

ASET

*Integrating Work and Learning*



# ASET Annual Conference 2008

**Proceedings of the 2008  
Placement and Employability  
Professionals' Conference**

**Robbins Conference Centre. Plymouth  
2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

# General Programme

## Day 1 - Tuesday 2 September – Working Internationally

7:30-9:00	Breakfast (Monday night delegates only)
10:00	Registration with fair and networking
11:00	ASET welcome and housekeeping
11:15-11:45	<b>Plenary - Professor Wendy Purcell</b> , Vice-Chancellor of University of Plymouth
11:45	<b>Plenary</b> – Understanding Student Visas CANUKE Agreement ( <b>Tony Waite</b> ) and IST Plus ( <b>Ralph Allemano and James Rainbird</b> )
12:30	Lunch
13:15-13:50	<b>Plenary – Lisa Ward</b> (University of Huddersfield) – ‘Work Placements - A Journey Around the World’
14:00–14:30	<b>Plenary – Friedrich Heger</b> (UK Erasmus Student Committee) – ‘Erasmus’
14:35	Parallel discussion sessions on International Themes
15:30	Break
16:00-16:45	Workshop 1 (see separate Workshop Timetable below)
17:00-17:45	Placement Services and Schemes Showcase (see separate Workshop Timetable below)
19:15	Stroll down to The Barbican
19:30	Dinner at Arribas, followed by quiz in upstairs bar

## Day 2 – Wednesday 3 September – National Placements

7:30-9:00	Breakfast
9:30-10:15	Workshop 2 (see separate Workshop Timetable below)
10:30	Workshop 3 (see separate Workshop Timetable below)
11:15	Break
11:30	Research Forum - parallel sessions (see separate Workshop Timetable below)
12:30	Lunch
13:15	<b>Plenary</b> - HEA Projects: - <b>Professor Ursula Lucas and Dr Phaik Leng Tan</b> (University of the West of England) – ‘Work-Based Placement Learning and the Development of a Reflective Capacity’ - <b>Simon Dove</b> (University of Gloucestershire) – ‘Integrating Employers in Effective Support for Student Work-Based Learning: An Evidence Base to Inform Innovative Policy and Practice (ongoing project evaluation) - ASET AGM and President’s Address ( <b>Dr Geoffrey Copland</b> )
14:30	Stroll down to The Barbican
15:00-16:30	“Cream Tea at Sea” Boat Trip (departs and returns: Mayflower Steps, The Barbican)
16:30	Free Time in The Barbican/back at accommodation
18:20-20:00	Plymouth Gin Distillery tour and drinks reception in The Refectory
20:00	Dinner split between Blues Bar and Grill and The Quayside/Watering Hole
22:00	Post dinner live music at Blues Bar and Grill

## Day 3 – Thursday 4 September – Local Focus

7:30-8:30	Breakfast
9:00-9:45	Workshop 4 (see separate Workshop Timetable below)
9:45-10.30	Workshop 5 (see separate Workshop Timetable below)
10:30	Break
10.40	<b>Plenary</b> – Innovative Assessment Methods: - <b>Katherine Duffy, Professor Denis Anthony and Francesca Vickers</b> (De Montfort University) – ‘Are E-Portfolios an Asset to Learning and Placement?’ - <b>Dr Stephen Gomez, Karen Croker and Holger Andersson</b> (University of the West of England) – ‘Profile: A Web-Based, E-Portfolio Tool’
11.50	ASET Conference wrap-up
12:00	Lunch and depart



## ASET Annual Conference: Plymouth: September 2008

### Foreword

It is with great pleasure that ASET, the Association for Sandwich Education and Training, presents the proceedings of the Annual Conference held at the University of Plymouth, from 2nd – 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

The conference coverage continued to reflect ASET's expansion of interest and scope, from Sandwich courses alone, to the broader "Integrating Work and Learning".

And this year's themes were International, National, and Local.

In response to feedback, sessions continued to offer the rich mix of presentation, involvement and discussion that seems to be appreciated at ASET conferences.

And I know that everyone who participated enjoyed the social events, both the river trip from the Mayflower steps, and the informative tour of the Plymouth distillery.

As usual, I should like to pay tribute to the Conference Committee, particularly Tamsin Pyne, who for geographical and job-role reasons had had to curtail her mainstream involvement in the ASET Executive, but who demonstrated her enthusiasm for both ASET and her own institution, by the detailed preparation she put into organising and welcoming us all to Plymouth.

I look forward to welcoming you to the 2009 Conference which will be held from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> September at a venue still to be decided, probably in the North of England.

Dr John J Wilson  
Chairman of ASET

## **ASET Conference**

### **President's Address**

**3 September 2008**

I would like to use this time to speak about how I see the issues affecting higher education and interests of ASET at this time. I will inevitably speak more about the particular issues in England but will try to show how they are more global.

We are at a critical time in the history of higher education. That expression has been used many times before but now I really do think that the system in the UK, Western Europe and indeed globally is facing some real challenges.

A few months ago the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) launched a series of reviews, led by people drawn from the HE sector to add to the debate about the future of HE. The topics included Part-time students, International HE, relationship between academia and policy makers, Research Assessment, Widening Participation, Intellectual Property, Student Experience, Diversity and Student population trends. These are due to report soon and some reports, such as the work by UniversitiesUK on the student population trends across the whole UK and looking internationally has already been published. DIUS has just set up a group to look at how HEIs can meet the carbon reduction targets set by government in a faster timescale than the national targets. This is one of a number of initiatives on sustainable development in higher education including one by HEFCE.

This range of reviews show that policy makers and politicians are now thinking seriously about the future directions of higher education.

I have my own list of issues that I think are exercising the minds of vice-chancellors and other leaders in the sector, some of which are already having impacts on institutions, and others will influence the future of our HE systems.

**Equivalent and Lower Qualifications (ELQ).** An immediate matter for concern follows from last year's debate (or lack of debate) on the ELQ decision to remove Funding Council funding from English institutions for students who want to study at a level equivalent to or lower than the qualification they already hold. This has an impact being felt differentially across universities in England, depending on the nature of their programmes and modes of delivery. These affect particularly the main deliverers of part-time degrees, not just the Open University and Birkbeck but many of the post 92 universities and specialist institutions such as music conservatoires.

**Tuition fees and funding levels** are always a matter of concern. This year is the last year of the major growth of income from the £3000 fees introduced in 2006/7 for fulltime undergraduate students in England. This has produced increased income above inflation for almost all English HEIs but that growth comes to an end after this year. Next year is going to see a major slow down in the rate of increase for England and will cause difficulties for many universities as the impact of the pay modernisation and 3 year pay deal of 2006 will be fully felt at the same time. In Scotland and Wales the fee scenarios are different but the pay issues are just as acute. As was predictable at the time of the difficult pay dispute, the final settlement, although much less than the original demands, is unaffordable without stringent cost reductions elsewhere.

As for the fees in England, the cap of £3000, adjusted for inflation, would be held until 2009 and that there would then be a review of the impact and future policy. I think it is generally accepted now that there will be no significant change in England until after the next General Election, probably in 2010. But the DIUS reviews and the longer term thinking being undertaken by a number of bodies, including Universities UK, relate not only to the fees issue but the impacts of demography, national economic performance and international competition all need to be considered very seriously.

**The figures on the future population** of 18-19 year olds in the UK are startling, and this is a pattern also repeated in much of Western Europe and North America. There will be a significant population decline in that age group (England -4.6%,

Scotland -10.9%, Wales -8.5%, NI -13.2%) between 2005/6 and 2019/20. These are worrying figures, though there is likely to be some recovery by 2026. Of course not all students are 18-19 years old and the figures for people in their 20s and 30s show increases, reflecting the population growth we have experienced in the last decade. But if the current policy on ELQs continues, then as many of these older students will already have an HE qualification, the numbers returning to study for lifelong learning may be lower. All this points to a potential reduction on demand from home students from a system that has been used to expansion. Many universities if not all have seen major expansion in students numbers from outside the UK, both from the EU and from other countries with full cost fees. What is happening there? We know that population declines are just as rapid, or more so in many EU countries. So it is unlikely that the EU will provide additional students for the UK market. The big growth has been in students from China and India and British Council projections from 2005 suggested that the transnational education market will grow rapidly up to 2020. But they made the point that this would only happen if the UK responded to increased competition from elsewhere by making UK higher education even more attractive to outweigh the high fee costs. With the rapid growth of universities in China, the potential opening up of India to foreign universities and greater investment by competitors for that market, the UK is going to have to work harder to attract students from these and neighbouring countries. But we are currently in a phase of making it ever more difficult for overseas students to gain entry into the UK as part of the response to international terrorism and other related factors, despite the Prime Minister's Initiatives to make UK higher education more competitive. So UK universities will have to work even harder to maintain their international appeal based on high academic standards over the next decade.

**Global and UK economic issues** will affect us all. In the past higher education has generally bucked the trend and benefited from economic slow down as more people seek to upgrade their qualifications to try to become more competitive in tighter employment markets. That certainly was my experience at University of Westminster with its large part-time postgraduate, post experience provision related to the London economy. Now this might be more difficult. First we have what I think was an unintended consequence of the government's ELQ decision of reducing demand. But there is a bigger picture to worry universities. There is undoubtedly

going to be a squeeze on public funding in the next few years as the economy slows down, coupled with the demographic changes I have already mentioned. This is going to make life harder than it already is for universities and I think this might have significant effects on the current structure of university provision across the UK. Already we hear of Scotland talking about much closer working between its various university institutions and the Welsh Assembly has been pursuing an agenda recently for mergers between universities. At the same time in England there is a move towards opening up local university provision in areas where there is none. Further, I think there will be more institutional mergers or close collaboration short of merger, and it seems to me that the case is unanswerable that there should be much greater sharing of services and resources between universities rather than every one trying to sustain the full range itself.

**Skills development.** This government and probably future ones will place greater emphasis on skills development and updating to support future growth of the economy. Last year, I expressed my concerns about some of the mechanisms that this government has set up to deliver part of this agenda by assuming that a small subset of employers knows best the future needs of wide sectors of the economy. There is more work to be done there. But let me look at other aspects of the skills agenda that are already happening and try to link them to the particular interests of ASET.

**14-19 diplomas** are being introduced in schools in England as I speak with the opening the new academic year. One of the innovations they face is introduction of the new 14-19 diplomas to run alongside GCSE and A levels. The first five of these diplomas start now. They are vocationally directed, complex in structure and include elements of work placement and experience. Ministers want to make them attractive as alternatives to A levels for those who wish to develop a more vocational mode of study. They are aware that, as with earlier changes to the structure of qualifications, the universities should play major role in influencing school student choice to take these new qualifications. As I read it at present, despite the efforts of many to persuade universities of the value of these alternatives, the response from a considerable number is that they are suspicious if not discouraging of this initiative. We hear employer bodies expressing scepticism of their value and the

representatives of schools saying that they are not adequately prepared to undertake these. Many regret that ministers did not accept the proposals of the Tomlinson Report to replace A levels and commit wholeheartedly to a new style curriculum. There are real fears that the new diplomas will not gain the currency that perhaps they deserve. When they are measured against the traditional so called academic A level curriculum, they are likely be regarded as for the less able and thus second rate. The UK is highly conservative when it comes to educational change despite the continual sniping about A level standards and so called "soft subjects". England and Wales are almost unique in the western world at holding onto the narrow focus of the A level curriculum. Many from across the educational spectrum are calling for the wide adoption of some sort of broader baccalaureate curriculum to overcome some of these problems.

So we face a situation where in two years time, some students will come into English universities with the new diploma qualifications and a body of work related experience. They will, in some universities, be joining students who already have work experience and vocational qualifications from other routes as well as the majority who have taken the traditional "academic" A level route. It will be nothing new to some staff to be teaching students with a range of experiences but it will add a further degree of complexity. The work experience that these entrants have experienced will have been provided by many of the same employers that universities seek to use for work based learning in foundation degrees and conventional degrees. I am sure those of you who are engaged in finding work placements or other forms of work related learning will need no reminding that this is not easy. If we add to this equation the added demands from schools and colleges for these new forms of work experience to the current gloomy economic circumstances, my guess is that you will have to work even harder to find employers who are willing and able to offer worthwhile placements, if any, to your students.

### **We are heading for an economic demand driven sector**

The current emphasis from government, not just in the UK but more widely across the world is for universities to respond to demand from the economy and for their activities to be centred on meeting the needs of the economy, ie primarily for

teaching. This is a profound difference from the traditional model of university provision and it introduces some new tensions. The scenarios which emerge from this demand-based perspective are likely to reflect the following features:

Multiple and diverse patterns of demand for different aspects of knowledge and learning from different client groups eg individuals, businesses, government

Incompatibilities between the criteria driving demand from these groups, in particular between public and private uses of knowledge and learning

Requirements for equally diverse and potentially contradictory responses from higher education institutions to be met through flexible frameworks to meet the specific needs of individuals and businesses

These features will create diverse but also specific demands on the system, probably stimulating a rapid expansion of choices for meeting them. These are characteristics of an economy in which there are many potential market niches and focused relationships, with reduced opportunities for the traditional monolithic, supplier-led provision of the HE sector. They will offer increased opportunities for slick, highly focused private sector providers.

The translation of original research to applications, innovations and commercial exploitation has traditionally been linear, with 'blue sky' research being conducted by universities and subsequently being exploited commercially if the innovation emerging from academic research was recognised as economically valuable and viable. This model is characterised by entrenched divisions between the worlds of academic research and industrial application, bridged by applied research projects that were predominantly confined to manufacturing and pharmaceutical applications.

Universities are seen as major players in regional or urban development. This is the driver behind the move to create new university centres in towns where there is no such provision. The presence of a university and academic community in a town is seen as a catalyst for urban development and regeneration, requiring increasingly close links between an HEI and other local institutions. Universities are now seen as

key components of economic development, particularly at the regional level. Their graduates enhance the skills base whilst their research activities promote and stimulate the growth of knowledge-based enterprises. But this model only works if the graduates and key staff remain in the local economy and do not take their expertise to more strongly established high skills and high salary cities. This poses many challenges and opportunities not only for the university community but also for the local political, economic and social establishment.

Such a scenario throws up potential challenges to existing universities and the public perception of their roles. It is likely to lead to an increasingly diverse sector. Some universities will continue to regard themselves as key international research led institutions providing the traditional model of three or four year undergraduate degree courses. But some universities will seek to focus increasingly with their local business community. Courses and offerings in such institutions would be designed and offered around the demands of local employers to create an exchange of skills, knowledge and application based in the local community. If employers and individuals are looking for specific credit based, modular skills, then some universities will be expected to meet this demand. This would be facilitated by a rethink of the way courses are financed, delivered, assessed and evaluated. The sector has in my view been too timid about this. The Burgess Report on degree structures was published over a year ago. It is one of a series of reports over the years to try to open up the structure of degrees and their classifications. In 1999 I chaired a project for the then DES which set out how universities across the UK might effectively use module based credit accumulation and transfer schemes to meet similar objectives. This was not the first attempt either. It was welcomed by the minister and some universities, mainly post 92 and colleges and roundly condemned as debasing academic standards by others. So that project sank. The good news this time is that the principles of a UK wide credit based degree system are being supported by UniversitiesUK and other bodies so we should at last see steps forward on this. It is argued by some influential employers that they want a simple measure of achievement, ie a degree class, but also they complain that degree classifications, like A levels, have been debased and are unreliable, particularly any form of non-examined work based learning elements.

The other lobby that would have real problems of such radical changes are the media pundits who want simple numbers and uniform models so that they can produce league tables and compare with some halcyon view of the great traditions of the past when the idea of producing an employable graduate was seen as a debasement of academia. So now we have an uncomfortable mix of economic and political pressures demanding more skills and employability based university graduates together with a populist desire to be able to rank universities and their graduates and research on traditional models of half a century ago, with an ever-strengthening push for world class universities to perform well in global league tables. We have just come through the Olympics frenzy where we have seen that spending large sums of money on a few elite sports people can produce some much celebrated medal winners, in some sports but curiously not many that were the foundation of the modern Olympic movement, but UK sport was high in the Olympics league table. Maybe there are some lessons to be learnt about investing not just in the traditional models but in new racy activities, not just in the Olympics but in innovative higher education, such as modular bite sized, employment related programmes. But beware of the trap of reducing investment in grass roots sports or education to pay for the few elite performers.

We are not alone in facing the changes in demography, economic pressures and facing the skills agenda, and we have something to learn from other nations and structures as well as good practice to spread to them. Last year I argued that ASET should look more widely at models of practice outside the UK. So I am very pleased that ASET will be contributing an international conference in Madrid in December on “Challenging Higher Education: Developing Enterprising graduates for a Changing World of Work” run by WACE which has a historic connection with ASET. I am on the committee for that conference and hope to see a good representation from the UK in Spain, so do look out for this.

In summary, the world in which we operate is changing fast and Higher Education must respond by accepting the challenges that are thrown up. Demography, economics, technology, globalisation and sustainability issues are all driving change through society. Universities have to respond to all these challenges. They should do so in whatever way is best for their circumstances. If they fail to respond, then I

fear for the continued high esteem for which UK higher education is currently held.  
Think more of the Olympics analogy.

Geoffrey Copland



# AGCAS Placement & Work Based Learning Task Group

Providing work experience for  
international students



# Today's agenda

- Focus on generating placements for international students in the UK and overseas
- Remit and activities of AGCAS Placement & Learning TG
- What do you expect from the TG?

# Some TG activities for international students

- Dedicated careers adviser
- Dedicated workshops
- Dedicated resources
- Actively seek overseas placements
- Targeted email to international students
- Bid for external funding to develop projects for international students
- International Careers Fair

# Continue.....

- Members of regional organisation to promote work opportunities for international students
- Placements were provided in the UK, Europe, Scandinavia, China, Far East, Middlesex East, Australasia, Central and South America, USA , Canada and Africa
- Bursary is available if overseas placement is unpaid

# Brunel Placement & Careers Centre.....

- Won AGCAS Innovation Award 2007 for work with International Students
- Dedicated International Careers Consultant
- Work with Schools to establish international contacts
- Work with Schools to explore international projects
- Generate overseas placements
- Work with placement agencies

# Initiatives

- Careers Education
- Improved information provision:
  - Prime Ministers Initiative (PMI) projects
- International Careers Fairs
- Jobshop & BUSS targeted work experience
- UK/ China Work Experience programme
- British Council visit :Careers Advisors conference and education ministers

# PMI3-hot off the press...

## ‘Intervisual’

On-line streamed video CV's to showcase international students to overseas employers

# International focused events



## INTERNATIONAL CAREERS FAIR 2006

[www.brunel.ac.uk/pcc/internationalfair.htm](http://www.brunel.ac.uk/pcc/internationalfair.htm)

7th December 2006

NEWTON ROOM, HAMILTON CENTRE, OPENS 1.00PM



For further details contact  
01895 266840 or  
[www.brunel.ac.uk/pcc](http://www.brunel.ac.uk/pcc)

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# Working in the UK -module

Working in the UK - Information for International Students - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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**Working in the UK: Information for International Students**

**Topic menu**

- + Working in the UK
- Topic introduction**
- + The UK Business Economy
- + UK Business Structure
- + UK Work Culture
- + The Right to work in the UK
- + The UK Recruitment Process

**Topic introduction**



Every country has its own practices relating to how business operates, its cultural practices and the way it recruits its employees. These differences can be confusing for international students seeking to gain work experience or a graduate job.

Learning about these issues in the UK can provide a useful insight to help you to plan your job search, prepare for the recruitment process and know what to expect in the workplace.

**Overview**

This topic will help you to:

- Gain an overview of the UK Business Economy
- Gain an understanding of the UK workplace
- Recognise cultural norms and practices in the workplace
- Identify and consider relevant employment legislation
- Recognise and distinguish between the different schemes granting permission to work in the UK
- Identify the employers offering opportunities to international students
- Understand the UK recruitment process

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# UK China Work Experience Programme

**UK China Graduate**  
Work Experience Programme



Department for  
**Innovation,  
Universities &  
Skills**



# Forging new links

- ***Working*** closely with careers colleagues in International universities eg China-Sun Yat-sen University-exchange visits, work shadowing
- ***Visiting/networking***-with overseas employers
- ***Expanding*** and varying employer networks by:
  - hosting regional recruiters on campus eg Jiangsu province
  - reaching local SMEs ‘Doing Business in China/India’ events
- ***Linking*** with UK government schemes
  - British Council UK and overseas offices
  - Alumni UK eg over 9000 UK Alumni back in China
  - CBBC –China Britain Business Council
- ***Collaborating*** with campus groups eg Great Wall Society,International society

# Exchange Visits



# Jiangsu Province on campus



# Doing Business in China/India



# Outcomes

- Employability initiatives - demonstrable key to marketing University courses internationally
- Brand awareness – Brunel
- Stimulation of new contacts - resulting in unsolicited approaches from international employers
- International conference participation - Korea
- Source of help with projects



**Thank you**

**Questions ?**

Contact us:

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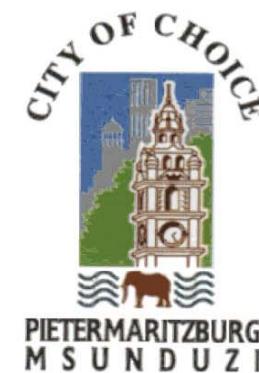
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# A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING FOR NATIONAL DIPLOMA (PUBLIC MANAGEMENT)



**Mangosuthu  
University of Technology**



# Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa



# Geographical Location

- One of the 9 provinces in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)
- Msunduzi Municipality is one of the 61municipalities in KZN and
- Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) is situated Durban which is a Metropolitan City; MUT one of the two Universities of Technology in KZN;
- KZN is home to great international events:
  - *Comrades Marathon,*
  - *Duzi Marathon,*
  - *Midmar Mile,*
  - *Royal Agricultural & Garden Show,*
  - *Art & Cars in the Park and*
  - *International cycling events;*
- Links to many great South Africans like Gandhi, Mandela and Paton



# About the Presenters

## **Ms Nompumelelo Madonda**

- Head of Department, Public Administration, Mangosuthu University of Technology.
- Honours degree In Public Administration; MSc Urban & Regional Planning (Housing)
- Areas of interest include, local government administration, government performance management, training and work placements

## **Ms Lulama Mbatha**

- Head of Department, Human Resource and Development, Msunduzi Municipality
- Master in Adult Education
- Presented various papers on Skills and Organisational development as well as Performance Management system
- Areas of interest include, performance management, internships and training.



# Structure of Presentation

- **Background to WIL in SA**
- **Background to the evaluation**
- **Purpose of evaluation**
- **Methodology and sampling**
- **Findings**
- **Lessons learnt**
- **Conclusion**
- **Recommendations**



# Work Integrated Learning in South Africa

- 28% of South African diplomats are unemployed.  
*(South African Institute of Race Relations (2003))*
- “South Africa’s capacity to absorb new recruits into the formal labour market has fallen from approximately 62% to less than 4%” *(Davies, 2001:32)*
- 10 million individuals in South Africa are classified as unemployed youth. *(Malatsi 1993:37)*



# Work Integrated Learning in South Africa

- *South African Minister of Labour, states that “the country has dire skills shortages: employers find it hard to find the skills they need and job seekers are frustrated when they do not qualify for jobs that are available”.*
- *Previous Minister of Education Prof K. Asmal (quoted by The Star, 30 June 2002) expressed his concern about the rising number of qualified people whose qualifications are not appropriate or adequate for the workplace.*

The link between unemployment, poverty and high crime among all levels of South African society may perhaps be linked to the **world of work** (*Skills Development Act 97 of 1998; Tiechler 2000*).



# Work Integrated Learning in South Africa

There have been repeated calls for higher education to be more responsive, accountable, relevant and accessible.

The response has been:

*Formulation of the Education White Paper 3 of 1997,  
Establishment of the Higher Education Quality Committee  
(HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE).*

The HEQC has formulated a number of criteria for programme development & review in the case of work-integrated and work-based learning.



# HEQC Audit Criteria – WIL

- Criterion 1:** The characteristics and requirements of professional and vocational education are accounted for in the development of the programme.
- Criterion 2:** The management of work-based learning is done efficiently in order to promote quality in all the components of the programme.
- Criterion 3:** An effective mentoring system provides support for the student in the workplace.



# Quality Management Framework

## QUALITY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### IMPLEMENTATION

Preparation, Placement,  
Curriculum

### EVALUATION, REVIEW

Monitoring, Visitation,  
Assessment, Feedback, Surveys

### IMPROVEMENT

Preparation, Curriculum  
Policy Review

### IMPLEMENTATION

- Must ensure that the documented evidence of the entire operational and learning outcome chain is organised.
- Operational procedures are agreed upon to ensure daily delivery.
- Communication networks between students, the academic staff & industry mentors have to be structured in terms of frequency & outputs of evidence, decision making & problem identification.



# Purpose of the Evaluation

## QUALITY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### IMPLEMENTATION

Preparation, Placement,  
Curriculum

### EVALUATION, REVIEW

Monitoring, Visitation,  
Assessment, Feedback, Surveys

### IMPROVEMENT

Preparation, Curriculum  
Policy Review

### IMPLEMENTATION

### Purpose :

1. To evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of WIL on students, Public Administration Department and the employer.
2. To make recommendations for Improving WIL processes.
3. To make recommendations for the general improvement of WIL.



# Methodology

## Qualitative Research methods.

**Input solicited from the three stakeholders through;**

- surveys (employers),
- focus groups (students);
- written sources (primary and secondary)

**Methods employed to collect data:**

- Cluster sampling;
- semi-structured interviews conducted



# Findings

## 1. Effectiveness of WIL

- Success rate (placements)
- Feedback from students (learning achievements)
- Feedback from employers
- Feedback from HE institution

## 2. Efficiency (WIL Processes)

- Resources (financial and human)
- Time (including duration of placements)
- Mentorship and supervision of trainees
- Monitoring and assessment of WIL

## 3. Impact

- Employability of students (profile)
- Performance at selection interviews
- Preferential employment of WIL students



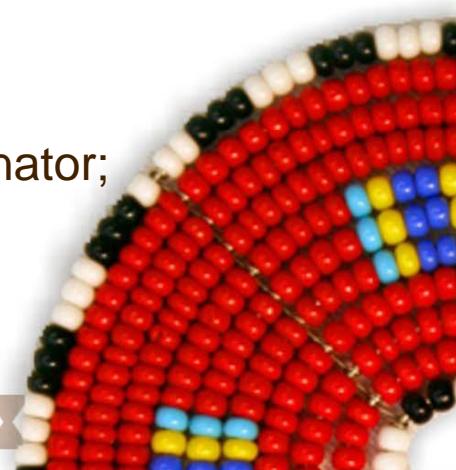
# Students Perspective: Effectiveness

- Development of the “soft” skills;
- Application of theory into practice;
- An awareness of work-place culture and expectations;
- An appreciation of the fluidity of a rapidly changing world of work;
- An opportunity to develop a range of personal attributes;
- The development of key interactive attributes;
- Enhanced employment prospects;
- Assistance in developing career strategies;
- Awareness of opportunities and building up a network of contacts.



# Employers Perspective: Effectiveness

- The opportunity to give a potential recruit a ‘trial without obligation’;
- Using students' reflection on work experience as a recruitment criterion;
- Having a pool of potential recruits with some general awareness of workplace culture;
- An injection of new ideas;
- Developing links with higher education institutions;
- Staff development opportunities that arise from employees mentoring students;
- Access to students who produce high quantity/quality work, handle tough assignments;
- Short-term financial benefits for students;
- Flexible with a maximum of 12 months;
- Mentors are assigned to students on 1: 3 ratio;
- Quarterly monitoring conducted by programme co-ordinator;
- Quarterly visits by institutions are encouraged;
- Students represent 2% of the total workforce.



# Institutions Perspective: Effectiveness

- The opportunity for students to see their subject area in practice;
- The satisfaction of seeing students develop and mature;
- The enhancement of students' skills;
- The establishment of links with a wider range of employers, with the potential for bringing a fresh approach to higher education institutions;
- Using employer contacts to ensure that their commercial or industry-related teaching is up-to-date;
- Using links to encourage employers to participate in the development of subject areas, present guest lectures or participate in seminars;
- The creation & tailoring of innovative or more applicable work experiences through collaboration with past employers of placement students;
- Developing their expertise in assessment methods by working with employers who have experience in assessing 'employability' skills.



# Students Perspective: Efficiency

- WIL is not well structured or meaningfully integrated into the curriculum;
- The quality and the quantity of the workplace provision;
- Availability of resources is at times inadequate;
- Inadequate assessment procedures;
- Learning outcomes are not given the same *priority*
- *Lack of financial support* from workplace and institutions;
- Discrimination; students have “lesser” status.



# Employers Perspective: Efficiency

- Lack of co-ordination by the institutions.  
*The workplace is not a learning institution, but rather a place for productivity and profit-making;*
- Lack of clarity of outcomes to be achieved by students.  
*Academic assessment logbooks are not easily applied in the work environment;*
- Inadequate resources available to students (work space and equipment).
- Cost implications to industry e.g. supply of legally required personal protective equipment;
- Staff unable to provide on-going training/supervisory time for students.
- No incentives for mentors;

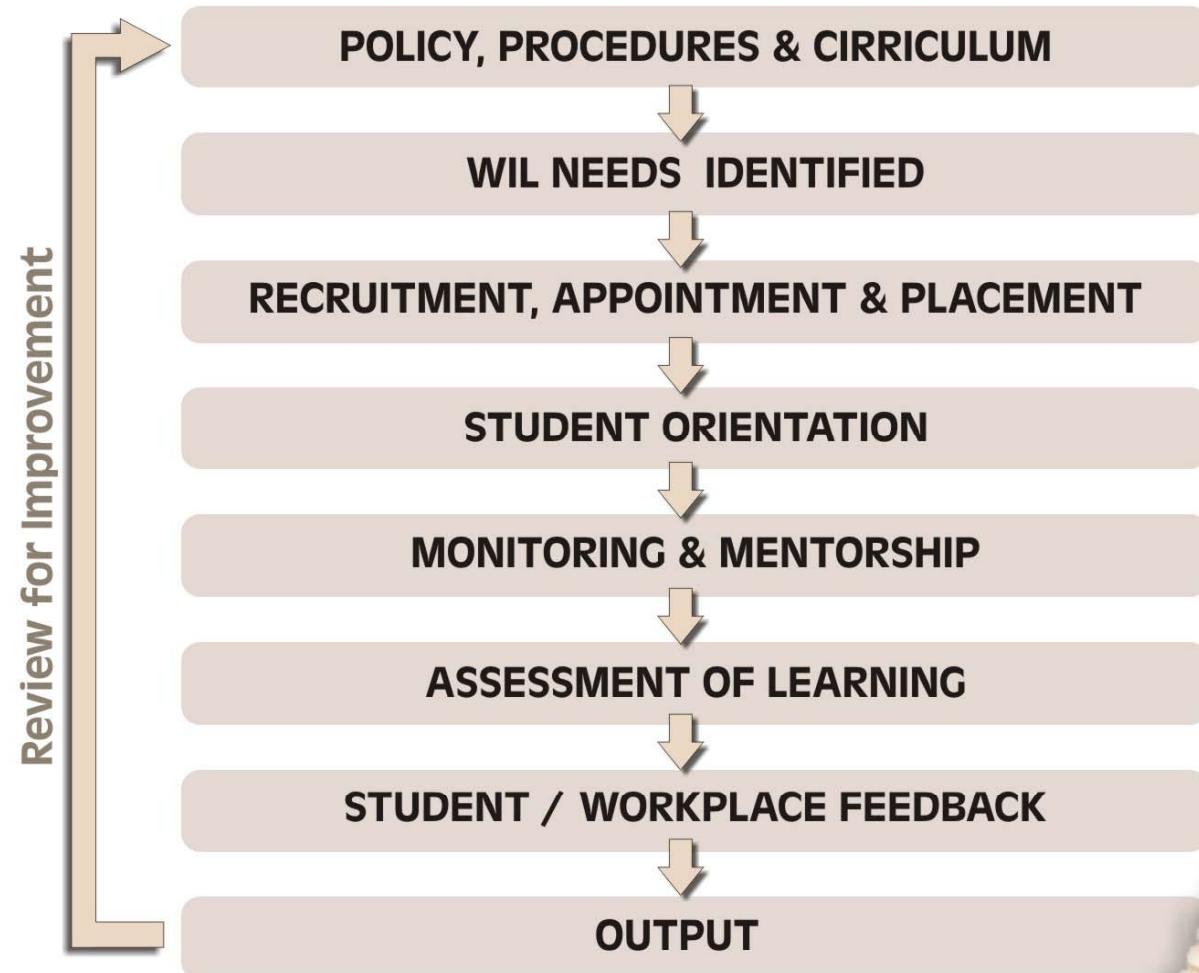


# Institutions Perspective: Efficiency

Content to follow...



# Administration of Work Integrated Learning



<b>MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY WIL SPECTRUM 2006 - 2008</b>
<b>Public Management</b>
<b>Human Resources</b>
<b>Electrical Engineering</b>
<b>Civil Engineering</b>
<b>Land Survey</b>
<b>Quantity Survey</b>
<b>Town Planning</b>
<b>Public Relations</b>
<b>ICT</b>
<b>Community Development</b>
<b>Library Science</b>
<b>Finance</b>
<b>Carpentry</b>

# Impact: Success Rate

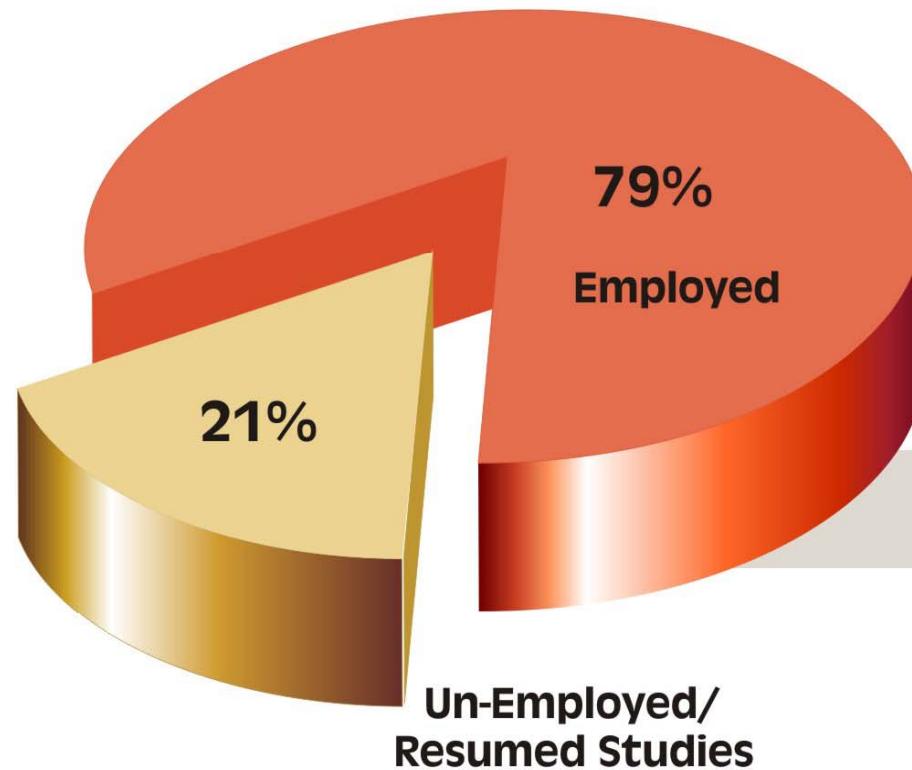
- Operated informally from 1998 and Policy was approved in 2005
- Operated formally since 2006.
- Aligned to scarce skills areas.
- Selection is through standard interviews.
- The length is flexible to a maximum of twelve (12) months.
- Students are paid a salary during their work term.

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Students</b>
2006	45
2007	44
2008	49



# Impact: Employability Profile

A successful work based learning allows the student to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that enhances their employability profile.



## OUTCOMES WIL Students 2006 /2007

23% Employed in the Msunduzi Municipality

87% Employment related to students qualification

# Lessons Learnt : Strengths

- High placement rate
- Relationships between HEI and employers
- Minimal expenses - students
- Financial support for monitoring and supervision
- Support from government and NGOs (local and national)
- Availability of basic resources to run WIL
- WIL objectives clearly communicated
- Basic understanding of WIL by employers
- Student preparedness



# Lessons Learnt : Weaknesses

- Inadequate placement period
- Timing of placements
- WIL objective and value
- Lack of clarity of roles and responsibility
- Baseline data not available to quantify overall impact of WIL
- Internal value and support of WIL unclear
- Inadequate Quality Management processes
- Students with disabilities



# Lessons Learnt : Opportunities

- WIL policies by Public sector institutions;
- Partnerships with other skills development agencies;
- Participation of employers in Advisory Committees;
- Lobby for financial support from government and other funding agencies;
- Lobby internally for revision of formula for WIL time and staff allocation;
- Increase in number of academic programmes with WIL component;
- On-going research on the impact of WIL;



# Lessons Learnt : Threats

- Competition for placements (Traditional Universities and Universities of Technology).
- Increased financial demand for WIL (competition among disciplines).
- 2010 HEQC Institutional auditing and accreditation (??2010 Readiness).
- Insufficient financial resources.



# Conclusion

- Students gain the best of the classroom and the real world of work learning through WIL.
- The feedback mechanism must serve to advise in the development of the curriculum.
- Education institutions and employers must jointly determine the competency of the students, ensuring that the graduates hit the ground running when entering the mainstream of the economy.
- The unused talent of South Africa's unemployed diplomats cautions us to the need for higher education to synchronise its efforts for more integrated programmes with industry to alleviate the problem
- The unused talent of South Africa's unemployed diplomats cautions us to the need for higher education to synchronise its efforts for more integrated programmes with industry to alleviate the problem.



## Conclusion (cont'd)

It is known that Work-Integrated Learning is often not well structured or meaningfully integrated into the curriculum. The quality and the quantity of the workplace provision is at times inadequate and the opportunities for maximising students' learning and development is compromised.

The learning that takes place in an insufficient learning environment cannot effectively address the challenges of the economy or the social development needs in South Africa, where adequate relevant skills are needed.

Higher education needs to equip students to enter the professional world by delivering skills with relevant training, a strong technological background, coupled with on-the-job experience.

Its accepted that collaboration between education institutions and employer organisations is to share in the development of skills.



# Recommendations

1. Formalise relations and clarify roles and responsibilities
2. Joint induction/orientation programmes prior to placements
3. Review logbooks and explore use of E-assessment
4. Develop departmental WIL policy and review procedures
5. Extend minimum placement period from 8 to 20 weeks
6. Review of Co-operative Education policy
7. Develop Monitoring and Evaluation tools against HEQC Audit criteria & other relevant policies
8. Source additional funding- e.g. students' living allowances
9. Partnerships with other academic institutions



## Recommendations (Cont'd)

10. Re-align Quality Management processes and develop best practices.
11. Lobby for incentives for workplace mentors.
12. Government to incentivise industry for participating in WIL
13. Government to develop a funding policy for WIL
13. Encourage interaction between all role - players (Advisory boards)





# THANK- YOU SIYABONGA



*"teaching without learning is just talking"  
(Angelo and Cross, 1993)*

# NCWE Quality Mark – National Placements, Sharing Good Practice and Supporting Students



# Our mission

“The National Council for Work Experience (NCWE) promotes, supports and develops quality work experience for the benefit of students, employers and the economy”

# Purpose of this workshop

- Overview of QM accreditation and process
- Business benefits for accredited companies
- Accredited companies and current applicants
- Quotes from QM companies
- Future aims

# Why a work experience Quality Mark?

- Benchmark for work experience programmes
- External endorsement by an independent body
- HEI confidence
- Identify and share best practice
- Recommendations for improvements
- Ensure students acquire useful transferable skills
- Tool for recruitment and retention

# Overview of the Quality Mark

- Endorsed by the DIUS
- Benchmark for work experience
- 8 criteria (CRILARPP)
- Assessor visit - an experienced careers adviser
- The external Committee (employers, DIUS, placement tutors, university careers and independent placement organisation)

# How do organisations benefit?

- Recruitment and retention
- Recognition of commitment to workforce development
- Adding Value
- Raising Profile
- Differentiation from competitors
- Extends networks and opens doors
- Promotes career opportunities with the industry

## Accredited companies can...

- Quality Mark logo on all corporate literature
- Listed in Prospects Work Experience magazine (150,000 students)
- QM students work experience certificates and NCWE awards in first year of accreditation
- Feature profile on [www.work-experience.org](http://www.work-experience.org) and [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

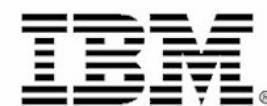
## Accredited companies

- Yorkshire Forward
- Barclays Capital
- GSK, reaccredited in July 2007
- Heinz
- M & S
- Citi
- Graduate Prospects
- Intel Corporations
- Mace Group



# Current applicants

- Accenture
- BP
- Wates
- IBM



# Best practice form QM submissions

- Senior management involvement
- Intern committee
- On-boarding interns

# QM companies

“Gaining the NCWE accreditation has increased our competitive advantage in the undergraduate work placement market, enabling us to recruit the highest calibre of undergraduate. The NCWE Quality Mark undoubtedly makes us more attractive to prospective students looking for a work placement opportunity. It offers them the reassurance that they will receive work experience that is structured and meets their requirements.”

“The depth and scope of the assessment really helped with the evaluation of what our work experience programmes deliver for the company and the students. As work experience is so embedded in our organisation, the rigorous assessment process helped us to re-clarify the aims and benefits of internships across the company.”

## QM companies cont.

It was nice to have an independent party verify our opinion of ourselves and the feedback that we received was great. We were given tips about improvements we could make and ways to benchmark ourselves against our competitors.”

“The accreditation in association with our Industrial Placement scheme has attracted extra tangible benefits for the company than we initially anticipated. This independent recognition of the high standards of training provided at Company E has given us a competitive edge in attracting interns.”

## Student interns from QM companies

“They do actually want to get the best out of you and develop you into someone who is able to get a good graduate job. Much better than some places where [placement students are treated as] cheap labour.”

“I was given much more responsibility than I thought I would have. I thought I might be sidelined, but was actually made a part of the team and my work does impact on the company.”

## Assessor reports

‘The Business Placement Programme (BPP) returnee felt that her placement had boosted her university grades and helped her with class discussions once back at university, because she was able to relate theory and practice. It had been “*A real motivator*” and had made her determined to join the company’s graduate scheme.’

‘One line manager wrote that he supported university-related learning “*When opportunities exist to allow [students] involvement in project work related to their academic work*” and that he asked at the beginning of the year, since different universities require different things.’

## Future aims

- Encourage more organisations to apply for the QM
- Raise awareness of benefits amongst practitioners and students
- To develop a QM for SMEs
- Accredit placement organisations
- Raise the quality of work placement programmes

# Summary

- Accreditation for companies who offer students quality work experience
- Benefits students, companies and society
- Rapid growth in interest and take up
- Benefits confirmed by QM companies and their students
- Further develop the QM to raise standards across all industries



# Thank you for listening



**Graduate Prospects**



m|a|c|e

MARKS &  
SPENCER



**gsk**  
GlaxoSmithKline

# Any questions?

 **BARCLAYS  
CAPITAL**

**IBM.**

 **wates**

 **Heinz**

 **intel**

[www.RateMyPlacement.co.uk](http://www.RateMyPlacement.co.uk)

## ASET Annual Conference

2 – 4 September 2008



By Students, For Students

# What is RateMyPlacement.co.uk?

- Our background
- Progress to date...
- As of August 2008:
  - 40,000 visitors
  - Over 700 reviews on 260+ companies
  - Over 5,000 students registered from 104 UK Universities



By Students, For Students

# How do we work with Students, Universities and Employers?

- **Students**

- It's FREE!
- Provides previously unavailable information

- **Universities**

- Raising the awareness of the benefits of placements and internships
- Enhancing knowledge of opportunities available

- **Employers**

- Job listings and advertising opportunities alongside their reviews
- Raise awareness of smaller companies



By Students, For Students

# 2008/09, what are our plans?

Our Aim =

***Become the number one online resource for students, universities and employers involved in work placements and internships....***

By...

- Building relationships with universities
- Increasing our on campus presence
- Promoting work experience
- Widening the variety of reviews



By Students, For Students

***"Your placement year is possibly the most valuable year of your degree."***

***"The whole year was about me...everything I was doing in work was relevant for my development."***

***"I decided it was what I want to do as a career from my placement year. I had a fab year."***

*All quotes taken from [www.RateMyPlacement.co.uk](http://www.RateMyPlacement.co.uk)*



*By Students, For Students*

# Managing Risk: A University's Strategic Approach to Work-Based and Placement Learning

Pete Watton,  
Placements & Work Experience Group  
University of Plymouth



# Aims

- | To outline the University of Plymouth's strategic approach to managing risk in relation to work-based and placement learning
- | To identify and review the key outcomes
- | To consider the relevance of this approach for other institutions



# Background

- | Diversity of demands on those managing the delivery of work-based and placement learning and differing views of the key issues
- | Increase in programmes offering work based learning opportunities and student take up
- | Concerns of new and experienced staff about the exact nature of their responsibilities and implications of getting it wrong
- | Lack of consistency across the institution, despite examples of excellent practice



# Process

- | Development of an integrated framework, incorporating key criteria - QAA code, ARMED criteria, university policy & strategy
- | Consultations with key stakeholders to ensure framework was inclusive
- | Review and assessment of potential risks *to the University and its objectives* through workshops and other consultations
- | Development of institutional action plan, including roll out to each faculty to address identified risks



# Framework Structure

1. Strategic Management
2. Programme Design
3. Management of placements, work experience and work based learning
4. Disabled Students
5. Contingency Planning
6. Monitoring and Evaluation



# Nature of the document

- | Initially seeks to present an impression of the institution as a whole - individual faculties and programmes will also need reviewing
- | Seeks to assess levels of risk to the institution associated with managing Work Based Learning, it is not focused on assessing a specific risk in terms of health and safety
- | The assessment score is based on the probability and severity of a particular risk



# For instance ...

## 3. Management of placements, work experience and work based learning

Ref	Organisational activity	Potential Risk	Assessment *		
			L	I	RR (LxI)
b.	Programme level procedures for finding and approving placements, work experience and work based learning – UK  - Overseas	Procedures are lacking, unclear, misunderstood or not implemented:  • Students undertaking an unapproved or inappropriate PWE&WBL opportunity which fails to offer a safe environment and risks injury	2  3	4  4	MEDIUM (8)  HIGH (12)



# Outcomes

1. Demonstrable evidence that the University has systematically reviewed its responsibilities to students, providers and staff
2. A shared understanding of the issues relating to work-based and placement learning
3. Increased clarity about priorities supporting strategic planning
4. Senior Management Team approved findings and action plan



# Action Plan

- Identification of senior managers responsible for work based & placement learning
- Development of *Staff Handbook for the Management & Delivery of Work Based & Placement Learning*
- Review and development of induction and staff development arrangements with HR team
- Development and sharing of model systems & resources
- Faculty level reviews of provision against framework and faculty level action plans



# Activity

In small groups:

- | to review the benefits & drawbacks of this approach
- | to consider whether such an approach might be of value in your own institutions



To be employed is to be at  
risk, to be employable is to be  
secure.

Peter Hawkins

# Becoming the Professional:

Adding Professional Value to the  
Engineering Work Placement



Richard Mendez  
Work-related Learning Officer

# Richard Mendez, Work-related Learning Officer

## Remit:

- Academic departmental teaching on employability skills, the application of academic skills and work placement preparation;
- Developing ‘year in industry’ modules for academic departments;
- Developing employability/work experience resources;
- Skills training events with employers;
- Management of enterprise learning provision.



# Aims of the Workshop

- Illustrate the inherent added value of the Engineering placement (based on a tracking study of engineering students)
- Outline approach and benefits of professional value-adding beyond placement
- Outline the problems with the programme



University of  
Leicester

# Background

- Raelin (2000) highlights the inherent value-added traits of (good practice) work-based learning
  - Reflection on work practices (reviewing and learning from experience);
  - Acquisition of meta-competence or cognition (learning to learn).



# Background

- Previous Research:
  - Council for National Academic Awards:
  - Strong correlation between placement students and a higher than predicted final degree classification on completion (Davies, 2003)



University of  
Leicester

# Definition: Added Value

- **Definition:** Educational Context

## *Added Value (or value-added)*

The enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes) as a result of their higher education experience. (Harvey, 2004)



University of  
**Leicester**

# Tracking Study

- Addressing the question
- *Does the engineering placement add value to students' intellectual development?*



# Tracking Study: Sample

- **Students sampled:** Random MEng and BEng placement students completing their degrees in 2005, 2006 and 2007
- **Disciplines:** Ranged from BEng Mechanical Engineering to MEng Electrical & Electronic Engineering
- **Sample size:** 40 placement students
- **Control:** 40 random non-placement students over the same period and disciplines



# Tracking Study: Sample

- What was analysed?
  - 1)Overall average percentage (%) increase in degree results for 40 placement students;
  - 2)Overall average percentage (%) increase in degree results for 40 non-placement students;
  - 3)Largest percentage (%) increase by top 10 students;  
(which cohort did they belong to?)



# Results: Stats at a Glance

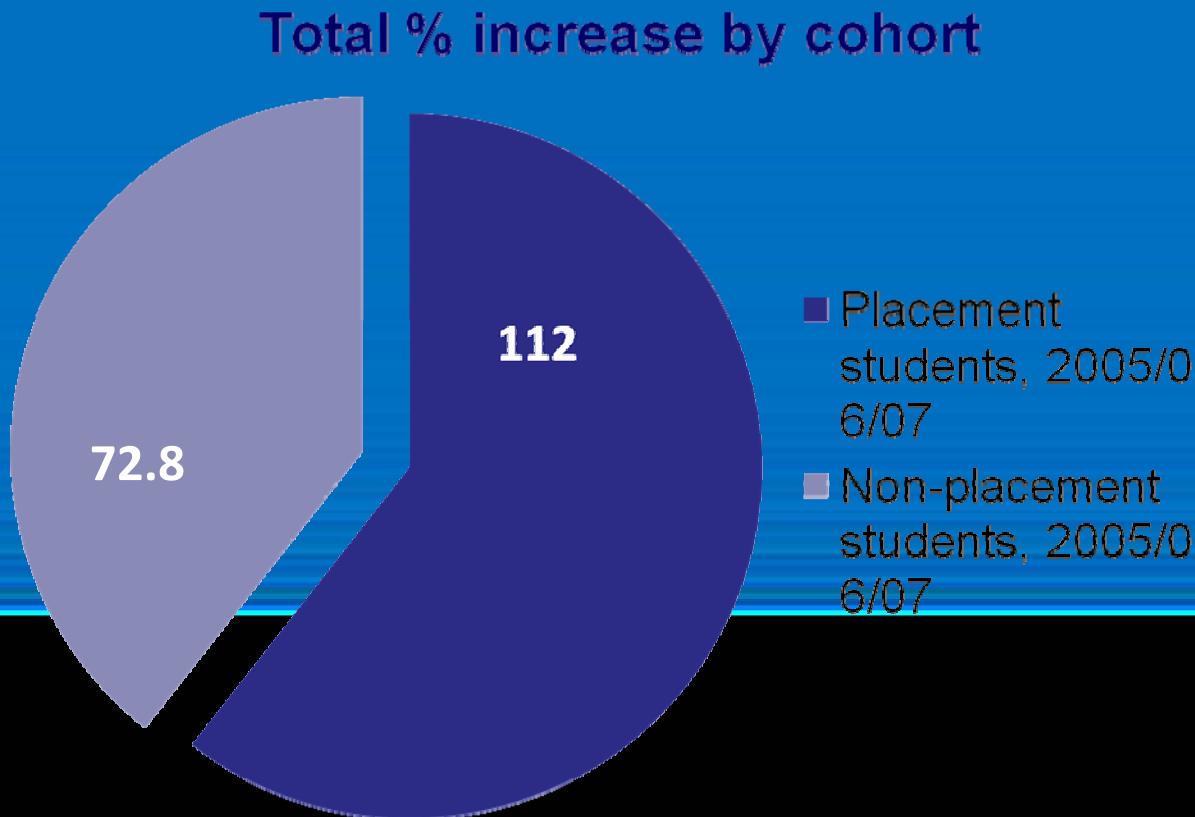
- Overall placement students % increase  
(i.e calculated by combining all 40 placement students' individual % increases)

= **112%**

- Compared to **72.8%** for non-placement students
- Represents a difference of **39.2%**



# Results: Total % Increase by Cohort



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# Results: Stats at a Glance

- Single highest % increase by any one student (by cohort) in each year

2005:

**19.2% (placement student)**

**19.5% (non-placement student)**

2006:

**10.1% (placement student)**

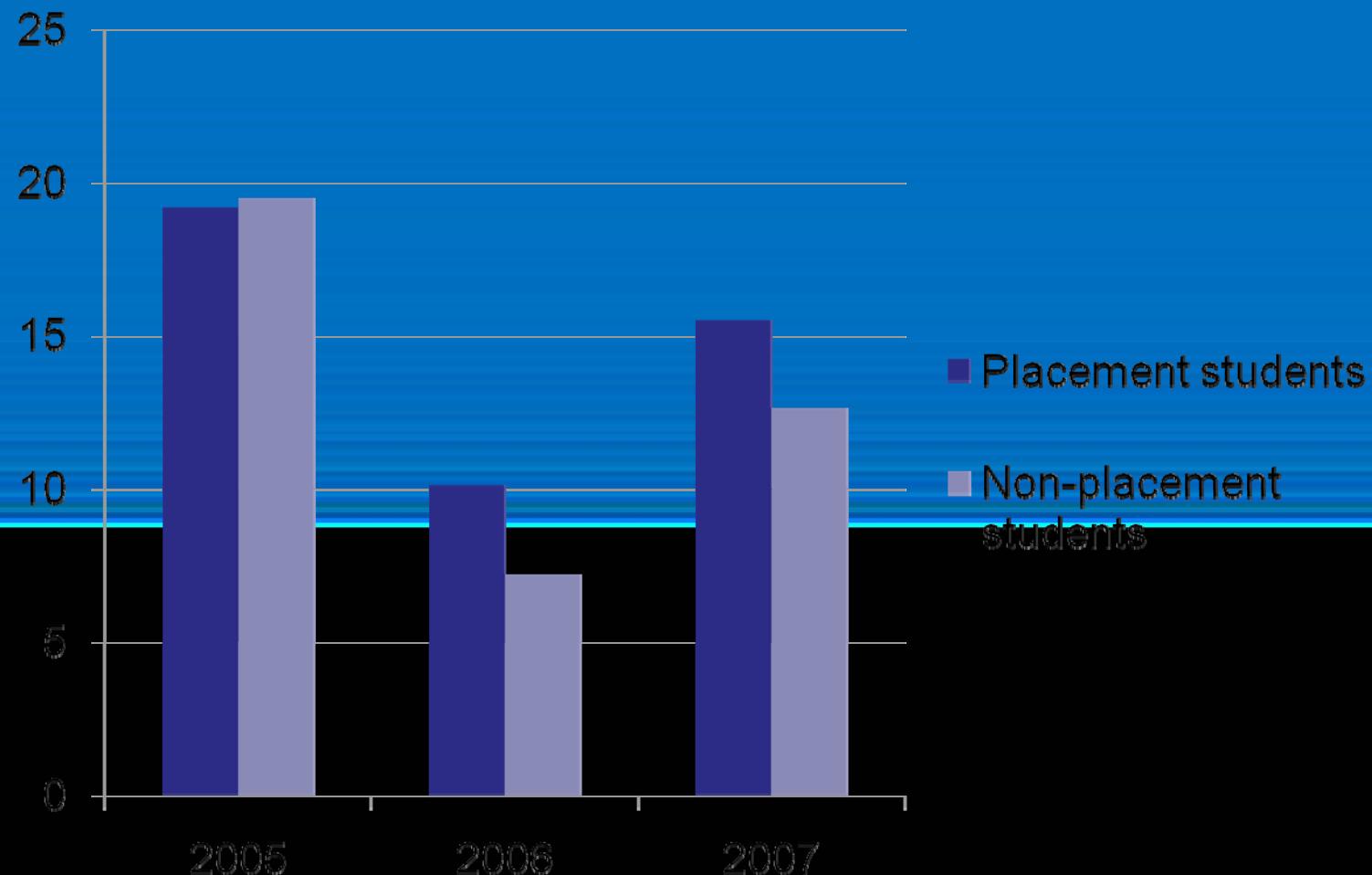
**7.2% (non-placement student)**

2007:

**15.5% (placement student)**

**12.6% (non-placement student)**

# Single Highest % Increase by any one Student by Year and Cohort



# Top 10 Students: % Increase by Cohort

Placing	% Increase	Cohort
1 <sup>st</sup>	19.5	Non-placement
2 <sup>nd</sup>	19.2	Placement
3 <sup>rd</sup>	18	Placement
4 <sup>th</sup>	17.2	Non-placement
5 <sup>th</sup>	15.5	Placement
6 <sup>th</sup>	15.5	Non-placement
7 <sup>th</sup>	13.8	Placement
8 <sup>th</sup>	12.6	Placement
9 <sup>th</sup>	12.6	Placement
10 <sup>th</sup>	12.3	Placement

7 counts of placements students in top 10.

This trend seen in BEng and MEng students regardless of year



# Findings & Conclusion

- Biggest gains amongst those who were previously underperforming (i.e predicted to obtain a third classification)
- In all measures used for the study, overall placement students outperformed non-placement students
- In some cases marginally, in others significantly
- Led to conclusion: placements have some causal effect in improved degree classification and thus adding value

# Tracking Study: Issues

- **Sample size:** Relatively small sample size due to student take up of placements in years 2005 – 7
- **Distribution:** Skewed slightly towards BEng – larger number over the period of study



# Success Stories:

## Career Development in Academia:

Peter Bailey

- 2003: Placement at Siemens, Germany
- 2005: 2.1 MEng
- 2005: PhD Marie Curie fellow, Politecnico di Torino, Italy



# Success Stories:

## Career Development in Industry:

### Philip Wingrove

- 2001: Placement at Nissan
- 2002: 2:1 BEng
- 2002: Offered a graduate position at Nissan and a competitive position at Alstom



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# Tracking Study Q&A:

Any questions at this point, based on the tracking study?



# Adding Value:

**Placement training contributes to UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence (Engineering Council UK)  
for Chartered Engineer Status**



**Employer-based committees**



**Placement preparation provision for students**



**Inherent benefits of placement year (i.e survey)**



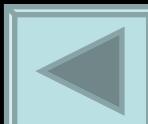
## Employer-based committees

- Forum consisting of academics from Engineering, Computer Science and placement employers
- Convenes approx three times a year to address mutual concerns, best practice and ways to broaden provision (e.g exploring more placements abroad)



## Placement preparation provision for students

- Full induction programme
- CV workshops
- Placement preparation workshops
- Past placement students providing talks and peer mentoring



# UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence for Chartered Engineer Status

- Engineering degree specialisms: training element of placement, recognised by the major engineering professional bodies
- Contributes towards achieving chartered engineer status

Institute of Engineering and Technology:

**MEng/BEng Electrical Engineering**

**MEng/BEng Embedded Systems Engineering**

Institute of Mechanical Engineers:

**MEng/BEng Mechanical Engineering**

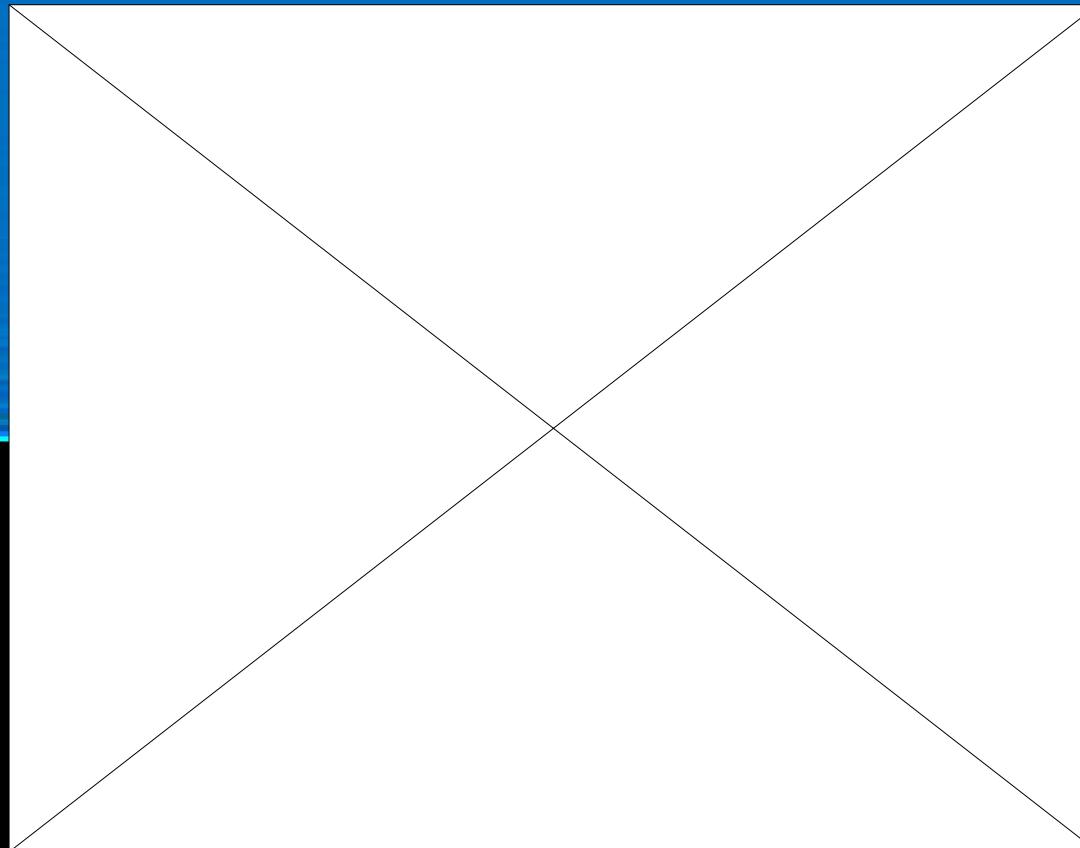
**MEng/BEng General Engineering**

[http://www.engc.org.uk/documents/CEng\\_IEng\\_Standard.pdf](http://www.engc.org.uk/documents/CEng_IEng_Standard.pdf)



# Value Adding: Student's Perspective

- 3 minute video case study of recent graduate and the value they gained from completing a work placement



**Spot the  
deliberate  
mistake !**

# Problems

- Numbers of engineering students taking up placement option stagnating
- How do we improve take-up?
- Departmental intention to augment programme, but uncertain of the way forward (e-portfolios, expanding placements abroad etc)



# Q&A and Discussion

## Discussion Point:

- In light of some of the problems faced (stagnant take up of placements) and opportunities present (e.g e-portfolios, expanding placements abroad), in teams of 3-4, address the following questions.
- 1) How would you resolve the problem of mediocre take up of engineering placements by students?
  - 2) What untapped opportunities would provide the biggest gains for the programme?

# Bibliography:

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- Harvey, L. (2002) '*Quality Assurance in Higher Education: some International Trends*', Higher Education Conference, Oslo, 22-23 January 2002.
- Raelin, J. (2000) '*Work-based Learning: The New Frontier of Management Development*', New Jersey, Prentice Hall.



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**University of  
Leicester**

# Adding Value

Placement training contributes to UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence (Engineering Council UK)  
for Chartered Engineer Status



Employer-based committees



Placement preparation provision for students



Inherent benefits of placement year (i.e survey)

**Feedback from ASET conference workshop: Becoming the Professional: Adding professional value to the Engineering Work Placement:**

**Suggestions for enhancing student uptake of placements:**

- Open days, promotion and advertising – drip-feed, continuous promotion
- Communicate the link between academia and a career in engineering. Help identify the link
- Peer mentoring (past students mentoring potential placement students)
- Make it compulsory to do a year in industry
- Communicate the benefits – e.g: enhanced career prospects, higher degree classification likely
- Emphasise company sponsorship
- Salary - lessen the burden of student debt
- Option for the department to sub/or waive the fee for the placement year
- Target first years and bring in employer to stress the values of a placement
- Vary placement format (e.g: shorter placement option, staggered placements – e.g done on a part-time basis)
- Link placement explicitly to assessment

# **Flexible WBL Opportunities for a Diverse Student Population and Diverse Employers: Example from the Creative Industries**

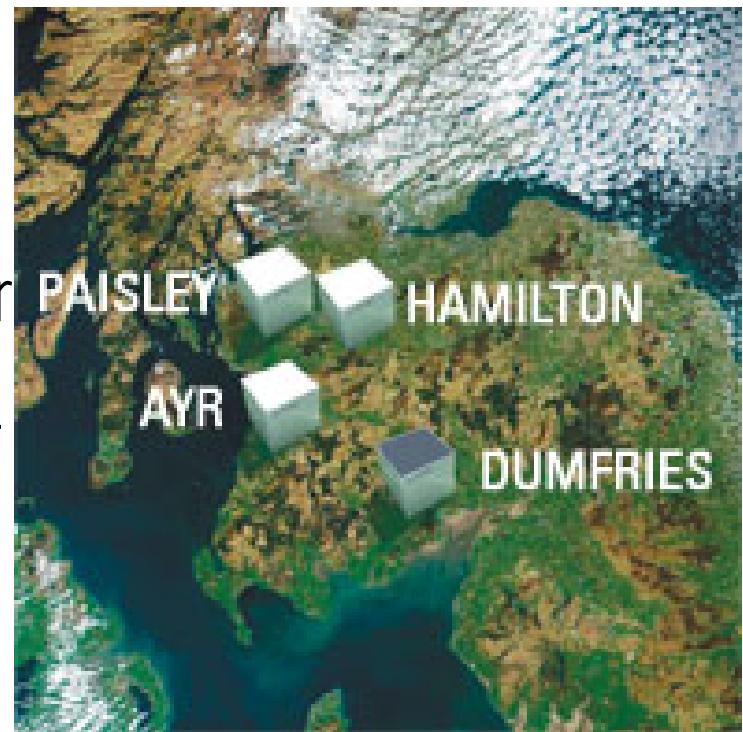
Fiona Milne & Ray McMaster  
University of the West of Scotland

# Agenda

- Context
- Institutional Support for WBL
- Issues to be Addressed
- Creative Industries Context
- The MLM Model
- Lessons

# Context

- Multi-campus University
- 18,000 students
- Majority Part Time and aged 25 or over
- Decline in popularity of traditional WBL



# Institutional Support for WBL

- Long history of providing WBPL opportunities
- Currently 60% of our University's Programmes offer students this opportunity
- High Level Commitment for further development of WBPL

# Institutional Support for WBL

- **Teaching and Learning Strategy 2007-2011**
  - Provide opportunities within the curriculum for work-based or work-related learning.
  - Academic credit to be given for all WBPL from 2008/09
- **Strategic Plan 2008-2016**
  - All programmes to include an element of WBPL by 2010/11
  - Particular desire to increase WBPL opportunities in an international context
  - Genuine emphasis on needs of Part Time students and support for Work Place learning supported with RPL

# Issues

- Despite recognition of benefits - Decline in numbers taking traditional placements
- Need to look at WBL models that are more suited to student profile e.g.
  - Optional (but equivalence of experience)
  - Shorter but meaningful and relevant to sector
  - Include students already in relevant work
  - Give academic credit
  - Do not add to time needed to get an award

- Academic staff concern about additional paperwork demands arising
- How to balance necessary quality assurance with what is reasonable for employers – especially where many are SMEs

# Work Related Learning in the School of Media, Language and Music

# The Creative and Cultural Industries in Scotland

- 2,655 Creative and Cultural businesses in Scotland contributing 5% to the CCI sector in the UK
  - 542,470 people in the UK Creative and Cultural Skills workforce
  - 36,800 work in Scotland (7%)
    - 14% of workers in Scotland are freelancers
    - 60% of the workforce is male
    - 98% of the workforce is white
- Over the period 2004-2014 employment will grow in Scotland by 15%
- 180,000 courses and 30,000 providers of creative & cultural education in the UK
- Difficulties in recruitment
  - Lack of experience
  - Lack of relevant skills
- 30% of businesses consider there to be key skills missing in their workforce
  - Hardest to fill is creative role
  - Technical and IT skills most lacking
  - Skills gaps in management

# MLM Model

- 20 credit Option across 6 programmes at SCQF Level 9
- Notional 70 hours of the total 200 student effort hours
- Reflects the School's commitment to both the Employability and PDP agendas of UWS
- Directly related to the professional practice skills and transferable skills embedded in all programmes
- Diverse range of programmes and students
  - BA (Hons) Broadcast Production
  - BA (Hons) Commercial Music
  - BA (Hons) Digital Art
  - BA (Hons) Filmmaking & Screenwriting
  - BSc (Hons) Music Technology
  - BA (Hons) Performance
  - BA (Hons) Creative Industries (part-time route)
  - BA (Hons) French, German, Languages (Paisley Campus)

# Assessment

- **Learning Outcomes**
  - Negotiate appropriate learning objectives in conjunction with the University and the external client if appropriate
  - Evaluate elements of the work experience as it relates to themes and issues of academic study relevant to the designated degree
  - Critically analyse the culture, structure, values, operational methods and effectiveness of the work experience and their role within it
  - Apply skills of self-reflection, criticality, observation and evaluation to demonstrate their ability to apply skills of learning to learn, along with analytical, problem solving, interpersonal and transferable transferable skills
- **Assessment**
  - Reflective Report
    - Discussion and evidence of the underlying theory relating to the WRL
    - Reflective diary
    - Employer feedback
- **Date of submission depends on timing of experience**

# Routes and Opportunities

- Employment Based Work and Learning
  - Accreditation of relevant part-time work
  - Local, national or international placement
  - Requires a tri-partite agreement
- Supervised Project Work/Industry Brief
  - Special projects set by employer or University
  - Usually supervised by a member of University staff
- Embedded WRL
  - Specific to the Performance students
  - Trimester 1 – preparation
  - Trimester 2 – working with an external organisation to deliver a performance
  - Requires a tri-partite agreement

# Lessons Learned

- Start early!
- Inspirational delivery and communication is key, especially Health & Safety!
- Often selected as 'the easy option' (a false perception!)
- Balancing an exceptional WRL opportunity against not meeting QAA and UWS precepts and codes e.g. SME
- Requires flexibility of timing and tasks
- Relies heavily on goodwill of employers/ host institutions
- Requires commitment of all staff in School
  - Monitoring of appropriateness of level and experience
  - Assessment support and marking
  - Dissemination of opportunities and contacts

# Lessons Learned

- Time, effort and support required is higher than might be anticipated:
  - Students who cannot find a placement
  - Submission of assessment
- What research says and what Employers want sometimes varies
- International
  - Organisation of visas etc
  - Monitoring of experience
  - Cost for students
  - Feasibility of extension of experience
  - Differences in practices and laws

# Reference List

- Sector Skills Council for the Creative and Cultural Industries (2007). *The Creative Blueprint: The Sector Skills Agreement for the creative and cultural industries in Scotland: Draft Summary Paper (Full Report due for publication August/September 2008)*
- QAA (2008). *Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education; Section 9: Work-based and Placement Learning*. Mansfield: QAA
- University of the West of Scotland (2008)
  - PDP Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - WBPL Policy

A composite image featuring two photographs of young women. The left photograph shows a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, smiling warmly at the camera. The right photograph shows another woman with long, light brown hair, looking down and smiling slightly. Both images have a soft, slightly out-of-focus quality.

# Increasing Accredited Work Experience - meeting a strategic target

**Sarah Flynn, Learning & Teaching Institute**

ASET Conference, September 2008

University of  
Hertfordshire

UH

# Aims of the workshop

Outline the strategic target in the Hertfordshire context

Discuss the drivers for the target

University response

Staff response

Next steps

Discussion points:

- Are such targets appropriate / achievable?
- Should we / how should we accredit work experience?
- How do we differentiate between levels?



**For further information, post conference:**

Sarah Flynn: 01707 281084, [s.j.flynn@herts.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.flynn@herts.ac.uk)

**“All students will have a work experience during their period of study with the University and 80% of undergraduates will have an accredited work experience as an integral part of their programme”**

The University of Hertfordshire developed a new strategic plan in 2007 in which it signalled an agenda for increased employer engagement, stating it would be a new model of a University

During 2006 the University was successful in being selected for a £4M HEFCE grant to fund a two year business engagement initiative which would pump prime its business facing agenda – UHEvolution

‘Business facing and business like’

Sustainability



## Drivers for the target



- Need to engage with employers on a meaningful basis
- Want this to become an identifiable feature of studying at Hertfordshire
- Graduate employability – engagement with the workplace whilst a student has a positive impact on graduate outcomes
- Accrediting this activity brings it within the curriculum and within the HEFCE funded activity – therefore within core funding. Too often, placement activity has only been able to be expanded through initiative funding
- New QAA Code of Practice Section 9 on Work Based and Placement Learning

# University response

Joint response from the Learning and Teaching Institute and Graduate Futures – project initiatives and setting up ongoing systems

Focus groups set up to engage with staff

Close working with Academy Registry to ensure effective and efficient metrics systems in place; robust data needed

Academic Quality Audit Committee parallel project to check that any activity labelled “work experience” considers and applies the QAA Code of Practice



# Focus groups

- What forms of work experience currently exist in Schools?
- What arrangements are in place with regards to securing opportunities?
- How is work experience documented and (if appropriate) assessed?
- What forms of work experience are not currently used but of interest to Schools?
- What are the potential barriers to increasing the uptake of work experience?
- What support is needed by Schools to facilitate effective work experience?
- What resource implications are there in increasing work experience activity?
- Opportunity to discuss good practices



# Staff response



Term 'work experience'  
Enthusiasm and commitment  
A lot of student w/e effort currently not recognised



Some scepticism about expecting all students to take part  
Some subject areas had concern about capacity of opportunities  
Value of generic w/e questioned in some areas



Appropriate structures and support needed  
Common resources to be produced



Included in target ?  
Accredited?  
Student voice?

# Next steps

Learning & Teaching Institute providing:

- Common modules
- Discipline and generic w/e module DMD
- Composite ‘employability’ module DMD
- Staff and student guidance
- Best practice resource bank

Staff development

Continue to support Schools on bespoke activities

Graduate Futures to outline sources of work experience providers / sources and recommend routes to securing these



## Discussion points:

- Are such targets appropriate / achievable?
- Should we / how should we accredit work experience?
- How do we differentiate between levels?

## Working Globally, Working Locally

### *An Evolving Model of Work Based Learning in the Biosciences*

Dr Andrew Ramsay

Senior Lecturer Applied Bioscience

Centre for Academic & Professional Development  
University of the West of Scotland

# Background

- Paisley Technical College & School of Art (1904)
- Central Institution (1950) (aka Polytechnic)
- University status in 1992
- Merger with Craigie College of Education (Ayr) in 1993
- Merger with Bell College (Hamilton) in 2007
- Name change to UWS 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 2007
- 4 campuses
- SEQLTA (2007-11)
- Credit rated WBL in all programmes

# Bioscience WBL (Hamilton)

- Biology teaching since 1976
- Placements since 1978
- HND - 30 months; 2 periods of Placements (3<sup>rd</sup> term); students had maintenance grants!
- Assessment – report only

# Bioscience WBL (Hamilton)

- HND became 22 months
- 1 period of placement
- Term 3, year 1
- Assessment as before
- Raw, limited practical skills; ‘pair of hands’

# Bioscience WBL (Hamilton)

pre 2003



- Now allied to University of Strathclyde
- Delivery of levels 7 & 8 of BSc Applied Bioscience; 9 & 10 at the University
- Term 3 of year 2
- Advantages to placement providers and students

# Developments since 2000

- Characteristics of Life Science Industry in Scotland
- Role of external agencies
- Changes to Work Placement Programme
- Conflicts with stakeholders
- Good Practice
- Placement Provider Comments

# Burgeoning Life Sciences

- More than 600 life sciences organisations operate in Scotland.
- The sector employs over 30,500 staff.
- Life Sciences in Scotland has experienced annual GVA Growth Rates of 7-8 per cent - four times the medium term, average growth rate of the Scottish economy.  
(Source: Young Company Finance Report: Life Sciences in Scotland, May 2007)
- Life science companies in Scotland attract in excess of £400 million of research funding each year.
- Scotland has more than 50 academic research facilities offering services to the life sciences community

# Burgeoning Life Sciences

- Global life sciences companies with a presence in Scotland include Wyeth, Invitrogen, Aptuit and Organon (Schering Plough).
- Scotland has a highly skilled workforce, with a large pool of graduates and post doctoral researchers in life sciences. Compared to EU and US locations, Scottish employers also enjoy competitive labour costs.
- Scotland has a highly developed network of specialist suppliers to the life science industry.
- Scotland has a number of science parks and dedicated life science parks around its major cities.

# Key Capabilities (Scotland)

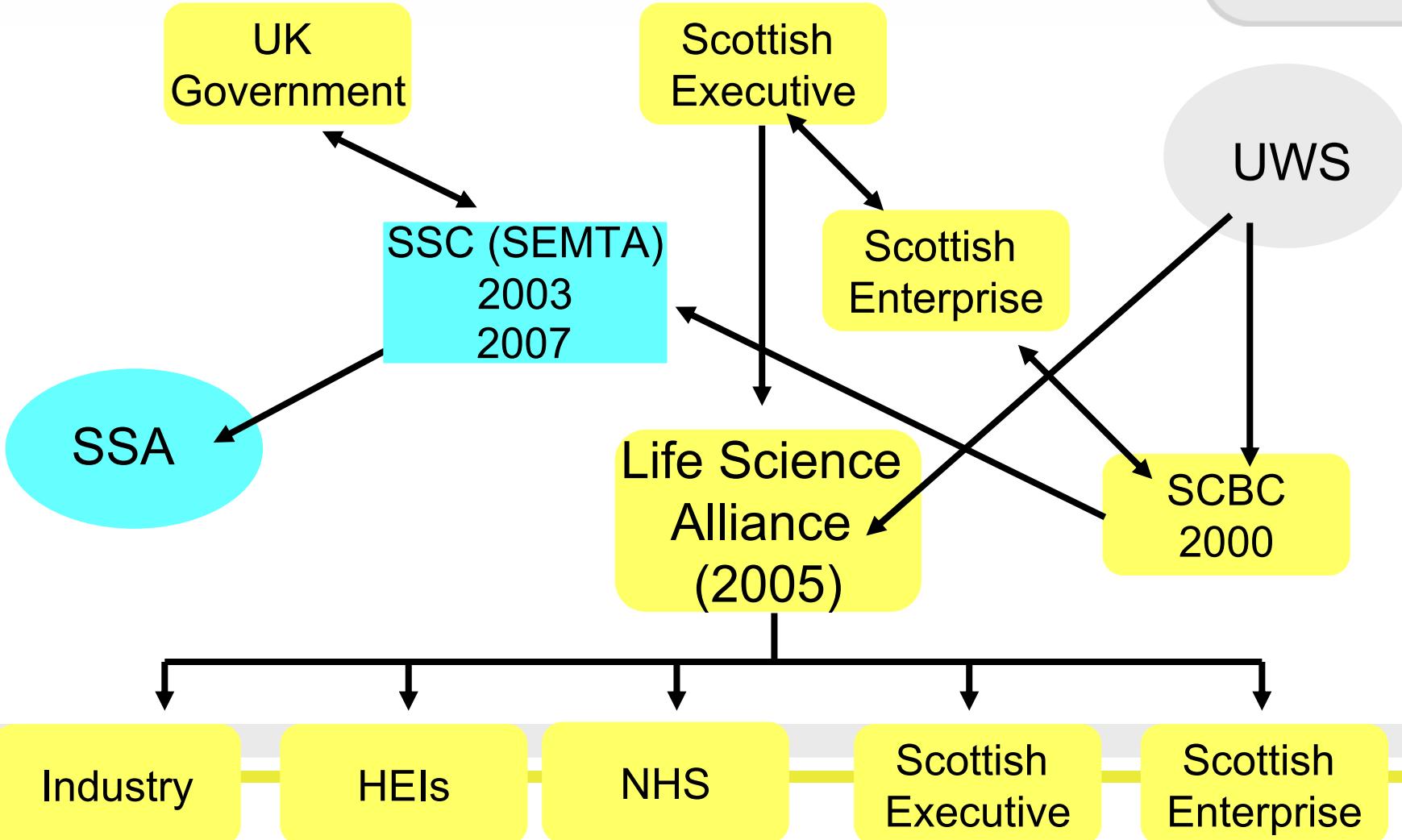
- Drug discovery & development
- Drug delivery & formulation
- Medicinal chemistry
- Clinical research
- Contract research

High Value

Significant Regulatory Framework

Source Scottish Enterprise

# Influence of External Agencies



# Literature

- 2000 – Reports for Scottish Enterprise – skills gaps → Scottish Colleges Biotechnology Consortium (SCBC) – next slide
- 2002 – Angle Technology Report – skills shortages; hard to fill vacancies
- 2003 – ‘BIG T Report’ – talent as key, rate limiting factor for the Industry’s development
- 2007 – SEMTA’s Sector Skills Agreement – hard to fill vacancies; skill shortage vacancies; skill shortages – 4 x higher than the average (England). Loss – products, work

- Scottish Enterprise - the catalyst; increasingly concerned that the infrastructure was not present to support the biotechnology industry growing at a rate of 30% pa
- Consortium of 4 (now 5) Institutions including UWS (as Bell College)
- Established with £0.6M from Funding Council's Strategic Change Fund

# New Industrial Revolution?



# New Industrial Revolution?

“On the edge of each new frontier of scientific discovery, there is usually a body of opinion that sees it as a threat. We are at such a frontier now. **The science of biotechnology is likely to be, to the first half of the 21st Century, what the computer was to the second half of the 20th Century. Its implications are profound, its potential benefits massive.**”

Tony Blair

Investing in the Future

17<sup>th</sup> November 2000

# SCBC & Development of WBL

- SCBC tendered for and got contract to upskill bioscience graduates not in relevant employment – 2001; repeat contracts in 2002,3,4
- Course (PreBio) designed with the Industry for the Industry
- Highly successful ~ 90% in employment within 6 months

- 8 weeks intensive, full time – different ethos
- Industry is highly regulated; need for graduates who understand and can apply the quality paradigm
- Practical exercises written as SOPs; required to keep a lab note book to cGLP standards
- Team working (essential) for variety of exercises / projects – variety of transferable skills
- Guaranteed job interview at the end of the course
- “I also hope that Pre-Bio is still going as it was the best course I have been part of and the springboard my career needed.”

Gordon M Walker Ph.D., Senior Scientist/Lab Director BioReliance Corp  
PreBio Class of 2003.

# Changes to WBL Programme

- Pre 2003 – assessment by Report only; employer comments; reference
- Post 2003 – 3 components to assessment
  - ✓ Actual work carried out (questionnaire – 21 criteria rated as ‘excellent’, ‘above average’, ‘below average’, ‘unacceptable’ + employer comments)
  - ✓ Log book (to cGLP standards)
  - ✓ Report (includes reflective component)

# Prequel to Placement

- Some placement opportunities are determined following competitive interview between interested students
- Careers staff
  - ✓ CV coaching
  - ✓ Interview techniques
  - ✓ Mock interviews for a ‘real’ job

# Changes to programme

- 2008 model
- Same three assessment components
- Employer questionnaire – 21 criteria – now a description for ‘excellent, above average, below average and unacceptable’ for each criterion.

(work in progress)

Students also complete this assessment

# Log Book

- Students provided with an SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) which details the completion of a log book to cGLP standards
- In drug discovery / development industry log books **must** be able to be audited / display traceability to the relevant regulatory authorities
- Log books are assessed with respect to compliance with the spirit of and completion to the specified standard

# Report

- 2 specifications – entirely routine placement; investigative project
- Reflective component
- Use their self assessment & FLQs (Focussed Learner Questions)

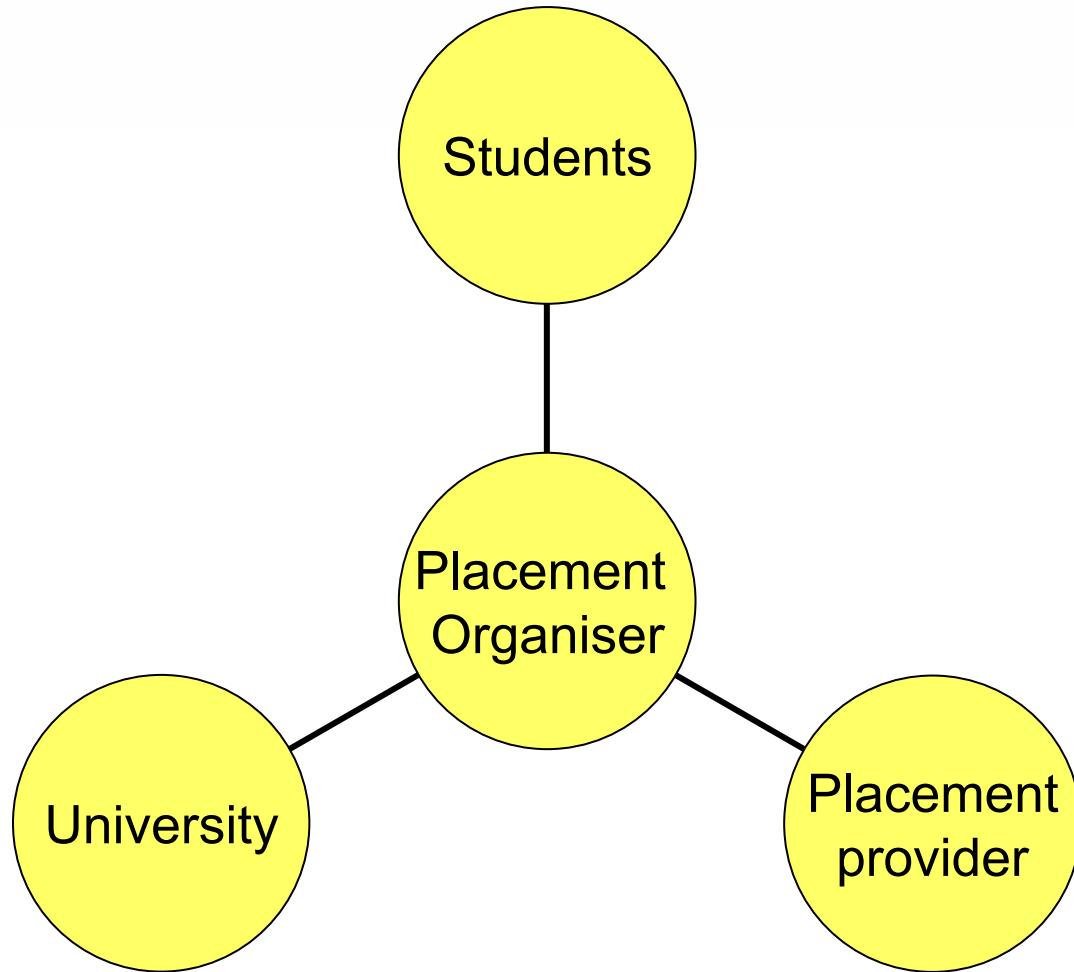
# FLQs

- What did I learn from the Placement? How does that relate to the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)?
- Are there ILOs that I failed to achieve or which should have been progressed further? If so how will I address them?
- What were the things that I enjoyed most about the Placement? Least? How could that affect my thinking about future career and / or subsequent curriculum choice? How do I feel about that? What do I plan to do about it?
- How did I handle my relationship with my workplace supervisor? What did I learn from him / her?

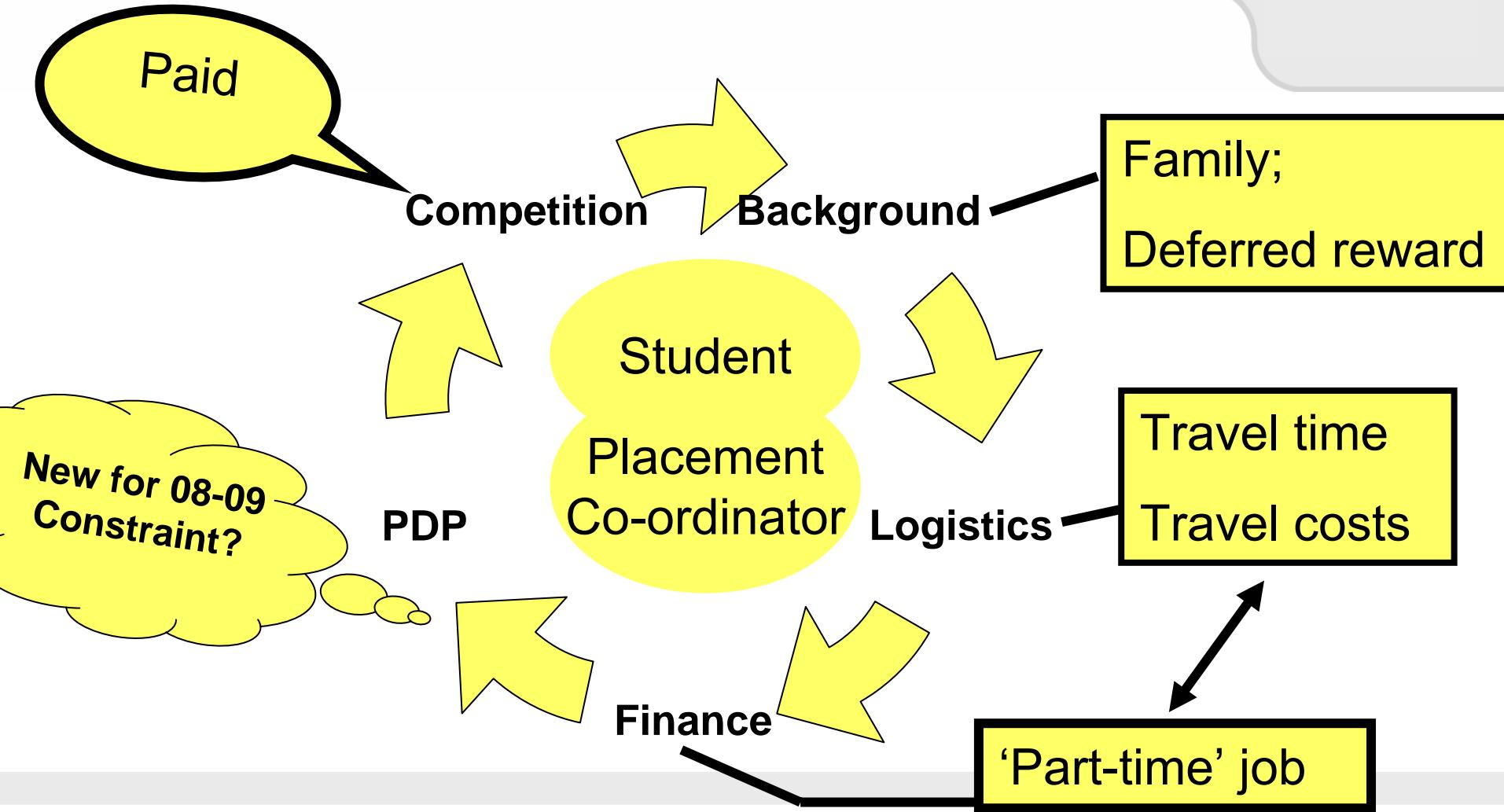
# FLQs

- What did I enjoy about the work environment?
- What feedback did I receive from my workplace supervisor? Did it surprise me or did it match my perceptions and expectations?
- Did I find the workplace experience motivating? If so how will that affect my attitude to the remainder of my course of study?
- How did I relate to others in the workplace environment? What positive things did I learn from them?

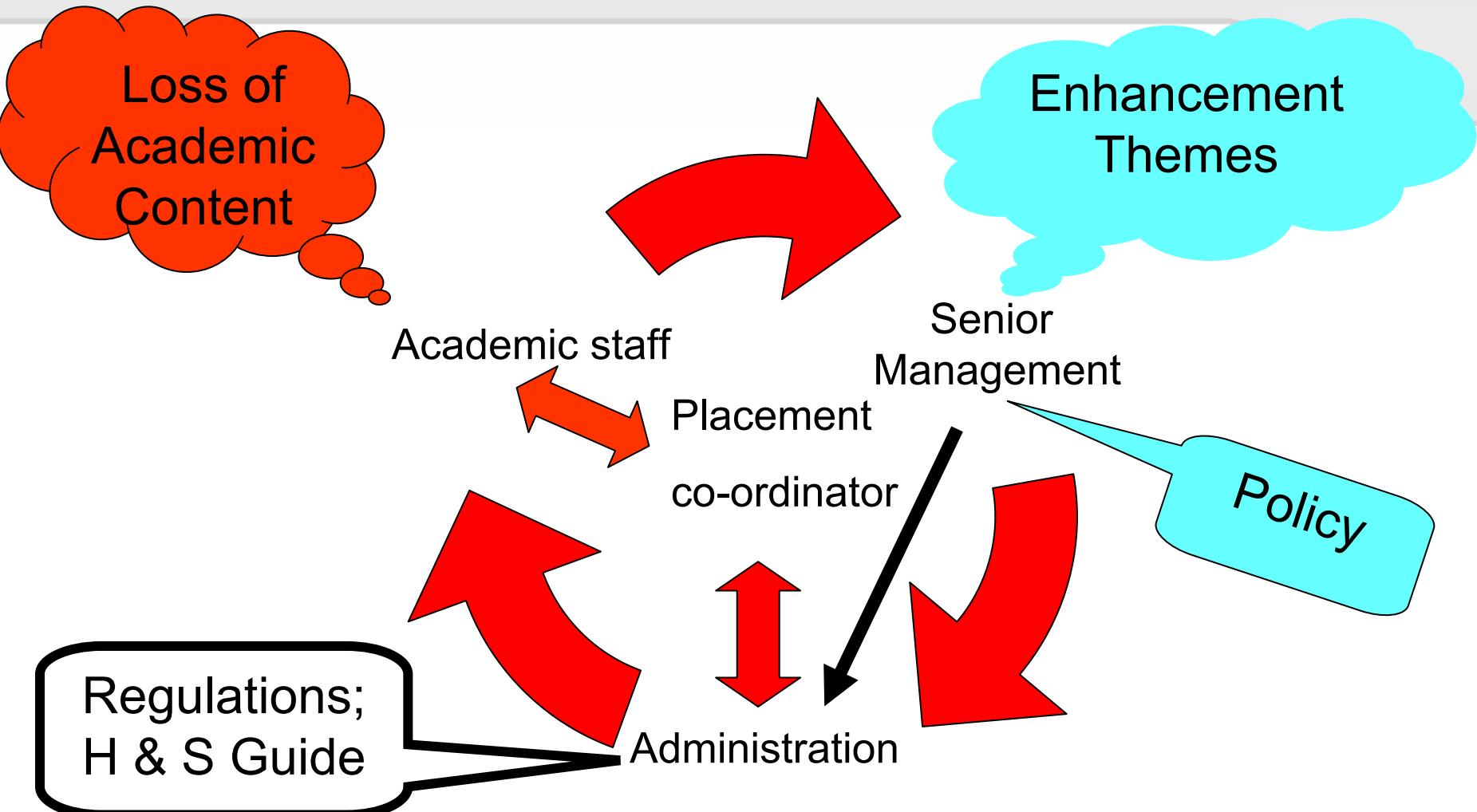
# Stakeholder Conflicts /Tensions



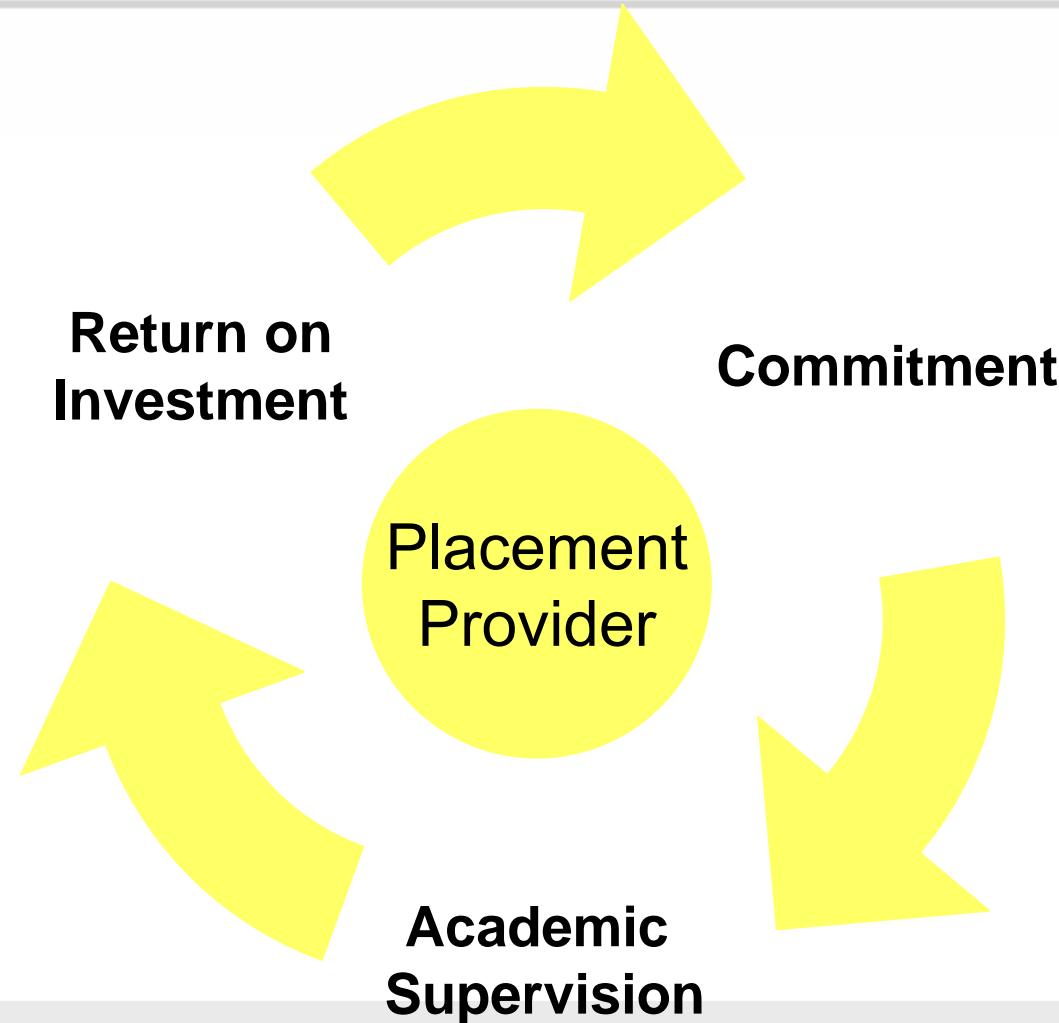
# Student Issues



# University Tensions



# Placement Provider Issues



# Employability Competences

Cognitive skills (3) 

Generic competences (9) 

Personal capabilities (8) 

Business / Organisational Awareness (4) 

Practical Professional Elements (3) 

Technical Ability (2) 

# An Evolving Model?

- Evolution – scientific theory...higher forms of life have gradually developed from simple and rudimentary forms (Collins English dictionary)
- “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.” – Charles Darwin

# Placement Provider Comments



"Organon (Part of Schering-Plough Corporation) have been accepting placement students from the UWS (formally Bell College) for the past two years. On both occasions we have found the student to be highly motivated and very enthusiastic. The liaison with the University has been excellent, both in terms of the quality of the students sent to us and in the continued interaction with the University whilst the students were with us. We feel that the students are able to make a positive contribution whilst they are here and that this has been of benefit to the company. The placements are part of our continued drive towards strengthening links with the local academic community and at present we have every intention of continuing to offer projects in the coming years."

# Placement Provider Comments



In total eight students have been placed with us, and have taken the opportunity to develop their knowledge within the pharmaceutical industry and pharmaceutical analysis in particular. This has proved fruitful both for the student and our company. Good quality work has been performed by the students generating quality data and information that was of value to the company which in turn has increased the skills and confidence of the students. Two placement students have since became valued employees and we are delighted that the rest of our placement students have gone onto to develop their careers within the pharmaceutical and related industries. We trust that their time here has assisted them in this. Controlled Therapeutics is pleased to support the University of West of Scotland student placement scheme and values its involvement in it.

# Placement Provider Comments



Hi Andrew,

I can definitely say that we at Dewar's are extremely impressed with Lynsey Jeffrey. If your other students are of the same calibre we would not hesitate to recommend them and your placement system.

Regards  
Noel

Noel McBrearty, Laboratory Manager

John Dewar & Sons Ltd  
Whisky Distillers

# Acronyms

- BIGT – Bioscience, Innovation & Growth Team
- CIHE – Council for Industry & Higher Education
- cGLP – Current Good Laboratory practice
- FEDS – Framework for Economic Development Scotland
- FLQ – Focussed Learner Questions
- SCBC – Scottish Colleges Biotechnology Consortium
- SEMTA – Science, Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies Alliance
- SOP – Standard Operating Procedure
- SSA – Sector Skills Agreement
- SSC – Sector Skills Council
- SSS – Science Strategy for Scotland

# Bibliography

- Biotechnology Cluster: Skills Demand and Supply Issues, Strategy and Projects (2000); University of Glasgow, Jean Hamilton Associates
- Science Strategy for Scotland: Making it Work Together (2001); Scottish Executive
- Biotechnology Skills Review (2002); Angle Technology
- Bioscience 2015 (2003); Bioscience Innovation & Growth Team
- Scottish Life Sciences Strategy: Achieving Critical Mass for Sustainable Growth 2020 Vision (2005, 2008); Life Sciences Industry Advisory Group for Scotland
- Enthusiating the Next Generation (2005); Biosciences Federation

# Bibliography cont'd

- Scottish Life Sciences Annual Review 2006-7
- Science Strategy for Scotland 2001: Progress Report (2006); Scottish Executive

# Code of Best Practice for Placement operation

Consultation stage  
ASET Conference  
Plymouth Sept 2008

# Session Overview

- Background/history
- Current Status
- Aims
- Areas needing development
- Possible ways forward
- Discussion – what kind of document would help you, ASET members?

# Background

- 2001 – vintage year! Two Codes:-
  - QAA Code of Practice Section 9
  - ASET/NCWE Code of Good Practice
- QAA Code Section 9 published late 2007
  - Placements and Work-Based Learning
  - So covers shorter periods as well
- ASET update currently in draft
  - Challenges in covering all WBL!
  - Hence this consultation; what would be of most help?

# Aims

- Remain compatible with QAA Section 9
- Remain compatible with other major players – NCWE, Placenet – others?
- Extend to cover shorter periods of WBL as well as sandwich placements
  - ASET - Integrating Work and Learning
  - Retain sections for students and employers
    - Which QAA doesn't cover

# Areas needing development - 1

- Current Code is focused on sandwich placements and uses that vocabulary – Placement Tutor etc. Roles around WBL in general may be quite different or even not defined
- WBL is a general learning process; placement is a delivery mechanism
  - Are we concerned with the learning or the delivery mechanism? Both! But details tend to be about operations.

# Areas needing development - 2

- Needs of shorter periods of WBL are different from those for placements, eg:
  - Preparation
  - Assessment
  - Visiting
  - Employer Liability/Public Liability insurance
- The whole Code will dovetail with the new UCEA Health and Safety document – when it comes out, possibly late 2008

# Possible ways forward

- Cannot define operational details for all durations of WBL from 1 day to 1 year
- Could have some general guidance on preparation, briefing and assessment, and leave Course Teams the task of editing as appropriate for their particular purpose:
  - But then the student and employer would need extra information for each case

# Discussion – what would help you?

- What kinds of guidance are needed?
- Would it be helpful to have general guidance for course Teams to adapt and adopt?
- Would it be better to leave the main document as referring to sandwich and placements, and have a blanket covering statement that not all parts would apply to shorter periods of WBL?

**ASET CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 2008 – PLYMOUTH**

# **Do Placements Improve Undergraduate Employability?**

**Presented by Michelle Dale  
Placements Manager  
Faculty of Health and Life Sciences  
De Montfort University**

# Content

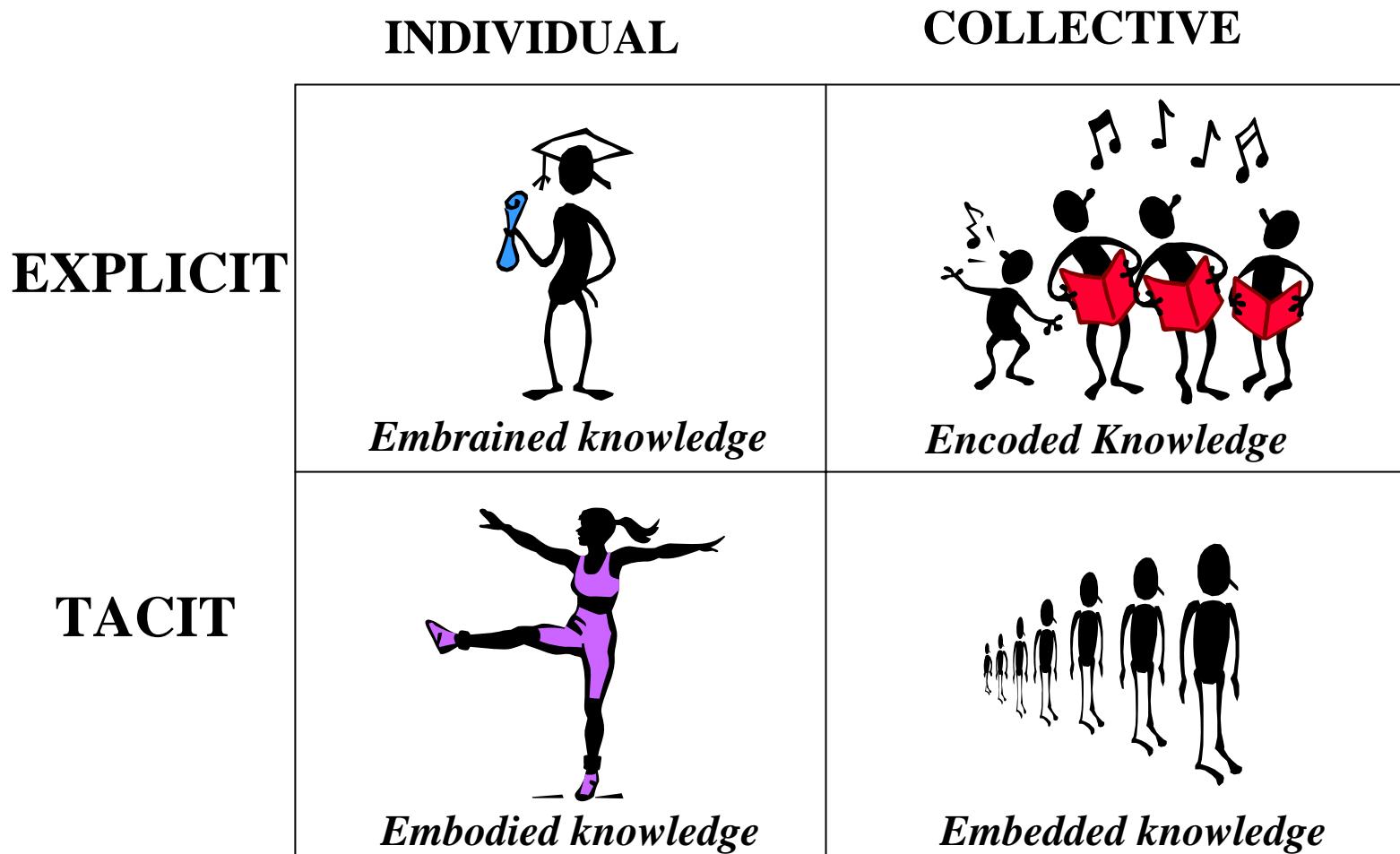
# Background

**Western civilisation can no longer compete against low cost production and manufacturing from countries such as India and China, highlighting the importance of the knowledge economy.**



**The need for a more knowledgeable and highly skilled workforce, raises the question as to what Universities are doing to enhance the employability of their students, as part of that initiative.**

# Knowledge



*Adapted from Lam (1998).*

'With increasing numbers achieving graduate status, students need to set themselves apart from the competition. Undertaking a structured period of work experience (work placement) provides students with invaluable commercial awareness and the opportunity to develop a wide range of enterprise skills through hands on experience, which, combined with strong academic performance, will prove highly attractive to recruiters and investors. If graduates are able to effectively demonstrate and articulate the skills and experience they have gained through the combination of their supported and structured work experience and the rest of their programme of study, it will provide them with the competitive advantage necessary to secure a fulfilling future, post-degree.'

Darren Scott of SES (Student Employment Services): 2008

# Methodology

Post 1992 University used as the case study has five faculties, three faculties offering compulsory and voluntary placement opportunities;

- Faculty of Business and Law (B&L)
- Faculty of Computing Sciences and Engineering (HLS)
- Faculty of Health and Life Sciences (CSE)

Two faculties who offer no placement opportunities;

- Faculty of Humanities (HUM)
- Faculty of Art and Design (A&D)

N.B. The faculties will be referred to by the abbreviations highlighted in bold.

# Secondary Research

The Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited  
**(HESA)**

The official agency for the collection, analysis and dissemination of  
Quantitative information about higher education

- Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Questionnaire
- Survey is carried out 6 months after graduation
- 2006 Undergraduates
- 4032 undergraduates were approached, approximately 3427 undergraduates responded, approximate response rate of 85%

(Appendix A & B: Data Tables HESA returns and respondents by faculty and placements)

2006 HESA data enabled the following comparisons, specific to placements;

- The employability and job quality of graduates who did not undertake a placement verses graduates who did undertake a placement.
- The employability and job quality of graduates from faculties offering placements verses faculties that do not offer placements.
- The employability and job quality of graduates who undertook compulsory placements verses voluntary placements

# Primary Research

Four main stakeholders identified;

- Students (currently out or previously participated on placement)
- Academics
- Employers of Voluntary Placements
- Employers of Compulsory Placements

(Appendix C: Data tables for each stakeholder cluster)

# FINDINGS

**EPI**

Employability Performance Indicator

Indicates those who are either employed, undertaking further study or unemployed.

**JQI**

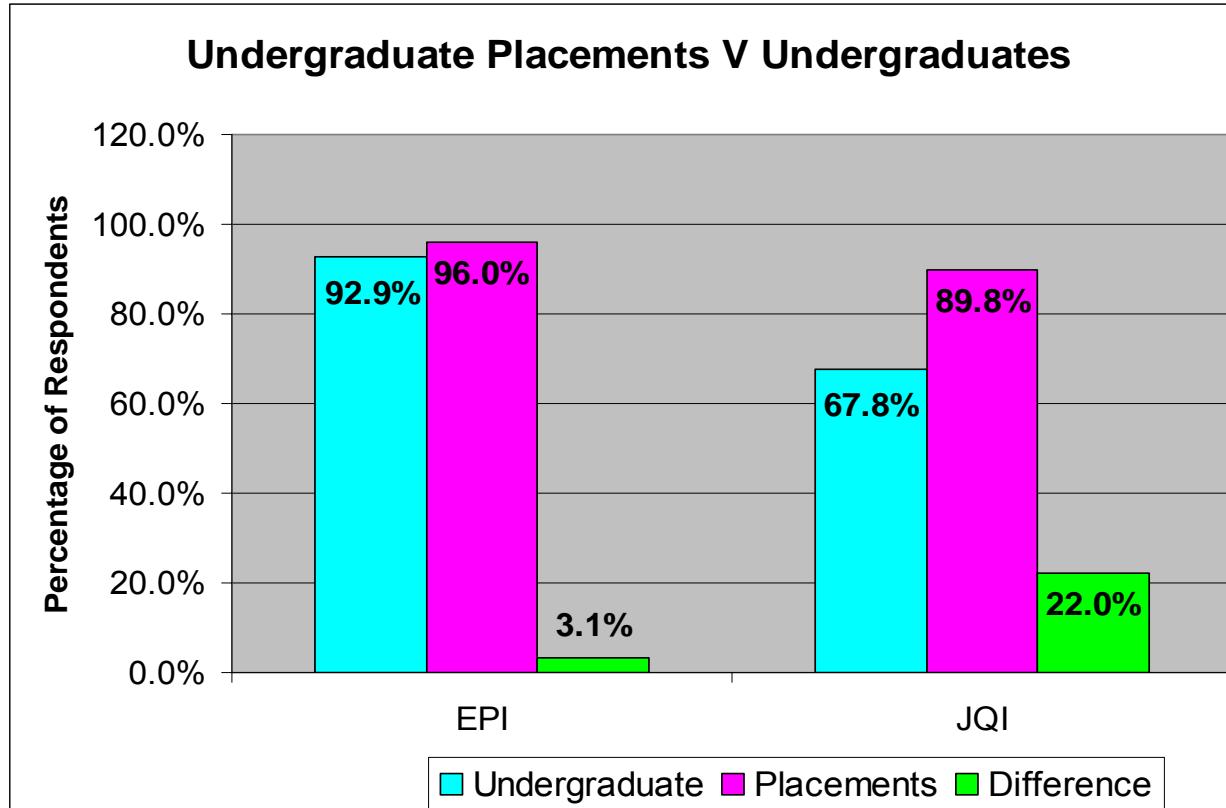
Job Quality Index

Indicates the type of occupations, such as non graduate occupations, traditional graduate occupations, etc.

(Appendix D: JQI data breakdown and JQI definitions)

**Figure 1**

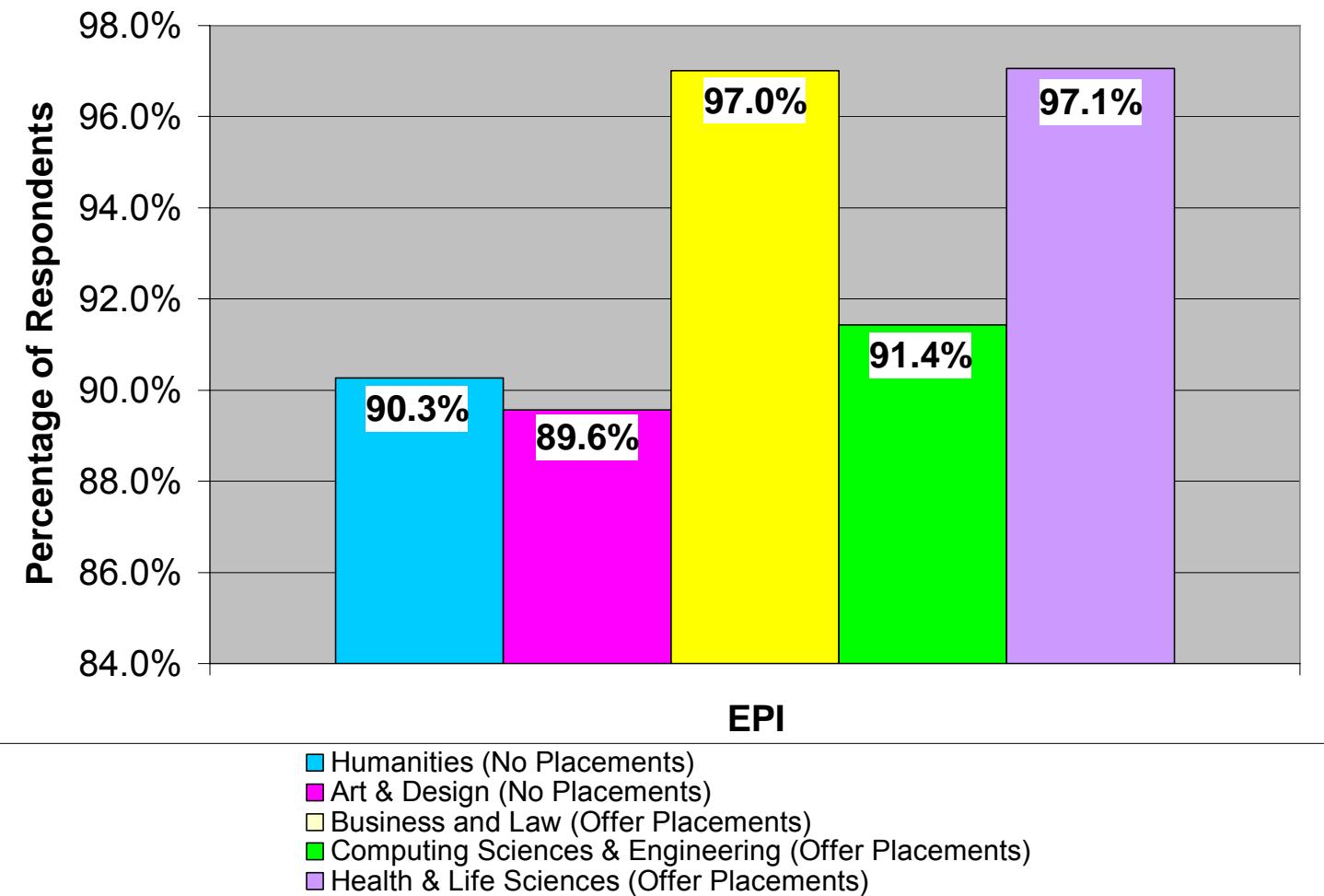
## University EPI and JQI Results



- 3.1% of placement undergraduates compared with non placement undergraduates achieved improved by Employability
- 22% of placement undergraduates compared with non placement undergraduates achieve improved Job Quality.

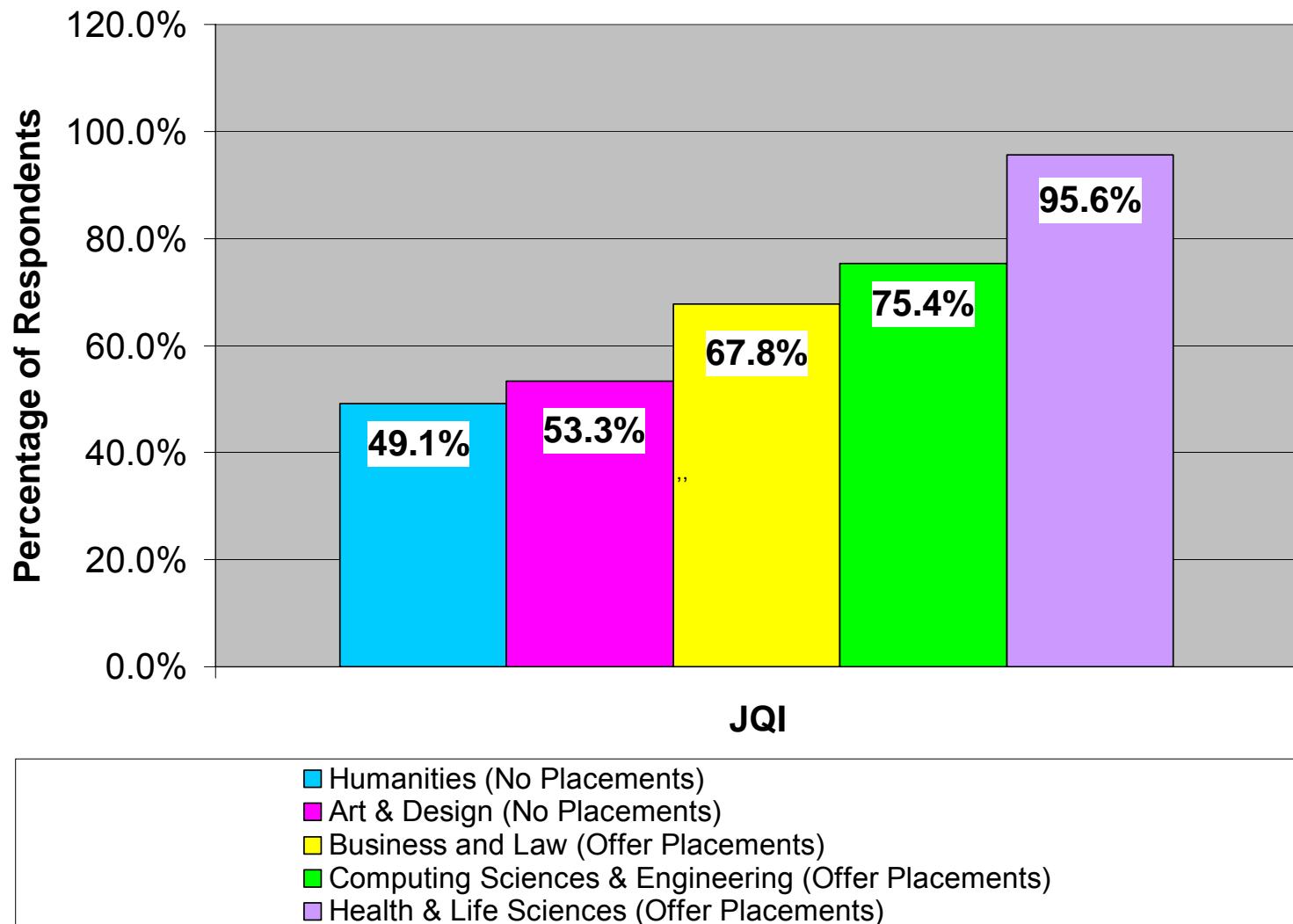
**Figure 2**

**EPI comparison of the five faculties**



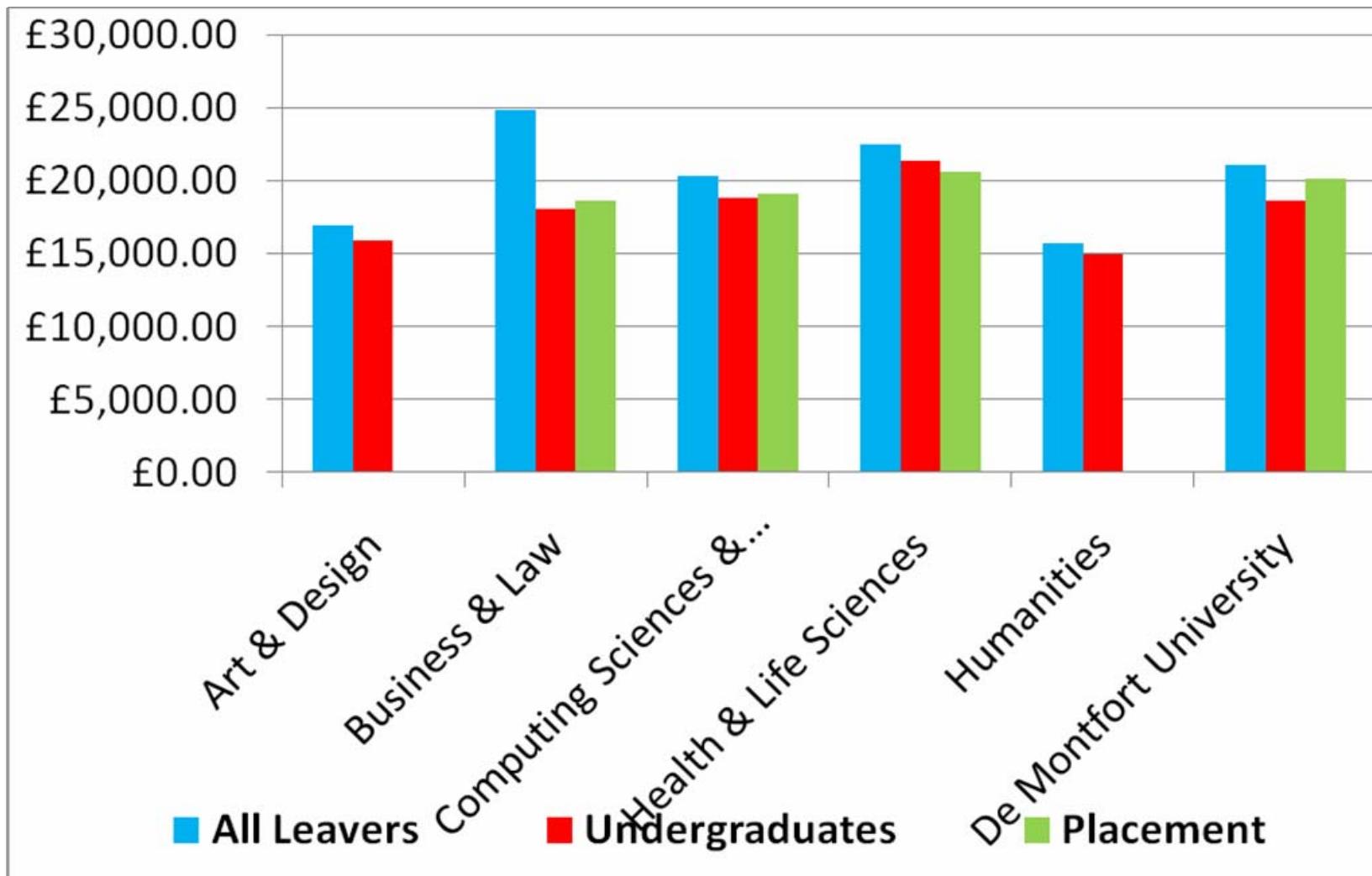
**Figure 3**

**JQI comparison of the five**



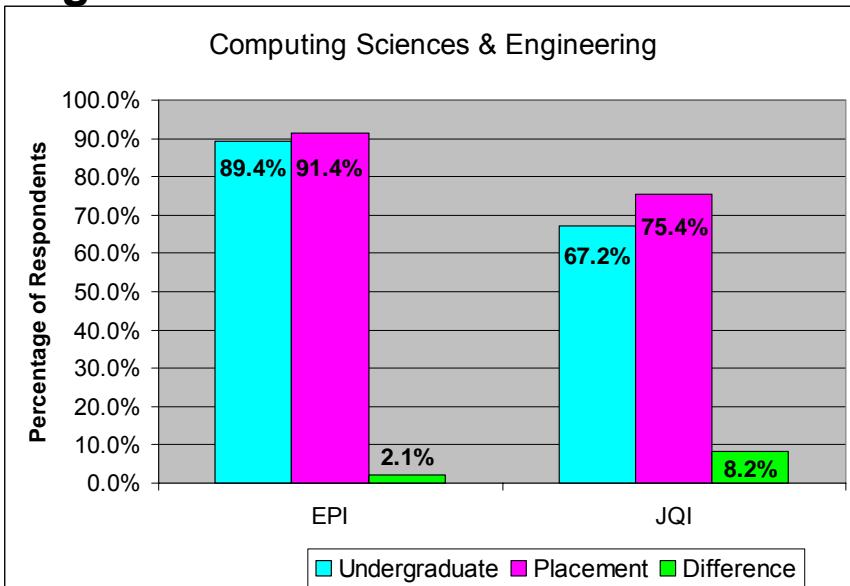
**Figure 4**

**Average Salaries**

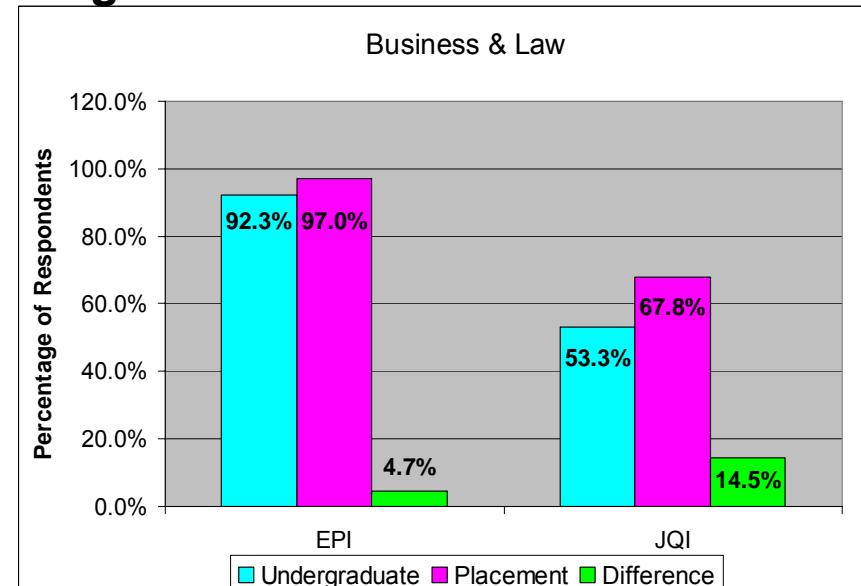


## EPI and JQI for the three placement faculties

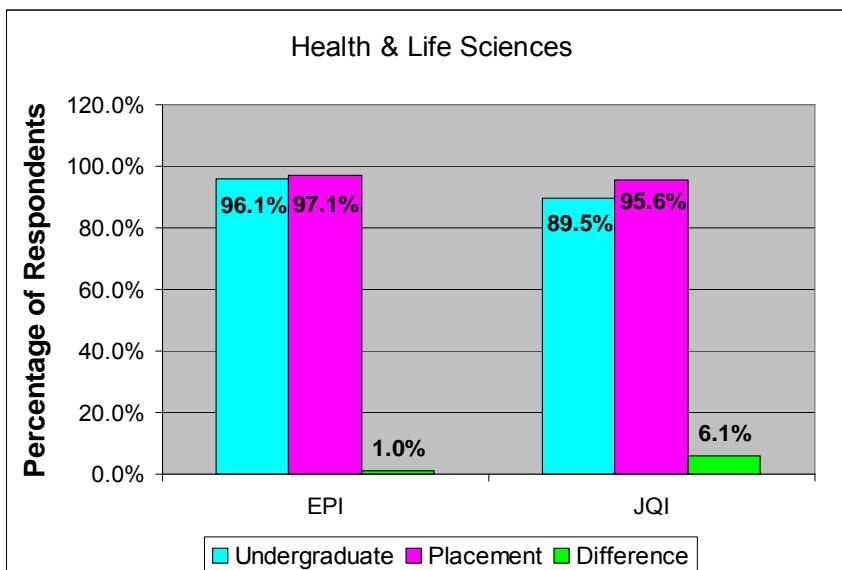
**Figure 5**



**Figure 6**



**Figure 7**



# Faculty Variables

- Type of Placements - Diversity of each faculty affects the type of placement opportunities offered varying dependant on
  - Course Requirements
  - Professional Bodies
  - Faculty and University 'Buy In'
  - Consumer Demand
- Course Specific
  - Correlation with Job Market
  - Supplementary Benefits gained from placements regardless of course.
- Faculty Value
  - The value of placements within the faculty structure and disparities between faculties can determine the level of investment and support placement offices receive affecting performance.
- Job Market
- Student Buy In
  - HLS students recognised placements are an essential part of their studies, the placement element is so entwined in the curriculum, buy in is automatic.
  - Voluntary placements require more investment to market and promote the benefits to encourage buy in.
  - Often students become aware of the benefits close to graduation when trying to enter the job market, without experience.
- Voluntary V's Compulsory
  - Difference between compulsory and voluntary placements to ascertain if one improved EPI or JQI more than the other.

# Key Benefits of Placements

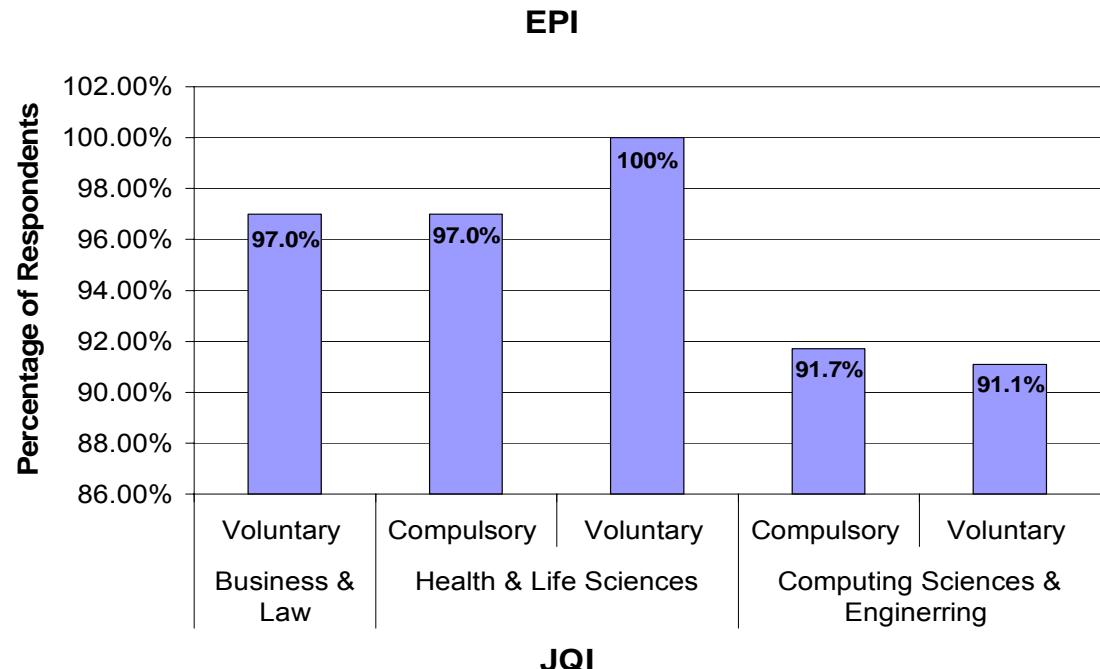
Below is a small selection stakeholders identified as key benefits of undertaking a placement.

- Ability to relate theory to practice
- Enhances employability and career prospects
- Develop skills and abilities
- Inform future career choices
- Exposure to real life situations and work environment
- Place students in situations which cannot be taught or simulated in a classroom
- CV and application skills, interview techniques
- Solid period of work experience compared with fragmented part-time work
- Provides fixed term employees to work on specific projects
- Injection of new recruits with fresh idea and perspectives – recruitment opportunity
- Networking opportunities and create valuable contacts
- Provides industry with graduates who are able to ‘hit the ground running’ and apply themselves almost immediately into their work

The list is not exhaustive; there are numerous benefits, relating to improvement in academic studies, benefits to employers, universities, research, collaborations, networking, etc.

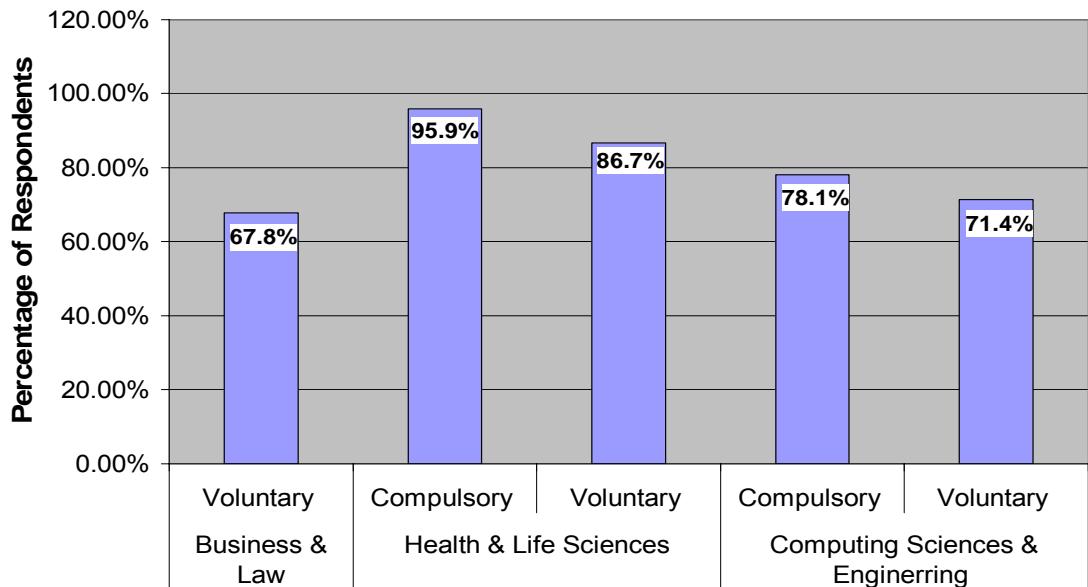
**Figure 8**

**EPI compulsory placements  
verses voluntary placements**



**Figure 9**

**JQI of compulsory placements  
verses voluntary placements**



# Additional Stakeholder Feedback

- Value of Placements
  - All of those interviewed recognised the value of placements on employability.
- Abilities and Skills
  - Placements are huge learning curve for most students, especially those with no prior work experience.
  - All participants saw a development in skills and abilities as a consequence of undertaking a placement. Skills and abilities identified were;
    - Improvement in cognitive skills, time management, confidence, presentation skills, time keeping, work-based skills, IT proficiency, team work, life skills, project management, self management, interpersonal skills, problem solving, the list is extensive.
  - Most employers suggested these were the attributes they looked for in graduate employees.

## Placements Impact on Academic Ability

- Lowering of Standards
  - According to the literature review some would argue that placements lower the standard of degrees. Consensus amongst participants suggested otherwise, in contrast participants felt that placements bridged the gap between academia and employability. Academia provided students with the theory 'Know What', whereas placements provide the experience, knowledge 'Know How' required by the job market.
- Degree Classification and Continuation of Academic Studies
  - A few academics, felt in their opinion placements did improve classification but they had no factual evidence in support of the theory.
  - A few academics did not, instead felt that sometimes it became difficult for some students especially on sandwich placements to return and get back into their studies, i.e. work ethic is different, frustration with fellow students in the classroom, presenting projects in a way expected by their employers rather than academic requirements, etc
  - A few stakeholders suggested that the success of placement students is due to smart students choosing to do a placement, and continue to be smarter thereafter. To some extent this is true, however academics and students alike mentioned that weaker students benefited by taking a placement, taking a step back from academia, improving their skills and abilities in an environment whereby failure resulted in one to one scrutiny, feedback, encouragement and ultimately taking responsibility rather than relevant on others.

# Negative Elements to Placement

Overall the majority of participants felt that there were no negative elements to placements, nevertheless some issues were identified.

- **Students** some times felt isolated due to leaving their current student cohort and friends, moving to a different part of the country and trying to build new social networks. Some students were not paid or received no financial support to undertake a placement, whereas some who were paid were unhappy that permanent colleagues in similar roles were paid more.
- **Academics** suggested that the quality of placements varied. In addition, placement support by providers on rare occasions could be poor. They also mentioned that sometimes students do not return from placements with the lure of full time employment and money to enticing.
- **Placement Providers** expressed that placements placed a large demand on their time and resources, as well as financial investment. Though all said they were well supported by the university, they were sometimes unhappy to deal with poor performance or behavior, suggesting they had given a student an opportunity which is not a privilege to be abused. In addition, when investment in a student started to become realized the placement was practically over.

No matter how thorough the placement preparations are problems still occur. Although negative elements were identified, stakeholders found positives from dealing with the difficulties and felt that this added to the learning curve.

# Conclusion & Recommendations End

- A number of benefits associated with placement participation have been identified throughout the report; including the suggestion that placements do not require correlation with a specific course inferring placements offer supplementary benefits that alone are substantial.
- All stakeholders felt that more practical elements should be integrated into university courses to better meet the needs and demands of the UK job market. However, overall the general consensus amongst all those who participated recognised universities are primarily academic institutions rather than training centres. However, it would be naive of universities to not to recognise their responsibility to the work economy, especially as 'economic analysis of the changing nature of work has formed a major platform of recent government policies for higher education, which, in turn, affects how funding for higher education is allocated and the areas that are prioritised' (UVAC 2005: p5). Therefore placements offer a successful transition between academia and the UK work force.
- The research findings provide a rich source of factual and narrative data which can be utilised by the relative placement units, to raise the profile of placements within their specific faculties and encourage further investment and acknowledgement of their value within the context of academia.
- Placements and the broader concept of work-based learning, subsequently and ultimately enhances the employability of students. As well as presenting an initiative which has the potential to impact positively on all stakeholders, if implemented correctly.

# References

## **Student-initiated and student-led ventures: the challenges of enterprise within the taught curriculum**

(Research paper)

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### **Introduction**

This research paper draws on an evaluative pedagogic research study of a work-related learning initiative called the Venture Matrix (VM). The Venture Matrix comprises a series of taught modules delivered at all three levels of an undergraduate Business and Technology course. The VM's primary purpose is to enhance enterprise and commercial awareness skills and attributes in students. It does this by giving students the opportunity to initiate and run their own business ventures. Activities involve coming up with a viable idea for a venture, preparing a business plan, advertising the venture, finding clients, securing and fulfilling contracts successfully, handling payments, hiring and firing staff, amongst others. The nature of the VM requires students to actively seek collaborations with groups outside of their immediate venture. This means finding ways to approach and engage with students they do not know personally and establishing positive, interdependent working relationships with these students. As the research study makes evident, the success of each venture is dependent on students developing the ability to establish such positive working relationships.

This research paper discusses some of the key findings of the research study, particularly those related to the value of the interdependent working relationships which students develop within the VM; findings related to how the experiences of students within the VM allow students to develop some of the key components of the USEM employability model (Knight and Yorke, 2003) are further discussed, in particular in adopting a reflective attitude to their work (metacognition).

### **Context**

The VM pedagogical approach is essentially targeted at integrating enterprise within the taught curriculum which makes it necessary to consider the conceptualisation of enterprise skills and attributes within an educational context,

as well as the broader conception of employability in the research literature. In addition, the research study was informed by the concerns within educational research with establishing effective approaches to embedding employability within the higher education (HE) curriculum. Both of these points provide a context for the research study.

Moreland identifies the entrepreneurial skills and the attributes of an entrepreneur, and further discusses the context of how these become a learning goal in an educational context (2006). The CIHE report (Archer and Davidson, 2008) identifies similar skills and attributes, emphasising team work, the ability to work internationally and honesty as those which employers value most highly in recruiting graduates. The concept and learning design of the VM environment provides opportunities for developing these skills and attributes. The question for the evaluative study was to explore the conditions which facilitated or hindered the development of such skills and attributes.

Such diverse lists of skills and attributes can be classified into a theoretical construct, such as the USEM model (Knight and Yorke, 2003). Each of the skills and attributes listed by Moreland can be classified under one of the elements of the USEM model: understanding, skills, efficacy and metacognition. It was therefore both of these approaches to conceptualising employability which the study draws on as parameters for evaluating the student experience of enterprise and employability within the VM. In order to understand the value of this experience, this paper explores the extent to which students made use of the opportunities for employability which the VM provides, as well as the factors which hindered and those which aided such provision.

## **Methodology**

An explanatory case study approach was adopted for this research. The case study approach was considered appropriate as it allows for a close focus on a 'bounded system' (Cresswell, 2007: 73) and the learning interactions taking place within this system. The Venture Matrix can be seen as a bounded system as it has its own rules of interaction. While it emulates the real world of business it does not

pretend to be the real world, but rather to give students a realistic and low-risk experience of the world of business.

An explanatory case study was also considered appropriate because it is concerned with the causal relationships within a bounded system:

*'An explanatory case study presents data bearing on cause-effect relationships – explaining which causes produce which effects.'*

(Yin, 1993: 5)

This is pertinent to the research questions which explore the factors influencing student engagement, as well as the reasons why discrete elements and approaches within the VM work more successfully than others in delivering the employability experience to students.

As is necessary for the case study approach, data was collected from multiple sources and using multiple methods in order to give a comprehensive picture of the student experience. The following sources and methods were used:

- **A survey questionnaire** distributed to the Business and Technology students taking VM modules at levels 4, 5 and 6. A total of 49 students responded to the questionnaire.
- **Focus group interviews** - four focus group interviews were carried out with VM students. Three of these were with students on the Business and Technology course, with each representing one level of study. The fourth interview comprised a cohort of Sports Science students at level 5. Their views were taken to represent those of students coming into a business module from a course unrelated to business. A total of 17 students took part in the interviews.
- **Students' written reports** - six student reports (two from each level) were explored for content which would triangulate or supplement the data gathered through the focus group interviews and the survey questionnaire.

- **Assessment tools used within the module** - these included assessment briefs given to students, module descriptions and assessment sheets showing the percentage weighting of the final assignment as well as the assessment descriptors.
- **Discussions with the module leader** - The purpose of these discussions was to prepare the researcher by giving her an idea of the way the pedagogic interactions were designed and the way they were expected to work by the tutor.

The data gathered was analysed using interpretative thematic analysis techniques (Bassey, 1999), including the following steps:

- Generating and testing analytical statements;
- Interpreting or explaining the analytical statements;
- Deciding on the outcome and writing the case report.

The students' experiences as described by them and the implications which these made for teaching and learning were elicited. It is believed that the conclusions drawn from the evaluation would make valuable suggestions regarding how to address student engagement with an employability initiative such as the VM.

## **Research findings**

### **Reflection and the need for realism**

As the learning of enterprise skills and attributes is at the heart of the VM initiative, this research placed an emphasis on exploring the extent to which students took advantage of opportunities for developing their abilities in this respect. Negotiation skills emerged as one of the most practiced skills within the VM according to students. The survey questionnaire indicated that the key skills which most students across the three levels felt they had acquired through collaborative working were communication skills and negotiation skills; an average of 70 percent of students reported increased ability in both of these skills. These findings were

supported by the focus group interviews with students. The following comment illustrates this point:

### Level 5

**Student 6:** *As far as charging people, what I did was, I thought of the top amount possible that the job would be worth and then if they agreed to that then yeah fair enough and if they wanted to negotiate... I remember in one scenario, they said 'we need three logos how much is it going to be?' and I said 'three logos is going cost you three thousand pounds', and then he said alright well can we do it for a bit less I was thinking like half that amount, and I said well we can do it for that amount but if you need the logos amending or changing I'm afraid that you'll have to pay me the full amount before I'll even think about looking at them again. So like it's a bit hard-nosed but I think that's the way business is.*

**Researcher:** *And did it work?*

**Student 5:** *Yeah.*

**Researcher:** *Do you feel rewarded once you've been successful in that process?*

**Student 6:** *I feel like the tactics that I used worked, I think, I'm not sure that it was the best way to go about it but.*

**Researcher:** *Why not?*

**Student 6:** *Because it might have been, it might have been too like, not customer focused enough like they might have felt like they didn't get as much of a good deal so in the future they might not come back to us. So it's like maybe we got the short term payout but the long term payout isn't in our favour because of the tactics that we adopted.*

There is evidence in this comment of the student learning negotiation skills in practice, or learning by doing, as is characteristic of the constructivist approach. However, what is interesting to observe is how the student has subsequently reflected on the experience. We can see that while he has been successful in his negotiation in the short term, he realises this approach may have cost him a longer term relationship with the client and greater returns. This is an instance which illustrates how the commercial awareness skills which they gain in practice lead these students to adopting a reflective attitude to their work, what Knight and

Yorke describe within their USEM model as ‘metacognition’ (2003), one of the key elements of learner employability.

Two distinct factors for such reflection taking place can be identified in this instance. Firstly, the constructivist pedagogical set up of the VM environment which places an emphasis on the active and self-directed learner constructing an understanding of their working environment while relying on their previous and current experiences, as well as learning through making mistakes. The VM provides a relatively risk-free environment for the learners to make such mistakes and rewards them for reflecting on these. In addition, little formal guidance is given to students as to what they should do in any particular circumstances.

The second crucial factor for facilitating reflection in the learner was the ‘realism’ of the experience. Evidence in the interview and survey data pointed equally to the fact that students’ deep reflection evolved specifically in situations where they perceived the experience as true or close to the way business is conducted in the real world of work. Conversely, where this experience of ‘realism’ was lacking, this could have a significant negative effect on students’ motivation to engage with the task. The following comments illustrate this point:

**(Level 4 students)**

**Student 2:** Yes we didn't use any of our original... we got 1000 pounds - squids. We didn't use any of that at all.

**Student 1:** So that's the legal side as well, when you have an expense, but I think it needs to grow significantly for the money to work better. For it to become more relevant. Because at the moment it's pretty much just - 'complete a task'.

**Student 2:** There needs to be more cost incurred then there would be ...

**Student 1:** There are essentially no costs in it at the moment.

**Student 2:** ...renting places...

**Student 1:** Sounds like more of a transactional basis that you are doing at the moment - you do this job, you just pay it and you are finished sort of thing.

**Student 2:** Whereas it doesn't really cost anything to do the job.

**Student 1:** Which it would.

**Student 2:** *Which in real life it obviously would. Because you would need equipment, premises etc.*

### **(Level 6 students)**

**Student 17:** *So when we were setting or prices in the real world you'd probably charge £200 for a website, but if we made £200 it wouldn't make any difference because we had 40 000 to start with anyway - so what's the point in doing it.*  
**(all laugh)** *Might as well put our feet up.*

In both of these comments students express the need for a more realistic experience: more costs need to be incurred; the starting capital for their businesses needs to be reduced. It is also evident that not having these constraints was detrimental to these students' engagement with the work. An experience which closely mirrors the world of work and is in this way 'realistic' is therefore essential both for students' engagement with the work and for their propensity to reflect on the experience and learn from it.

### **Learning honesty and trust through interdependence**

Another element of the VM experience which stood out as enhancing learner reflection was this of the collaborative working set up of the learning environment. We call this element 'interdependence' as it is a form of collaboration which makes each student's work and success dependent on the performance of other student groups and individuals, most of which the students would not have met or known previously. This 'interdependence' proved to have a crucial effect on students' learning.

An average of 53% of students responding to the survey across all three levels indicated they had gained skills in 'working with different types of groups'. For first and final year students, this was one of the highest ranking skills which students indicated they had learnt through group work; it was ranked slightly lower by Level 5 students, but was still identified by just over half (52%) of these students. This is significant as working with interdisciplinary groups and groups at different levels is a unique feature of the VM and is one of the ways of the employability experience becoming integrated into students' programme of study at all levels. The focus

groups built on this data to provide evidence of how and why these students found such interaction useful. In the following example students from the Level 5 Sports cohort pointed out that the group work element of the VM was significantly different from their experience of group work within the rest of their course:

**(Level 5, Sports students)**

**Student 11:** *Because I suppose in our group we all obviously worked together we didn't have to operate with other course teams and people from different courses. And meet other people's deadlines.*

**Student 10:** *The matrix allows you to do that, it's aimed at that really.*

**Researcher:** *Is that more difficult? Is it more challenging to do that, when other people's work depends on you?*

**Student 11:** *it makes things more realistic in a way because you have to - say if we mess up and don't meet a deadline we know it is going to affect other people's work as well. Especially when you think that some people's dissertations are being written on what we are doing...*

Similarly the following comment by second year students shows that these students felt responsible for other people's work and success depending on them:

**Level 5:**

**Student 7:** *I think any risk I felt was because of the third years - we were doing real work for them for their real projects and there was a risk in us saying we would do this for a certain deadline when we have all this other work as well or we are trying to do our work. I think if we hadn't done it I would have felt quite bad. So that was a risk I guess.*

Both of these examples indicate that the fact that if they missed a deadline they would negatively influence other people made these students feel personally responsible for the work, more so than it would have done if the work had consequences for themselves only. This is how working in an interdependent way within the VM recreated the realistic experience of the world of work where interdisciplinary teams, working in different companies depend on each other in order to be able to meet a shared goal. This form of collaborative and interdependent working therefore allowed students to feel this was a realistic

experience which as discussed previously is related to promoting a reflective attitude to their work.

In addition to raising their sense of responsibility, such interdependence meant that students had a first-hand experience of realising the importance of being honest and the need to trust others within a business world. As discussed in the literature review, the CIHE report (Archer and Davidson, 2008) quoted 'honesty' as one of the most important employability attributes from the point of view of employers. There was a wealth of evidence from the focus group discussions of the challenges which students perceived in having to trust others with their work:

**(Level 6 students)**

**Student 12:** *Like for us we had to trust a second year student to make a website for us and that was part of one of their sports groups' coursework. So when they say it has got to be in on the 13th February and we are trusting another person we don't know to do this, like they would come and have a go at us if we didn't get it done for them it would look bad on us and not really the guy who was supposed to be doing it. So I think it is not part of their coursework, if it goes wrong on our end it's like if we mess up and mess up their final year coursework it would be terrible for them really. Whereas the fact that I didn't do it is not really anything off his back - he's just said 'yes I'll make a website for you'.*

**Student 17:** *Someone would say it's all right if you put contracts in place, but if he breaks the contract then nothing is going to happen to him really it's just fictitious isn't it. So it was quite risky for us to trust someone else to do the work for us.*

The majority of the students interviewed spoke about this interdependence in the work as the most high-risk activity within the VM and the one which taught them to take responsibility for their learning most fully. It is evident therefore that having to trust each other and work interdependently taught these students the most valuable lessons regarding honesty in a business world. It was interesting to note that students progressed in their thinking towards finding ways of being more comfortable trusting others with work:

## **Level 5**

**Student 4:** *I also thought it would have been a better idea if they (first year students) actually worked with you and once you've employed them to be a part of our group as opposed to just contacting them asking them to do something and they send it via email. So they'd work with us as a group rather than them being on their own. Because when you're employing someone they are working with you, not in a different room at a different time.*

In this and in a number of supporting instances students expressed a preference for closer, more regular contact with those they had delegated work to such as would allow them to develop stable working relationships. The fact that students progressed to looking for strategies for improving communication and collaboration with each other is evidence of deep reflection on the side of students.

## **Conclusions**

The evaluation of the VM learning environment indicated that students made active use of some of the opportunities offered to them for learning within an enterprising environment. In this paper we have discussed those aspects of learning which stood out as most significantly influencing students' employability. We have also related these aspects of learning to learning theory, to employers' needs and most importantly to recognised employability skills and attributes.

The findings of research strongly indicated that the VM learning environment worked on social constructivist principles, such as an active learner who draws directly on their past experiences and their own resources, rather than on external guidance when dealing with challenges in the work/learning environment. Within this the question arose of how students learn from such experiences. There was a wealth of data indicating that reflection, the key form of learning emerging within a work-related learning environment, depended both on the extent to which students perceived the learning interactions as realistic and on the highly interdependent way of working which the VM requires. This has identifiable implications for implementing a work related module within the higher education curriculum. Students would look for opportunities to experience the real world of work as closely as possible; as instances in the research data demonstrated, making the

experience too easy or unrealistic has a negative effect on these students' engagement with the task. In addition, the interdependence which was required of students within the VM proved to be highly successful in inspiring reflection in students. Within this they had to consider the need to trust those they were working with and those they were working for. We can argue that learning how to trust each other has taught these students the value of honesty in the world of business. Finally, while the interdependence which these students experienced can be likened to the collaborative work often utilised within contemporary curricula, there is a pronounced differentiating element in the VM: collaboration spanned all three levels of the course, thus testing students' ability and resourcefulness in managing complex communication and developing relationships of trust with divergent groups and individuals.

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## **Making Connections: The Power of Local Links in Developing Student's Social Capital and Employability.**

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### **Abstract**

As more people have the opportunity to access higher education, greater thought has to be given to the outcomes of the experience. The move from widening participation to optimum participation means that educational institutions need to ensure that the experience students have is productive not only in achieving academic qualifications, but in preparing them for employment. This means taking account of the development of personal and social attributes relevant to employability. The outcome of the educational experience should enhance students' confidence and aspirations should grow. This cannot be left to chance. Deliberate steps have to be taken to equip students with the skills and confidence to achieve all that they can. This is particularly important for students who lack confidence, experience, or the networks which will support that development. Without the skills to make use of the vast array of networks and contacts available, the impact of their higher education will be limited.

By exploring the principles of social capital and applying this to the development of new approaches and links with local communities, this paper will seek to explore the role of external partners in developing the employability skills and attributes of students and examine the link between social capital and employability.

### **Widening participation and barriers to employability**

According to Kenton et al (2004) it is the very people that the government is trying to attract into higher education that face most difficulties in obtaining suitable graduate employment, they benefit less than their traditional entrant peers from the achievement of a degree. This indicates that something is missing in the delivery of higher education for this group in relation to employability. If a diverse student group arrive at university with a different skill set, aspirations, confidence levels and social capital; one which inhibits rather than supports graduate employment, then the learning experience needs to be adjusted to cater for a different set of needs. Either employer's expectations have to shift to accommodate diverse graduates or higher education has to be able to offer a range of new experiences in order for students to confidently develop careers.

Changing career patterns and requirements of a changing work environment have resulted in employers seeking new attitudes and attributes placing different demands on graduates. Traditional approaches to education are no longer sufficient.

Blasko *et al.*, (2002) claim that many of these students (entering via widening participation) are from backgrounds which are first generation to attend or aspire to attend higher education and that these are the groups facing the greatest disadvantage in the labour market. According to Hugh Smith (2003) many students from under-represented groups do not have the social (personal) capital to enter the workplace on the same footing as more traditional graduates, and the transition to work for these groups may be complicated if they do not know how to demonstrate the skills, qualities and achievements that employers seek. Brown *et al* (2002) claim that they are further disadvantaged in the job market, as the rapid expansion of higher education does not reflect the demand for high skilled jobs. The best jobs will still go to those from higher social backgrounds who follow traditional routes through university. Anecdotal evidence described by Brennan *et al* in "Access to What" (2003) also suggests that these students do relatively poorly on entering the labour

market. Brown also raises concerns that, because of the acceleration of entrants to higher education over the last decade, many graduates will find themselves surplus to requirements and end up in jobs offering less than they expected. These findings have particular relevance for many of the students in the University of the West of Scotland which has been particularly successful at attracting students from low participation neighbourhoods.

Widening participation is commendable but only if institutions recognise that the students have different needs and they (the institutions) are able to change accordingly. If significant numbers of students fail in their studies or fail to attract suitable employment then we raise expectations which are at best unrealistic and at worse damaging in the longer term to the individual's confidence.

Improving the ability to access and mobilise social capital would enhance the students' experience and, by increasing their abilities and preparedness, through exposure to new opportunities and resources, improve employability skills and career potential.

This view is supported by Borden and Evenbeck (2003) who state that *"a growing body of research and documented best practices has made it clear that the learning outcomes most closely associated with long term student achievement and success in the workplace are the general higher order skills that result from a strong liberal education... Writing and communication skills, intellectual adaptedness, creative problem solving and the ability to work with diverse individuals...."*

Communication and working in teams is commonly seen in the literature of employability. The experience that students get in these areas in higher education tend to focus on internal communication; that which is with their own student groups, and with lecturers. More could be done to offer experience of working and communicating with the diverse individuals that Borden and Evenbeck rightly mention as a key employability skill. If students are not exposed to situations which allow them to make links with external sources and 'diverse individuals' then how will they expand their skills and confidence in accessing and utilising potentially valuable resources? What role is there for the informal learning and development that occurs through mixing with 'diverse individuals' and how do we identify and access such individuals?

Gopee (2002) recognises the gap in the literature relating to the process of informal learning and implies that social capital is the primary means in which adults learn within organisations – *people learn in corridors, over tea, in the car park and interactions in the classroom itself* (Field 1999). This is also true of students and we need to ask what additional learning could occur if deliberate attempts were taken to expose them to a wider range of opportunities external to the institution.

### **Making connections through social capital.**

Stanton Salazar (1995) defines social capital as "the social relationships from which an individual is potentially able to derive various types of resources and support". These relationships can lead to valuable networks in terms of employability.

The power of networks is not disputed. Craig's (2001) study of the role of networks in developing social capital and empowering young people tells a compelling tale of improvement when young people are given knowledge, skills and other resources to pursue their education and careers.

It is therefore relevant that we examine the skills that allow individuals to access and utilise that capital, recognising its value in contributing to the development of employability and new ways of making these connections. The resources that may become available are valuable in opening out opportunities in terms of building

employability skills and building the confidence necessary to access the graduate job market.

Forret et al (2001) stress the importance of networking behaviour in the “protean career”. Networking behaviour, she suggests, is an “*individual’s attempt to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to help them in work or career*”. (p284). She provides evidence of how successful careers and promotions are strongly linked to those who are most able at networking. The development of the CIME employability competencies would appear to support the protean career – preparation for a changing workplace with an emphasis on the proactive employee rather than on organisations being responsible for making contacts. Building and mobilising networks are dependant on utilising social capital and need to be treated with the same importance as knowledge and technical skills.

Woolcock (1991) cited in Field (2001) breaks down the levels of social capital as

- bonding social capital describes the ties between people in similar situations such as family and friends and people in similar situations
- bridging social capital relates to more distant ties of like persons such as workmates and loose friendships and
- linking social capital refers to reaching out to unlike people in dissimilar people who are entirely outside the community thus enabling a greater range of resources than are available within the community.

Catts and Ozga (2005) encapsulate these definitions. They depict bonding social capital as “getting by”, bridging social capital as “getting on” and linking social capital as “getting around”.

### **Social Capital and Higher Education**

What then is the role of Higher Education in enabling students to develop the skills required to identify and mobilise social capital which is valuable to employability?

Thomas (2002) explored the potential for higher education to impact positively on social capital, suggesting a number of ways in which building social capital can improve student success. These include the development of friendships, work experience, student union activities and participation in governance. She raised concerns that institutions often ignore the value of social capital and that the socialisation of “non-traditional” students is often seen as unimportant with a lack of opportunities for students with non-traditional tastes. I would argue that it is not just taste, but lack of experience and confidence, which prevent students participating in activities and that more effort has to be made to encourage students and assist them to see the relevance of developing the skills of “getting on” and “getting around” to future employment.

Field (2003) suggests that a major deficit in the social capital literature relates to skills development, which enables people to utilise social capital. Unless we equip students with the skills and confidence to identify and access useful resources then ‘getting on’ and ‘getting around’ will not happen.

### **Bonding to Bridging: From getting by to getting on?**

Whilst friendships play a key supporting role for students, close relationships can be limiting and restrictive. Friendships formed in the early stages of study may not always be the most productive and, without bridging relationships with others, students will lack exposure to new ideas and behaviours.

### **Bridging Social Capital: How do students get on?**

Making connections with new groups can be a daunting task for students particularly for those who lack confidence. We need to consider how best to help students bridge relationships, offering them opportunities to work with new skills and

resources within and outwith the institution. This also includes the students' ability to connect with staff. The importance of the learning environment is crucial here. Where students are encouraged to engage with staff and challenge in the classroom, their skills and confidence grow, preparing them to connect with external resources.

### **Linking Social Capital: How do students get around?**

Perhaps the most important and indeed difficult aspect in relation to employability is the students' ability and willingness to mobilise linking social capital. Linking social capital refers to the connections made with more powerful resources not available within the usual community and it is this form of social capital that can be most intimidating for students.

Burt (2005), speaks of the benefits to be gained through reaching across structural holes, connecting with new resources which offer a vision of options otherwise unavailable. Students who have reflected on their experiences of linking with external resources described how this affected confidence, expectations and aspirations. The learning experience, which encourages students to connect with external sources, is crucial in building confidence and developing the skills required to connect with diverse networks. Commonly used approaches include work placements. But is this enough? Can we make more of the business community in a range of different ways?

### **Some initiatives in linking social capital.**

In order to address these issues a number of initiatives have been undertaken in the University of the West of Scotland. One development is a partnership agreement with the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT). This partnership has resulted in PSYBT providing specialist staff to provide input to classes, for example in providing business planning workshops and coaching sessions to help students 'pitch' business ideas with potential funders. The Trust also provides a range of guest speakers for classes to illustrate business start up and development. The partnership agreement includes PSYBT offering a range of placements with their clients. The great advantage of this is the age group of these local entrepreneurs as PSYBT deal with business start up for the 18- 25 age group. Student who have access to these entrepreneurs are able to visualise themselves in that position in a few years time; they are not so far removed from the student age group and by sharing their experiences with students, they demonstrate possibilities for those who had never considered business start up as a career option. PSYBT is also a very well connected organisation and can facilitate connections between students and well known, successful and respected business leaders locally who are supporters of the Trust.

Another development involves student placements with local social enterprises. This has proved particularly valuable for students who are lacking in confidence or who have particular problems which impact on the development of employability. An example of this was a student whose severe dyslexia had impacted on her confidence relating to employment. A voluntary network support group provided a placement which offered considerable support in building her confidence and helped her to enhance her skills and reflect on the development of these throughout her placement. Other relevant projects have been offered from local social enterprises including students developing business plans, researching funding sources, reviewing feasibility of services, evaluating the impact of services and developing management process on standards of care.

The importance of this sector in providing the development of employability skills must not be underestimated. As an increasingly large employer, social enterprises can offer supportive and valuable placements for students, particularly for those students who require additional support in developing and reflecting on the development of their employability.

Another initiative involves the local enterprise companies. By inviting them to participate in University activities such as business planning competitions, they have now become active in offering student placements with SME's, offered funding for student intern posts to help activate entrepreneurial thinking and provided expert sessions and resources in terms of business development skills.

Each of these offers opportunities for students to connect with new resources and practice the skills necessary to build linking social capital.

The success of these initiatives is, of course, dependent on staff being able to utilise their own social capital.

### **Final thoughts**

As we encourage a diverse student population to engage in higher education then we have a responsibility and a moral duty to ensure that we provide the best opportunities that we can to develop the full range of employability skills and attributes which will enable students to access graduate employment. This means thinking in different ways and engaging the local community in our efforts. Many of our students will become their future workforce so it is only right that they participate in their development, ensuring that what we are teaching and the resources that we are accessing are relevant and appropriate. Confident students who are able to network valuable resources become confident workers who will be able to access valuable resources for their employing organisations and communities alike. Higher education has to take account of this in programme design. This presents challenges for staff, many of whom have yet to be convinced that skills development, employability and social capital growth are the remit of the academic community. I would argue that if we fail to take account of these components we are failing to maximise the potential of a diverse student group and their contribution to the future of their community.

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# Work-based learning

Creating capacity for local workforce  
redesign

Tracey Pugh; Edgar Meyer; Julie Wintrup  
04 September 2008

# Overview

- Background
- Work Based Learning (WBL): agendas and challenges
- Our story
- A possible framework for considering all the stakeholders in WBL

# Background

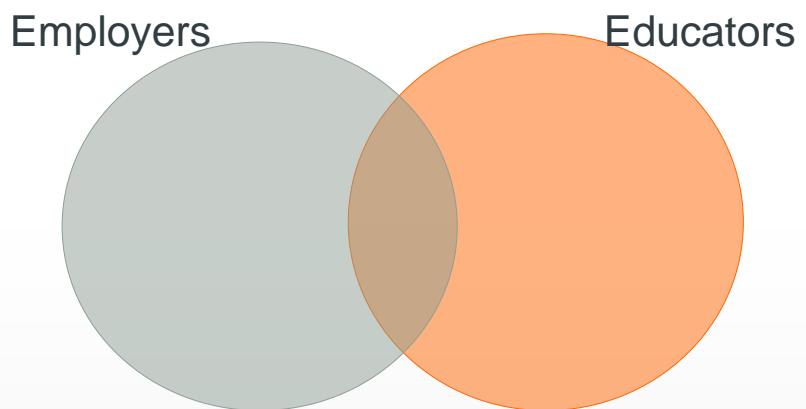
- Our context:
  - Multi-professional workforce (Health & Social Care )
  - Highly regulated & hierarchical
- Our workforce:
  - Professional silos & career paths
  - Supported by support workers who have traditionally received only minimal training with often no career trajectory
- Widening Participation:
  - Foundation degree with different H&SC pathways and short placements (either 6 or 12 days)
  - 40 of our 60 places are funded by the SHA for students already employed within the sector
  - Russell Group, research-intensive University

# Exploring WBL agendas

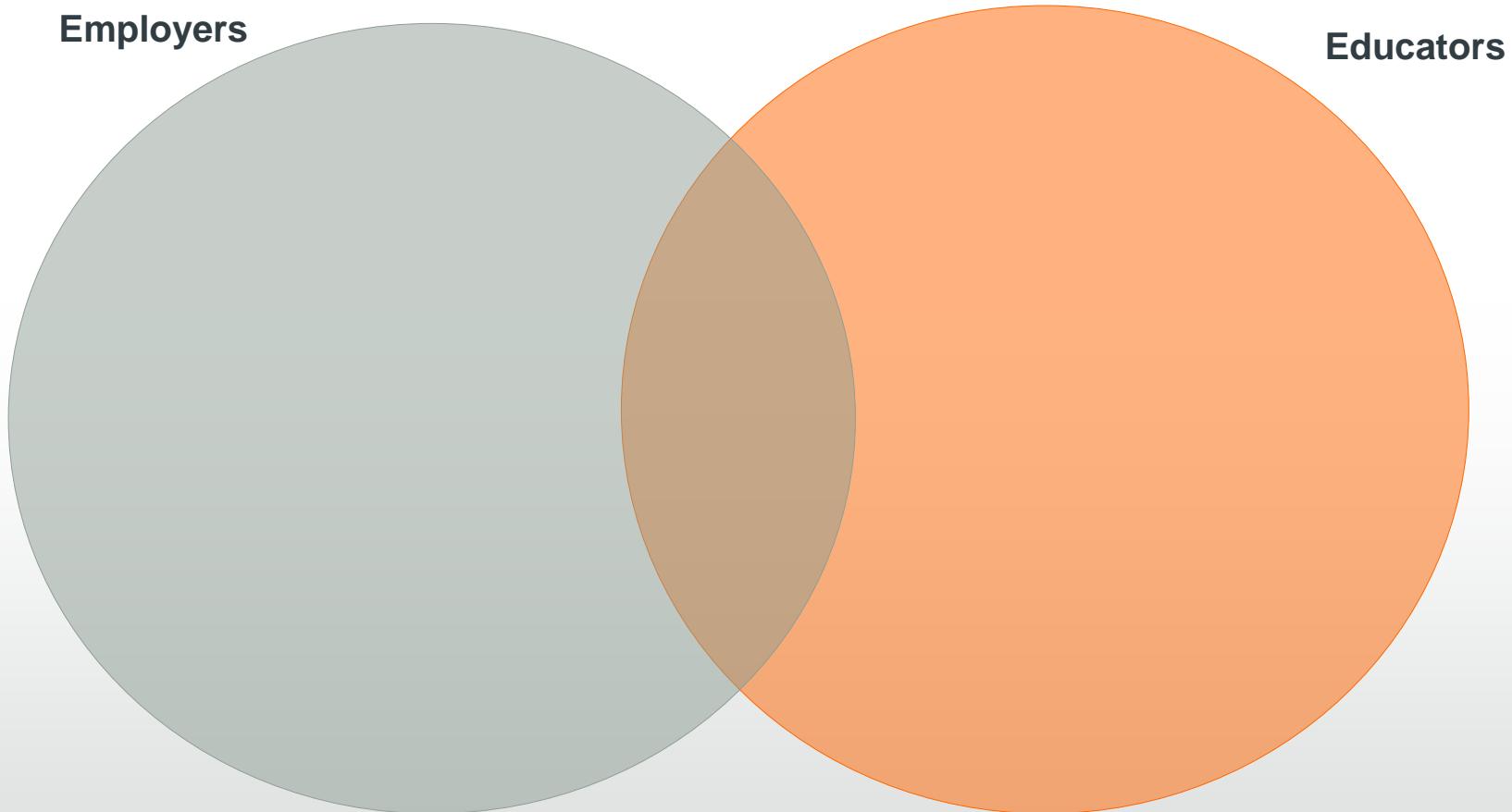
Write down one thing you would like to influence/change in your local workforce?

# Challenges & Agendas

- From your perspectives as Educators and/or Practitioners think about
  - What are the agendas in regards to WBL
  - What are the challenges in regards to WBL
- Summarise your discussion & place onto the diagram



# Challenges & Agendas



# Our experience...

# The Programme

Fd 1 <sup>st</sup> yr (Level 1)	Fd 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr (level 2)	Post Fd career
<p>Generic introduction to health and social care</p> <p><b>Specialist pathway: Rehabilitation</b></p> <p><b>Specialist pathway : Children &amp; Families</b></p> <p><b>Specialist pathway : Mental Health or LD</b></p> <p><b>Specialist pathway : Generic H &amp; S care</b></p> <p><b>Specialist pathway : Long Term Conditions</b></p> <p><b>Application to Pathway to Nursing</b></p> <p><b>Application to Pathway to Occupational Therapy</b></p> <p><b>Application to Pathway to Physiotherapy</b></p> <p><b>Application to Pathway to Podiatry</b></p> <p><b>Application to Pathway to Social Work</b></p> <p><b>Application to Pathway to Audiology</b></p>	<p><b>Common Learning: IPLU1</b></p>	<p>New roles in the workforce</p> <p><b>BSc(Hons) top up year</b></p> <p><b>Full time or Part-time</b></p> <p><b>Application to BSc(Hons) in chosen profession</b></p>

# The Programme

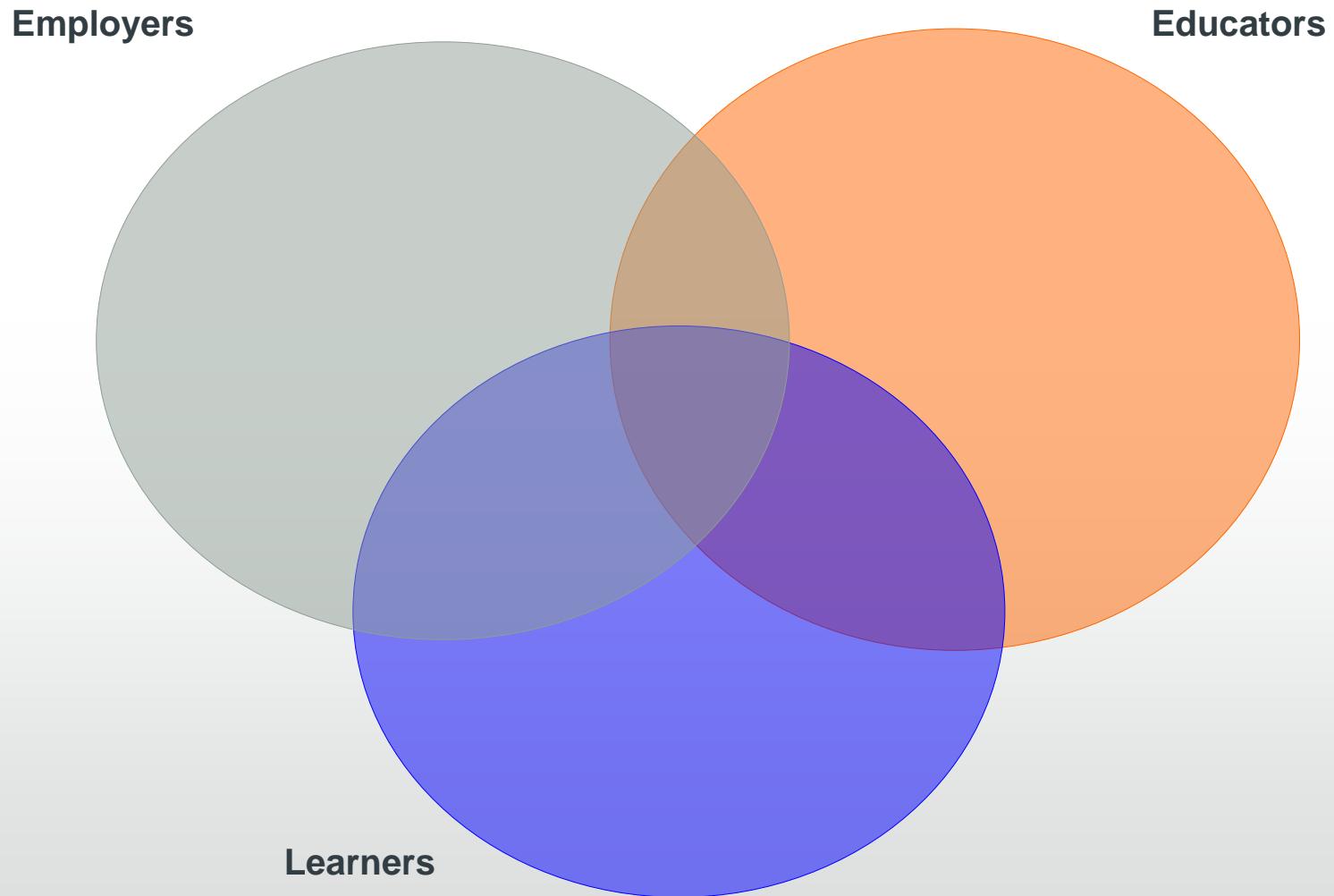
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	<p><b>Application to Pathway to Nursing</b></p>	
	<p><b>Application to Pathway to Occupational Therapy</b></p>	
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		<p><b>BSc(Hons) top up year</b></p> <p><b>Full time or Part-time</b></p>
		<p><b>Application to BSc(Hons) in chosen profession</b></p>

# Developing a new role

- Employer driven
  - Need for intermediate workforce
  - Improving patient care
- Redesigning roles in practice → Associate practitioners
- Collaborative curriculum design – academic and practice requirements were met
- Placements in rehabilitation service
  - Often determined by managers
  - Focused placements to allow students learn the skills needed for the new roles

# Reflecting on the different perspectives

# The different agendas



# The complex relationships in WBL

- Considering this addition to the model, think about how this may change the way you would redraw the diagram for your workforce?
- Consider the initial thought you wrote down. In which circle would this change need to take place?

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# Work Based Learning – Foundation Degree Health and Community Studies



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**ASET Annual Conference 2008**

by

Judith Mann – Cornwall College

Pool, Redruth, Cornwall

[judith.mann@cornwall.ac.uk](mailto:judith.mann@cornwall.ac.uk)

# Work Based Learning

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Foundation Degree Forward.....

‘It is very difficult to say what work based learning is as it is approached and delivered in so many different ways. It isn’t possible, therefore to reduce it to a single essential ‘thing’.

[www.fdf.ac.uk](http://www.fdf.ac.uk) **Briefings for Learning Providers**

Ctd)

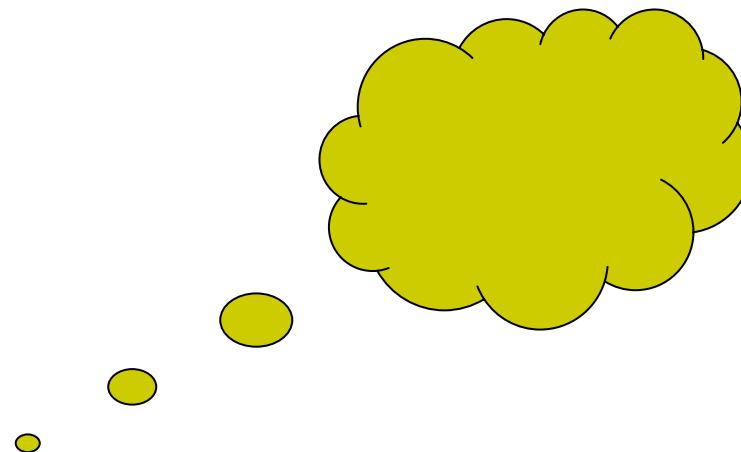
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‘WBL can’t be simply defined, by the fact that it takes place in the workplace.....since it is the nature of the particular relationship between work and learning that is important’

# What is the ‘big picture’?

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- What is the ‘different learner’ that we want the student to be at the end of the course?



# What difference has WBL made to Sarah?

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- A placement
  - A job
  - A qualification
  - A future career
- 
- ‘Soft’ skills



# Challenges to work based learning on FdA were:

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- Paper Portfolio approach
- Duplication of assessment against existing assignments (especially PDP)
- Nature and level of assessment
- A need to complement the assessment and the work related experience
- Relationship with Employers

# Research from CETL project Year 1

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- Indicated a need for:
  - Student ownership - flexibility
    - empowerment
  - Greater degree of Employer engagement
    - learning contract/ expectations
    - sharing objectives
    - **mentoring in the workplace (key role)**

Ref. Boud D. and Solomon N. eds. (2001)  
**“Work Based Learning: a new Higher Education**, Buckingham, OU.

# Mentoring – what is it?

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- “Mentoring is a process in which a more skilled or more experienced person serves as a **role model** to teach, encourage and counsel less skilled or less experienced person (in this case the Foundation Degree Student) for the purpose of promoting the student’s professional and personal development”

(University of Plymouth Mentors’ Guide)

# Employers' ideas

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- Induction (Expectations of the College)
- Advice on mentoring
- Employers' forum ('**but not too time-consuming**')  
therefore on Moodle
- Contract - student/ college/employer and meeting  
before students start
- **Provided**
  - mentoring guide
  - employer moodle site

# New relationship between learning and work – 3 focuses

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- Course design and development
- **Partnership** approach/ employers/ students
- Status of learner-
  - Recognition of existing skills
  - **Ownership** of learning goals
  - Overlap with PDP

# Challenges

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- TIME
- Busy employers
- College commitments
- Where to place WBL in the curriculum



# Outcome

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- Create a Level 1 and a level 2 WBL module, responding to progression and widening participation
- The new assessment reflects the different levels, responding to differentiation. Level 1 can be APL'd.
- Level 2 to be developed as an MLE (Managed Learning Environment) using Moodle (College VLE)

# Advantages

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- Level 1 ensures an **Introduction to the industry** e.g.  
Health and Social Care delivery
- Opportunity to APL by recognising previous and  
relevant experience
- Level 2 allows a shift to **personal goal setting and  
empowerment through reflective practice**
- On-line approach provides new opportunities:
  - raising student's confidence level
  - reinforcing the place of WBL in the curriculum

# Online approach - Benefits

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- Employer/Tutor/ learner and peer input (e.g. peer review)
- Interactive
- Self (learner) and tutor managed
- Variety of activities
- Deeper level of learning  
(CETL Project Year 2)

# Blended approach to Learning

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- Apples
  - Pears
  - Bananas
- 
- Can be modes of delivery/ online/ offline
  - Participants/ Partnership/ Dialogue



Salmon G. (2002) “**E-tivities The key to Active Online Learning**” London, Routledge Falmer.

# New ideas for FD

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- \* Students organise a workshop/ conference
- \* Students present in front of employers
- \* Online forums students/ employers/tutors
- \* CV and placement/ job opportunity posts
- Link WBL with PDP activities



# WBL 1 - Introduction to the workplace Assessment

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- Reflection on Careers (20%)
- Professional Profile (20%)
- Role play (30%)
- Report (30%) (1,000 words)

# WBL 2- Development through Work Assessment

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- Planning the WBL (10%)
- Conference Participation (10%)
- Reflective entries (10%)
- Presentation (40%)
- Report( 30%) (750 words)

# What ‘difference’ has WBL made?

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- Self belief
- Values
- Dispositions
- Attitudes
- Knowledge and Understanding
- Skills
- A ‘feel’ for the work

# A quote from a completing student.

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- What I have improved:
- ‘**The main thing I am pleased about, which is a result from completing this module, is that my personal confidence has improved so much, although it still has room for improvement, I can definitely see a change in myself. This has always held me back, but now I feel I can achieve anything I want to, I can feel myself looking forward to new challenges, whereas before I would have been full of the fear of failure’.**

# New ideas for programme

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- ‘Uspace’ pilot
- Animations
- ‘Talking heads’
- Agency profiles
- Employer validated certificate
- Mentoring short course

Course: FdA Health and Community Studies -  
Level 2 Work Based Learning (HCE216)

# Resource

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

Practice Based Learning Project involving staff from Ulster, Northumbria and Bournemouth Universities to make practitioners more effective in promoting the quality of practice based learning.

(£250,000) Resources are out there!!

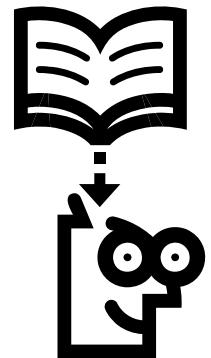
# Resource ctd)

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## □ Mentoring Guide

CITB (2004) A good practice guide to  
mentoring-

[www.citb-constructionskills.co.uk](http://www.citb-constructionskills.co.uk)



# Service Learning: Encouraging involvement in the Community

## Context

Over the past five years, the Centre for Workplace Learning at St Mary's University College has developed a number of accredited work placement modules which are open to second and final year undergraduate students studying across the full range of degree programmes offered.

These modules are different from the traditional 'sandwich' or 'year out' placements offered by many other institutions in that they are part-time opportunities which take place alongside the students' other university commitments. This model enables us to run lectures, workshops and tutorials on a regular basis for the students before, during and after their placements. This helps them to benefit from support throughout the placement, to reflect on their own contribution and learning, to relate the work experience to the theory they are learning in the classroom, and to share their experiences with one another.

The take up of these modules has trebled over the past three years showing the popularity of this model and the increasing realisation that employers are looking for evidence of practical, relevant work experience in graduate recruitment.

## Introducing Service Learning

Responding to the national agenda to promote outreach to business and the community, work placements have been long established in universities, creating a formal connection between students in HE institutions and large companies or corporations which host the placements. Connections with community enterprises have traditionally been on a smaller scale with less structured voluntary opportunities often organized in response to specific local, national or international events.

In keeping with its mission to '*engage with the wider community in its social and economic development...*' and to '*offer a college framework within which all students are enabled to develop their academic, professional, moral, physical and spiritual potential*', St Mary's University College has had a long tradition of involvement with volunteering in the local community.

The Service Learning module harnesses that tradition of community involvement and volunteering and incorporates it within the existing academic framework of workplace learning. However, Service Learning, community service and volunteering are not synonymous. Community service and volunteering become service learning when there is a deliberate connection between service and learning opportunities, and when that integration is accompanied by the opportunity to reflect on the service experience.

This module provides a true service learning experience – one which brings together volunteering and academic learning. This accords with Bringle & Hatcher's definition of Service learning as a

"course-based, credit-bearing educational experience that allows students to (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112).

The Service Learning module merges the enthusiasm of our students to give their time and skills in service to the community, with more formal academic learning thus providing an opportunity for student learning and for a real engagement with relevant and significant issues that affect all in the community. Students are encouraged to view service to the community not as a one off act but as

a lifelong commitment which they can continue both to give to and benefit from for the rest of their lives, whatever their chosen career path.

## The Learning Experience

The Service Learning module is a second year module available to all non ITT undergraduate students at St Mary's. It has been designed to help students to prepare for and understand organized service activity by developing in them an awareness of wider social issues together with an appreciation of the relations of these issues both to St Mary's and to the local community. It does this through offering a practical work placement opportunity in a local social, community, educational or charitable agency. By a combination of theory and practice the module enables students to develop their awareness and understanding of community and their role in it, and to enhance their employability skills through a process of practical application and reflection.

With its very specific focus on the not-for-profit sector, the Service Learning module is able to concentrate on the particularities of that sector, to look at service to the community from a historical and political perspective, and to investigate the culture of a chosen mission-led organization.

Students undertake a minimum of 60 hours of work over 1 semester in their chosen organization, organising their working hours around their other academic and/or professional commitments.

The academic component of the module includes topical and relevant issues which students are encouraged to analyse critically – they are introduced to the notion of social justice, explore the ‘taken for grantedness’ of the welfare state, of the need for charities, and learn to critically assess media coverage of government and welfare initiatives. Issues covered vary according to the particular interests and experiences of the cohort of students and according to debates that are current.

The Service Learning module aims to promote social responsibility in students and it does this both through the experience itself and by encouraging students to discuss and reflect on the issues that arise in the classroom. This is a mutually supportive atmosphere in which students are able to test their ideas, discuss any anxieties or misgivings they may have about their placements, and to resolve personal issues or prejudices which they feel may be impacting on their work. Students are also supported in doing this by the opportunity to meet regularly with the tutor to discuss their progress.

There is a continuous thread running through the module relating to taking responsibility for actions and for learning, and self evaluation. This is done through reflection on their contribution to the placement and on the experience more generally, and through a series of exercises in self assessment, time management and management of personal stress and stressful situations.

There is a focus throughout on transferable skills, on professionalism in the workplace and on using the experience to consider career plans and future learning needs.

## Active Citizenship

The Service Learning module is closely aligned with that part of the national agenda concerning the role of universities in society supporting active citizenship which was a recommendation in the Dearing report and has been pursued by government in different ways since 1997. As set out in Dearing (1997), one of the four main purposes of higher education is “to play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilized, inclusive society”

Service Learning encourages social responsibility through experiential learning opportunities. Students are involved in active citizenship, and are enabled to see their skills and talents as being important for making a contribution to their communities:

"If Higher Education develops the whole person by contributing to the 'maturing process', then active citizenship is crucial to the wider goals of social inclusion and the creation of a more cohesive society". (DfES, 2001)

Active citizenship involves an understanding of rights and responsibilities, and the opportunity to contribute to the community. In this module, students develop a knowledge and understanding of community and touch on related topics such as social justice, diversity, government and non-government organizations, equality and the rule of law. They gain life and employment skills through the discipline of regular attendance at the workplace and the requirements of them there, and through taking part in discussion and debates, analyzing information, expressing opinions and critical thinking. They have a chance to debate and to reflect on their values, the opportunity to construct arguments to support their viewpoint, and to gain an insight into alternative points of view.

The Service Learning module at St Mary's is in its own way therefore part of very much larger agendas that are only growing in significance as higher education is increasingly challenged to reflect on its responsibilities to social cohesion.

## **Effectiveness and Impact**

Feedback from both students and employers has been universally positive for this module with all host organizations keen to repeat the experience and take on further students, and with many students continuing to work in their chosen organization in a voluntary capacity (and one or two progressing to a paid role or to full-time work on graduation).

In December 2007, the module won the Henry Walpole Prize for Learning and Teaching, an annual award given for outstanding and innovative contribution to teaching and learning in the institution. This was particularly significant for all those involved in work placements as it reflects the growing acknowledgement in the academic sector of the value of work placements

The impact of the Service Learning module can be seen in three areas; the impact on the students, the impact on their host organisations; and the impact on the communities and individuals that the organisations serve.

A number of 'case stories' will be presented demonstrating impact through local, national and international examples, and showing that 'success' can be measured both in terms of academic achievement, and in less traditional ways.

***This presentation will focus on the idea of Education as formation, as developing the whole person, and as being a process which includes a huge range of people, knowledge and practice.***

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**ISBN: 0-9542231-8-7**

**13-digit ISBN: 978-0-9542231-8-2**

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**Integrating Work and Learning**



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