can collaborate via online platforms, conducting peer-to-peer reviews, creating podcasts and other activities to initiate critical discussion and debate with other students. The comparison of the assessment of the same pieces of evidence by academics and careers professionals has yielded interesting results too; while some modules were strong in several competencies, looking at the modules across the qualification has helped provided an overall picture.

WORKING TOGETHER

We have also considered the language used in providing feedback, particularly in relation to constructive comments and providing recommendations of suitable material. A senior lecturer and student experience manager from the undergraduate business degree commented: “where the Business School thought it had identified an example of the employability framework in action, the sense check revealed it to be in superficial terms only, i.e. the key words

were mentioned but students needed more help in achieving the (employability) criterion”.

The pilot mapping of ten qualifications will lead to identifying best practice examples that can be shared across faculties and support qualification teams to identify how areas might be developed to include greater coverage of the framework components.

STUDENT JOURNEY

Personal Development Planning (PDP) resources are being developed for the ten pilot qualifications to encourage students to understand and engage with their employability development through recording, reflecting and articulating this throughout their student journey. We are looking at ways to encourage participation with these resources to support our students achieve their personal and career goals; the student voice will play a key part in gathering feedback.

The lessons learned from this initial audit will inform how the rest of the curriculum is reviewed and, ultimately, ensure that a balanced range of skills and behaviours are incorporated into qualifications. The collaboration between academics and careers consultants is also strengthening relationships. We have a long way to go but envisage significant benefits as we progress.



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winning awards
**TAKES CAREERS
EDUCATION TO
NEW HEIGHTS**



Following the publication of HECSU-funded research highlighting the benefits of careers education and subsequently winning a number of employability awards, staff in the Careers Service at the University of Dundee found themselves in a stronger position with a raised institutional profile. **Sophie Morrison, Senior Careers Adviser**, discusses the legacy of this research and the positive impact it has had on working collaboratively with academic colleagues.

In 2017 and 2018, the University of Dundee Careers Service published groundbreaking research into the impact of and motivation for careers education. This research gave us an evidence base to support what we, as careers professionals, already knew – careers education works!

SECTOR RECOGNITION

Our research was recognised by AGCAS in 2017 when we were awarded the AGCAS Award for Research Informed Practice. We also won the AGCAS Award for Technology for innovative use of e-portfolios in careers education. In 2018, the wider career guidance community recognised this work and the CDI awarded us the UK Career Development Award for Research Undertaken by a Careers Professional. The findings of the research were also published by [Times Higher Education](#), which led to many academic colleagues making contact, eager to find out more. Buoyed by our findings, and proudly clutching our awards, we set about further spreading the word across the university. Following this, wide-ranging enhancements to the academic alignment of careers education across our institution have ensued.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING

The awards brought recognition from colleagues and enabled us to strengthen our relationships with senior management. With endorsement at this level and an evidence base to demonstrate that our careers education was highly effective in raising graduate preparedness, we were invited to university committees where we dealt with numerous requests for careers education input into the curriculum. New ventures included credit-bearing careers service-delivered modules for engineering degrees and embedded careers service-led education across the whole of the School of Life Science.

NEW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

A new strategic alliance has emerged – one that has significantly increased the visibility of careers education across the institution. With our experience of delivering a standalone careers education qualification for postgraduate students, we were ideally placed to

“ A NEW STRATEGIC ALLIANCE HAS EMERGED – ONE THAT HAS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED THE VISIBILITY OF CAREERS EDUCATION ACROSS THE INSTITUTION ”

respond to a request from the university and the Students' Union to provide a postgraduate careers qualification for the Student Executive. Recognising the need to enhance professionalism and work-readiness, careers education was introduced within the Students' Union for the first time by matriculating the Executive as students of the Careers Service's Graduate Career & Professional Development Certificate (GCPDC).

The GCPDC aims to enhance career development by supporting students to critically review and develop self-awareness, professional values and skills through reflecting on work-based learning. The qualification incorporates our award-winning e-portfolio to capture learning gain and has been designed, written, and is delivered by the careers service to meet the specific needs of this group.

“ WE ADOPTED A CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE MARKETING MESSAGE - CAREERS EDUCATION WORKS! ”

REVISITING LAPSED ACADEMIC ALIGNMENTS

In the past, academic alignment was sometimes hindered by low careers modules uptake, possibly due to a lack of knowledge about the benefits of careers education. In the Law School, we had previously delivered a career planning module, which had been well received by those students who had undertaken it, but had failed to attract sufficient numbers to maintain its viability.

In 2018, straight off the back of our award wins, we were approached by the Law School with a request to revisit this module. We knew that the module needed to be refreshed to gain sign-ups so we sought to completely redesign the curriculum and incorporate elements of innovation and enterprise. Fully embraced by Law School academics, the Creating Your Future: Innovation, Careers and Enterprise module was piloted with 25 students in 2018/19. The students and the careers tutors have learned along the way; nurturing discussion-based learning and embracing group assessment has been key. As the module concludes, all returned evaluation forms have rated the module as 'excellent' or 'very helpful'.

“ The GCPDC has complemented my experience as a Student Executive very well. The course has given me cause to really reflect on the tasks I've undertaken throughout the role and enriched my learning across the year. The tangible portfolio outcome will allow me to prepare for job applications and interviews as I now have a resource to draw upon from the breadth of my sabbatical year. ”

Claire Hartley,
Vice-president Communications and Campaigns

CAPITALISING ON MOMENTUM

With clear messages of evidence-based practice and award-winning careers education we were able to enhance our student communication strategy. We adopted a clear and effective marketing message – Careers Education Works! Numbers across all our modules grew after our research was published: from a total of 393 students in 2017/18 to 509 students in 2018/19. This, of course, presents its own challenges as the number of assignments to be marked has grown!

The use of evidence based research to demonstrate the effectiveness of careers education, and the recognition of its efficacy through winning awards, has positively impacted on the breadth, depth and quality of academic alignment at the University of Dundee. Our aim is to continue to capitalise on this momentum to steer careers education further forward. The challenge will be to manage the demands for new and increased careers education within our existing resources, whilst also continuing to nurture and promote other forms of careers engagement, such as our guidance offer.

Download the research reports:

[Impact of careers education on graduate success](#)

[Careers education – are we preaching to the converted?](#)



BEYOND THE BOLT-ON



City, University of London (part of The Careers Group) has a strategic commitment to embed employability in every undergraduate programme by 2026. Gemma Kenyon, Head of Careers, maps City's journey of curriculum delivery and outlines the challenges they have overcome during the process – and those they are still working on.

City has a remarkable student cohort: 74% of our UK undergraduate students come from a widening participation background. Even more significantly, City has more commuter students than any other large university according to *Homeward Bound: Defining, understanding and aiding 'commuter students'* (HEPI, 2018). Internal analysis reveals that over 80% of our cohort live in the parental home and commute for over 30 minutes (what HEPI refer to as 'high risk' students). This means that a significant majority of our students face additional barriers to engaging with the extracurricular support we offer. However good our extracurricular careers provision is, and however well we market it, we can never expect the majority of our students to be able to engage with it. We need to support students where they can engage with us, and that is in the classroom.

MODULE EXPANSION

Before 2015, the careers service delivered just one 10-credit, first-year core employability module (in Law LLB). Through our experience of managing and delivering the module, we established some strong principles about what worked, what content and delivery styles students liked, and how being in the curriculum boosted other engagement with our service.

Over the past four years, we have revised the original law module and developed new modules for business, maths, politics, journalism

and sociology. This brings the total count to seven, all of which are diverse in format, credit, level, context and type.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Getting academics to spare credits for employability has occasionally been difficult. We have won over sceptics by developing our credibility in this area, which has enabled us to demonstrate success. A healthy dose of peer-to-peer competition between academic departments has also been helpful. From the start, we have worked collaboratively with academic programme teams, being mindful to design content in line with broader programme objectives and to reflect the specific interests of the student body. Our commitment to collaboration was recognised in 2016 through an internal award, Best Collaborative Project between a School and Professional Service, for one of our modules.

Embedding employability in the curriculum is time intensive. We made successful business cases for new posts based on School demand. Furthermore, recognising that this area of work requires additional knowledge and skills, careers consultants delivering the modules have been able to undertake Academic Practice qualifications with our Learning Enhancement and Development (LEaD) department.

“GETTING ACADEMICS TO SPARE CREDITS FOR EMPLOYABILITY HAS OCCASIONALLY BEEN DIFFICULT”

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Our new institutional employability strategy commits to embedding employability in all undergraduate courses by 2026. This is an exciting and bold statement of intent given that we have 83 courses and counting!

Our attention now turns to addressing the challenges raised in order to deliver City's strategic vision. Although the strategy has been agreed, this has not necessarily resulted in awareness and agreement on the ground. One objection already voiced is an actual or perceived lack of space in the curriculum due to professional body accreditation requirements. This has led me to exploring the objections and collaboratively devising solutions.

A major benefit of the organic way our existing modules have developed is how bespoke they are to the broader pedagogy of the programme and student interests. Inevitably, we are having to explore how to balance this with scaling the provision. In tandem with this, we are also considering future resource requirements in line with the staffing needed to deliver the strategy, which requires the ongoing production of supporting business cases.



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Amy Lourenco, Acting Team Leader of UCL Engineering Careers Team, shares a case study of how the Integrated Engineering Programme (IEP) has embedded employability into undergraduate teaching and illustrates how the IEP and careers teams work together to achieve positive graduate outcomes.

embedding employability THROUGH CURRICULUM REFORM

The Integrated Engineering Programme (IEP) is a unique, *award-winning* method of undergraduate teaching that has been recognised by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as one of the emerging leaders in engineering education. Encompassing interdisciplinary projects and a minor subject outside of the student's main technical discipline, the programme covers eight departments in the Faculty of Engineering and has an intake of over 800 students per year.

The IEP was created and implemented in 2014/15 to address some of the feedback about engineering education received from industry, such as graduates being technically strong but lacking in transferable skills. It aims to create graduates equipped to solve global 21st century challenges in areas such as health, sustainability and security.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

The IEP has employability at its heart, providing students with opportunities to develop interdisciplinary teamwork and problem solving skills through a range of projects and challenges, including those where real world problems are set by industrial partners. Predictably, students find they are questioned on these projects frequently at internship interviews as it provides them with rich examples of managing conflict, time and people, amongst other key transferable skills. In

addition to project-based learning, students also take a 'minor subject' which allows them to take three modules outside of their main engineering discipline. For example, they might choose entrepreneurship, programming, marine engineering, accounting or modern foreign languages.

“**THE IEP HAS EMPLOYABILITY AT ITS HEART**”

CLOSE COLLABORATION

In addition to curriculum reform, the Faculty of Engineering has also invested in their careers resource by funding a small team of six careers professionals, thus creating a vehicle for close collaboration. The careers team contributes to the IEP in a variety of ways:

- as a member of the IEP Operations Committee;
- through delivery on IEP teaching;
- by running an employability day;
- by facilitating employers in the curriculum;
- through visibility to students.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Evaluating the success of our initiatives remains a challenge as we found when contributing to the narrative for the recent TEF subject-level pilot. The impact of our work is difficult to quantify; student quotes were found to be more effective. We will continue to look at new ways we can capture this via

learning gain style questions and more robust module evaluation.

Enabling students to recognise their learning about themselves and the impact of taking part in interdisciplinary projects on their transferable skills are the big drivers for us. How do we ensure students use these examples of teamwork and problem solving and communicate their experiences effectively to employers? This is something we hope to tackle via a forthcoming work-based learning project marketed alongside the IEP where all undergraduates will have the chance to have their work experience recognised on their Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR). This will also include an appointment with a careers consultant and thus increase our student engagement too.

EXTENDING REACH

This academic year so far, the careers team has reached 68% of the second year undergraduate engineering cohort through teaching, events or appointments. With in-curriculum delivery being the best way to reach large numbers of the undergraduate population we hope to build on this in future years.



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embedding delivery in the modern age: DATA, TECHNOLOGY AND SCALABILITY



Iwan Williams, Employability Business Partner at the University of Liverpool, outlines how change to a traditional delivery model has led to an ambitious, data-focused and highly scalable employability offer for students within their curriculum.



A change is as good as a rest, or so the saying goes. At Liverpool, we certainly put that theory to the test by undergoing a major departmental restructure alongside our busiest delivery period in 2018. Whilst there were challenging moments, the change has enabled us to radically redesign how we work with our academic departments.

We knew that, typically, only 10-15% of our students walked through our doors voluntarily. So, we decided that if they weren't going to come to us, then we were going to go to them. The inception of our student-led Career Studio drop-in has enabled us to become more deeply rooted within our faculties.

“ **WE PRIORITISE THE BUILDING OF EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH ACADEMICS** ”

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Of course, we had always delivered within our academic departments and much of this work was highly effective and valued. However, we also knew that there was room for growth. We wanted to move away from traditional 'parachuted' careers sessions, often on a topic led by the academic department (aren't we supposed to be the experts?), delivered at a time of their choosing. This often led to our delivery feeling out of place and isolated within the student's experience of the module. The appearance of a careers professional within any lecture theatre or classroom needs to make sense to the student on an intrinsic level if we want our messages to be effective.

Our new Data, Tech and Communications team has added a level of intelligence never before available to us. We analyse engagement data (what inspires our students to engage with us online or face-to-face?), Careers Registration data (to understand their 'career readiness') and module attendance data (to show us where we can hit the largest numbers). The expertise of our delivery team

adds context to this information, creating a narrative that focuses on developing students' employability. Our Employer Engagement team provide us with the most up-to-date information on the graduate market: who is active, what are they looking for and how do they recruit? This multi-faceted approach feeds directly into a key element of our vision; to recognise that every student has their own story and attempt to provide them with a personalised employability journey throughout their time at Liverpool. We can ensure our timing is right, our messages are clear and our impact is long-lasting.

GETTING THE RIGHT CHEMISTRY

The most developed example of this new approach sits within our chemistry department as a third-year module in the first semester. To meet the accreditation requirements of the Royal Society of Chemistry, we have created a support package that helps to prepare students as they enter a crucial moment in their career planning. We have also benefited



from a very supportive academic lead, who is as enthusiastic as we are to deliver employability.

The activity we run as part of this module is far-reaching, but includes three highly-focused lectures on how to articulate skills within a graduate job application, using social media as a force for good, and developing resilience to stay positive during a time of potential knockbacks and frustration. We also run a three-hour interactive practice assessment centre experience for 150 students in a 'flipped classroom' teaching space and utilise various technologies to enhance learning. One example is the use of the video software FlipGrid to recreate a presentation style activity scalable for such a large number. We add a further digital element by asking students to complete a practice video interview on our Sonru software tool.

We act as tutors on the major assessed element of the module (an employer-focused group work task and presentation) and this enables us to feel truly present within the module. We support, encourage and

“ WE WANTED TO MOVE AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL ‘PARACHUTED’ CAREERS SESSIONS ”

offer feedback at every stage. The module also has a number of smaller mini-tasks that are optional to students, but gives them the chance to add percentage points to their overall total.

SHOOTING FOR THE MOON

We don't want careers and employability to be something that just shares a space with students as they move through their time in Liverpool; we want it to be something that draws students in, engages them and is integral to their success in the future. Our new strategy encourages us to be innovative in our approach, to use data and technology wherever possible but also to recognise the importance of sharing an immersive experience that encourages reflection and

self-awareness.

Our new delivery model enables us to opt in to a range of activities, even if they fall outside the traditional delivery remit. We now prioritise the building of effective partnerships with academics. By showing a greater willingness to be involved, more doors than ever are opening for us as we plan new and exciting delivery across the university.



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*raising graduate outcomes
through academic partnerships:*
**A UNIVERSITY-WIDE
APPROACH**



Kingston University focuses on widening participation and social mobility by supporting its diverse student population achieve their personal aspirations. **Araanee Manoharan**, Employability and Enterprise Curriculum Manager in the Careers and Employability Service, discusses how working collaboratively with academic staff is helping employability become a critical part of the curriculum across the institution

“ FROM THE VERY START OF THEIR PROGRAMME, STUDENTS ARE **ENCOURAGED** TO RELATE CLASSROOM LEARNING WITH **REAL-WORLD** APPLICATION ”

Kingston University is a post-1992 provider with a diverse student population. We are a true widening participation university: 59% of our undergraduate students are Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), 49% are first-generation, 35% are over 21 on entry, 14% have a declared disability and 67% meet at least one indicator of disadvantage. With the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and greater emphasis on student outcomes, employability has emerged as a priority for the institution; rather than being detached from teaching and learning, employability is now integral to it.

RECONFIGURED SERVICE

The change in the policy landscape generated an opportunity to reconsider the support provided by the Careers and Employability Service. Following feedback from students, academics, and employers, this led to a departmental restructure. Within our new configuration, the Employability and Enterprise Curriculum Team supports academic colleagues to embed employability within the curriculum through subject-specific learning and teaching.

While embedding employability is well established in our more vocational programmes, it remains a relatively new concept in other areas. Though the Careers and Employability Service has delivered ad-hoc skills sessions in the curriculum for many years, we have found this approach to have limited value for students who often struggle to see the relevance of such interventions when not integrated with their wider course. This area of work must be more strategic, owned by the faculties, and assimilated within the regular structures and processes that academic colleagues traverse.

STUDENT JOURNEY

As an institution, we need to support our diverse student population in cultivating their social and cultural capital so that they can navigate and succeed in an increasingly globalised environment. This means that skills development needs to occur through practice and be built upon throughout the student journey. This is best achieved through the implementation of a diverse range of pedagogical approaches and assessment methods (Pegg et al, 2012). To achieve this, our aim is to work with course teams to look at the whole course and implement enquiry-based learning, authentic assessment and employer/industry interaction in core modules at each level of study, so that from the very start of their programme, students are encouraged to relate classroom learning with real-world application. However, applying this philosophy to curriculum development is often easier said than done.

CURRICULUM ADAPTATION

To aid this process, each faculty now has an Employability Curriculum Partner (ECP). The ECP is a careers and employability professional who works with academic teams to adapt the curriculum and identify learning and teaching solutions with the support of careers and other colleagues. The ECP is well-positioned to enable school-wide engagement. For example, together with the School of Life Sciences, Pharmacy and Chemistry, we facilitated a learning and teaching employability away-day, where course teams were given the space to construct the ideal student development journey and generate an action plan to make this a reality. In addition to this work at faculty level, we have also been liaising with Academic Registry, ensuring

“ RATHER THAN BEING DETACHED FROM TEACHING AND LEARNING, EMPLOYABILITY IS NOW INTEGRAL TO IT ”

that learning and teaching criteria for the various quality assurance processes include evidencing how employability is integrated within the curriculum. As part of this work, we are now key contributors at curriculum design meetings for new programmes so that the student development journey is reflected upon from the outset.

CASE STUDY:

BSC (HONS) INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

We have been working with academic staff who wanted to revitalise the curriculum to increase student satisfaction, as well as improve employment outcomes for graduates. The ECP was given access to all course information and analysed content to map employability across the programme by identifying what skills, knowledge and attributes were being developed, how these were being assessed, and the ways in which this was articulated to students. To supplement this analysis, they also met with module leaders to gain a greater insight into teaching methods utilised, successes within the classroom, and any continued challenges. Once this auditing process was complete, the ECP wrote up their findings in a short report with recommendations on how to enhance employability further, for example, through the use of live briefs so that students can apply their theoretical learning to solve real-world problems. The course leader identified modules where these recommendations would be best applied and we are now working with module leaders to develop action plans for implementation in 2019/20.

POSITIVE MOMENTUM

After just one academic year, our ambition of embedding employability into every course at the university has been challenging. However, we have also secured some encouraging wins. Building upon this positive momentum, our aim is to increase the academic governance of employability within faculties, beginning with faculty employability targets, which have now been agreed for the next three years. Our intention is that employability becomes an integral aspect of learning and teaching – and academic life as a whole. It is with this purpose in mind that we move forward enthusiastically into the new academic year.



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establishing a coordinated approach to EMPLOYABILITY AT SCHOOL LEVEL



Fiona Winfield, School Employability Manager in the Nottingham Business School (NBS) at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), outlines NTU's approach to embedding employability across the curriculum and discusses the challenges and impact of introducing a school-wide module.

In 2012, Nottingham Trent University (NTU) created a new Employability Coordinator post for every academic school. Initially intended as a year-long secondment for a senior academic with the remit to embed employability across NTU, this is now a permanent, full time School Employability Manager post (with one FTE per School).

EMPLOYABILITY AUDIT

The secondments coincided with a university-wide review of the undergraduate curriculum. In parallel to this, the Employability Coordinators worked with academic colleagues to audit their undergraduate provision, assessing where employability-related activity already resided and to start the conversation about what needed introducing or improving, and why. Within the Employability Team at university level, we agreed to use [Dacre Pool and Sewell's CareerEDGE Model \(2007\)](#) to guide us to consider aspects of employability in addition to career management, and to help the students to understand that a degree alone is insufficient.

Following the audits, each Employability

Coordinator drew up suggestions and worked with senior management and academic colleagues within their School to implement their findings in different ways.

THE NOTTINGHAM BUSINESS SCHOOL (NBS) APPROACH

Within NBS we introduced a final-year module, Leadership & Employability (L&E), which was rolled out to all 1,200 finalists. To allow for the different disciplines, we introduced eight versions, each having a common synoptic assessment of an individual reflective report and a group assessment, most having a sustainability-focused project.

To support students' reflection, on entering their final year they carry out a Personal Gap Analysis, to assess themselves against the NBS Graduate Attributes. Working with their personal tutor, they select specific gaps (or weaknesses) and set up a personal development plan (PDP), seeking out a minimum of 25 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) to help fill identified gaps.

For the reflective report, while the CareerEDGE model is introduced and explained as part of the module, students can use another model of their choice (or indeed their Personal Gap Analysis) as their framework. As part of their reflection, they are asked to consider their time at NBS, both from an academic perspective and, more importantly, in terms of their wider life experiences (including any extracurricular

“ WE NOW ENSURE THAT UNDERGRADUATES START TO THINK ABOUT THEIR EMPLOYABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS FROM DAY ONE ”



“ EMPLOYABILITY COORDINATORS WORKED WITH ACADEMIC COLLEAGUES TO AUDIT THEIR UNDERGRADUATE PROVISION ”

activity). We want to enable students to reflect on these learning opportunities in combination, to be more self-aware, and to be able to articulate what they have to offer a future employer or business partner.

We also want students to develop into responsible leaders. The introduction of the module came not long after the 2008 financial crash and we were conscious that issues relating to ethics and sustainability needed to be woven into everything we taught. Writing the reflective report gives students the opportunity to consider how they can be a responsible leader in the future, linking in with their own employability.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

To introduce the module across such a large diverse cohort was quite an undertaking and needed buy-in across the School. Not every academic colleague was enthusiastic at the prospect. In particular, some felt less confident in facilitating students' reflection. In response to this, staff development was offered and central lectures, handbooks and other support material were prepared.

The reaction of students was also very

mixed. Many found reflection challenging and aired these views. Others, however, realised the importance of being self-aware, even though they found it difficult. Many also found the freedom to be creative in their reflection too challenging and wanted clear direction and a clear structure.

MEASURING IMPACT

Anecdotally, we know that the module has had a huge positive impact on many students. Feedback has referred to feeling more confident and less stressed in interviews, an awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses and the ability to articulate these and demonstrate to employers how they have sought to improve themselves. Many students had not realised just how interested interviewers would be to hear about their sustainability-focused group projects.

Furthermore, since 2012, NBS has also seen a dramatic improvement in graduate prospects, as measured by DLHE: the overall NBS score has increased from 73.2% in the 2013 survey to 89.6% in the 2018 survey.

FRONT FOOT

Following the introduction of the module, working closely with NBS's Personalisation Team of Academic Mentors, we now ensure that undergraduates start to think about their employability and development needs (and sustainability) from day one. We have also introduced a similar approach at master's level.

When, in 2015, NTU's new strategic plan required all courses to refresh their curriculum and embed employability and sustainability (among other elements), NBS was already on the front foot. The required employability aspects involved career planning, translating theory into practice in work-like contexts, and a synoptic assessment incorporating reflection on their employability – all of which had already been firmly embedded at NBS.

Further evidence of the success of our work came in November 2017, when we won the [EAUC's Green Gown Award for Employability \(Larger Institution\)](#), based on the module. Judges commented that it was "an excellent example of taking a strategic approach to embedding sustainability within curriculum development, genuinely linking these two key aspects and creating responsible business leaders".

As we approach the eighth iteration of the L&E module, diagnostics, reflection and CPD are embedded throughout NBS, with employability and academic colleagues working closely together. By linking employability to responsible leadership, we also firmly believe it allows our graduates to stand out from the crowd.



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Mundeep Panayi, Career Development Manager in Student and Academic Services, and **Stuart Wright**, Senior Lecturer in the School of Design, outline collaborative activity at De Montfort University to embed employability interventions within the curriculum.

a shared employability vision: COLLABORATION THROUGH DESIGN

THE CAREERS PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVE: MUNDEEP PANAYI

Over the past several years I have worked on a collaborative basis with academic staff from the Faculty of Arts, Design and Humanities at De Montfort University to help embed employability interventions into the curriculum. This has been through a combination of developing and teaching careers education sessions aligned with module learning outcomes, as well as working with the faculty-linked employability officer to negotiate employer related exposure and input.

When I first started working with Interior Design, my approach was to gain an overview of those employability interventions already embedded and working well, especially as the course is vocationally oriented and led by industry-experienced staff. What emerged was that intervention had largely been placed in the final year of the degree, mainly in terms of CV preparation. Gaps were identified in terms of the ways to introduce career learning and how to prepare students to navigate the world of work from year one, building on this in year two and then through to the final year and beyond. There was also an appetite to broaden the range of live employer projects students were exposed to. We therefore looked at ways we could introduce these elements into core credit-bearing modules, ensuring employability interventions were linked with module learning outcomes.

From a careers education perspective, examples of these interventions have been to develop and run lectures on careers topics around effective self-promotion for the design industry, preparing elevator pitches as part of degree show preparation, as well as continual development of bread and butter sessions. From an employer-related perspective, we introduced a national student design competition, which has now become part of an external project brief within the course.

The biggest challenge has been to get academic buy in to the idea that the careers department can offer so much more than just sessions on CVs.

THE ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE: STUART WRIGHT

When I arrived into academia as a part time Senior Lecturer in Interior Design back in 1998, student employability was not on the mind of

most academics; it was subject knowledge that drove their world. As a designer from industry I had been struggling for years to find the right calibre of graduates. Over the past 10 years, the higher education landscape has changed significantly with a dual focus on student experience alongside academic achievement. University strategies are now positioned to allow true focus on employability as a key agenda and we are all able to take advantage of this situation.

In the School of Design, our close collaboration with the careers department has led to the embedding of carefully sequenced interventions to create a full and meaningful university experience for

“ AS ACADEMICS, IT IS
IMPORTANT THAT WE TAP
INTO UNIVERSITY RESOURCES
AND STRATEGIES AROUND
GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT ”

students, enhance their employability and align this with employers' actual needs. This is not only achieved through subject-level interventions, but also through opportunities for direct engagement with real clients with live design projects and competitions that are mentored by external professional practitioners.

As academics it is important that we tap into university resources and strategies around graduate employment. We must not see departments as silos but as resources to support our students and for us to gather wider understanding, to build relationships and collaborate to achieve mutual goals.



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graduate employability THROUGH THE LENS OF EDUCATION



Dr Igot Ofem, Coordinator in the Career Development Centre at Lagos State University, Nigeria, highlights the main benefits and learning points from collaboration with the university's various academic departments.

Historically, the focus of the Lagos State University Career Development Centre (LCDC) has been to ensure that students derive maximum utility and economic value from their graduate study by becoming marketable and employable graduates. Viewing the development of graduate employability through the lens of education reveals how multiple components can be aligned to prepare students for the world of work.

COMMON GOALS

While it is desirable that all aspects within higher education work towards the same goals, it has to be recognised that many employability skills required by employers will not be taught in the classroom. Equally, while university careers services occupy a prime place in helping students achieve desired outcomes, such services should be viewed

“LECTURERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO RELATE THEIR RESPECTIVE CURRICULA AND TEACHING DELIVERY TO THE WORLD OF WORK AND CAREER PROGRESSION”

as more than an isolated 'one-stop shop' for graduate employability.

The highly dynamic and increasingly competitive nature of today's employment market has made it necessary for Lagos State university to put in place a purposeful, web-based career development learning management system to bridge the gaps between graduate quality and employers' demands for more effective continuous engagement between academic faculties, alumni and prospective employers.

SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Beyond ensuring that students transition smoothly from university to work, the LCDC team recognises the benefits of engaging in active and supportive partnerships with academic departments in all university faculties to achieve the objectives of career service delivery and graduate employability. To this end, four career advisers are assigned to the university's faculties and schools, as well as the College of Medicine, to work closely with academic advisers. Lecturers are encouraged to relate their respective curricula and teaching delivery to the world of work and career progression.

The attachment of career advisers to faculties has raised awareness of the vital role the LCDC plays in helping students understand their career options and employers' expectations. Students are being

encouraged to make better informed career choices earlier and also to participate more in career-related activities. An additional benefit has been to help the LCDC team understand students' specific needs in more detail. Experiential learning in faculties is being encouraged and most students are able to forge links between their course content and specific professional competencies. It has also bridged the gap between central career development services and academic advising/mentoring.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The results of collaborative activity include the development of a career learning assessment suite and reflection templates for experiential learning and work experience, all of which help to measure the impact of interventions and students' ability to relate curriculum content to career competencies and transferable skills.

It is heartwarming to see our collaborative efforts yield results within effective timeframes and I am hopeful we can achieve more given the continued enabling environment and support from university management.



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WHAT'S THE POINT OF PEDAGOGY?



Claire Guy and Emily Packer, Careers Advisers at the University of Plymouth and both recent graduates of the Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP), discuss the value of pedagogy in delivering embedded employability and share some examples of this approach.

Pedagogy is the method, theory and practice of teaching, encompassing planning, teaching strategies and assessment. A pedagogic approach is central to the success of embedded employability; it empowers careers professionals to design and deliver high-quality interventions, aligned with higher education teaching standards.

TEACHING PRACTICE AND STANDARDS

The work of careers practitioners is brought in line with academic models of teaching practice via:

- alignment with programme aims, learning outcomes and assessment criteria;
- a seamless student experience across disciplinary teaching and taught employability;
- an increased perception of quality;
- creating a familiar space for careers practitioners and academics to collaborate within, using shared language, techniques and goals.

FRAMEWORKS

SEEC credit level descriptors provide a framework for assessing levels of academic learning in higher education. They provide a description of the increasing levels of challenge, complexity, and autonomy that a learner is expected to achieve and are a useful tool in creating rigorous learning

experiences. SEEC descriptors categorise learning into 'setting', 'knowledge and understanding', 'cognitive skills', 'performance and practice', and 'personal and enabling skills' and set an expectation of development in each learning experience.

I have used both descriptors and effective learning outcomes to set appropriate complexity and challenge. Working with Stage 1 business students as part of an employer consultancy project, I created sessions on reflective cycles and self-analysis. Students reflected on their employability skills, such as performance in a team. SEEC descriptors aided me to challenge students to identify their team role, engage with development and self-direction, undertake non-routine tasks and to evidence self-awareness around the needs of the project and the wider labour market.

When delivering an embedded employability module across the Law School with a CPD portfolio, the SEEC framework levels allowed me to map previous learning and progression across stages. For example, a student is taught to identify sources of labour market information in Stage 1; by Stage 3 they are expected to apply this knowledge in making career decisions autonomously and make arguments to support these decisions.

DYNAMIC TEACHING

Dynamic teaching promotes active learning; students must do more than just listen. Active learning influences knowledge, skills and

attitudes and stimulates higher-order thinking such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

There is a vast literature on teaching strategies, ripe for careers practitioners to choose from. From old faithfuls such as 'Think, Pair, Share' (where students first think individually, then share ideas with another student, before sharing with the group) to more contemporary activities such as 'Find Someone Who' (which requires students to find another student meeting a certain criteria, e.g. "find someone who has gained experience with an NGO" or "find someone who has started applying for graduate schemes"). Another is 'Four Corners' in which specific statements are introduced and students move to a corner indicating that they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. I have used this strategy to demonstrate individual differences in career anchors (e.g. "I will feel successful in my career only if I become a general manager in an organisation") but also to reassure ("I have absolutely no idea what I'm going to do with my life").

GAMIFICATION

Another approach is gamification: teaching in a way that incorporates elements of game-play, such as teams, points, leader boards and prizes. Gamification also means borrowing from well-known games. Recently I have adapted Jenga by writing interview questions on the blocks. As students remove the pieces, they must answer the revealed question; other players then provide

feedback on clarity and their use of the STAR method. The person to knock over the Jenga tower must answer a wildcard question selected by other students.

TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR USE OF PEDAGOGY IN SESSION DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Many institutions offer some kind of pedagogic training. At the University of Plymouth, alongside collaborating with educational developers, the PGCAP has been invaluable to our use of pedagogy. If your institution has teaching-based programmes (e.g. PGCE), you will find resources in your library. Pinterest and Twitter also have accounts dedicated to teaching practice. If your students nominate academics for outstanding teaching awards, why not watch the winners in action? Be sure to ask academics for module outlines to align employability with academic learning.

By harnessing the multiple tools of pedagogy, all careers practitioners can feel empowered to deliver quality learning experience and elevate their teaching practice.



[/in/claireguy](#)

[/in/emilypackercareers](#)

“ PEDAGOGY EMPOWERS CAREERS PROFESSIONALS TO DESIGN AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY INTERVENTIONS ”

from resistance to innovation: MAPPING EMBEDDED EMPLOYABILITY



Ben Robertsons, Careers Consultant (School Partner) at Leeds Beckett University Careers Service, outlines how the success of a non-credit bearing careers module transformed the employability agenda in the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities (CSH) and explains how this has led to accelerated innovation with senior academics.

When I first started working in higher education, I was warned that it could take years to develop relationships and gain the trust of academics. I have experienced this working with the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities (CSH) over a number of years, with the School initially being resistant to employability. However, having exhausted all of the tried-and-tested methods, the school finally warmed to the idea of a bite-size non-credit bearing online careers module to improve students' employability. This presented the opportunity for us to create a bespoke offer, which incorporated some career development learning (a key component of the [CareerEdge Model of Graduate Employability](#)). We didn't have a specific goal when we started other than being grateful for the opportunity to try something new – and to get a few students to test its impact.

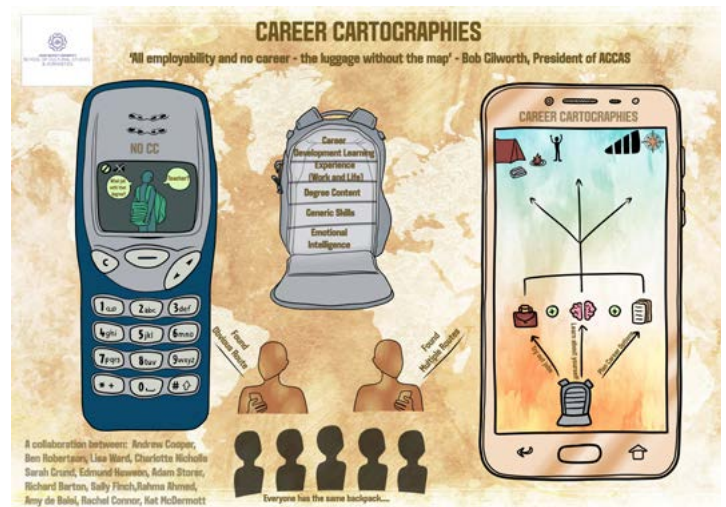
IMMEDIATE IMPACT

Launched to second-year students across the school, the module saw participants engage in a number of bite-size reflective career development learning activities (curated in CareerHub and Abintegro). The impact on students was profound; 100% stated that they would

“ THIS ACADEMIC SCHOOL – ONCE ONE OF THE MOST RESISTANT IN THE UNIVERSITY – IS NOW THE MOST INNOVATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE ”

recommend the module to other students and that it had improved their career awareness, job hunting skills and provided them with strategies to make appropriate career choices. This positive feedback certainly caught the careers service's attention and it started to turn the heads of academics, too. When we asked students if they felt the module should be credit-bearing, the majority agreed that it should be. This provided yet more evidence and strengthened the case for further employability developments within the school.

The next significant step was recognising the opportunity to build on the module's success and impact by embedding a new school-wide employability module in the next round of revalidations. A second-year employability module for Applied Humanities was developed in collaboration with the careers service, offering students the opportunity to undertake live-brief learning, supported by career development learning activities and real-world assessments.



COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

Having won over academics, and now finding ourselves working with an 'employability-friendly' Dean of School, we seized the opportunity (by securing some internal teaching excellence funding) to collaborate further to embed employability in the curriculum. Our approach was to build around what we had started with the non-credit-bearing module. This time, however, we took the collaborative approach to the extreme through the co-creation and development of Career Cartographies, a new online embedded career development learning and work integrated learning module for the arts and humanities.

Aligned to our Education Strategy (at Level 6), the module is pedagogically underpinned and involved input from students,

employers, senior academics (including the Dean of School), Instructional Designers (from our Distance Learning Unit) and careers, employability and placement staff. From September, all final year CSH students will have access to this (optional) module, which aims to enhance students' skills, knowledge and non-linear career options through work-based learning.

In designing Career Cartographies, our focus was on enabling students to independently map their career progression beyond graduation. The naming and key principle of the module came from students; rather than simply telling their stories, students create maps with different routes for more than one career path, and develop the confidence to set out on preferred route. Furthermore, Career Cartographies has been designed to support students in presenting evidence to employers of *skills that are highly valued by the World Economic Forum* (the module uses assessment techniques that reflect the recruitment methods of employers in the 4th Industrial Revolution, fully embedding social and digital learning).

DISTANCE TRAVELLED

Fast-forward three years and the success of the non-credit bearing online careers module has far exceeded our initial expectations, most notably demonstrating to academics the necessity and appetite from humanities' students of career development learning and employability.

“ The online careers module has had a transformative impact on the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities... it has underpinned subsequent work across the School to create optional modules that help students shape their career paths during their time as undergraduates. ”

Professor Andrew Cooper PFHEA,
Dean of Cultural Studies & Humanities

It is quite profound that this academic school – once one of the most resistant in the university – is now the most innovative and collaborative, working collegiately with the careers service. We have come a long way in three years and the evidence of achievements with this school have started to initiate further strategic employability activity across the university.



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Supporting disabled students into employment

AN INTRODUCTION

WEDNESDAY 17TH JULY
9.30AM - 1.00PM; LONDON

FRIDAY 19TH JULY
9.30AM - 1.00PM; MANCHESTER

- What stops students disclosing their disability to employers?
- What challenges do disabled students face as they transition from education to employment?
- What support can students reasonably request from an employer?
- How do you inspire confidence in your disabled students to apply for jobs and internships?
- Are you 'disability confident'?

Join us at one of our forthcoming workshops 'Supporting Disabled Students Into Employment' to discuss the answers to these, and many other, questions. Build your knowledge and understanding to enable you successfully support your students as they navigate the recruitment process.

There will also be the opportunity to hear from employers and students who will provide insights and share their experiences. To find out more about this workshop, and to book your place, please visit www.myplusstudentsclub.com

This workshop will be delivered by Helen Cooke, Director and Founder of MyPlus and the MyPlus Students' Club. www.myplusstudentsclub.com provides disabled students with the advice and support they need to realise their potential with disability-confident organisations.

“ Helen's experience as a graduate, an employer and a consultant gives her a unique insight into the issues faced by students with disabilities, educators and employers. Her work has always been solutions focused, helping drive industry change and improving outcomes for students. Stephen Isherwood; C.E.O Institute of Student Employers ”

REALISE YOUR CAREER POTENTIAL

[myplusstudentsclub.com](http://www.myplusstudentsclub.com)

*forging strategic
partnerships*
**TO DEVELOP
FUTURE GLOBAL
LEADERS**



Matthew Howard, Undergraduate Careers Manager at Lancaster University Management School (LUMS), shares how academics, careers and other professional services staff are working in partnership to enhance first year students' leadership skills through the design of a faculty-wide, in-curriculum employability focused module.

A

s the recent [ISE Development Survey \(2019\)](#) reported, 64% of graduate employers view leadership as a key skill lacking in their entry-level hires. Respondents also raised concern that the most pronounced graduate skills gaps relate to students' resilience, their ability to manage up, self-awareness and commercial acumen. These findings were supported by the QS report [The Global Skills Gap in the 21st Century \(2018\)](#), which identified skills gaps to be a global issue and highlighted that students do not fully understand the competences that employers value.

So, how can we effectively support students to up-skill in areas that organisations prioritise? And how can we ensure that our graduates develop into the resilient, internationally-focused and commercially-minded future leaders of tomorrow?

FUTURE GLOBAL LEADERS

At Lancaster University Management School (LUMS) we have tried to answer these questions through the design of an innovative, faculty-wide, professional development module taken by all new undergraduates. The Future Global Leaders (FGL) module, piloted to 970 Year 1 students in 2018/19, has involved collaboration between six academic departments, senior School leaders, the careers team and undergraduate office. This credit-bearing module focuses on leadership training at its core in the context of ethics, sustainability, enterprise and analytics. Academic colleagues deliver each of these thematic sections, which have a corresponding employability offer interwoven.

Throughout the module, students gain insight into differing styles of leadership and management, directly from chief executives, vice presidents, managing directors and partners from a wide range of industries during timetabled seminars and panel sessions. At the module's mid-point Leadership Festival event, teaching staff facilitate round table discussions between students and international leaders. Students receive regular mentorship from Lancaster's recently established [Young Leaders' Council](#) of high performing alumni, and the [LUMS Leaders In Residence network](#).



“ TO ADDRESS PERCEIVED GRADUATE SKILLS GAPS OUR **PRIORITY SHOULD BE TO CULTIVATE** NEW MODELS OF CAREERS DELIVERY ”

MODULE DESIGN CHALLENGES

Designing and delivering such an ambitious academic module has not been without challenge. The first hurdle being how to effectively deliver a programme simultaneously to all Year 1 students across LUMS over two academic terms, particularly as the FGL module represents the largest enrolment of students on to a single module in Lancaster's 55-year history. Our approach has been to adopt a blended learning pedagogical format and to enhance students' active learning through the use of Moodle, embedded Abintegro content, videos, podcasts, e-facilitator led discussions and face-to-face careers events. Student progress is evaluated termly via short multiple-choice tests and learning logs. The module also begins with a unique four-week pre-arrival online induction, to build a sense of programme community before the academic year.

The second challenge was embedding employability-related learning outcomes into the module. Using the '*CareerEDGE Model of Employability (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007)*' and DOTS Model (Law and Watts, 1977), four key elements of Career Development Learning form the foundation to the syllabus: self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision making, application skills. This model encourages students to link their learning to its professional application and foster the articulation of skills development.

ADAPTING THE LEARNING JOURNEY

As the FGL module pilot concluded in March 2019, students were encouraged to reflect upon their learning and skills development and to set SMART career targets for their second year. Discussions are now underway regarding the curriculum changes required to take FGL from a pilot to an ongoing module in 2019/20. It is felt that more frequent face-to-face elements and timetabled webinars would increase students' sense of belonging to the module and embed their learning. We plan for the module structure to feature less weekly content, focus more on a students' learning journey, include a negotiation skills exercise day and incorporate a more holistic view of leadership in relation to global sustainability challenges.

NEW MODELS OF CAREERS DELIVERY

It is clear that to address perceived graduate skills gaps our priority should be to cultivate new models of careers delivery. Modular co-delivery with academics and industry can help students link their

learning to its professional application and inspire early career planning. The delivery of online blended-learning curriculum-based employability activity, which is ideally timetabled and/or credit-bearing, can significantly boost student engagement with careers education, as well as foster social mobility.

We are excited that FGL represents a unique addition to the Lancaster careers offer, dovetailing well with our institution-wide development of graduate attributes and enhancing students' employability skills from day one of their studies. Furthermore, this module evidences the power of faculty-level Careers Registration data analysis and industry feedback on graduate hires in helping to nurture dynamic academic-careers partnerships.

We look forward to evaluating how the module impacts positive Graduate Outcomes and to supporting cohorts of future global leaders into 2019/20 and beyond.

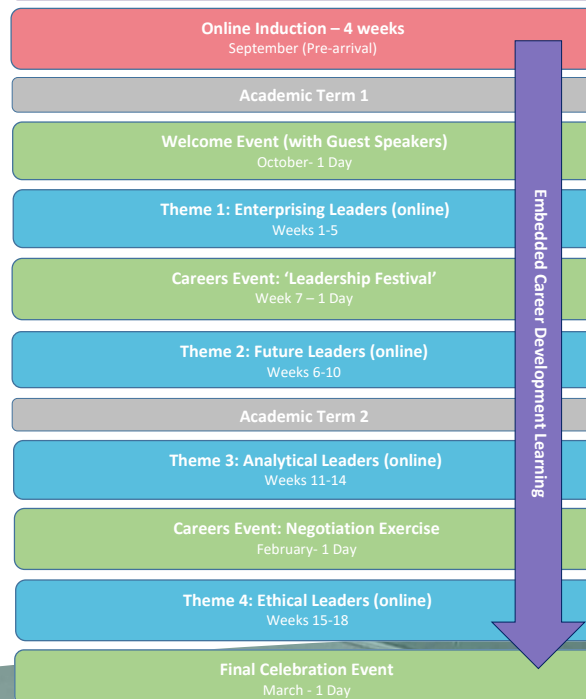


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FUTURE GLOBAL LEADERS MODULE OUTLINE



module creation THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WORKING



Emily Sandwell, Careers and Employability Consultant at the University of Stirling's Careers and Employability Service, and **Dr Carol Marshal**, Lecturer in the Stirling Management School, worked together to support the design and delivery of a module for Management School students. Now in its fifth year, they reflect on the module's success and the challenges they faced along the way.

Part of the University of Stirling's employability strategy is to 'transform student opportunity by creating an innovative curriculum and student experience that embeds employability practice from pre-arrival through to graduation'. To help deliver the strategy, the Careers and Employability Service has focused on developing successful partnerships with our faculties and academic colleagues.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2014, the Management School introduced a third and fourth year Professional Development and Practice (PDP) 20-credit elective module. This initiative was driven by the Dean of the Management School at the time, who understood the need to ensure students were equipped with the relevant skills for the global business world and the confidence to progress their personal and professional development.

The PDP module provides an opportunity for students to maximise their transferable business skills. It focuses on the development of

self-awareness through topics such as communication, teamwork and career management skills, including CV writing and interview preparation. Practical skills are at the heart of the module; following three years of academic theory we believe it is critical to bring that theory to life and prepare students for the real world. Every week, students have the opportunity to hear from industry experts who deliver talks intended to inspire students and give further insight into the business world. Networking skills are developed and students' contact base is expanded as they engage with peers from different subjects across the School.

The module also focuses on building confidence through the organisation and planning of events, with students working towards a main event at the end of the semester. Using a topic that they are passionate about, it allows the students to showcase their experience and research into their chosen topic, while developing practical skills. The main assignment for the module is in the form of a reflective essay. To fully engage and participate in the module, students have to understand themselves; their assignment demonstrates how far they have progressed. You won't be surprised to hear the results can vary dramatically.

DEEPER IMPACT

The initial drive from senior management was fundamental to the launch of the module, but equally important is the continued commitment and dedication of the wider team and the individuals who run it. Having an academic on board with a passion for employability makes this module work and ensures that careers input has a deeper impact across the faculty.

We continue to be challenged by student feedback. For many students the true value of the module isn't realised until they have left university and entered employment – then the penny drops. Equally though, some students use the module skills earlier to broaden their employment prospects. Anecdotal feedback supports this and we have had many past students returning to the course as speakers, sharing their story of the impact the module has had on them.

“ FOLLOWING THREE YEARS OF ACADEMIC THEORY WE BELIEVE IT IS CRITICAL TO BRING THAT THEORY TO LIFE AND PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE REAL WORLD ”

SUCCESS STORY

Despite some of the challenges that exist with student engagement, over the five years the module has been running we have had approximately 500 students complete it – and over 160 this year alone. To encourage attendance and engagement, 10% of their grade is for engaging in the practice-based activities. It has been a nice surprise to have full attendance on Friday afternoons!

There is no doubt that students benefit from the module in a variety of different ways, depending on what stage they are at in their own professional and personal development journey, and reading some of the feedback makes it all worthwhile.



Claire Guy, Co-Chair of the AGCAS Curriculum Design Task Group, highlights some of the challenges of curriculum-based delivery for careers professionals and outlines how AGCAS members can contribute to the work of this newly-formed AGCAS group to support the wider community.

introducing the AGCAS CURRICULUM DESIGN TASK GROUP

Whilst curriculum-based delivery is a positive opportunity for careers practitioners to contribute high-quality, integrated content to large numbers of learners, it also presents challenges. Negotiating and collaborating with academics, planning a curriculum to suit students, alignment with learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and the confidence and ability to work in a large group setting may require the development of new skills, knowledge and resources.

SUPPORTING THE CAREERS COMMUNITY

The newly-formed [AGCAS Curriculum Design Task Group](#) is beginning to address these needs by collating examples of existing best practice and developing resources, such as how-to guides, research-informed approaches, strategies to overcome obstacles and practical tools, which can be implemented by practitioners. Resurrecting aspects of the invaluable AGCAS Careers Education Benchmark Statement (created in 2005 in the midst of a significantly different higher education landscape) we hope to launch the first incarnation of the toolkit to the AGCAS community at the AGCAS Annual Conference 2019.

Our starter-list of topics (which will grow as the toolkit progresses) are:

- Cultivating effective partnerships

- with academics
- The use of various sources of data within embedded approaches
- Designing learning outcomes
- Dynamic teaching and the creation of learning activities
- Involving enterprise and experiential learning
- The use of technology within embedded employability
- Assessment and feedback

Based on a review of recent research and the Careers Education Benchmark Statement, we have developed a set of guiding principles for embedding employability into the curriculum.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Inclusivity: All students have equitable access to opportunities to enhance their employability

Collaboration: Employability should be seen as an institution-wide approach

Engagement: Developing a shared understanding and view of employability in any given context will facilitate staff, employer and student engagement

Understanding: Staff and students feel motivated to engage with employability, and understand the benefits of doing so

Strategic support: High-level strategic support should outline responsibility and accountability

Holistic: Students should have the opportunity to reflect on and articulate their skills, mindset and experiences

Current: Links to the labour market, with

a focus on adaptability and responsive to changing student cohorts

Impact: The design, delivery, assessment, and evaluation of curricula should be informed by a range of contemporary pedagogies for employability, including conceptual and theoretical models, innovative learning and teaching, relevant subject benchmarks, professional body requirements, and relevant data.

Expert-led: Should be influenced, developed and delivered by qualified employability professionals

Complementary: Should be seen as complementary to one-to-one careers guidance; both are important and distinctive

CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF THE GROUP

As a task group we see ourselves as both creators and curators of this resource. As such, we are seeking contributions from across the wider AGCAS membership – for case studies, resources, lesson plans or activities you have designed, which align with some of the topics above or another aspect of curriculum design. Alternatively, you may wish to suggest other topics you want us to address, or provide feedback on the principles (abbreviated here).

To share your materials, or to find out more about the work of the group, please contact claire.guy@plymouth.ac.uk. There will be further opportunities to contribute to the work of the group at the [AGCAS Annual Conference 2019](#).

RESEARCHER'S DIGEST



Dr Julia Yates, Senior Lecturer in Organisational Psychology at City, University of London, shares her latest digest of careers-related research.

01

CHANCE EVENTS IN PhD CAREER PATHWAYS

Kindsiko, E., & Baruch, Y. (2019), Careers of PhD graduates: The role of chance events and how to manage them, Journal of Vocational Behavior, 112, 122-140.

Many of us spend some of our time working with PhD students. We know that their career choices can be difficult and that, for many of them, getting a job in academia is just a pipe-dream. This large-scale mixed-methods study tracked PhD students through their studies and beyond to examine their career pathways and identify the factors that led some PhD students to become permanently employed academics. The main finding was that it's all about luck. The participants who successfully transitioned to academic jobs benefitted from chance events at an individual, institutional or national level, which had a significant impact on their career paths. Chance events at the national level included changes in funding streams and the 'empty canvas' effect, which gives a significant advantage to those who happen to stumble across an idea first. At an institutional level, participants talked about the importance of local networks and the particular strategic plans of their departments. At an individual level, chance events included the impact of family, an inspiring role model, or the retirement of a senior colleague. Harking back to the advice from Planned Happenstance Theory, the authors suggest that PhD students would be well advised to be open to the possibility of chance events, and to make sure that they are in a position to take full advantage of anything that comes their way.



02

ATTITUDES TOWARDS FUTURE CAREERS

Donald, W. E., Ashleigh, M. J., & Baruch, Y. (2018), Students' perceptions of education and employability: Facilitating career transition from higher education into the labor market, Career Development International, 23(5), 513-540.

This mixed-methods study explored the attitudes of undergraduates towards their future careers, and analysed their views on how university had prepared them for the world of work. Students reported that they felt that a university education would offer them a long term financial benefit, but were conscious that student fees and student debt would reduce their graduate salary premium. As they progressed through university, the students felt increasingly skilled and prepared for the workplace, but also developed a more sophisticated understanding of the competitive nature of the graduate market. By their final year they felt more employable personally, but that they were less likely to get a good job. The authors identified nine suggestions for university careers services to consider. I'm sure many of these will sound familiar to you:

1. Tailored support for specific courses
2. Help narrowing down the options available
3. Developing stronger partnerships with lecturers
4. Increasing students' awareness of the services on offer
5. Compulsory participation in careers sessions
6. Engaging students more
7. Supporting students across all university locations
8. A wider range of employers visiting campus
9. Supporting students who have received rejections



03

EMPLOYABILITY CAPITAL

Peeters, E., Nelissen, J., De Cuyper, N., Forrier, A., Verbruggen, M., & De Witte, H. (2019), *Employability capital: a conceptual framework tested through expert analysis*, *Journal of Career Development*, 46(2), 79-93.

Your heart may well be sinking at the thought of yet another conceptual framework for our field, but I was drawn to the idea of something as comprehensive and relevant as employability capital. Employability capital is defined as the combination of personal resources, which will help individuals to find and maintain employment. The authors of this paper have analysed a wide range of different employability frameworks, identified the different personal resources known to enhance employability and have synthesised them into two broad categories. First they describe an ‘employability

dimension’, which encompasses job-related, career-related and development-related capital – the skills and abilities needed to perform in a specific job, across a whole career, and to continue to develop and enhance one’s skills. The second part of their model is the ‘capital dimension’, which looks at the notions of human capital (knowledge, skills and attitudes) and social capital (who you know). The authors suggest that these two dimensions interact, resulting in 12 personal resources that students need to develop in order to maximise their chances in the workplace:

This grid can be used by career practitioners either to help them to understand their clients’ needs more clearly, or to share with clients, both in one-to-one discussions or group sessions to develop self-awareness.

	Job related	Career related	Development related
Human capital: Knowledge	Knowledge needed to perform a job	Knowledge needed to manage a career	Knowledge needed to adapt and develop
Human capital: Skills	Skills needed to perform a job	Skills needed to manage a career	Skills needed to adapt and develop
Human capital: Attitudes	Attitudes needed to perform a job	Attitudes needed to manage a career	Attitudes needed to adapt and develop
Social capital	The people you know who can help you to perform a job	The people you know who can help you to manage a career	The people you know who can help you to adapt and develop

If you would like further details about any of the research featured in this issue, please email Julia.yates.1@city.ac.uk

PROSPECTS: A SECTOR UNITED

PROSPECTS



Jayne Rowley, Chief Executive of HECSU
Prospects, considers how stakeholders and agencies from across the sector are coming together for the greater good of the student experience.

Last month we flew the flag for UK higher education at the annual gathering of the Groningen Declaration Network in Mexico. International education and collaboration were key themes. Five million students study outside their home country and 10% choose the UK. The government's recent International Education Strategy has ambitious targets for growth in overseas students choosing a UK experience. It highlights how universities can effectively support international students into employment and further study, both in the UK and when they return home. I co-presented a session with US colleagues looking at developments either side of the pond. As a sector we are developing world-class tools to facilitate global student mobility.

PARTNERSHIP WORK

Collaboration with stakeholders and fellow Universities UK (UUK) agencies is evident across all of our initiatives. We are advising HESA on the Graduate Outcomes survey steering group and working alongside UUK on skills shortages research. In response to the Bell Review, we have joined forces with Jisc, UCAS and HESA to develop The Career Explorer, which will be an innovative analytical tool to help young people with their career choices. We are looking at opportunities with Jisc on the Learning Data Hub, a project that will be immensely valuable for our [Hedd](#) verification services.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The vital work we are doing with QAA and others on academic integrity is much in the news at the moment and it receives unprecedented attention both from within the sector and government. Together, we are extending good practice across the student journey with a new charter and principles and a push for legislation.

This was the topic at one of our recent roundtables. Employers and universities got together with fraud champions such as Lord Storey. Delegates agreed that degree fraud isn't just the concern of the registry and admissions teams but should be addressed across the university. Careers colleagues can help by urging students to insist on being verified when they apply for graduate jobs and by urging employers to make verification a routine part of recruitment. 'Engage, Recruit, Verify' is our new rallying cry.

Careers services can also help fight fraud and protect the investment of genuine students by raising awareness of the risks of graduation selfies. Shared images of degree certificates can be easily copied and passed off as genuine certificates to unwitting employers. Support on degree fraud can be found in our new student toolkit, which is dedicated to protecting students so that they can enter the labour market with confidence. Download our student, HE or employer toolkits at [hedd.ac.uk](#).

VIRTUAL CAREERS FAIRS

Roundtables are just part of our events calendar. Prospects Summer Virtual Careers Fair was a resounding success. Graduate employers, and providers of postgraduate courses and gap years hosted a branded exhibition space to share company or course information. Nearly 3,000 students registered and we had fantastic feedback in terms of the support they received from the careers advisers who took part. Email marketing@prospects.ac.uk to get involved in our Autumn Virtual Careers Fair.

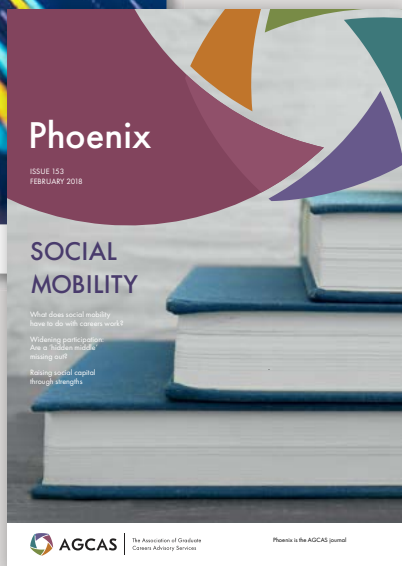
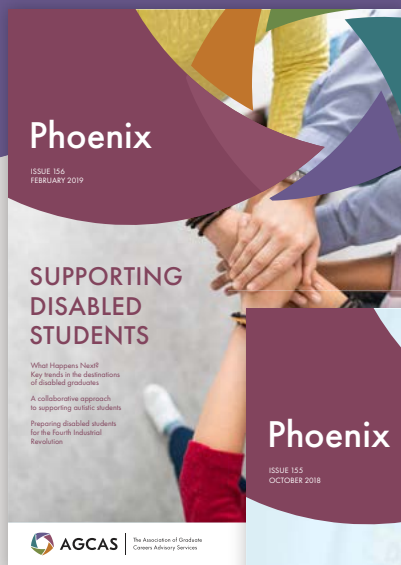
RESEARCH

Support for careers services extends beyond our events. Our £50,000 research fund is exclusively for projects led by careers professionals at HECSU member institutions and is overseen by a steering group of AGCAS members. Over the years we have had the pleasure of supporting a diverse range of projects from established researchers as well as new entrants to the field. We will shortly be announcing the successful bids for 2019-20, but you can read the latest careers research we have funded on [Luminate](#).

LABOUR MARKET EXPERTISE

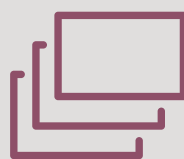
Research isn't the only offering available on [Luminate](#). Careers advisers are among our regular contributors and, thanks to the valuable content that you provide, it is fast becoming the sector's go-to resource for those interested in the graduate labour market. Although just a year old, we now have more than 10,000 monthly unique users and an engaged audience on social media, so please continue to get involved. We are always looking for new content ideas, which you can send to editor@luminate.prospects.ac.uk

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next issue
OF PHOENIX

**NEXT ISSUE
OCTOBER 2019**



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