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Discipline-Specific Employability Skills and Awareness via the Virtual Learning Environment:

Piloting an Innovative and Transferable Approach

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WORLD
CHANGING
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Good Practice Guide





Employability and Online Teaching

- Increased internationalisation and growth of online teaching in HE;
- Equity and graduate capital (online, part-time, international students);
- Global changes and trends in in-demand skills;
- Few documented initiatives have focused on boosting employability within core online learning (Rees, 2021)





Institutional and Programmatic Context

- MSc Global Mental Health

On-campus and online distance learning (ODL);

Diverse student cohorts;

- No 'direct links to industry and a natural path from education to employment' (Blackmore et al., 2016)

Job Market Analysis

Searching	Searched for relevant job advertisements
Mapping	Mapped key sectors and job families
Sampling	Selected a diverse sample of 70 ads
Analysing	Qualitative content analysis and framework development

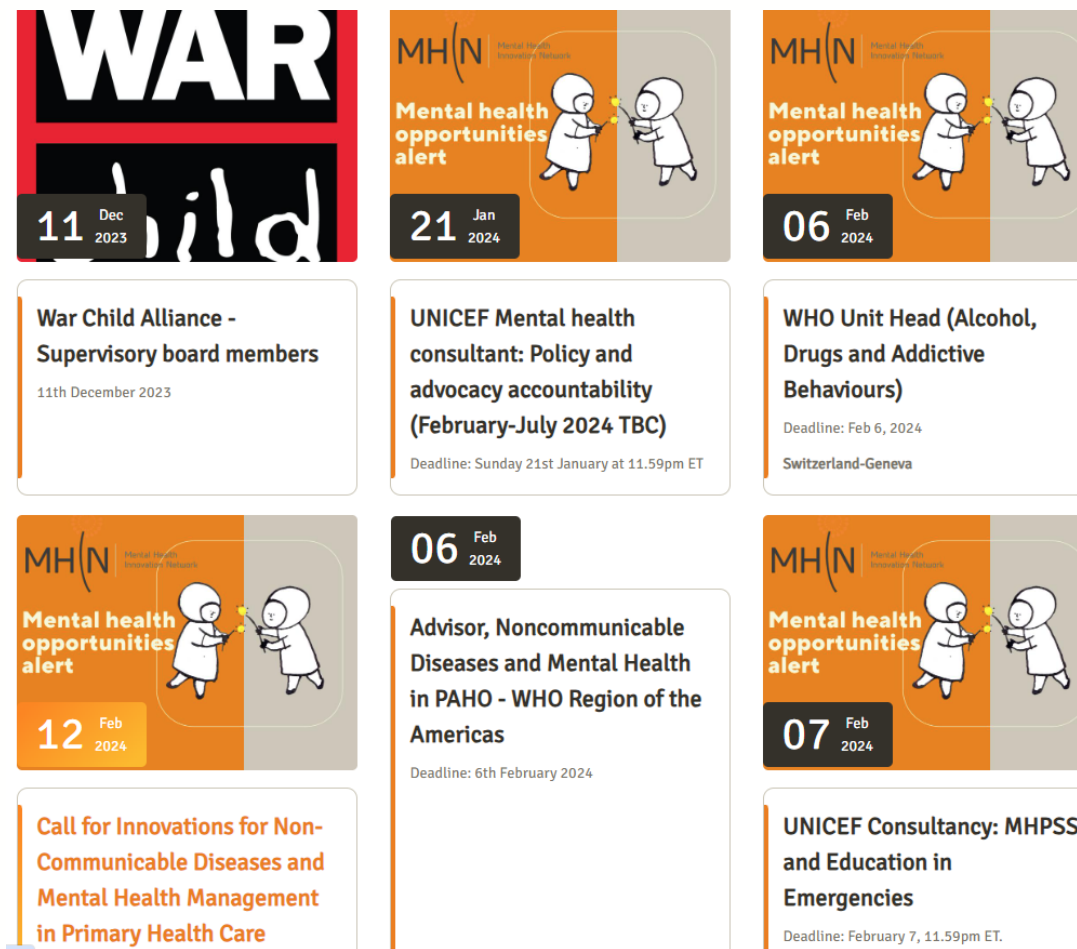


Image: A snapshot of job advertisements relevant to global mental health

'4S' Discipline-Specific Employability Framework

- Skills
- Self
- Sector
- Subject



Image: A circular diagram of employability skills



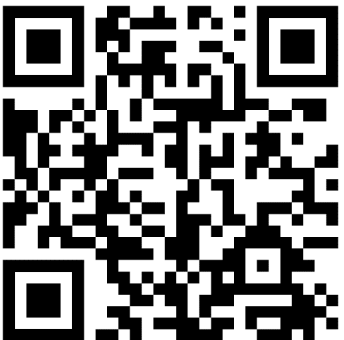


Implementing the '*Extracted Employability*' Approach

- Curriculum auditing

- Extracted employability (Daubney, 2020):

‘should not focus on adding content but instead on extracting and surfacing what is already developed in the curriculum’ (p.90)





Employability Enhancements

Employability Insights

Explicit connections are drawn between core subject material and employability skills and attributes

Reflective Practice

Activities designed to prompt students to explore their “personal strengths and competence limitations” and identify “sources and means for solving existing and future professional activity problems.”

(Colomer et al, 2020, p.4)

Examples of Employability Enhancements

Employability Insights: Drive, Grit, and Resilience



In light of the challenges highlighted in this section, reflect on the importance of personal attributes such as drive and ambition, resilience, grit and perseverance, and courage. In fact, those qualities are frequently required by employers when recruiting for positions in the policy and capacity-building sectors.


For instance, a job advert for a Senior Policy Advisor at the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission (New Zealand) specified:

- Displays grit, courage, resilience, humility and integrity; manages reactions and demonstrates composure and consistency in their behaviour and emotions
- Demonstrates achievement drive, ambition, optimism and a delivery focus; makes things happen and achieves ambitious outcomes

Reflect on how personal and professional challenges and other experiences have enabled the development of some of those attributes.



Examples of Employability Enhancements (Cont.)

**Employability Insights:
Cultural Adaptation** 

Culturally adapting assessment tools, training packages, and treatment guidelines is an important skill in many professional global mental health roles. Solid knowledge of the principles and techniques of cultural adaptation may boost employability.

A recent advertisement for a MHPSS Technical Advisor post at the International Federation of Red Cross listed in its key tasks and responsibilities:

'Develop, culturally adapt, and disseminate tools for training to enable humanitarians to offer Psychological First Aid and other psychological support to Ukrainian refugees. Adapt existing training packages to the current context and different needs.'



Employability Enhancements (Cont.)

Ideas into Action

- Action oriented, authentic learning activities that closely resemble real-world roles, procedures or responsibilities.

Futures Thinking

Learning activities aimed at enhancing students' career adaptability and responsiveness to change.



Recommendations

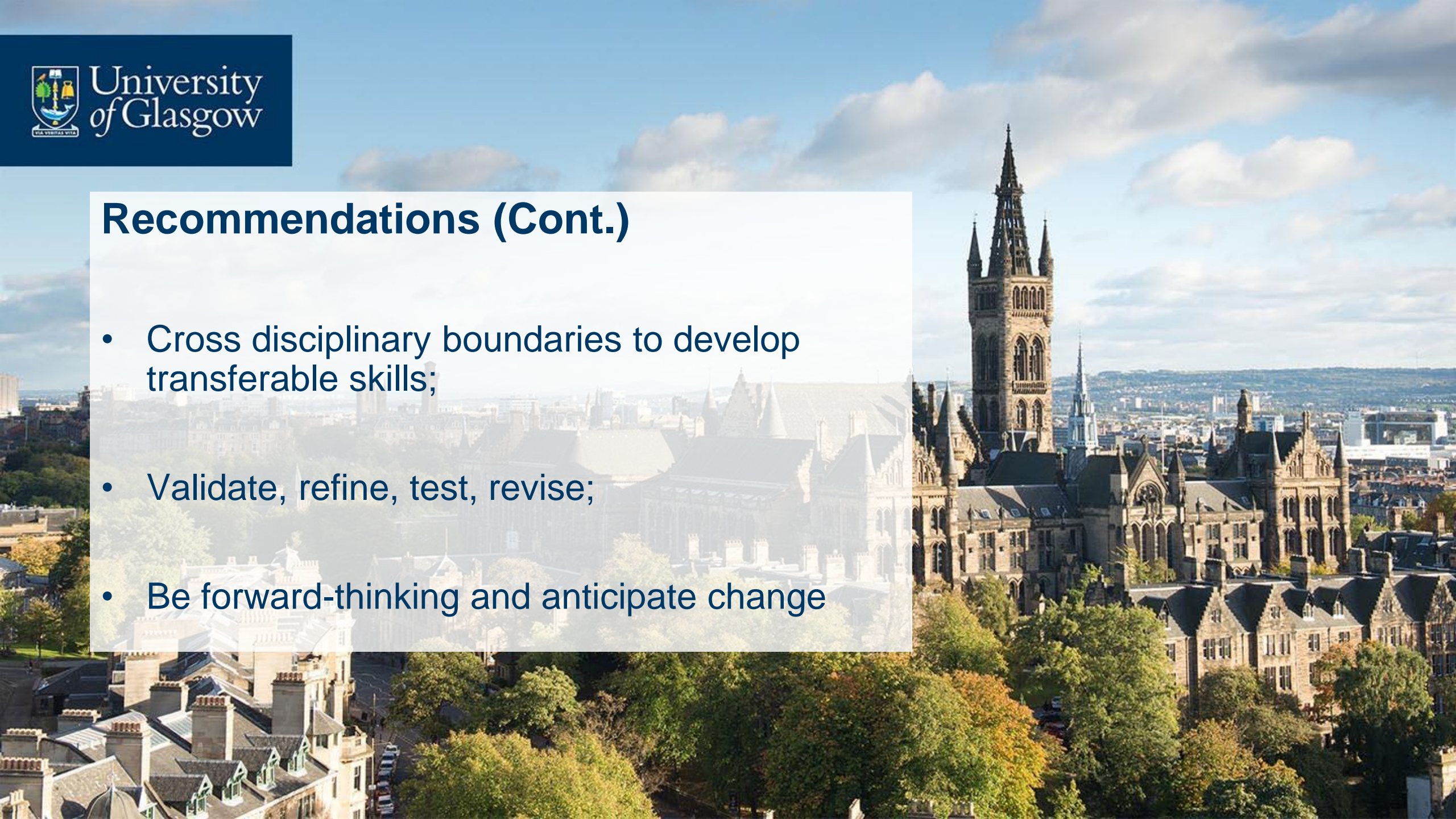
- Engage students in career awareness activities early;
- Be receptive of various definitions and aspects of employability;
- Embrace collaboration; engage with stakeholders





Recommendations (Cont.)

- Cross disciplinary boundaries to develop transferable skills;
- Validate, refine, test, revise;
- Be forward-thinking and anticipate change



Resources

- Peer-reviewed publications:

Karadzhov D, Lee J, Hatton G, et al. Identifying core global mental health professional competencies: A multi-sectoral perspective. *Cambridge Prisms: Global Mental Health*. 2024;11:e24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2024.26>

Karadzhov, D., Sharp, L., Hatton, G., Stubbs, F., & Langan Martin, J. (2024). More than just an add-on: Enhancing discipline-specific employability skills and awareness via the virtual learning environment. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.56433/jpaap.v12i1.568>

- Step-by-step good practice guide:

National Teaching Repository: <https://doi.org/10.25416/NTR.24602136.v1>





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Thank you!

**For questions and collaborations, contact us at
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