Sheffield Hallam University

ASET Annual Conference 2005: Proceedings of the 2005 ASET Annual Conference

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ASET
Integrating Work and Learning

ASET Annual Conference 2005

Proceedings of the 2005 ASET Annual Conference

Vanbrugh College, York
6th – 8th September 2005

ASET CONFERENCE

12th Annual Conference
Vanbrugh College, York
6th – 8th September 2005

ASET Annual Conference 2005

Proceedings of the 2005 ASET Annual Conference

Editor: Keith Fildes

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ASET Annual Conference 2005

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FOREWORD

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that ASET presents the proceedings of the Annual Conference, held at Vanbrugh College, University of York, from 6th – 8th September 2005.

The scope of the conference recognised the expansion of ASET's involvement in all forms of "Integrating Work and Learning", while continuing to value sandwich-course experience as the reference standard in fully-integrated, assessed and accredited, work-related learning.

Special thanks go to our guest speakers: Angela Smallwood from University of Nottingham and David Bagley from University of Central Lancashire presenting on behalf of their CETLs in 'Integrative Learning' and 'Employability through the Humanities' respectively, and James Thompson, Siân Jones-Davies and Helen Cookson from Eversheds LLP, covering some of the key legislative implications of placements. Our final speakers, from George at ASDA, were delayed in traffic and unable to deliver in person, but ASET Executive member Angela Peers, who had had close dealings with them, stepped in and delivered their presentation. All these addresses provided a most useful background of experience and expertise which is at the heart of ASET's mission.

As well as these more formal sessions, an important feature of ASET conferences is the opportunity to meet old friends and to make new ones, and to discuss practical as well as academic educational issues. We would particularly like to thank the workshop presenters who helped to direct and shape this with a range of engaging papers.

On behalf of all who attended, I should like to pay tribute to the Conference Committee, particularly Sarah Flynn the Chair, and Keith Fildes the ASET administrator who, working largely behind the scenes before and during the Conference, made all this feasible. In doing this I speak for the entire Executive.

As this goes to print I have had a sneak preview of plans for the 2006 Conference from 5-7 September at the Cadbury Manor House in Birmingham. As before, we have incorporated changes in response to the feedback from the 2005 conference, and I look forward to seeing you there.

Dr John Wilson
ASET Chairman

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

By James Thompson, Siân Jones-Davies and Helen Cookson, Eversheds LLP

Work Placements in the Education Sector

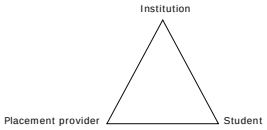
- Legal duties and real risks

James Thompson - Associate, Regulatory Team
Siân Jones-Davies -Head of Eversheds' Student Issues and Education Dispute Management Groups
Helen Cookson - Associate
7 September 2005

Placements – the background

- "Who cares"?
- Differing views
- Criminal/civil
- Costs (actual/hidden)
- Correlation between involvement/control and risk/liability
- Legal liability/expectations

The Triangular Relationship



What the law says….

- Common law
- Section 3 Health & Safety At Work Act 1974
- Contract
- The student (consumer) contract
- Negligence
- Other legislation (including anti-discrimination legislation and DPA)
- What the law may say…
- Levels of responsibilities

What does that mean for you?

- Criminal prosecution
- Personal injury claims
- Negligence
- Contract – student and provider
- PR
- UK and abroad

Change in stance?

- Lowering the standard?
- Commercial decision?
- Why change – the law hasn't?
- HSE viewpoint

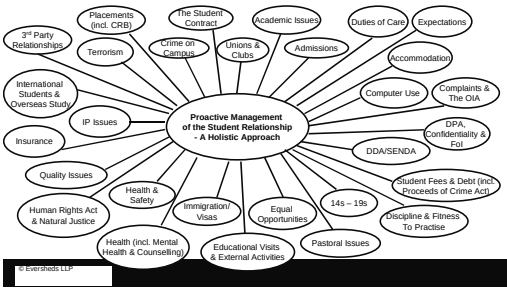
Do's and don'ts

- What does your Health & Safety Policy say?
- Risk assessments and documentation
- Ongoing assessments
- Policing your standards

Liabilities

- Personal – criminal/civil
- Institutional – criminal/civil
- Student perceptions (current and future)
- PR

Proactive and Holistic Management of the Student Relationship



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Conclusion

- No delegation of duties
- Consequences far outweigh the costs of compliance
- Reputation is everything
  - Course
  - Institution
  - UK education as a whole

Active Risk Management in Education

- http://armed.ilrt.bris.ac.uk

EVERSHEDS

www.eversheds.com

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Eversheds LLP – Health and Safety Question & Answer Session

John Wilson – ASET Chairman

To give some background to today's session, in the early 1990s ASET first became involved in Health and Safety issues relating to work placements, in response to questions raised at conferences. This culminated in the publication in 1997 of a report entitled 'Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE Students'. For this report solicitor's opinion (not Eversheds') was sought to try and establish a reasonable set of preparations to undertake before and during a placement. The report was adopted by CVCP (now UUK) as definitive guidance. Since 1997, all UUK's Health and Safety responsibilities have passed to UCEA. Recently there has been talk of revising/updating the report and ASET have been considering undertaking this (a working party has now been established and will be convening for a meeting in August 2006). In the past year USHA, the Safety Officers body alongside which ASET worked on the 1997 report, have been active in drawing up an independent report, a draft of which has been circulated. There has subsequently been much talk and confusion about the status and merits of this new USHA report.

The following record is a non-verbatim account of the session with the Eversheds panel on 7 September 2005, which has subsequently been approved by Eversheds.

Angela Peers – Manchester Metropolitan University

Are you familiar with the existing document and the new draft and, if so, could you outline the main differences of responsibility?

Siân Jones-Davies - Eversheds

Yes, we have seen both documents. The existing document encourages a more proactive approach, placing an onus on the institution to assess and manage health and safety risks. Examples of the proactive approach include the use of checklists, seeking feedback from the student and visits to placements. The draft revised guidance proposes a more reactive approach, for example, by the suggestion that the institution inform the placement provider of its health and safety expectations, rather than complete a checklist or carry out health and safety visits. Eversheds have serious concerns that this will result in a weakening of the manner in which institutions seek to discharge their health and safety obligations and will expose institutions to potential claims and investigation where students are thereby exposed to risks to their health and safety.

Angela Peers – Manchester Metropolitan University

Would such a new report not dilute or even remove the duty of care?

Siân Jones-Davies – Eversheds

No, not in the eyes of a court, as there has been no change in the law. Institutions will still owe a duty of care and a court would expect institutions to have regard to appropriate (rather than simply the most recent) guidance in discharging that duty of care.

Lisa Ward – University of Huddersfield

Why is the onus of responsibility not on the employer?

James Thompson – Eversheds

It is all about the triangular relationship between the student, employer and institution. Both employers and institutions have Health and Safety responsibilities.

Eversheds Presentation (supplement to 'Work Placements in the Education Sector–Legal Duties and Real Risks' handout)

The responsibility for the health and safety of placement students does not just rest with employers; the institution's legal duties extend off campus. Claims for breach of these duties could be pursued and, even if they are not successful, the time, money and damage to reputation incurred in defending them could be very harmful to the institution. Eversheds' view is that institutions should always maintain a degree of responsibility to seek to prevent both the corporate body and individuals being exposed to prosecution. Such a case could either come in the form of civil action where a claim is made against the institution, or criminal action in the event of death or serious injury where the institution's, and even an individual's, precautions can be scrutinised. If anyone in an organisation is able to control/dictate how the placement programme is run then they may acquire responsibility for the risk, which they must then manage and safeguard against. Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, organisations are liable to an unlimited fine and the £15 million that Transco were fined for four deaths shows the sort of figures applicable for breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act. However, simple steps can be taken to seek to make sure both the institution and individuals are not held liable.

The triangular relationship demonstrates simply the continual link between all three sides of a placement. The link between students and the institution always remains and responsibilities cannot be delegated.

Under common law there is a general duty to look after students' welfare. To prove an institution negligent, it must be shown that it has breached its duty of care. If an institution sends an individual to a placement and has not checked that it is safe, then it may have breached its duty and could be held liable.

In addition, Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act highlights employers' responsibility to look after people in their workplace who are not employees. If an institution sends someone on placement, it is possible that a court may interpret that the placement is in fact the workplace as, by definition, the workplace is not location specific. It remains for a judge to decide the scope of coverage.

Furthermore, if parties breach their contractual responsibilities then they may be liable. If contractual obligations have not been fulfilled then students, or possibly their parents, could bring legal action.

Although an institution may not have initiated the procedures, it can inherit the responsibilities. It needs evidence of what action it has taken as this will assist a legal team to defend a case against it.

Placement situations could theoretically also lead to criminal prosecutions. If there is proof of gross negligence, there is nothing to say a placement officer could not be charged with manslaughter. An example of this would be placing a student with a company known to have a bad Health and Safety reputation, ignoring warnings from students of near misses etc. Such action might not necessarily lead to a conviction but could bring about gross negligence charges. Placement practitioners therefore need to make sure they do enough to cover themselves and their organisation.

Regarding placements abroad, although UK criminal law has no jurisdiction overseas, charges could still be brought against negligent pre-placement preparation. A civil claim has in the past been brought against St Andrews University regarding one of their students who was attacked while on overseas study (rather than on a placement) in Odessa.

Health and Safety is an area an institution should not compromise on. By doing relatively little an institution can seek to protect itself, explicitly by demonstrating its duty of care with an audit trail of protective exercises such as checklists, risk assessments, Health and Safety visits and maintaining points of contact with students. In situations like this it is often seen that there are no such things as accidents and blame can always be apportioned. By maintaining a level of responsibility an institution can seek to avoid becoming a scapegoat.

Do what your health and safety policy says and keep documentary evidence to show it has been carried out. Risk assessment forms are very important in this. Maintain living documents, do not just write

then file records away, keep them under constant review and regularly audit policy. All Health and Safety regulators and police love documents so set out what all parties are going to do, make sure you do what you say and have a written fall back position. Finally, have a procedure for withdrawing students should such action be necessary.

Student perception is very important. If you do not perform the measures recommended, beware of creating a bad reputation for your institution. The press love stories about Health and Safety, damage and death, and it could cause a major PR issue and a deterrent for future students if an incident occurred.

Eversheds advise on all the issues highlighted in the 'Proactive and Holistic Management of the Student Relationship' diagram. This shows how many facets need to be taken into consideration.

Finally, you must take basic steps to document your preparation for placements to protect yourself and your institution. Remember your institution's continuing responsibilities - it should never be a case of out of sight, out of mind.

Question and Answer session

Sylvia Hargreaves – Nottingham Trent University

Regarding Criminal Liability, is Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act the only reference point for this?

James Thompson – Eversheds

No, risk assessment has a wider reach and is implicit in this. You should always do and carefully document risk assessment, though obviously different levels on this are determined by the nature of the placement. Placements in offices are less likely to require specific visits and Health and Safety assessment than placements in the construction industry, for example. You are more likely to get prosecuted for not correctly discharging your duty of care.

Carrie de Silva – Harper Adams University College

Referring to risk assessment, would you recommend visits for all new employers?

James Thompson – Eversheds

If you were being prosecuted, the first question the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector would ask you would be have you been there? You should be aware of factors like where their Health and Safety policy is displayed and who is the contact in the company with responsibilities in that area. You should go, as, if possible, should a Health and Safety expert.

Carrie de Silva – Harper Adams University College

What if practicalities make such action extremely difficult?

James Thompson – Eversheds

There is no leeway on this issue. Inconvenience or lack of resources are not an excuse in an inquiry. The best advice we can offer is that if you can possibly go, go. If not, this may be seen as a weakness by the HSE.

Zineb Norcliffe – University of Huddersfield

Is Health and Safety expertise an essential requirement for the visiting person or will any placement tutor satisfy?

James Thompson – Eversheds

It would be great if the visit could be made by a Health and Safety expert but, if not, then any visit is better than none. A practical balance needs to be struck but, in an investigation, such a point could be raised.

Siân Jones-Davies – Eversheds

Whoever the visitor is, it would be preferable if they are aware of their institution's policy, be able to recognise risks and have training in risk assessment. They should also be able to refer back to the Health and Safety officer when appropriate. There is a spectrum of possibilities from no visit, up to a visit by a Health and Safety manager. The further along the spectrum, the better should be the situation for the institution.

Zineb Norcliffe – University of Huddersfield

What about placements abroad?

Siân Jones-Davies – Eversheds

Obviously there are more practical difficulties in visiting overseas but there are also potentially far higher risks which an institution should consider addressing. It should also make sure it checks the local legal situation.

Tamsin Pyne – University of Plymouth

Are there generic guidelines on risk assessment for overseas placements?

Siân Jones-Davies – Eversheds

Useful reference points on placements include the QAA, UKCOSA (www.ukcosa.org.uk) and ARMED, a HEFCE funded site (http://armed.ilrt.bris.ac.uk).

Jan Young - College of St. Mark & St. John

What are our responsibilities to the employer?

Helen Cookson – Eversheds

It depends on the arrangements put in place. What the student is doing determines risk and potential liabilities and you need to decide who will accept them. Expectations need to be clearly expressed, for example, is active supervision expected and by which party, who is accepting what risks? If you know a particular student has a condition, say a mental illness, you may have a responsibility to tell the employer of this.

Siân Jones-Davies - Eversheds

In relation to the triangular relationship between institution, placement provider and student, the courts may regard the institution-employer relationship (if indeed the placement provider is an employer - there may not be an employment relationship between the placement provider and the student) in a particular situation as a contractual one, even if there is no written contract in place. Therefore it is better to have the 'rules of the game' expressly articulated from the outset.

Jan Young - College of St. Mark & St. John

In regards to students' conditions, what about confidentiality/DDA issues?

Siân Jones-Davis – Eversheds

You need to make it clear to students from the outset what you may disclose and in what circumstances and seek their consent to this. It is important in terms of managing expectations that all sides are aware of disclosure situations that may arise.

Helen Cookson – Eversheds

There are exceptions to the duty of confidentiality such as when disclosure is in the overriding public interest. Even sensitive personal data (e.g. medical information) may be disclosed responsibly under the Data Protection Act, for example if it is necessary to protect the vital interests of a person.

Jo Noblett – University of Central Lancashire

Sometimes Health and Safety jobs are delegated to lower clerical and administrative staff and responsibility becomes interwoven into their jobs. Should this happen and can they become personally liable?

James Thompson – Eversheds

The HSE always tend to climb trees to look for higher levels of responsibility and usually leave the lower practitioners alone whilst investigating the senior people who defined the Health and Safety policy. The individuals on the bottom rung tend to be ok unless they can be seen to have been overtly negligent. Generally though, it is a mistake to delegate down so far within the institution and emphasis would shift to a corporate level.

Tricia Tape - Loughborough University

In terms of checking premises, I am responsible for 300 students in 120 locations. Although I receive feedback every year for every company, are you saying I need to perform onsite risk assessment every year at each location?

James Thompson – Eversheds

It is all about being reasonable and striking a balance. Start with the ones you perceive to be the most risky. This alone shows that you have thought about the risks in your actions.

Siân Jones-Davies – Eversheds

Also consider what you are promising students generally about placements. Be aware of making blanket statements to students. The more emphatic the statement, the more likely it may be interpreted as a contractual promise. If the promise is not kept, this could lead to civil proceedings for breach of contract.

Harriet Robinson – King's College London

Are Health and Safety issues impacted by differing definitions of what a student is and what a placement is?

Siân Jones-Davies – Eversheds

Definitions can vary from institution to institution. There may be no precise definitions of some things and the courts may decide upon their own definitions. There is a danger that institutions may in their own minds have defined placements too narrowly and overlooked their responsibilities in areas such as opportunities for voluntary work, concentrating rather on compulsory placements in which they are directly involved. In general, risk and duties arise where there is a degree of connection between the parties.

Helen Cookson – Eversheds

You need to be aware that this would be judged on how it is perceived by an outside third party with no knowledge of institutional structures. It would be based on the facts of what is offered, how it is

communicated and any statements of responsibility. Defining the scope of definitions may be useful for greater awareness internally, but may not absolve responsibility if matters come before the courts.

Angela Peers – Manchester Metropolitan University

The QQA code is very all encompassing in its definition of a placement including all course related activity outside of campus. Is the duty of care limited to the working day, like it normally does once a studying student is off campus, or does it extend outside of the work experience and environment?

Siân Jones-Davies – Eversheds

Duty of care is not generally defined simply by reference to a 9-5 day. It may in some situations be reasonable to extend the duty of care to areas not directly connected to the course-related part of a placement.

Tricia Tape - Loughborough University

I have 80 students placed in London in close proximity to the locations of the recent bombings. Would I therefore be expected to, say, warn students against going to London?

Siân Jones-Davies and James Thompson – Eversheds

Generally such incidents are difficult to predict as distinct, say, to a situation involving an area which is a known trouble zone where risks are more likely to arise and are more foreseeable. It is a difficult situation but you should focus on factors like what support and planning you have in place. Be proactive in collating and maintaining emergency contact numbers and outline a plan that enables you to be able to account for all your students in the occasion of such an event.

Dave Hotchkiss – Plymouth College of Art and Design (By proxy and subsequently responded to by Eversheds after the session)

In the creative industries many placements are only short term and with sole traders who do not have Employers' Liability insurance. Could you please clarify what insurance is essential and minimum as if we demand Employers Liability insurance we will be losing a wide range of valuable experiential opportunities?

The only insurance which employers are compelled to take out by statute is Employers Liability (EL) insurance. There is no statutory obligation for a sole trader, who by definition will not have any employees, to take out EL insurance. By implication, therefore, sole traders will not carry EL insurance. A sole trader may, however, voluntarily take out some other form of insurance (for example, public liability insurance which will include occupiers' liability insurance) which will indemnify for liabilities to third parties in respect of injury or death, or loss or damage to their property, at work. Such insurance would not necessarily cover an incident relating to a student, however; whether it did would depend on the exact cover in place and the specific circumstances of the incident arising.

As some placement providers may not comply with the statutory obligation to take out EL insurance, or do not need to because they are sole traders, it is sensible for an institution to request clarification from a placement provider of what insurance the placement provider has in place, and to request a copy of any policy documents or schedule relating to that insurance, in order for the institution to establish whether it covers students and in what circumstances.

In relation specifically to EL insurance, what will determine whether a student on placement is "an employee" for that purpose will be the definition of "employee" under the particular EL insurance policy. Temporary employees may not ordinarily be covered by the definition. Even where a placement provider has EL cover which includes additional temporary individuals, it may need to notify its insurers when it takes on such individuals as it will be under a continuing duty to disclose circumstances which may affect its liability cover (for example, employing additional persons).

Institutions should generally have regard to the apportionment of risks and potential liabilities across the triangular relationship of institution, placement provider and student and whether that apportionment is reflected in the insurance cover (not just in respect of EL insurance) in place across that relationship, particularly where students do not fall within the definition of "employee" for EL purposes. It is suggested that institutions discuss with their brokers the type and extent of cover currently in place (taking into account the existing cover, not only of the institution, but also of the placement provider), whether that cover is sufficient and appropriate, and whether it might be possible to extend their own insurance to cover students on placements.

Institutions will wish to avoid unintentionally finding themselves in a position where an incident involving death, injury or loss to a student arises where no insurance cover is in place across the triangular relationship.

In summary, therefore, an institution should, as a minimum, look either to: (1) place students with placement providers with EL insurance or some other form of appropriate insurance which will specifically cover the students; and/or (2) check whether the institution's current insurance programme is applicable and/or an endorsement or extension of cover to the current programme is available that will adequately cover students on placements; and/or (3) consider with its broker whether any specific policy to cover students on placement with placement providers is available in the market.

From a Health and Safety (not insurance) perspective, both the institution and the placement provider will have non-delegable statutory duties to ensure the Health and Safety of a student during the placement.

ASET would like to thank the Eversheds team for giving its conference delegates such an invaluable opportunity.

Transcribed by Keith Fildes, with acknowledgement to Sarah Flynn.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Paul Jenkins and Paula Wilson, George at ASDA

GEORGE

George

Paul Jenkins – Resourcing Manager
Paula Wilson – Development Manager

GEORGE

The George Talent Pipeline

Purpose

- To provide the business with a fresh intake of young talent & ensure that our student colleagues are the first stage of our people succession planning.
- To develop their talent to become exceptional leaders, enabling them to grow the business and shape George's future.
- To work closely with education to help guide and advise on business needs to ensure smooth integration of students into the workplace

GEORGE

The George Talent Pipeline

Three main initiatives

– **George Degree**

– **Student Placement programme**

– **Graduate Scheme**

GEORGE

George Degree

- BA (Hons) in Fashion Retailing Management in partnership with Nottingham Trent and Westminster Universities
- Academic Requirements to be accepted on the programme
- 6 year programme – 4 students per year
- Working full time at George head office within the Buying and Merchandise functions, whilst studying on day release at the universities
- Opportunity to choose career path once experienced each of the functions
- Work in a role that plays an important part in our business
- The chance to go on the graduate scheme for the final 3 years of the programme

GEORGE

George Student Placement Scheme

- 12 months programme
- Current opportunities in Design, Buying, Merchandising, Quality Technology, Branch Merchandising, Marketing, Visual Merchandising and IT
- Future opportunities in Fabric Development, Colour Technology, Logistics
- Work in a role that plays an important part in our business
- The chance to take on more responsibility and get experience of wider projects
- An excellent opportunity to come back as a graduate
- Overall winner of the 2003 NCWE award for work experience

GEORGE

George Graduate Scheme

- 3 year fast track programme
- Current opportunities in Garment Design, Buying and Merchandising
- Future opportunities in Quality Technology, Fabric Development, Graphic Design and Logistics
- Work in 3 roles during the programme
- The aim over the 3 years: To broaden product knowledge and to increase managerial responsibility
- Take on general business wide projects to broaden knowledge on top of day job
- Attend the Asda Graduate programme training and development sessions
- Successful completion of the programme is measured by how quickly a managerial position is achieved after leaving the programme

GEORGE

Managing a Placements Development…

GEORGE

New to Role…

Direction:

- Pre – induction
- 2 week company induction
- 2 week scheme specific induction
- 4 week handover
  - Day in the life of… / Week in the life of…
- Mentoring scheme in place
  - Grad's sponsored by Board member

GEORGE

Technical Skills…

Coaching:

- Give colleagues the tools that they need to understand their accountabilities and help them to deliver within their job roles quickly and effectively, in turn providing both colleagues & the business with:
  - Consistency throughout the business of job roles
  - Consistency of colleagues training & development
  - Consistent ways of working
  - Consistency of information given to colleagues

GEORGE

Managing Great Performance – Driving a Learning Culture…

Supporting:

- George Performance Review Process
- Appraisals & Monthly 1-2-1's with Line Managers
- Output to provide colleagues with clear focus through performance contracts based around KRA's and a robust personal development plan to help deliver successfully both technically & behaviourally.

GEORGE

Great Performers – Consistent Achievers

- **Competent** – Knowledge and skills
- **Motivated** – Interest and enthusiasm
- **Committed** – Confident to do the job without supervision

GEORGE

How Do we Measure Success?

- **Listening Groups**
- **Performance Review Process**
- **People Asset Review.**

GEORGE

Perceptions in the Business…

GEORGE

Key to our Student Schemes Success

- **Developing partnerships with universities**
- **Selection Criteria**
- **Assessment Day**
- **Future initiatives**

GEORGE

Perception of Students/Graduates in George

- **George Degree – Initial reaction fantastic due to students being additional resource**
- **Student Placements – Recognise the importance of having students but know they need a lot of training and will leave after 12 months**
- **Graduates – Graduates who return having completed a placement with us are "hot property"**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Angela Smallwood, CETL at University of Nottingham

Angela Smallwood, University of Nottingham

CETL for Integrative Learning

'Fostering students' abilities to integrate learning – across courses, over time, and between campus and community life – is one of the most important goals and challenges of higher education'
Carnegie Foundation, 2004

Initial partnership

- Professor Martin Binks – Director, UNIEI – Entrepreneurship Education
- Dr Alan Booth – National Teaching Fellow – School of History – History Director, Subject Centre for History, Classics and Archaeology
- Dr Angela Smallwood – National Teaching Fellow – Director, Personal and Academic Development for Students in Higher Education (PADSHE) → eportfolios

Integrative Learning

- Making deep level connections between:
  - **academic learning**
  - **reflective self-awareness/personal development**
  - **experiential learning in a range of practical contexts.**
- Holistic, intentional learning – reflective, independent, self-managed – lifewide
- Student-centred; student-owned ePortfolios

Opportunities for students

- To develop critical reflection, creativity self-reliance, personal confidence
- Collaborative learning with employers, graduates, teachers, students union, careers service, other students, active communities
- Sliding scale of involvement: student centres; study groups; internships

Scale of outcomes

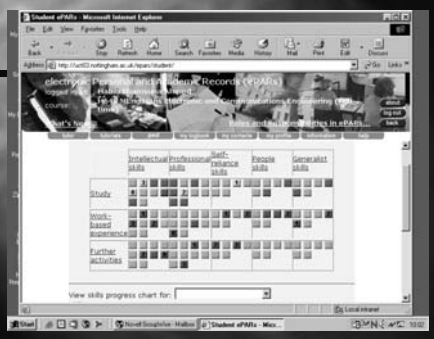
- Student Involvement
  - **Year 1 – 500**
  - **Year 5 –> 5,000 (includes regional universities)**
- Staff Involvement
  - **Year 1 – 2 Schools**
  - **Year 2 –> 7 Schools**
  - **Year 5 – potentially University-wide, plus**
    - **Regional Universities**
    - **National and International Networks**

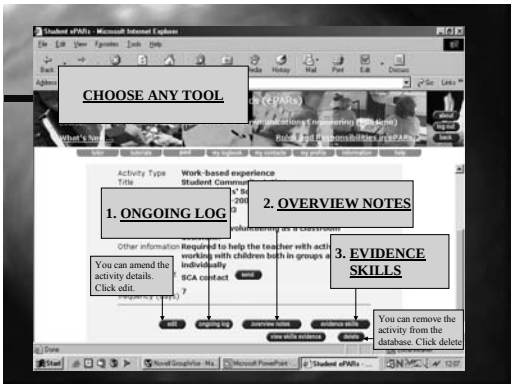
Entrepreneurship education Academy meets world of work

- **Nottingham University Business School: UN Institute for Enterprise and Innovation**
- **Creativity and problem-solving group work on live case studies**
- **Poster presentations, elevator pitches, to employers**
- **Not subject-specific**

Non-vocational subjects

- **Reference writing – key ingredients**
- **Employability and the things we've not been giving marks for**
  - **American Studies year abroad**
  - **Work experience**
  - **Life experience**





ePortfolio for Lifelong Learning

- **Univ of Nottingham JISC project**
  www.nottingham.ac.uk/epreferencemodel
- **Factoring case studies in, as we build the concept and the technology**
- **Nottingham CETL will provide some examples at the interface between study and work**
- **We are seeking to enrich our evidence base – would you like us to include your practice?**
  Angela.Smallwood@nottingham.ac.uk

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

David Bagley, CETL at University of Central Lancashire

ASET annual conference

6 September 2005

An Employability CETL:
The UCLan Centre for Employability through the Humanities (CETH)

David Bagley

What do people 'know' about studying Humanities?

- Traditional, demanding courses.
- Great fun for enthusiasts.

But

- No benefit to UK plc.
- No career paths.

So why not do something useful?

Times Higher Aug 19 2005

"fewer students will choose to study arts when an increased debt burden makes the salary implications of studying law, accountancy, engineering and the sciences even more attractive than at present."

(Jim Morissey BA English & French)

Times Higher Aug 19 2005

"If notions such as citizenship or civic duty are to have any logical import, we must ensure that society's critical faculty, represented and promoted by the humanities is not rendered irrelevant."

(Jim Morissey BA English & French)

Context: UCLan

- 35000 students.
- Strong on QA systems.
- Employability focus.
- Committed to "developing employable graduates who are well prepared for their future lives in a changing world".

Context: UCLan Centre for Employability

- Cross university brief.
- 4 academics.
- Teaching: Career Management, Personal Development, Enterprise.
- Staff, curriculum, materials development.
- Innovation.

Context: UCLan Dept of Humanities

Research, academic, non-vocational but employability focus.

- English.
- Theatre Studies.
- History.
- Film & Media.
- American Studies.

Employability in the UCLan Humanities curriculum

- Embedded in core subjects.
- Available as optional subjects.
- Additional electives available.
- Placements with employers.
- Live projects.

Some Modules:

- Planning your Career in Film & Media.
- Making the most of your job.
- Community History.
- Live projects.
- Working with English.
- Starting a Business.
- Personal Development.
- Writing for the media.
- Placements with employers.

Excellent feedback

"I can't imagine that I would enjoy another course at any other university – or the same course at another university - as well as this one. Challenging, diverse, interesting, fantastic tutors."

(Year 3 Eng Lit. student)

Excellent feedback 2

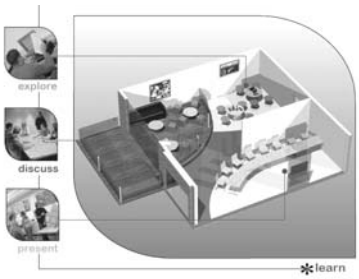
"High levels of personal reflection are encouraged throughout, dramatically enhancing students' self-awareness and self-reliance. The team still leads the way nationally."

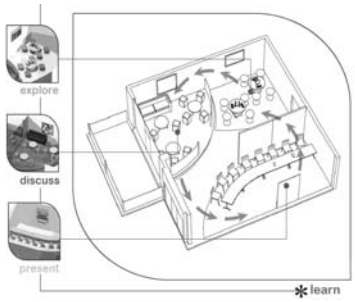
Dr Peter Hawkins, External Examiner

Main features of the Bid

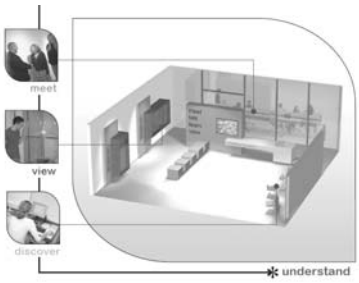
- Employability further developed through the curriculum
- Different approaches to T&L

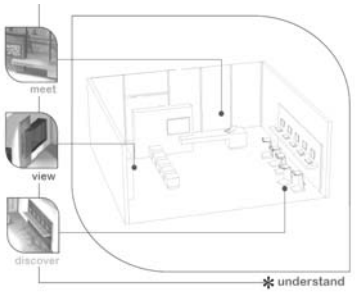
Learning Space





Centre for Employability through the Humanities





Main features of the Bid

- **Employability further developed through the curriculum**
- **Different approaches to T&L**
- **Scholarly approach to evaluation**
- **RWEs in publishing, theatre, museums, media skills, cinema**

Realistic Work Environments

Students will be able to gain academic credit and develop employability skills by working on projects in teams in near commercial environments: Publishing, Arthouse Cinema, Media Development, Theatre, Museums/ Exhibitions.

They will not become experts but rather gain insights into particular careers.

Realistic Work Environments

Students will be able to gain academic credit and develop employability skills by working on projects in teams in the Publishing RWE.

In one module, students will work in teams to specify, design and undertake the publication of a piece of work such as creative writing, using appropriate media. They will produce a reflective diary and critical appraisal of their work as part of the assessment.

Main features of the Bid

- **Employability further developed through the curriculum**
- **Different approaches to T&L**
- **Scholarly approach to evaluation**
- **RWEs in publishing, theatre, museums, media skills, cinema**
- **Incubation facilities**
- **Links with community, schools, Subject Centres**
- **Emphasis on reflection**

Where are we up to?

- ***Seven (fractional) staff appointed.***
- ***New building under design (to be shared with Performing Arts & Media Technology).***
- ***Temporary accommodation ready on Monday.***
- ***Four new modules written.***
- ***RWEs being developed.***
- ***Formal launch October.***

Next Steps

- ***Staff rewards system.***
- ***Links with schools, colleges & HE.***
- ***More employer links.***
- ***More new modules.***
- ***Enterprise & entrepreneurship programme.***
- ***Dissemination.***

Further information

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/TInits/cetl/

www.uclan.ac.uk/ceth

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Thanks for listening

Embedding Employability: A Case Study of a Major Periodic Review of Courses within the Carnegie Faculty of Sport & Education at Leeds Metropolitan University

Jeff Abrams and Chris Wolsey
Leeds Metropolitan University

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore alternative methods of dealing with the complex and contentious areas of employability, key skills and personal development planning (PDP), within a higher education (HE) context. The discourse tends to be largely based upon the well-worn arguments surrounding the relative merits of both academic and vocational approaches to learning. The confusion is further enhanced by the way in which the concepts of employability, key skills and PDP are almost used interchangeably. Although it is impossible to adequately deal with such issues in a paper of this length, it is important that a clearer consensus/framework is developed in order to move forward. However, the lack of a substantive research base often means we are left with the superficial approaches espoused by external bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency.

There is also a political dimension to be considered that is often left out of the debate. This political dimension has both big 'P' and little 'p' aspects. The big P is driven by the government's agenda to increase HE student numbers, as well as widening access and diversity. At the same time HE institutions have to successfully retain students who, in tandem with their parents, are becoming increasingly instrumental in the choices that will impact their future career opportunities. Such trends are merely exacerbated by the need to pay top up fees, leading all stakeholders to increasingly view students as 'consumers' of higher education.

The HE response to this problem relates to the little 'p'. Students need support to achieve such objectives at a time when that support is under great pressure. Added to this, students needs have changed. There are more students, from more diverse backgrounds and with more specific learning needs than a decade ago. Quick fix solutions to these problems are often espoused. For example, we need to reduce assessment, reduce the number of modules, reduce the number of modules that need to be passed, or focus on smarter teaching using the latest advances in e-learning. However, in many cases, actions are based on intuition, managerial decision-making, or a quick response to ill-conceived external driving forces. Tutors are asked/required to simply accept that employability and PDP initiatives are needed and they are increasingly seen as being as important as other aspects of HE learning.

However, the critique and evidence base is mostly limited, if presented at all. This creates great potential for resistance to change and for lip service to be given to whatever process is espoused and implemented. In turn, the need for accountability leads to requirements to monitor the process in order to ensure that it works effectively. In many cases, however, this is problematic as performance measures such as 'first destination statistics' are spurious and lead to superficial conclusions. Where more substantive evaluation occurs, this tends to be driven by external research funds, rather than a fundamental institutional desire to better understand and develop the process.

We are also faced with the problem of how to implement such ideas and how to deal with the resistance to change that is almost always present when consensus is not. The limited literature suggests that approaches to employability, personal development planning and key skills tend to fail when there is limited ownership on the part of both academics and students for the implementation and understanding of the potential benefits of such approaches.

Driving Forces for Change

Employability and the development of key skills are not new to higher education. However, the balance between the development of key skills and discipline-based knowledge has changed over the last 20 years. The Enterprise in Higher Education scheme in the 1980s and the growth of BTEC national and higher national diplomas helped to raise the profile and perceived importance of key skill development in higher education. This in turn helped to inform and improve practice in these important areas within more traditional programmes of study. More recently the Quality Assurance Agency has placed a significant emphasis on key skill development within most higher education programmes through the use of benchmark statements, codes of practice, nationally agreed frameworks and programme specifications.

Although most academics would agree that employability and the development of key skills are important aspects of HE practice, there continues to be little agreement about the most effective and efficient way of achieving this in practice. Hence, there are anecdotal descriptions of how various institutions have addressed these areas of work but little in the way of concrete evidence to support effective methods. As a consequence of this, we get many examples but no judgments of which methods are most effective in a given context. This is also true within our case study. There are examples of practice that colleagues have adopted across the University, but little in the way of evidence to support which models are effective. In fact, there is also little in the way of evaluation to influence such judgments. This is a consequence of the need to respond to external and internal driving forces quickly, often with little time for reflection and evaluation. Moreover, where more time is available there is a tendency to de-prioritise this area in favour of more important work. A discussion paper produced by the Quality Assurance Agency for Vice Chancellors highlights such issues.

"HE policy should be seen as part of a continuum of related policies and activities aimed at promoting as accurate record of personal achievement and improving an individual's capacity to reflect upon and plan for their own development. While many members of the academic community would embrace the ideals contained in the recommendation, there will be others that will be less convinced of its value. Implementation of policy in this area will be as much about winning hearts and minds as about establishing objectives and procedural requirements." (Jackson, 1999 p. 1)

The above quote from the QAA demonstrates the essence of the problem of implementing such initiatives. Without clear evidence of the benefits of such approaches there is almost certain to be resistance and lack of commitment by many academics to take forward such initiatives in a productive and effective way. What is required is evidence-based practice that clearly evaluates the relative merits of the adopted approach.

The Approach Taken

Given the plethora of competing issues, opinions and priorities it was not possible to produce an 'off the shelf', 'one size fits all' approach to the problem. In fact, there were various views as to the best way forward. The approach to PDP across both schools demonstrates both similarities and differences, reflecting the unique context of each. The School of Sport, Exercise and Physical Education will concentrate their approach to PDP around the personal tutorial process. This will be supported by the work experience module at level two. The School of Leisure and Sport Management will embed PDP within a combination of individual modules, such as 'work experience', and a supporting personal tutorial programme.

However, both approaches reflect the need to engage in more substantive personal development over the three years of study. Personal tutorials form an integral part of a students personal development planning. At each level courses will provide a structured tutorial programme, designed to facilitate the development of key, specific and career skills in conjunction with appropriate modules. A structured approach across all three levels will ensure that students recognise that Higher Education is more than the sum of the academic modules studied. Activities within the tutorial programme will support students in the mapping of key, specific and career skills which are experienced, developed, or assessed throughout the whole university experience. This is further supported by all modules where a comprehensive mapping is provided.

As a consequence of the above, three distinct approaches have emerged:

Approach 1 involves an enhanced personal tutorial system that is supported by more detailed module descriptors itemising the development of key, specific and career skills within each module. In addition, there is a work experience module at level two which facilitates experiential learning through personal planning and reflection. With the exception of the work experience, the process of personal development planning is not directly assessed.

Approach 2 involves enhanced personal tutorials and module descriptors. A specific personal development module at level one and the work experience module at level two. At level three there is a more indirect method of personal development planning through existing modules. Assessment takes place during levels one and two, but there is no direct assessment at level three.

Approach 3 involves a more overt approach to personal development planning with dedicated modules at each level, integrated into a system of personal tutors/tutorials. Direct assessment takes place at all three levels.

Methods

The case study will be based on tracking the longitudinal impact on students on the three differing approaches to PDP, employability and key skill development over a period of six years (3 years in higher education and the first 3 years thereafter).

These three approaches will apply to the incoming first year students, but not the existing second and third year students. We will also track the present third year students as a control group.

We will sample students from each group to determine the effectiveness of the respective approaches taken to personal development planning. We will do this by using questionnaires and focus groups. There are clear problems with tracking this type of information at a particular point in time, as it may not be until much further along in a student's career that they can see the benefits of the approach taken. Nonetheless, it is important to track students at the early stages of these developments to ensure information gathered is robust over time. By tracking students over a six-year period we will gather information on employment and personal development in the longer term.

Our intention, through the proposed study, is to provide an evidence base to make a small contribution to this area of work. This in turn should help to inform decision-making and improve practice. Whilst we do not intend to expand on all of the issues highlighted above, we feel that it is important to establish the context in which many of these ideas and techniques are operating. This will help to ground this case study research in the working practices and culture of the institution. As this paper is being written, the University has just started a consultation exercise focusing upon its proposed employability policy and strategy. It is hoped that such actions will lead to a more substantive and coherent approach to this important area of the 'lifelong learning' agenda.

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Grey, C and Elena, A. (2004) Essential Readings in Management Learning London, Sage
Jackson, N. (1999) Developing A Progress File for Higher Education A Discussion Paper Quality Assurance Agency
Partington, D. (2002) Essential Skills for Management Research London, Sage

Reflective Learning through Journals/Log Books – A Business School's Approach

Nicola Bullivant
Aston University

Primarily, the purpose behind this paper is to share with a wider audience of placement officers, tutors and those who are involved in the management of placement students, the approach taken to encourage reflective learning in undergraduate placement students at Aston Business School (ABS).

Reflective learning forms an important foundation of the placement year at Aston Business School, where the placement is a mandatory element of the four-year degree for all home/EU students (optional for International students) who are taking a Single Honours degree. The placement year is not compulsory for those students taking a Combined Honours degree, although approximately 50% of students taking a Business School subject do opt to take a placement year through ABS.

The placement year is assessed, carrying credits which amount to a contribution of 10% towards the students' final degree. The assessment methods used require the students to submit an academic essay, a report and a log book, the latter being the reflective piece of work.

The placement year has a set of explicit, robust learning objectives:

a) To benefit from the integration of university study and work experience in ways which facilitate critical reflection on each;
b) To experience the responsibilities, tasks and relationships involved in managerial work at a level appropriate to a third year undergraduate student in a business school;
c) Where students are specialising in a particular functional or professional area, to gain greater practical understanding of their chosen specialism;
d) To gain an understanding of the ways in which their placement organisation operates and how this might relate to other organisations and management processes;
e) To build a personal awareness of their own interests, competencies, values and potential;
f) To develop the ability to share their work experience and evaluations with their peers and with academic staff in order to gain more from their final year of study and to assist others to do likewise;
g) To increase their ability to make informed career choices.

The logbook's objective is as a developmental piece, rather than as an academic piece, aiming to meet the objectives b - e (possibly a and f too).

Aston Business School's Placement Office introduced a log book as part of its assessment of the students' placement year several years ago. This was initially graded on a pass/fail basis but, more recently, this marking scheme was adapted to include "merit" and "distinction" ratings too, to reward those students who fully engaged with this piece of work and demonstrated that they had developed the ability to self-reflect.

For students embarking on their placement for the academic year 2005/6, a decision has been taken to revise the title of this piece in order to move away from being merely a "log book" to being a "Reflective Learning Journal." The decision came about as a result of students' feedback on this piece, the number and range of enquiries the Placement Office team needed to deal with relating to the log book, and feedback from tutors involved in marking the log books. Overall, students demonstrated a lack of ability to engage wholeheartedly with the piece. The term "log book", for some, conjured up the notion of the piece as descriptive i.e. literally logging what they did and what happened, despite the detailed instructions provided to them. Critical self-reflection was being carried out to only a basic level by some students.

Students who undertook a placement in 2003/4 were surveyed on a range of areas relating to their placement when they returned to university in October 2004. The results of the survey showed that students felt that the instructions and information provided to them on the (then) log book were insufficient - "more information on log book should be available"; "more straight forward guidelines for the log book"; "more detail on each piece of coursework"; "examples of log books should be made available" and "the placement report and log book should count towards final year grade".[1]

Students on placement in 2004/5 have benefited from the use of the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is widely used at ABS. A placements module has been developed which incorporates the functionality of student discussion boards. These boards facilitate intra-student discourse, along with having quick access to a member of the placements team with whom they can raise queries. A range of topics have been discussed through the discussion boards this year, including issues surrounding writing log books.

Key questions posed on the discussion boards from July 2004-April 2005 relate to students' unease with writing in the first person, writing descriptively and not reflectively, simply not recording experiences at source, and so on.

Journal Structure

For students on placement in 2005/6, the Reflective Learning Journal will be an essential coursework requirement. The journal requires students to keep records of their experiences and how this links to their learning, thus developing their ability to critically self-reflect. The structure of the journal is as follows:

Section One: Framework

Here the students put together a framework for their placement employment upon commencement. The students arrange a meeting with their placement supervisor to discuss and agree a framework for the placement. During this process they are advised to look to address, at least, the following basic questions:

- What is your role in the organisation? What will this entail? What are your responsibilities?
- What are you aiming to achieve?
- What personal skills do you wish to develop/gain?
- How will your progress be appraised by your supervisor?
- What training/learning/development opportunities will be provided?

The meeting is then documented by the student and both parties sign this record. This then completes Section One of the journal and sets a framework for the placement year.

Section Two: Regular Reflections

This section of the journal is written over the course of the placement year, month by month. Students meet with their Placement Supervisors regularly during the placement year – this may be frequently during the early stages (i.e. daily, weekly) and then perhaps less frequently as they settle into their role (but ideally monthly).

The meetings should enable the student to:

- Gain feedback from their Placement Supervisor on their performance
- Reflect on what they have achieved and how
- Reflect on any difficulties that they have encountered, highlighting any particular problems or areas of difficulty there might be and agreeing what could be done to resolve these
- Decide on a course of action for the next stage of the placement, taking into account progress so far

Students are advised that such meetings will be more effective for all parties if they prepare for them thoroughly beforehand. A checklist is provided to assist students in the preparation process.

Each meeting is then documented by the student by means of keeping a record and this then forms one monthly entry for Section Two of the journal. Once again, both parties sign the piece. At the end of

[1] Placement Office Report, Nicola Bullivant, 2003/4 Academic Year.

the placement year, each student's journal should normally contain 12 entries for Section Two. However, they may include more entries, if the student feels (or their supervisor or tutor feels) that more regular meetings were required. Additionally, for example, if the placement company has an appraisal process, the reports or documents from appraisal meetings could be incorporated into the journal as these are complimentary reflective processes.

Each of the monthly entries should include comments on:

- The activities the students has been involved in
- Reflection on any problems they faced and what action they took to try to resolve the issue
- Their learning – they should also reflect on the skills and knowledge gained, and any personal development from the experiences
- An outline of their objectives for the next month

With the often highly personal notion of reflection, students are advised that they may wish to write about a particular event or learning situation for a second time, perhaps at a later date after their supervisor has signed off the original entry for that month. Students are reassured that this is acceptable in those situations where they wish to write very openly and honestly – perhaps, for example, about a personal situation or an event involving the supervisor. In these circumstances, both the original signed entry and the second versions should be submitted.

Section Three: Summary

The final section of the log book is a summary of what the student feels they have gained from the placement in terms of skills, new learning, knowledge, experience, training etc. This is the overall, holistic reflection on their placement – what have they learnt? How have they developed as a person? What skills have they gained? How have they developed as a student?

They evaluate their performance against the objectives outlined in Section One and are asked to reflect on whether these objectives were met. Did they develop further than anticipated? We encourage the students to not worry if they did not meet all of the aims and objectives they set out to achieve in Section One; they are not penalised when the piece is marked. However, if this is the case, it is essential that they reflect on and comment upon why they did not meet these goals.

Students are given some examples of this kind of development to aid the process.

Programme Relevance

The importance placed upon the students' ability to critically self-reflect is very high – Aston Business School's degrees are accredited by a number of professional bodies, including:

- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants in England and Wales
- Chartered Institute of Marketing
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland
- The Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators
- Chartered Insurance Institute

For students who embark on professional careers and develop their membership levels within these professional bodies, the skill of reflective practice is essential. For example, CIPD members are required to practice and be able to demonstrate continuing professional development in order to upgrade their membership. Members complete an application form which states "the important aspect here is that you are able to reflect on your learning and show how you have added value in a professional capacity".[2]

Tutor Support

Each student is assigned a placement tutor who, along with visiting the student (and their supervisor) whilst on placement, also provides academic guidance to students and will "liaise with the student

[2] Chartered Institute of Personal Development, Chartered Membership Simplified Application Form, London, 2005.

throughout the year by whatever method is appropriate to help their development and maximise learning opportunities".[3]

Personal Development Plans

Personal Development Plans have been piloted across the University in 2004/5, with 9 current Aston Business School placement students taking part in this study. At the time of writing this paper, a feedback survey is being carried out by the PDP Officer. A section within this survey will look at the reflective learning experiences of students. Therefore, there is no data as yet on the perceptions of students on the need to reflect and how they went about this.

[3] Aston Business School – Briefing Pack for Students, Company Supervisors and Tutors, Nicola Bullivant, 2005/6 Academic Year.

Investing in Technology to Manage Placements and Support Career Guidance

Ann Doris
Queen's University Belfast

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This paper will examine the value of investing in technology to manage placements and support career guidance within the School of Computer Science at Queen's University Belfast. The focus will be particularly on the move from the old system of posters and emailed information, through to the development of a web enabled placement tracking system, designed to support students and employers in order to maximise the opportunities afforded by the work placement experience.

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

The School of Computer Science has been running placement programmes for over 30 years and currently 200+ students undertake a compulsory one-year placement between 2nd and 3rd year as an integral part of five-degree pathways.

The Dearing Report in 1997 placed emphasis on the need for key skills, work based opportunities and more collaboration between higher education and employers in support of the government's long-term aim to have 50% participation in higher education. The IT industry experienced phenomenal growth in the late 1990s resulting in higher numbers of students undertaking Computer Science degrees. However, the industry's rapid decline from 2000/01 has meant that these students were still working their way through the university system at a time when job opportunities and placement opportunities were declining. As the number of students seeking placement rose, it became increasingly difficult to track students applying for placement and employers advertising opportunities. It is essential to have IT systems to administer large numbers of students seeking a limited number of placement opportunities, otherwise it would be practically impossible to manage placements.

Ten years ago the School of Computer Science operated a paper-based system to support the relatively small number of students undertaking placement. As student numbers grew, technology was slowly introduced in stages and a system has evolved. Initially, an Access database had been designed to record student placement details and provide basic reports, whilst brief details of vacancies were emailed out to students. Students were informed of vacancies using a notice board and CVs/application forms were collated and posted off to employers; this involved a time consuming process for administrative staff. Problems with opening email attachments led to a basic website being designed to display vacancy details. The website was a success with over 10,000 hits within a year and this led to a rethink of how technology could be used to efficiently manage placement. Being based in the School of Computer Science and having access to technical support made this transition easier. Over the past 4 years, a web based management system, which functionality supports students through the entire life cycle of placement, has been developed, and the system expanded to provide careers information to support students from entry at university through to entry in to the workplace.

Development of the system has been informed by the precepts outlined in the QAA Codes of Practice on Placement Learning and Careers Education, Information and Guidance. As numbers of students undertaking placement grow, it becomes increasingly difficult to use a paper-based system to meet the QAA precepts. Equally, a paper-based system does not scale with increasing numbers.

To address these issues our approach has been to introduce technology to support students, employers and the placement team to maximise the opportunities afforded by the work placement experience and ensure that a quality service can be delivered.

WHAT QUEEN'S ARE DOING

The Queen's system provides support to students while at university, but the main feature addressed here is the support and tracking of placement using the web-based tracking system.

THE WEB-BASED TRACKING SYSTEM

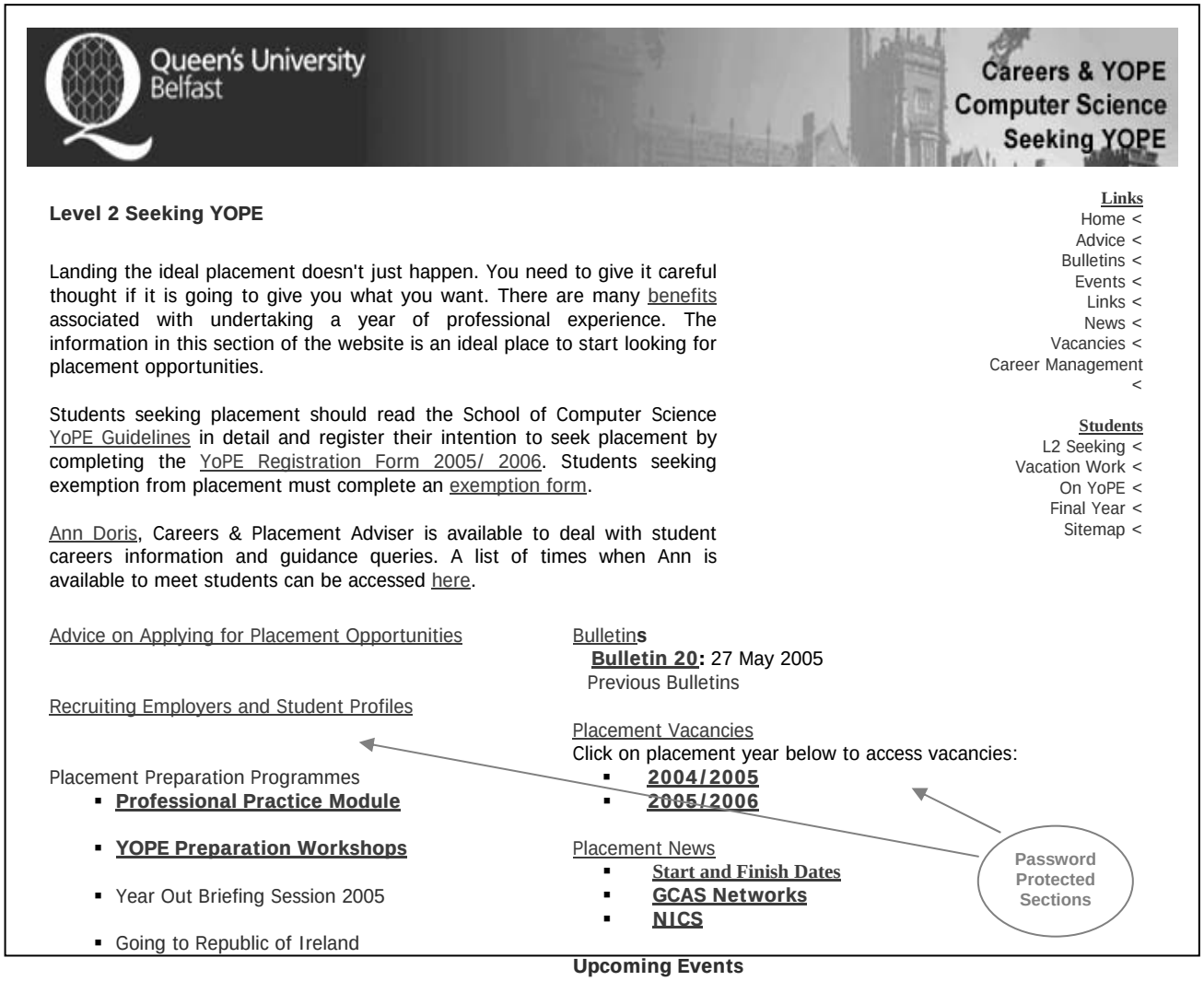
Professional placement staff have been involved in the design and development of this web-based tracking system from its inception. A Computer Science student, on placement, has also been employed on an annual basis to provide computer system development and administrative support. A web-based tracking system has been developed that supports the three main stakeholders, namely, students, employers and the placement team through the entire placement lifecycle, providing a quality service with 24/7 access.

The system has been structured into three main sections:

STUDENT section:

This area is split into four sections covering vacation work; 2nd year students seeking placement; Year of Professional Experience students and final year/postgraduate students. There is a page targeted to each group that contains all relevant placement and/or careers information that students require.

As an example of the type of information provided, the 2nd Year Seeking YoPE page is illustrated below:



Students seeking placement are required to complete an online registration form upon entry into 2nd year. This provides students with access to a password protected area of the website that requires users to log on in order to gain access to placement vacancies, lists of recruiting employers, student placement profiles, student placement locations etc. Once a vacancy has passed, all opportunities are placed in an archive section so students can access job descriptions and company information in preparation for the interview stage.

The website has also been used as a dissemination tool for a variety of materials. The remainder of this section has an open access area containing generic information on guidelines for placement including advice on applying for placement, upcoming careers events, placement news, placement careers bulletins, as well as placement preparation programme resources.

EMPLOYER Section:
The employer section attempts to answer some of the questions employers may have when taking on a student for a placement or graduate role and is implemented in a 'frequently asked question' style for speed of access. The information currently available ranges from placement year requirements and recruitment procedures, through to support available to line managers supervising placement students.

ADMINISTRATION Section:
The web-based tracking system permits the detailed 'profiling' of student applications and employer opportunities. The web front administrative section has 2 main functions, namely the display of information and updating the underlying database. The aim of the system is to provide quality management information that is essential in planning and monitoring the placement situation at any given point in time.

The resulting system enables the placement team to find details on individual students and employers online, as well as updating and adding vacancies, news and events. This is facilitated through the use of ASP coding to insert and pull the relative information from the database and dynamically add it to the web page. There is also the facility to store minutes from placement team meetings which can be readily accessed by all members.

The system provides several automated features such as instant status reports *[e.g. students placed, still seeking, on placement etc.]* and the automatic generation of standard letters and emails. The student tracking system element records details on student applications made and can also identify students not engaging in the placement process and target these individuals by sending out personalised emails and letters. The status breakdown function is useful in demonstrating how the status of a student can change through the placement process. A typical example would be: *Registered→Seeking Placement→Placed→On YoPE→Final Year→Graduated*. Within this there can be variations such as *'Exempt', 'Deferred'*, *'Withdrawn', 'Temporarily Withdrawn', 'Repeating Level 2'* to name a few, in order to cover all eventualities. These functions enable the School to accurately track students to meet the placement guidelines:

> *"Before a student will be deemed 'unable to secure a placement' he/she will be asked to demonstrate a consistent effort throughout the year in obtaining a placement. Normally, this will be interpreted as a minimum of 20 applications to advertised positions, spread across the year. Speculative enquiries to companies not advertising placement opportunities do not form part of this."*

The employer tracking system element can identify the history of opportunities advertised, students currently and previously placed at the company, health and safety information and salary details. There is also a status button indicating the various stages of the recruitment process for each placement vacancy advertised. The system also alerts the placement team to upcoming closing dates, especially opportunities that need to be collated on behalf of employers. This has been a useful tool in not only managing time but in allowing the placement team to plan ahead, especially forecasting the number of potential placements to be advertised.

EVALUATION OF THE SYSTEM:

STUDENTS

The website was tested with a group of students prior to going live and an online feedback questionnaire appeared as a pop up screen when the website was launched. This was invaluable in helping to refine the system. The current website has been a major success with over 65,000 hits from its inception in June 2003.

Effective communication between the placement team and students helps to raise awareness of the expectations and requirements of the year of professional experience. Regular emails and placement bulletins are sent out to students informing them of new vacancies, upcoming closing dates, careers events and placement news. Second year students seeking placement are able to plan applications using *'upcoming closing dates'* and '*recently added opportunity'* buttons. If students are short-listed for interview they are able to access opportunity details using the archive section. Students are also encouraged to establish support networks by getting in touch with other students going on placement to the same company or location. A special password protected section of the website has been set up to facilitate this and has resulted in new friendships forming and help with finding others to share accommodation. Students currently on placement also provide tips on interview, accommodation seeking etc., whilst accessing all relevant information and documentation pertaining to the placement year. Feedback from students is very positive with many reporting that it would be difficult to find placement without the website and regular emails alerting them to opportunities and events.

EMPLOYERS

The employer tracking system allows the placement team to keep in touch on a regular basis with hundreds of local, national and international employers. The close liaison with employers from advertisement through to appointment helps to speed up the short-listing process and has decreased the number of students accepting multiple placement offers from 15% to 0.5% over the past four years. Feedback from employers show that they value this system as it saves them time and costs that would otherwise be incurred with re-advertising vacancies. The password protected vacancy section of the website supports employers who only recruit from targeted universities since their advert is only accessible to Queen's students.

PLACEMENT TEAM

The introduction of technology has been a major asset to the placement team in terms of the amount of time consuming routine administration tasks such as inputting employer details.

Close to 100% of students now complete an online registration form compared to 65% using the paper-based system. There has been a 100% reduction in photocopying and postage costs as all vacancies are posted on the website and CVs are emailed directly to companies.

Previously, reports on student status used to take up to 3 days to compile. The in-built generic report option, plus the easy drop down menu to create own reports, in the new system has enabled a variety of detailed reports to be generated almost instantaneously.

The ability to accurately and quickly monitor the number of student applications and a change in the School's policy has resulted in a reduction in the number of students progressing directly to 3rd year without placement from 89 to 3 over a two year period. Students can also be emailed according to their placement status thus allowing specific groups to be targeted.

The employer tracking facility allows mail merge emails to be sent out to employers at the touch of a button, has the ability to track opportunities, whilst employers can be easily informed if applicants are still seeking placement, thus speeding up the short-listing process.

The underlying database acts as a back-up if the web server is down as information can be inputted and uploaded to the server at a later stage.

A real benefit is that it is a multi-user system with functionality that can be accessed by any member of the placement team from any location using a password system.

GENERAL

The web enabled tracking system differs from other management information systems in that it covers the entire placement lifecycle. It has been designed by professional placement staff, has multilevel access for administrators and students and can manage large numbers of students and employers,

whereas a paper-based system does not scale as numbers grow. The system creates an entire placement profile that interlinks both student and employer details.

The current system has 'out of box' functionality or it can be customised to suit the end user. As the nature of placement can change, the system has been designed to be flexible in that it can support different placement models such as year-long, vacation, projects, electives etc. It evolves easily as it is not difficult to add new fields or functions. The flexibility and extendibility of the system has been clearly demonstrated when a copy was successfully customised for the School of Management and Economics at Queen's who offer year long, vacation and European placement programmes.

The precepts outlined in the QAA Codes of Practice on Placement Learning and Career Education Information and Guidance have been a central driving force in the development of this system. Having a dedicated person providing careers education, information and guidance, as well as coordinating placement, has enabled systems and procedures to be implemented and reviewed, thus allowing the delivery of a quality service to students, employers and staff. The School of Computer Science has been cited as a model of best practice within the University.

Whilst it is important to note the benefits technology has to offer however it must be recognised that it can not be used as a stand alone model in managing the placement lifecycle. Students still require professional advice and guidance, as well as tailored placement preparation programmes delivered by specialist careers/placement advisers, to assist them in their search for placement, monitor them during their placement through visits, as well as assess their reports and presentations at the end of placement. Our technology has freed up time to allow the Placement Adviser to undertake quality work with students rather than mundane clerical tasks.

CONCLUSION

It is important to invest a significant amount of quality time in fostering and managing the relationships between university, employer and student in a work placement programme. This resulting system provides immediate access to all information pertaining to placement, eliminating inefficiencies, cutting administrative overheads and enabling work to be delivered more reliably and cost effectively. This is a constantly evolving system with frequent enhancements that provides a cost effective quality solution in the provision of careers education information and guidance, as well as coordinating the placement activities of students within the School of Computer Science.

Not Just a Paper Exercise: Integrating Application of Number Skills Development within the Non-Medical Prescribing Curriculum

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This paper draws on work carried out at Leeds Metropolitan University as part of the FDTL4 project, 'Promoting key skills development through the use of portfolios' carried out in partnership with the Universities of Nottingham, deMontfort and Salford. The aims of the project were to promote the development of students' key skills through the use of portfolios and to explore ways of assessing evidence of key skills attainment. Within these broad aims, at Leeds Metropolitan University, the project sought to:

- explore teaching, learning and assessment strategies that enabled non-medical prescribing students to develop and acquire particular key skills (application of number and improving own learning and performance).

- equip these students with a skill set for continued professional development within their own professional area.

- elicit these students' views on using a portfolio approach to design their own learning programme and develop key skills.

Non-medical prescribing represents a relatively new development in health care, but courses are now well established within universities across the UK. The courses are at post registration level and are required to meet the needs of diverse students from a wide variety of nursing backgrounds. Future courses will also include students from the wider professions allied to medicine (DoH 2001). Embedded within the course learning outcomes, as identified by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC 2003), are statements that relate to applying numerical skills and the capability to manage own learning and development. In addition to specific course requirements, there is an expectation that all qualified nurses manage and direct their own learning and professional development and maintain a portfolio of evidence (NMC 1999).

The project development group sought to combine the benefits of using a portfolio for learning with the need for nursing students to acquire specific skills and demonstrate competence across a variety of complex situations. This involved examining the nature and purpose of the portfolio and its associated teaching and learning strategy, the meaningful assessment of competencies, including application of number skills, the role of the workplace mentor and the image of the course from students' views to achieve learning that is long lasting. Such learning requires students to have skills in self-assessment, planning, critical reflection and evaluation (QAA, 2000 DoH, 2004). These skills, labeled key/transferable skills, require a teaching, learning and assessment strategy that fosters and supports development and achievement rather than simply measurement. As a method for teaching and learning, a portfolio captures skills development from different contexts and experiences, offers opportunities for self assessment to evaluate learning and development, acts as a tool for reflective thinking and self-directed learning and provides a collection of detailed evidence of an individual's capabilities.

The portfolio was introduced to students at the beginning of the course and, to date, three groups who have used the format and approach (34 students in total), have provided feedback comments and interview data to support the project evaluation. The project group adopted an ongoing evaluation strategy using a combination of questionnaires and interviews with students and staff and an audit of course and assessment documents. The comments were coded and the detailed

analysis is presented elsewhere, but for the purpose of this paper students' comments on their own skill development and the usefulness of the portfolio are presented together with a summary of selected areas of the audit work. This paper discusses the findings and results within the framework of the project.

Discussion of Findings

1. Teaching, learning and assessment strategies to support skills development

One area of continued discussion within the project was how to offer students working in different contexts the required teaching that is relevant to their needs, while meeting specific outcome requirements of the NMC. This problem is not unusual for courses at post-registration level where individual's needs and perceptions can affect motivation and indeed retention. From the outset, the teaching and learning strategy was planned to be student-centred and the portfolio was chosen to offer an approach that could accommodate individual learning within a competency framework. From the outset, the portfolio was to be used to support students in designing their own learning programme through a system of 'learning contracts' developed to deliver the course outcomes. This meant that teaching strategies had to be in place to support students in the development of skills to organise, manage and improve their own learning and performance. The key skill of improving own learning and performance was seen as underpinning this process with its skill set of self assessment, planning, researching, monitoring progress and reflecting on performance. For some students this represented a new way of working which took time to become familiar with and created some unease at the start of the course:

> *Difficult to identify learning needs initially and tie them to competencies as I have not studied in this way before. I found this very stressful.*
> *Learning contracts need a lot of practice.*
> *I did not understand initially what a portfolio and learning contract was.*
> *I found it hard matching up the competencies with writing a learning contract.*

As the course progressed and students gained experience in using learning contracts within the portfolio, views expressed included:

> *Useful to personalise course to own learning needs.*
> *Help me to recognise what I have learnt and how my practice has changed.*
> *Enjoy seeing it completed.*
> *Help to structure learning*.

However, it was evident from the evaluation data that students found the process time consuming and, for some, this had a negative effect of the portfolio as a whole:

> *Need time to understand it.*
> *Need time to develop.*
> *Need time to keep relevant and up-to-date.*
> *Can get out of proportion.*

The response from the project team was to re-examine the student guidance materials and amend them to improve clarity and overall support for the student at the start of the course.

Integral to the teaching and learning was assessment. Overall students were very positive about assessment, including skills assessment:

> *I welcome assessment by portfolio as it gives you the best opportunity to demonstrate your competence.*

2. Using a portfolio to develop 'portfolio skills' including self-assessment, personal learning strategies including goal setting, monitoring and reflecting on performance

From the start, students were expected to plan their own development using learning contracts. This demanded they engaged in skills of self-assessment, planning and target setting, using resources, including mentors and tutors, monitoring progress and critically reflecting on their practice. In other words, they needed to use skills to improve their learning and performance and evidence their capabilities. Students surveyed at the start of the project reported mixed experiences of skills development and portfolio use. While students were often 'skills aware', they had little awareness in developing a 'learning' portfolio and evidencing their achievements. They were generally unaware of the skills required to develop a portfolio effectively or of ways to describe their own skills and strategies to improve them, commonly not using them to help them identify their own needs. However, as the course progressed later evaluation showed they considered the benefits of using this approach:

> *Way of making you think about learning needs and improving and expanding learning methods.*
> *Assist me to look holistically at my learning needs, does not prescribe an order or method of learning.*
> *Does not have 'edges', learning can cross boundaries and I can take on other skills that will be useful elsewhere.*
> *Using the self- assessment materials helped me to focus on what I need to do.*
> *Very structured, methodical way of learning that is specific to self and helps you develop new skills that are useful in other areas.*
> *Does help you to focus on specific learning needs and encourages in-depth learning so you feel confident and competent in reaching your goals.*

Students made a number of comments indicating that they considered their skills useful not just for this course, but for continuing professional development:

> *It demonstrates evidence of learning and developing skills. Portfolios are an excellent resource in interviews and presentations and evidence of continuing professional development.*

3. The role of the workplace mentor

For the students, the workplace mentor, a GP, represented an important source of support along with academic staff. Workplace support proved to be both problematic and inadequate for some students. While the mentor may have some knowledge and experience of using a portfolio, they were less aware and less able to progressively support students in skills development or organising their own learning. Although all mentors received information and briefing documents relating to the course and the approach used, the degree to which individual mentors supported students was variable. Therefore students had very different experiences of developing their knowledge and skills and the type of environment in which they were operating. This finding highlighted the need to develop homogeneity regarding the pedagogic approach by improved mentor support and information relating to quality and standards and represented one of the main difficulties in changing the teaching and learning strategy to one that is student-centered and competency based. Workplace mentors and academic staff are frequently more used to working with a curriculum where the emphasis is on what has to be taught, rather than enabling students to design their own learning needs. Thus for some students mentor support represented an obstacle for their development:

> *Mentors need training and support.*
> *Mentor never got to grips with their role.*

Over the life of the project, professional development for staff involved in the course, both workplace mentors and academic staff, concentrated on supporting them in understanding the principles behind a learning portfolio, ways they could support students effectively and the nature and importance of key skills development.

4. Students perception and confidence of their application of number skills

One of the requirements embedded in the NMC (2003) competencies is the expectation that students should be competent and confident in numeracy skills to practice 'safely', but no specific

guidelines are given as to what level of numeracy skills professionals need to demonstrate to meet this standard. A main aim for this course was to highlight the use and application of numeracy skills to enable students to be both competent and confident to make calculations, interpret statistics, or challenge requirements as they used their numeracy skills. At the start of the course, students were given self-assessment exercises involving calculation skills relevant to basic prescribing practice. Students were then supported in using this information to help them plan and implement strategies to develop and improve their numeracy skills. They were asked their views on developing numeracy skills before the course started and on completion of the course.

Initially students were reluctant to discuss numeracy and talk about their own capabilities and most in the first group provided little or no evidence of numeracy skills development in their completed portfolios.

> *I think you could assume that at Level 3 we can all add up.*
> *I felt numeracy was not relevant to this course.*

The response from the project team was to re-examine the teaching and learning strategy, providing more guidance and feedback on self-assessment and portfolio development skills. Subsequent evidence provided by students later in the project demonstrated that supporting students in developing skills in improving own learning had a significant impact on their development of numeracy skills with all students, regardless of skill level, identified areas in which they could improve.

> *My levels of inadequacy were clearly demonstrated.*
> *Need to check things out to ensure I am up to spec.*

Some were less aware of their own competence initially but found the process beneficial.

> *Initially I thought developing my numeracy skills was a waste of time as I thought I was competent in this area. It was not until I attempted some calculations that I identified an area that I needed to work upon and have enjoyed developing this skill.*
> *Difficult to identify learning needs initially.*

Developing skills in this area is problematic, commonly because of students' long held beliefs that historically they were not good at maths. Almost all documented feelings ranging from apprehension anxiety and lack of confidence to panic and dread when faced with carrying out self-assessment.

> *When I think about doing maths I lose confidence – when I am using maths everyday at work I just get on with it. Must be the "test' factor'.*
> *When confronted with some calculations to do, I found that I lacked confidence.*
> *Didn't do the quiz at Uni – took it home to do in private as I didn't want anyone to see it.*

However, for some students, despite initial anxiety, there was clear recognition of the need to be able to perform calculations as part of their professional skills.

> *Numeracy cannot be avoided when prescribing, and it is essential that nurses are competent in using it. To reassure myself I felt it would be useful to undertake some exercises and revisit it.*

The success of learning contracts and the portfolio as a stimulus for developing numeracy skills is reflected in ways students confidently used and discussed issues involving numeracy towards the end of the course:

> *It has made me feel more confident about speaking out in areas that need to change or 'happen' to benefit the patient.*
> *Useful to develop key skills within prescribing and very interesting. I have learnt a huge amount.*
> *Enjoyed revising my maths skills and decided I will not let them slip again, as the more I use them, the more confident I will be using them.*

5. Ethics and the integration of application of number skills

There is a range of previously well-documented evidence of nurses' poor mathematical skills (Hutton 1998a, Hutton 1998b, Duffin 2000) and the contribution of miscalculations to drug error (Lesar et al 1997). One of the measures to reduce errors is the promotion of a culture of openness about reporting errors. Managing the curriculum of non-prescribing courses means that attention must be paid to students' abilities to prescribe safely and thereby reduce the likelihood of errors. This involves supporting students to develop their numeracy skills and designing the assessment strategy to provide a check on performance. Alongside this, is an evident need to support students in improving own learning so that they may develop as practitioners with integrity and become truly accountable for their own practice, promoting a culture of openness about the need for ongoing review of competence in a rapidly changing work environment and raising awareness that writing a prescription is more than a paper exercise.

6. Conclusions

Portfolio development presents challenges and difficulties for both students and teachers and without a strong commitment from all involved the implementation of the portfolio process can be overwhelming and difficult to maintain (Tierney et al., 1998, Klenowski 2002). Using a learning portfolio to develop skills requires a different way of working from the usual approach. The key skill of improving own learning and performance as the structure for the portfolio and the system of learning contracts provides a structure for the work that students find both useful and challenging. The structure offers a systematic way to develop the required competencies, key skills and portfolio skills and students are able to identify their learning and plan for future development using this approach. However, organising and managing such a course is no easy option. Considerable effort is required for staff development and the design of support materials. Despite this, the evaluation indicates the benefits to students' learning, their colleagues and the environments where they operate.

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ESMOS - Enhancing Student Mobility through Online Support

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The ESMOS project - Enhancing Student Mobility through Online Support - is a partnership of Universities from 6 European countries (UK, Italy, Austria, Lithuania, Poland and Bulgaria) whose combined aims are to develop, evaluate and model the usage of Virtual Learning Environments to support students in mobility situations throughout the EU. The ESMOS project is funded by the SOCRATES Programme/Minerva Action, which seeks to promote European co-operation in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in education. This paper presents the rationale to and background behind the project, followed by an overview of the aims and objectives of ESMOS.

In January 2000, the University of Salford, UK, undertook a two-year e-learning pilot project funded by the European Social Fund and the North West Development Agency (UK) in order to develop a number of small e-learning programmes within the mainstream undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum and to identify the issues that needed to be considered when rolling out the use of ICT in the delivery and support of all mainstream programmes across the University. Part of the pilot project recognised the need to develop a generic support tool, utilising the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Blackboard, which would support the students on their student exchanges. As part of the pilot, a number of subject areas, where student mobility activities were undertaken, were chosen, including languages, nursing, radiography, acoustics and art and design. The needs of each study exchange/placement in relation to the subject area were identified, and a basic support tool using the VLE Blackboard was developed. The students then tested the use of this support tool when they were on their study exchange and the whole process was externally evaluated. The majority of the placements were within the United Kingdom, although the language placements were spent abroad.

The project outcomes and its evaluation revealed that there was substantial benefit to the student and the tutor of having the use of the web-based tool whilst studying away from home or abroad. There were noticeable differences in the way the tool was used, the type of communication and the priority given to the use of the tool related to the type of course and subject area. As a result of the pilot activity, the VLE Blackboard has been successfully adopted to assist with the allocation of both academic and industrial placements and support for students whilst studying abroad. From the point of view of the students, it has provided relevant information and support in a very simple and accessible way. From the point of view of the staff, it has provided a way of transmitting this information directly, quickly and easily without any significant overheads. The information and services provided through Blackboard are easy to maintain and can be scaled up to take account of increasing student numbers. A successful model of support for placement students and tutors has been developed, the results of which are being disseminated both internally (within the University) and externally (journals, conferences).

The previous activity revealed the potential for developing this tool further, particularly for the use of students abroad on exchanges or placements. There is a real potential, by using a VLE, for developing a model of support for European student mobility, especially now in the enlarged European Community, understanding and promoting best practice for student exchanges, which will engage the student in communication and activities, keeping them motivated and leading to decreased attrition rates. The model developed would be generic, based on a student centred approach, and could be incorporated in to any programme and any institution, but still recognising different cultures and languages.

One area of development is that of assessing the student's performance within the study placement, if appropriate, utilising the VLE. This also builds on the findings from the evaluation study, which also highlighted the communication and relationships that develop between the students, their tutor, the mobility receiving organisation and the student's peers in other academic organisations. Whilst there is a potential for using the VLE for supporting these relationships more effectively, there is also the potential for developing easy mechanisms for assessing the student's mobility.

The aim of the ESMOS project is to improve quality of students' mobility experience by providing them with a high level support through the means of Virtual Learning Environments. The project will deliver its aim through the following objectives:

- Share the current practice with the European Project Partners, as to student placement support, particularly investigating how the technology is being utilised to support students.
- Examine the factors that effect students on placement; identify problems with meeting student mobility numbers in the UK and other countries.
- Examine the potential of the technology each project partner is currently using and ways how to support the students more effectively.
- Understand the relationships that need to be developed between the universities and their placement organisations and to identify where and how the VLEs can be utilised effectively.
- Identify potential models and criteria for assessing students on work placement and identifying how this could be carried out using the VLE.
- To apply and disseminate a current model that has been effectively evaluated and produce two best practice/case studies.
- Validate the methodology and the final product.
- To develop guidelines for effective support, using the technology, for students undertaking placements.
- Disseminate the project outputs to European universities participating in Socrates ERASMUS and Leonardo da Vinci mobility programmes, as well as the network of partners within the project partnership.

The ESMOS project is innovative for a number of reasons:

- It will build on the provision of web-based support in order to improve the participation, well-being and motivation of students during their mobility activities across Europe in an integrated fashion.
- It will extend the use of VLEs to accommodate effective support methodologies and student centred learning approaches, as opposed to delivery of traditional programmes and courses.
- It will use a partnership approach, based on a wide practical understanding of how to support students undertaking placements abroad.
- It will attempt to look generically at the support required, but develop the ability to meet the needs of individual programmes and learners.
- It will help us to understand what differences in culture might have impact on the methodology and design of the support system.

The initial Salford experience used the VLE as a tool to support a student-centred approach, which comes mainly from a constructivist approach to learning. However, the first objective of the project is to understand the different pedagogic models of student support that the partner organisations have utilised, identifying any problems and issues that have arisen from this and then define appropriate pedagogic models. The pedagogic model may have to be determined by the VLE of use within the partner organisation, but wherever possible the student centred approach will be utilised.

Often, as the student placement is a part of an existing taught programme of study which may not have been designed using a constructivist approach, the web-based support tool will need to engage the students appropriately and this might well have an impact on the curriculum and assessment methodologies. Ultimately, there needs to be an integrated mechanism between the classroom based activity and web-based activity whilst on placement. A blended learning approach will be encouraged which brings together the learning outcomes of the course curriculum with the placement.

This innovation will require a much more integrated approach to supporting learning and supporting students. It will require the technical support, technical development, student records, the academic

tutor and placement tutor to all work together to develop robust infrastructure, content and support which is generic and appropriate for use in different partner organisations.

In addition, this project will initiate the process of changing educating into learning support. It will help to shift focus from organising students learning to development of learning environment and organising learning resources and supporting bodies around student's needs. Decentralisation of provision of educational services can be considered as an additional innovative aspect of the ESMOS project. Furthermore, the responsibility for the provision of educational services will be shared between several universities in the case of student placement. Therefore the organisation and the responsibility of educational processes will cut across many institutions.

The target group for this project are undergraduate and postgraduate students from higher/further education institutions that will directly benefit from on-line support provision whilst on their placements/mobility exchanges abroad. In addition, tutors will also be benefiting from the developed online environment, being helped to set up their own support mechanisms that will aid their students in acquiring better experience from their study abroad.

In summary the project will help to achieve the following:

- An effective and sustainable stream of communication both with the supervisors and with their peers established.
- More placements using Blackboard or other VLEs – increased number of participating students in the exchange programmes.
- More extensive use of technologies both by students and their tutors – encouraging them to use technology in a more effective way.

The main beneficiaries of the project will be:

- Tutors and academics.
- HE students participating in placements and student mobility programmes in the enlarged European region.
- Placement tutors in the placement organisations at departmental, faculty and university level.

Previous experience through the e-learning initiative at the University of Salford has shown that it takes time to understand the needs of the students and tutors, develop the methodologies for support, gain the understanding and commitment of the tutors and students and effectively use the technologies. The first year of the project is devoted to the identification of the level of current student placement support in all partner universities and to carrying out a needs analysis of placement students, which will take place in the first quarter of the project. The methodology and model development activities will be carried out as a result of previous stages. The second year will be devoted to the implementation of the model and methodology, informing the development of protocols for use by the students and tutors and case studies. The communication technology will be used to enhance the relationship between the student, tutor and placement organisation.

The main outputs for the project are:

- Generic needs analysis of placement students.
- Several case studies of where the VLE has been used in practice to support students abroad.
- A new methodology, utilising a VLE, to support students on their placements.
- Models, criteria and tools for effective assessment of performance within the workplace as part of the VLE.
- Requirements for the VLE or guidelines for adaptation of the VLE to the purposes of the student support.
- Guidelines for reorganisation of educational processes in order to assure effective support of placement students by the means to the VLE.
- Disseminative knowledge transfer from project partners to their national HE partners.

All partners will use the developed methodology for encouraging more students to undertake placements and to support students going on their exchanges. The ESMOS partnership is made up of 6 European HE institutions:

The University of Salford, UK, has a long track record of providing educational opportunities across all sections of society and is renowned for its partnerships with industry, business and the public sector. The University of Salford has 3,000 full time members of staff and approximately 18,000 students.

The University of Calabria (Unical), situated in Southern Italy, is a public institution initiated in 1972. Unical is a medium size university with about 30,000 students. Since 1996, the Socrates and Community Projects and Contracts Office at the University of Calabria has enlarged its partnership both within the European Union countries and with the East European countries (including 118 partners in 20 European countries) and has a great experience of other initiatives in programmes such as TEMPUS, LEONARDO DA VINCI and LINGUA. Since its very beginning, the University of Calabria has clearly set out the strategies for the development of its international dimension and this constant work has produced a considerable amount of international co-operations.

FH JOANNEUM is one of Austria's leading universities of applied sciences, with 16 highly specialised degree programmes in the areas of business & technology, information & design, mobility, social services and public health. Degree programmes are offered at university level and aim at a professional training on a scientific basis

Czestochowa University of Technology (CzUT), Poland, is one of the oldest and biggest higher education institutions in the region. There are about 20,000 students, and about 100 specialisations. There are about 8,000 teachers employed. The University has already gained some experience in co-ordinating and participating in different European programmes such as 5th and 6th Framework Programme, INCO-Copernicus, SOCRATES-ERASMUS and SOCRATES-GRUNDTVIG, TEMPUS and LEONARDO DA VINCI.

D.Tsenov Academy of Economics, Bulgaria, is a state owned higher educational institution that is specialised in training in the fields of economics (accounting and finance), management and business informatics. There are 240 academic staff (professors and assistants) employed by the academy and the number of students was 6,393 for the academic year 2003/2004 – full time and part time (additionally about 1000 in Distance Learning).

Vytautas Magnus University in Lithuania is relatively young (established in 1922, closed during Soviet occupation and re-established in 1989) and rapid growing. During the University's first decade the number of students and teachers grew more than twenty times (now it has at about 8,500 students, 800 personal, 380 are teachers and scientific workers). It has become the centre for academic work in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Theology and Fine Arts, Political Sciences and Law in Kaunas. Modern programmes have been expanding in: Informatics, Environmental Sciences, Biology, Mathematics and Physics. The feature of this university still remains exceptional in Lithuania today: this is a liberal policy for studies, according to which students are admitted not into specific specialisations but into fields of study.

Investing in Students, Investing in the Workforce

Julie Wilson
National Council for Work Experience

The aim of this paper is to explore how employers can really invest in the students they take on, through commitment and implementation of good practice in the placements that they provide. This paper is written with the subject of the conference in mind, i.e. the focus on employability and skills development from work related learning. In particular, it addresses the theme of effective employer relationships.

Employers can invest in the students they take on by ensuring that the student will undertake a worthwhile placement that will positively contribute to their employability and skills development. Not only does undertaking a worthwhile placement benefit the professional development of the student and give them the opportunity to see if the career envisaged in their mind is in fact suited to them in reality, it also has many benefits for the employer. For employers it facilitates the notion 'try before you buy' and can aide recruitment retention. On a wider social and moral level the employer can also be seen to benefit from positively contributing, amongst other things, to employer responsibility and building up effective employer relationships with those involved in learning.

The role of the employer in employability and current debates

From the employers' point of view it may seem that, even though universities equip students with knowledge and theory in a particular subject area, students still leave university lacking in the soft skills required in the workplace. Although this statement needs quantifying, it is one often heard from employers. Indeed, vocational university programmes do in fact, by their very nature, aim to expose the student as much as possible to the skills required in the workplace. However in more traditional programmes, i.e. those that do not have a vocational element attached to them, then the gap in skills, as interpreted by the employers, may be wider.

Responsibility therefore falls on the employer to equip the student with the relevant occupational skills required for the world of work. With more people entering university this could become a huge task for employers. Even though it may seems 'right' that employers take responsibility, it is just as important that the participating HEIs, as well as the student themselves, also understand the role they have to play and the responsibility they should take.

Facilitating responsibility

For employers, taking responsibility can mean ensuring that the placements they provide are quality placements that are structured and have learning outcomes, thus providing benefit to the student as well as themselves.

With such placements established, the question arises of how the employer can then take the next step forward to define themselves and be measured in the employer arena against other employers, as a provider of worthwhile placements. The answer to this would be accreditation. If the employer is accredited for their placement, it provides formal tangible recognition which allows them to formally invest in and attract the highest calibre of student.

The National Council for Work Experience together with the University Vocational Awards Council has devised a standard for work placement providers enabling them to be formally accredited. Accredited employers will have demonstrated that they have satisfied rigorous criteria and codes of practice, that the placements they provide are of a standard which result in positive learning and professional development outcomes and, in addition, they are committed to providing quality work experience and have implemented good practices in their placements.

By providing formalised placements with defined outcomes and benefits, it will contribute to raising the skills awareness of the workforce. Thus employers are playing an active role and taking responsibility.

The need for accreditation

In light of the current interest in integrating work and learning, which can be seen from the many conferences on the subject taking place on a national level and the somewhat rapidly changing nature of the labour market, there is a need for raising the level and standard of placements. We now operate within a highly competitive market, both on an international and national level, where not only businesses are competing for a larger share of the market, but where the workforce is also competing for the best career opportunities. In this environment, developing the skills of the workforce is ever more important.

It is the aim of this paper to discuss how employers can get involved in contributing to employability and raising skills awareness. One such way is accreditation, as proposed in this paper, which not only helps employers and students get the best from their placements, but also helps raise the overall level of skills development and increase employability. This accreditation is called the 'Excellence in Work Experience' Standard. It is a standard for work experience providers and the only one of its kind to date. As mentioned earlier, the Standard was created by the National Council for Work Experience (NCWE) and the University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC), with valuable knowledge contributions from the University of Glasgow and GlaxoSmithKline.

The Standard was borne out of the need, recognised by the Government and associated institutions, to raise the skills level of the potential workforce, whereby employers should be encouraged to offer more work experience opportunities for students, whilst at the same time, taking a strategic view of their relationship with higher education. With this in mind, any form of work experience which is carried out should aim to be of a standard which benefits the student, the employer and the economy as a whole.

In this context the Standard was developed based on rigorous codes of practice which addressed these issues. As well as ensuring the codes of practice were written in a way that was manageable for employers to work towards they, apart from other things, recognised the real business benefits. It may be worth mentioning here that one should not forget the main underlying objectives of commercial organisations, which is a return on investment using the minimum of resources. It is vital then, in building effective employer relationships, that we recognise a businesses commercial, as well as people development, agenda.

The Excellence in Work Experience Standard then is awarded to employers who demonstrate that they provide quality work experience/placements/internships in line with rigorous codes of practice. The codes of practice or criteria which need to be met are based on 5 major areas. These are:

Commitment
Recruitment procedures
Placement process
Focus on learning and assessment
Evaluation and monitoring

Each of these areas is made up of codes of practice and the employer must show that they comply with the codes of practice in every area.

The codes of practice and criteria have been carefully researched and confirmed by occupational and academic professionals to ensure that the Standard is robust and that it contributes to positive developments in workforce development, student learning and society by raising the quality of work experience.

Examples of some of codes of practice are as follows:-

- Business objectives set by the employer and the learning outcomes should be agreed by the employer, HEI and student within an agreed structure or framework.

- Show evidence that guidance is provided to integrate the students learning into long-term career plans and that such learning is articulated and recorded by the student.

- Evidence of a health and safety policy must be provided that is fully compliant with current legislation and which is implemented and fulfilled at all levels within the organisation.

- All selection policies and procedures must be transparent, fair, consistent and explicit.

The employer must demonstrate how they meet the criteria. They would do this by providing a written application explaining and providing evidence of how they satisfy or comply with the criteria.

It is fitting to mention here that satisfying the criteria aims to bring about the forging of links with universities and the organisations. It also requires the university and employer to look carefully at their existing provisions and the changes that may need to be made to meet the criteria.

The GlaxoSmithKline Experience

A division of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) piloted the Standard or Quality Mark, as it was then known back in February 2004. Their main motivation was apparent in the below quote.

'the key aspects for the students is that the quality mark assures them (the student) that work experience at GSK will be of a high quality and they will have the opportunity to receive relevant practical experience and training whilst being able to meet their own personal and professional development objectives'.

Upon being awarded the Quality Mark, the benefits to GSK were publicised and therefore filtered through to the neighbouring divisions. As a result, at the end of 2004 another division of GSK committed themselves to apply for the Quality Mark or Excellence in Work Experience Standard. This was seen as an opportunity by the NCWE to further evaluate the criteria and refine the application process, making any adjustments as and where necessary. The second GSK application also served as the live test prior to formally launching the Excellence in Work Experience Standard.

The second division of GSK began the application process in January 2005, with the NCWE acting as advisors. The first step was to agree, in consultation with GSK, a suitable critical path which would enable GSK to realistically work towards preparing the application in a timescale that would fit in with their recruitment drive. For GSK it was decided that a realistic timescale would be six months to prepare the evidence and compile the application. This would not be the case for every organisation, as each would need to be considered on their own merits.

A steering group was brought together consisting of key GSK personnel and NCWE advisors. Meeting dates were planned in advance and it was decided that the best way forward would be for GSK to concentrate and complete one of the five areas at a time with the meeting dates corresponding to each area. By arranging the application and the workload in this way, it seemed less daunting to GSK and thus easier to handle as they could logically work through the application area by area.

The criteria are rigorous but certainly not impossible to achieve. Some organisations already have well organised placements embedded in the culture of the business. One such organisation is GSK who already understand the importance of commitment to students and hold the student's development as a priority. However for GSK it was a case of recognising the processes they already had and setting it in the formalised context. Also, in GSK's case, the role undertaken by the NCWE was that of support and guidance. This role can differ depending on the employer who may need to actually implement processes first so that they are then eligible to meet the criteria. Here the role of the NCWE advisor would then be more as a consultant to help the organisation first reach a level whereby they could continue to apply for the accreditation.

Another benefit of the Standard, which was confirmed during the second pilot with GSK, was the knowledge development of those employees involved in the application process. For GSK those involved were mainly line managers and it was they themselves who had daily contact with the students on placement. With the steering group being made up of such people it meant they were able

to recognise the placements in context. The benefits to them saw them able to manage their placements with more conviction and understanding. This in turn would also have a direct benefit on the students and all concerned. It was also confirmed that, rather than raising the standard of work experience on a process level by adopting best practices, the standard is actually raised from within directly by the line managers in their daily dealings with the students and associated departments.

The other benefits to GSK apply to all employers who may be accredited with the Standard such as recruitment retention, increased profile etc. It is crucial though that the benefits are well defined and set out in order to convince employers about the value of the Standard.

A tripartite relationship

In keeping with the Conference theme of effective employer relations and the development of closer links between higher education and the industry, the Excellence in Work Experience Standard would facilitate such links as it requires the employer, HEIs and the student working together in a tripartite relationship. The Standard's criteria are devised in such a way as to ensure that the tripartite relationship is embedded and thus is an important underlying factor. The criteria ensure that there is a relationship in place and that the participating HEIs also adhere to the relevant codes of practice. By embedding a tripartite relationship the Standard attempts to create a stronger, more positive, contribution to raising the competitiveness of the workforce and hence organisations both at an international and local level.

Overall business benefits

Benefits to the business reflect the fact that the employer is actively investing in students and consequently investing in the workforce. The Standard can address the recruitment and retention needs of an employer, as well as raising the skills level of the workforce. Recruitment and retention can bring about an increase in the organisation's competitive advantage. Businesses need to recruit talent and talent wants to undertake a positive work experience placement. An accredited employer will attract such talent and talent is retained. Taking on a student can be an investment for any company and those employers that take responsibility and show commitment can in turn aide HEIs to recognise better the role that employers can make and thus open the way to develop relationships further.

Providing an accredited work experience programme not only benefits the employer, but it also benefits the student undertaking the placement and the university which the student attends. An accredited work experience programme therefore creates a win-win situation for all involved.

Focus on the Implications for Vocational Educational Training under the New LEO-NET Integrated Programme 2007-2013

Edith Doppelhofer
Leo-Net

LEO-NET
Leveraging Education into Organisations

ASET Conference, York 2005
Integrating Work and Learning

Theme 2: Managing Work Placements

LEO-NET - An Innovative Network for Good Placement Results:

Implications for vocational educational training under the New Integrated Life Long Learning Programme ILLLP 2007-2013

Edith Doppelhofer, DANUBE, Vienna, Austria

Leo-Net

LEO-NET
Leveraging Education into Organisations

Overview

- Introduction
- The current LEONARDO da VINCI II Programme
- The New ILLLProgramme 2007-2013
- LEO-NET Leonardo Network for Academic Mobility
- Future Role for Mobility in HEI - Higher Education/Industry

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Networking and Services on all Levels

LEONARDO DA VINCI Programme II 2000-2006

- Educational programme of the EU
- Pilot and mobility projects

Aims:

- Establishing and intensifying international contacts and co-operations
- Stimulating mobility throughout Europe
- Offering opportunities to gather working, intercultural experience and language skills
- European dimension

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Networking and Services on all Levels

The new Integrated Programme Life Long Learning (2007-2013)
Main priorities for a new Erasmus

Integrated Programme			
Comenius School education	Erasmus Higher education & advanced training	Leonardo da Vinci Initial and continuing VET	Grundtvig Adult education
Transversal programme 4 key activities – Policy development; Language learning; ICT; Dissemination			
Jean Monnet programme 3 key activities – Jean Monnet Action; European Institutions; European Associations			

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Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

The NEW Erasmus actions:

- Higher education (study) mobility
- Reflecting the incorporation of student placements in enterprises
- Envisage specific mobility for students on Joint Masters programmes.

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Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

What does this mean to the programme?

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Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

ERASMUS has different Actions:

- Erasmus "Standard" Mobility
- Erasmus "Special" Mobility
- Erasmus "Placement" Mobility
- (Erasmus-Mundus)

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Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

The different Actions need specific structures:

- The University-Enterprise co-operation is different because:
  - No permanent contractual agreements
  - Supervision and recognition differs
  - Industry co-operation needs special attention

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Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

What does this mean to the structure ?

Leo-Net

Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

- Reinforcement of the regional University-Enterprise-Partnerships
- Separate action/strand ***Erasmus-Enterprise***
- Support for these regional networks
- A European-Network (LEO-NET)

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Leveraging Education into Organisations

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LEONARDO Network for Academic Mobility

Leo-Net

Networking and Services on all Levels

LEO-NET as a supporting tool

- Network for Academic Mobility throughout Europe
- Founded in 1999 in Maastricht with 60 members in 15 countries
- Grown to 132 members in 28 countries in 2005

Leo-Net

Networking and Services on all Levels

Future Products/Activities

- New Workshops and Symposia in 2005/2006
- Continuous upgrade of website www.leo-net.org and JOE - Online Job Offers Exchange
- Strategic Actions on implications of LEONARDO beyond 2006 consultation process with EC
- Activities during 17th EAIE 2005 in Kraków, PL

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Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

What is to be done ?

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Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

5 topics to be tackled for the future of mobility in HE/I relations:

- Quality Aspects
  - recognition and legal issues
- General framework of the new programme
  - unified implementation procedures
- Access to Academic Work Placements
  - joint application for student and recent graduates
- Eligibility of Beneficiaries
  - all disciplines for all undertakings
- Administrative and Financial Rules
  - simplify grant administration and financial reporting

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Networking and Services on all Levels

LEO-NET Leonardo Network for Academic Mobility

http://www.leo-net.org

Secretary General: Edith Doppelhofer

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email: info@leo-net.org
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Raising Awareness for the Necessity of Organised Networking in the Field of Academic Mobility, Presentation of LEO-NET and Future Role for Mobilities, Network Structure

Edith Doppelhofer
Leo-Net

LEO-NET
Leveraging Education into Organisations

ASET Conference, York 2005
Integrating Work and Learning

Theme 4: International Partnerships and Placements

LEO-NET - An Innovative Network for Good Placement Results:

Networking in the field of academic mobility and future role for mobilities

Edith Doppelhofer, DANUBE, Vienna, Austria

Leo-Net

LEO-NET
Leveraging Education into Organisations

Overview

- Introduction
- LEO-NET Leonardo Network for Academic Mobility
- Future Role for Mobility in the New ILLLProgramme

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LEO-NET
Leveraging Education into Organisations

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LEONARDO Network
for Academic Mobility

Leo-Net

Networking and Services on all Levels

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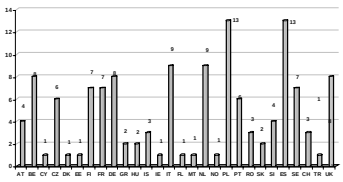
Networking and Services on all Levels

132 organisations in 28 nations



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Networking and Services on all Levels

LEO-NET – Structure

- **Board (6 elected members)**
- **Secretary general**
- **LEO-NET is set out to work on 3 levels:**
  - **basic level:** all members involved in day-to-day contacts
  - **central level:** 6-8 representatives from different countries
  - **upper level:** representatives of the board; contacts to national authorities and the EC

Leo-Net

Networking and Services on all Levels

Products/Activities so far

- List server
- Several new project partnerships between network members
- Website www.leo-net.org
- Workshops
- Promotional activities, i.e. posters, leaflets, conference presentations
- Annual member meeting held during EAIE
- New features online on the web - i.e. JOE Job Offers Exchange

Networking and Services on all Levels

Future Products/Activities

- New Workshops and Symposia in 2005/2006
- Continuous upgrade of website www.leo-net.org and JOE - Online Job Offers Exchange
- Strategic Actions on implications of LEONARDO beyond 2006 - consultation process with EC
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Networking and Services on all Levels

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Jean Monnet programme 3 key activities – Jean Monnet Action; European Institutions; European Associations			

Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

Operational objectives

- to increase the volume and improve the quality of multilateral co-operation between higher education institutions
- **to foster co-operation between higher education institutions and enterprises**.

Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

What does this mean to the programme?

Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

ERASMUS has different Actions:

- Erasmus "Standard" Mobility
- Erasmus "Special" Mobility
- **Erasmus "Placement" Mobility**
- (Erasmus-Mundus)

Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

What does this mean to the structure ?

Leo-Net

Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

- Reinforcement of the regional University-Enterprise-Partnerships
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- A European-Network (Leo-Net)
- Support for these regional networks

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Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

What is to be done ?

Leo-Net

Networking and Services on all Levels

The New Integrated Programme

5 topics to be tackled for the future of mobility in HE/I relations:

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Leo-Net

Quality Management on Work Placements: A Training Course for Tutors

Gert Lijkendijk and Jelly Offereins
Hogeschool van Utrecht

Through this paper, readers will gain an insight into the design, development and implementation of a certificate course for work placement tutors. The aim of this paper is to provide those interested with inspiration, ideas and tools to be able to implement (parts of) the described training in their own institute.

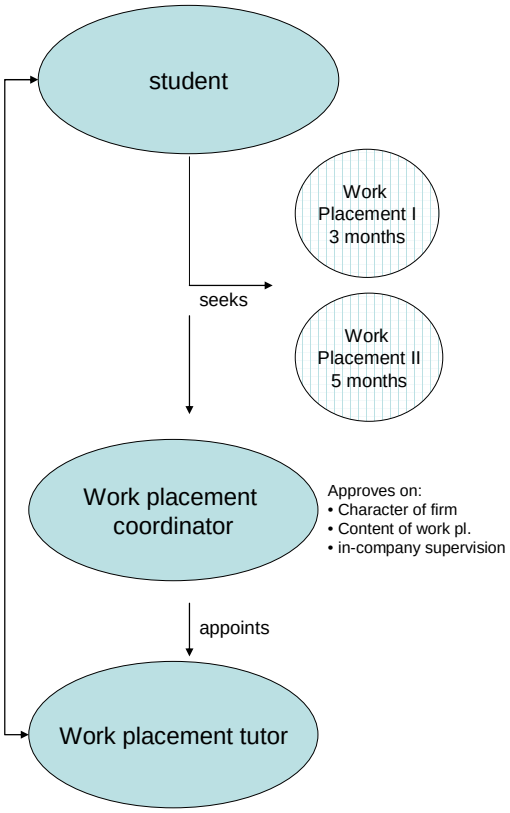
Principles underlying the development of the certificate course for work placement tutors:

- The work placement covers a substantial amount of ECTSs (European Credit Transfer System); tutoring a student in a work placement situation means that the tutor has the responsibility for a relatively large part of the curriculum.
- The quality of the work placements is crucial to the quality, and consequently to the success, of any curriculum preparing students for a profession (applied science).

Context

The setting of the course is the Faculty of Economics & Management Studies of the University of Applied Science, Hogeschool van Utrecht in the Netherlands. Although the students concerned are initially business students, the Hogeschool views the course as a pilot for all faculties (the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Health Studies, the Faculty of Social Work and the Faculty of Journalism and Communication).

The following schedule shows the position of work placements in the curriculum:



Starting point
Annually approximately 450 students are doing work placements. Currently the host companies are satisfied with the information and guidelines provided by our Business School and with the adequate action taken in case of a disappointing performance by any student, whilst lecturers are happy with their tutoring task. Despite handbooks and personal guidance, undertaking tutoring is mainly implicit instead of explicit.

Due to
- the need for quality control of the entire curriculum;
- and consequently the need for 'knowledge circulation' (see below);
- and therefore the increasing importance of lasting relations (requiring optimal profit for all parties involved);

the institute faces the challenge to provide its work placement tutors with those competencies necessary to carry out their tasks effectively.

Necessary steps
1. Defining the vision of work placement tutoring on the medium-long term
2. Defining the roles and tasks of a work placement tutor
3. Defining the required competencies of a work placement tutor
4. Defining the conditions for effective work placement tutoring on the medium-long term
5. Implementation

Ad 1.
Vision on work placement tutoring in 2010:
A work placement tutor functions as a 'bridge', responsible for:
- The quality control of the external curriculum e.g. the development of abilities of any individual student.
- Establishing steady relations with, and representatives within, the industry.

- Gathering actual and relevant input for the internal curriculum.
  → →
  - Didactic tasks
  - Relation management tasks

Only lecturers holding the certificate are tutoring work placements.

Ad 2.
A tutor should be capable of:

- (continuously) assessing the quality of the placement.
- supporting the student (process-wise) in relation to the professional tasks and the required competencies.
- discussing the progress and performance of the student regarding both their work and social skills.
- understanding the role and position of the placement for the internship company.
- perceiving of, and reporting to the institute, the needs and relevant developments within the industry.
- acting as a relation manager of the institute.

Consequently, effective tutoring of a work placement student requires knowledge and skills of various natures.

Ad 3.

Competencies of a work placement tutor	**Behavioural indicators, e.g.**
Customer focused	Seeks opportunities for cooperation between the university and the industry, is able to contribute to an attractive positioning of the university
Quality focused	
Coaching skills	
Communication skills	Is able to mediate in case of conflicts, easily contactable
The ability to judge (matters)	Is able to cope with uncertainty and subjectivity, judges matters on the base of explicate criteria, observations and evaluations

Ad 4.
To enable work placement tutors to fulfil their tasks successfully, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- At the beginning of any work placement, the tutor must have at his/her disposal the following information:
  - Concerning the placement organisation: activities, products, markets, concern relations, size, management structure of the company, etc.
  - Relationship between the organisation and the Business School (former placements, alumni, other cooperation).
  - Concerning the company supervisor: function, experience with the Business School.
  - Concerning the assignment in the placement: underlying idea, framework, aim, problem definition, relevance, parties involved, etc.
  - Concerning the student: study results, study plan, Personal Development Plan, etc.
- The work placement office runs an actual and interactive CRM (Customer Relationship Management – Microsoft) system.
- A well-organised working back-office working according to simple and clear procedures.
- Knowledge circulation is integrated within the quality management cycle of the course; input from the industry is structurally analysed and incorporated into the curriculum.
- The training of tutors is part of the HRM (Human Resource Management) policy of the institute.

Ad 5.

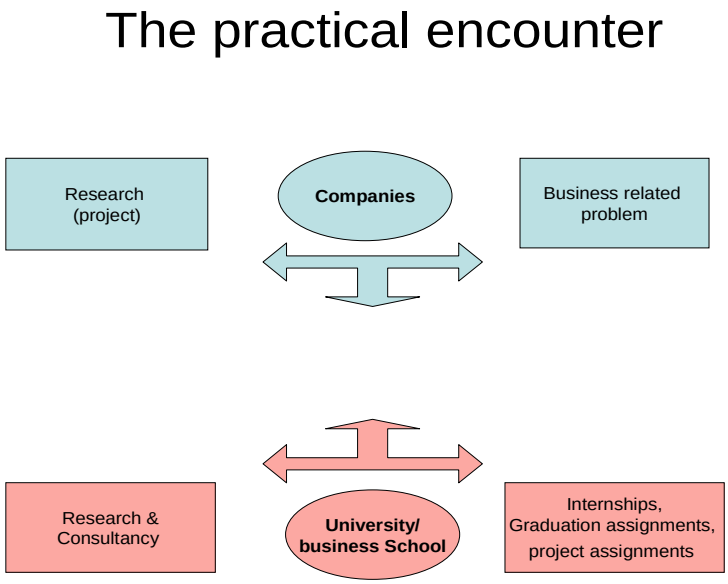
- Defining criteria for course participants
- Budget
- Planning

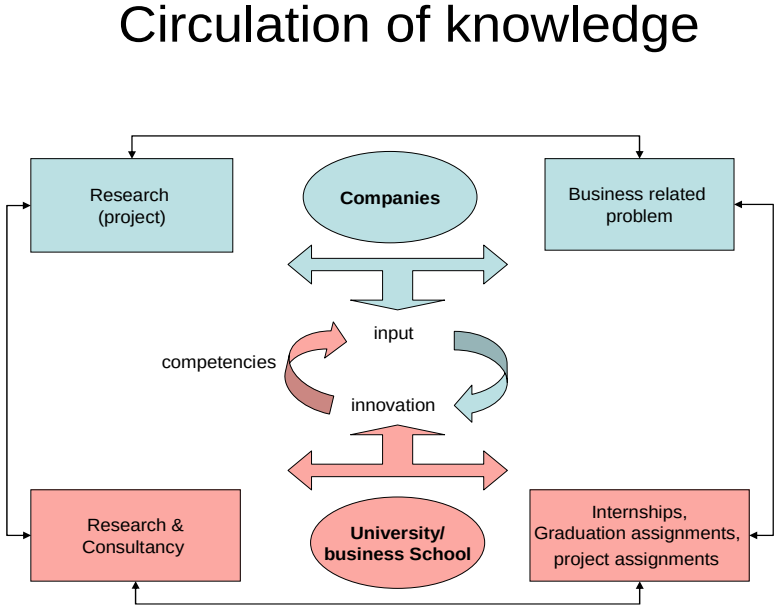
- Evaluation

Structure and content of the course
The course was developed in the academic year 2004/05; implementation started in June 2005.

The course includes assessment, training sessions (concerning research, coaching and oral communication skills), simulations, intervision, portfolio, placement and conceptual courses, depending on the portfolio of the individual participant.

Attachment circulation of knowledge





King's College London - Setting Up an Internship Module in a New Masters Programme in the Cultural and Creative Industries

Harriet Robinson
King's College London

This paper centres on the creation of a new internship module within a new masters programme in the cultural and creative industries at King's College London (also referred throughout this paper as 'the College'). The paper will:-

- Highlight some factors in the external environment in the creative industries and the Arts in the UK
- Note factors within the College that influenced the setting up of the MA programme
- Provide a brief overview of existing work-based learning at King's College London
- Outline the role of KCL Enterprises Ltd who led on setting up internships
- Describe the model of internships on King's College London's MA Cultural and Creative Industries
- Highlight good practices implemented in relation to internships
- Discuss some of the challenges that were faced when setting up the programme and internships

Introduction
Employability is an important issue for all universities developing tomorrow's aspiring talent. Within the HE sector many universities are seeking to collaborate with employers. Students can benefit by enhancing their portfolio of skills, by gaining a critical appreciation of their subject or chosen field and through gaining and demonstrating competencies that they need to operate effectively throughout their career. King's College London is a leading UK university with over 19,000 students: some 13,854 undergraduates and 5,693 postgraduates. Within the health sciences, many degrees at King's contain placements and over 3,000 students each year in medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, dietetics and nursing participate in work-based learning as part of their programme of study.

The opportunity to undertake a placement is also an integrated part the following programmes at King's College London:-

Extra Mural Year (Sandwich Placement):-

- BSc Bimolecular Sciences
- BSc Computing Science
- MEng Electronic Engineering
- BSc Life Sciences
- BSc Pharmacology

Course-related short internship, work-based project or professional training module:-

- MSc Assistive Technologies
- MSc Aquatic Resource Management
- MA Cities, Culture and Change
- MSc Drug Discovery Skills
- BSc Environmental Health
- MSc Environment, Politics and Globalisation
- MSc Financial Mathematics
- MSc Forensic Science
- MSc HRM and Organisational Analysis

King's College London Careers Service
Students' employability related enquiries are also handled via the King's College London Careers service which is part of the University of London Careers Service.

KCL Enterprises Ltd.
KCL Enterprises is a subsidiary of King's College London. KCL Enterprises Ltd (KCLE) is responsible for the business development of King's College London's intellectual capital. There are three divisions and three units within KCLE organised by business activity and these are:-

1. Business Development Division
2. Technology Transfer Division
3. Research Grants and Contracts Division
4. Spin-Out Company Mentoring Unit
5. KCL Consultancy Unit
6. Continuing Education Unit

KCLE's mission specifically includes employability and KCLE has led a number and variety of successful initiatives in these areas for the benefit of College. These activities are supported by HEFCE's 'third stream' monies, originally Higher Education Reach Out in Business and the Community, then Higher Education Innovation Funds 1 and currently Higher Education Innovation Fund 2, which runs from 2004 - 2006.

KCLE and work-based learning opportunities, student projects and placements
Some of KCLE employability activities relate to capacity building and creating work opportunities for students, e.g. via a scheme called Work Opportunities for Registered King's Students (WORKS). For the most part, KCLE resources are directed to supporting initiatives to create formal embedded work-based/workplace learning opportunities within courses and study programmes for students. KCLE has developed such opportunities for new and existing programmes at King's and provides support to academics interested in setting up work-based learning modules. This paper deals specifically with a new MA programme, Cultural and Creative Industries.

External and Internal Environment
The following general factors influenced the set up of the MA programme and internships:-

Factors in the external environment:-
- Growing importance of creative industries UK and recognition that they are an economic driving force
- Presence in London of a high number/concentration of organisations in the cultural and creative industries
- Emergence of separate funding council, Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in 2005 from the former Arts and Humanities Research Board
- Perceived skills shortages in the cultural sector which has few formal graduate training schemes

Influential factors within the internal environment of the College:-
- Fit with the School of Humanities' strategy to increase postgraduate students by 30% by 2010
- Fit with School's strategy to provide vocationally orientated postgraduate training for students in the cultural and creative industries
- Direct support of the Vice Principal at the time the course was set up
- HEIF funding available to support pump-priming activities and help cope with front-loading of course development costs and internships

MA Cultural and Creative Industries
The MA Cultural and Creative Industries started at King's College London in 2002, although the conception of the course occurred a little over two years before this following market research by KCLE that identified potential. The decision to set up the course builds on King's research strengths in the Arts and Humanities. There is a distinction that can be made between King's College London's MA Cultural and Creative Industries and, say, Arts Administration programmes at City University, as each taps into a different audience and occupies a different space in the market place.

KCLE provided support over three years to set up an internship module on the MA programme. 13 students joined the course in the first year and numbers have since grown to around 35 students each year with significant interest from international students. Within two years the MA in Cultural and

Creative Industries has become the largest MA programme in the School of Humanities at King's College London, with the opportunity of an internship being seen as an attractive feature of the course.

Internships take place in the Cultural sector. This arena embraces the heritage sector, museums and galleries, visual arts, performance arts, the spoken and written word, TV, film, music, advertising, digital media, as well as arts administration, arts policy and a range of agencies working to develop regional, national and international links for educational, cultural and economic purposes.

Organisations who have participated in the scheme so far include The Barbican, The Bridgeman Art Library New York, Brent Council, British Antiques Dealers Association (BADA), Centres Georges Ponpidou Paris, Create KX, Glynis Henderson Production Ltd, Helen Storey Foundation, ICA, National Maritime Museum, Peggy Guggenheim Collection Venice, Photographers' Gallery, Spread the Word, Tate, The Cervantes Institute, The Clore Leadership Programme, The Fish Can Sing, The New Ambassadors Theatre Group, The Place, The Royal Academy, The V&A Theatre Museum, The Wallace Collection and UIP (United International Pictures).

The internship lifecycle

Figure 1 shows the internship lifecycle. Students are involved in developing their ideas for a placement. Students are encouraged to look for opportunities themselves with the support of the College or they may undertake an internship secured via the College. The internship takes place for a minimum of 30 days and is usually carried out between Easter and mid-September.

Figure 1: The internship lifecycle on King's College London's MA Cultural and Creative Industries

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	F	Mar	Apr	May	June	J	Aug
Internship process			Identifying/ developing opportunities with organisations who have participated before starts	Advertising opportunities commences	Internship interviews commence			**Internships start after Easter**				
'Careers in the Cultural Sector'		Session 1 Intro. to the internship	Session 2 & 3 King's College Careers Service – skills audit and self promotion	Session 4 Alumni talks Session 5 Employer talks	Session 6 Interviews King' s College Careers Service		Session 7 Internship briefing	Session 8 PowerPoint training	Tutor visits start			
Placement admin.	(Internship presentations 2nd group)	Registration for internship form and student contact details collected		Individual student progress reviews and action planning			Submission of formal requests by individual students who have found own internship	Write to employers w/ H&S forms. Visiting tutors allocated.	Visit forms completed and returned (employer, visiting tutor and student)	Internship presentations group 1 and report submitted with dates work log		Update internship booklet for 2005/06
Student's own links												
Developing new links	**Business liaison with prospective organisations**											

Flexibility regarding timing has been key to meet organisations' needs and different patterns of placement have been developed e.g. full-time over six weeks, part-time 3 days a week over ten weeks, or carrying out the placement either in early or late summer. Some internships are paid, in some cases organisations cover expenses (lunch and travel) and others are voluntary (although it is acknowledged that organisations invest resources via accommodation, supervision, training etc.). Sometimes host companies stipulate a minimum length of time that they feel is appropriate for the placement e.g. 20 hours for 2 months and in a few cases placements are substantially longer e.g. 5 or 6 months on a part-time basis (normally attracting financial support from the host organisation).

Staff
KCL Enterprises Ltd. supported the set-up the internship module of the MA programme for two years. Assistance provided encompassed the following:-

- Discovery and development of new links with organisations (profit and not-for profit)
- Enhancing business involvement in a careers support programme
- Student support – reviews, action planning and advice
- Setting up a robust academic framework for assessment of internships which is academically rigorous, develops students intellectual thinking about the creative industries and the Arts in a critical way and recognises learning and development relating to the acquisition of skills, practices and processes in the workplace
- Producing an internship booklet for staff, students and host companies
- Administration
- Advice on implementing best practice in relation to work-based learning

Business liaison
In the first two years just over forty new business relationships were developed by KCL Enterprises Ltd on behalf of the programme. Business relationships were mainly built through:-

- Producing marketing literature for internships
- Direct marketing to organisations in the cultural sector
- Face-to face visit to potential placement provides
- Discussing, scoping and negotiating opportunities to meet employers', students' and the College's interests and needs
- Arranging a PR event for King's College London's MA Cultural and Creative Industries attended by King's staff, current students, alumni and employers
- Referral of potential new links from Business Development Managers, academic staff and alumni to KCLE Business Liaison Manager responsible for setting up the internship module
- Employer enquiries via KCLE website

Ongoing resourcing
After two years, a Programme Manager for MA Cultural and Creative Industries was appointed in September 2004 by the College and part of the role includes co-ordinating the placement process. Existing links were transferred from KCLE to the Programme Manager who now maintains and nurtures them as well as managing the student-facing procedures related to preparation, development and assessment of placements – the internship lifecycle. In 2004/05 KCL Enterprises Ltd created ten additional new contacts on behalf of the course and provided staff training and mentoring for the course team as appropriate. As a result, by the end of the academic year 2004/05, placements and placements management had been wholly embedded within the programme successfully.

Implementing best practice
This model of internships seeks to implement perceived good practices and to promote experiential learning via reflection on learning that takes place in the workplace. It is worth noting that the College has a code of practice for placements which follows QAA guidelines. Good practices implemented on the MA programme include:-

- Learning objectives and outcomes are agreed at the start of the internship and students are involved in developing their own ideas for the internship
- Preparation for placement takes place – students attend a programme of seminars provided by MA Cultural and Creative Industries staff, KCL Careers Service and external guest speakers

and practitioners. This is wider than just a skills development programme as input practitioners bring the outside world directly into the classroom and provide students with exposure to actors' personal experiences and real life stories about developing projects, ideas and careers in the cultural sector

- Employers are involved in scoping out appropriate student roles and participate in the 'matching' process which follows good equal opportunities practices
- Internships are supervised – students receive a visit on placement from King's staff
- Placement is assessed – students complete a 3000-word report and a short presentation which together contribute 15% (equivalent to one module) of the MA programme. In addition, students are required to submit a dates worked log signed off by their host organisation and it is also a requirement that they keep a reflective learning log (not assessed)
- Good communication and dialogue between all parties is encouraged - an internship booklet for employers, students and staff has been written
- A member of staff has been appointed to co-ordinate the placement process, repeat placement opportunities are realised each year with many organisations and some students have returned to their placement companies as full-time employees on graduation

Challenges

A number of interesting challenges were presented in setting up the internship programme. These included:-

- At an initial stage investment from the College was required for new staff
- Identifying academic champions to support the idea at key stages
- Finding a home for the course and bedding the programme into a department/school
- Working across Schools and Departments in a large organisation (c. 4,500 staff) which has a devolved management structure
- Developing and mentoring of staff to manage internships

Conclusions

It goes without saying that a significant body of good practices relating to work-based learning already exists within HE institutions; there is no need to reinvent the wheel. However, if we are looking at ways in which this paper adds to our collective understanding of developing work-based learning at institutional level, then I think that we can extract some useful experiential learning ourselves.

Firstly, the case study has highlighted how both the external and internal environments influenced the establishment of a new MA programme, Cultural and Creative Industries at King's College London and a new work-based learning module.

Secondly, the paper has identified a number of key considerations to think about when setting up course related work-based learning, particularly regarding i) fitting with and looking to the strategy and culture of the HE institution, School and Department concerned, ii) the availability of resources and expertise from within and outside the institution to support work-based learning regarding costs associated with setting up new initiatives and ongoing administration, iii) the need to gain buy-in from academics and senior management to the idea, iv) establishing a process for managing employer relations and student expectations, v) the helpfulness of market research and employer consultation in assessing the potential and market demand for student placements.

Finally, in terms of Knowledge Transfer, this work represents a successful model of knowledge transfer within an institution (from enterprise unit to academic department) whereby effective use has been made of resources provided by short-term HEFCE funding to set up a sustainable model for work-based learning for the mutual benefit of students, the College and employers. It is likely that this model will be utilised elsewhere within the College.

Managing Personal Development Planning On-line

Gordon Crawford and Colin Turner
University of Ulster

Introduction

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is "a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development" (QAA, 2001). PDP is centred on student learning and development. It seeks to improve the capacity of students to understand what they have learnt, how and when they are learning and encourage them to monitor, reflect on, evaluate, plan and take responsibility for their own learning. The University of Ulster has developed a strategy to comply with the requirements of PDP.[4] A major strand of this strategy was the development of an on-line system that could be used to record the outcomes of the PDP processes used within each faculty. This paper discusses various aspects of the Personal Development System (PDS), the product of a three-year project,[5] funded by the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF).

Overview of the PDS

The PDS[6] (http://pds.ulster.ac.uk) is an on-line system, accessed via a web browser from any computer with Internet access.[7] It is secured by a user-name and password combination.[8] It is used by students, academic staff, programme teams, student support staff and guests users who view shared portfolios. Content is mainly generated and owned by the student e.g. action plans, personal records, etc. Academic records and transcripts are derived from central university sources. The main objective of the PDS is to provide a modular system, configurable at a programme level, that will facilitate the recording of the products of the students' PDP processes. These can include recording additional student information,[9] reflective journals, goals, competencies, plans, CVs and portfolios. The system also provides for the sharing of portfolios with other users and a facility for them to provide qualitative feedback.

The PDS also provides specific functionality for academic users. They are provided with a cohort management tool, enabling them to create cohorts of students. These cohorts can then be provided with specific resources, forms and skill sets. The academic who adds a student to one of their cohorts will appear within the student view of the PDS as a course team member.

Features of the PDS

The PDS provides many different features, some have been intimated above, but a full list of the features and a brief description of each is provided below for completeness.
Students have access to a student strand of the PDS which provide features that are key to recording the products of their PDP process.

- Set goals and create action plans.
- Record progress and experiences.
- Build multiple CVs.
- Check examination results.
- Create and share e-portfolios.
- Access placement and work experience resources.
- Communicate with course team.

4 Agreed by the University's Teaching and Learning Committee in 2003.
5 The project finishes in January 2007.
6 For more information on the PDS contact df.mcgivern@ulster.ac.uk or g.crawford@ulster.ac.uk.
7 Students use the system from home and work as well as university.
8 The username and password are already familiar to the student and academic as they are used to access the VLE.
9 This information is additional to the data normally recorded within the Student Information System.

- Accept meeting requests, via the calendar.
- Create a collection of artefacts.
- Carry out skills audits.
- Download programme specific forms.

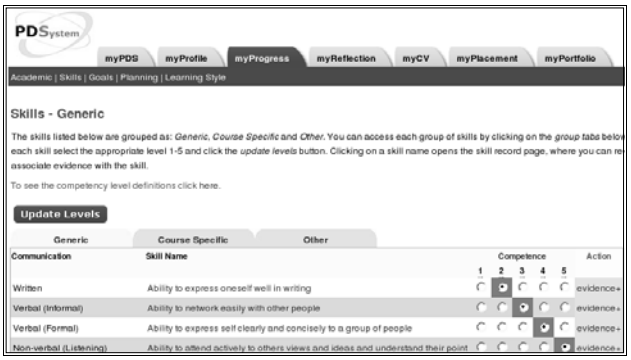


Illustration 1: Recording of generic employability skills.

Academic users have access to the academic strand of the PDS and this provides features that are focused on the management of cohorts and the tailoring of the PDS to their cohorts. It also provides features that enable the academic to review portfolios and provide feedback.

- Create a cohort of students.
- Define cohort skills.
- Upload cohort specific forms.
- Add cohort specific resources.
- View Adviser of Studies forms.
- Request a meeting with a student.
- View cohort usage statistics.
- Review shared e-portfolios.
- Send a comment associated with an e-portfolio.

The PDS also provides some additional user classes with special features. A guest user class is created when a portfolio is shared to someone who is not a member of the University and not a PDS user. This user class only has access to a limited set of features, primarily for the review of e-portfolios and the submission of feedback.

- Review shared e-portfolios.
- Send a comment associated with an e-portfolio.

Implementation

The PDS was designed as a tool specifically for the recording of the PDP process. It is implemented in an open framework using a loosely coupled design strategy. The aim of this strategy was to develop a system that would be resilient to infrastructural changes within the institution.
Specific technologies used were:

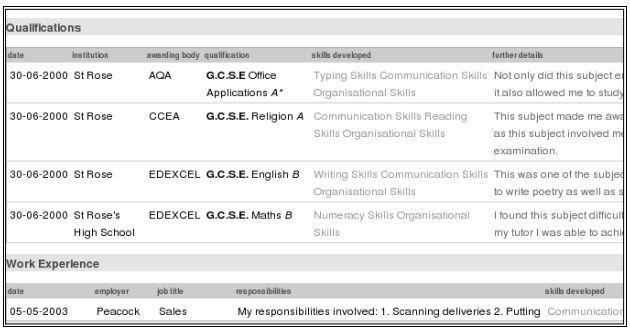
- PHP: a powerful and efficient server side scripting language,
- MySQL: a very fast database server that is specifically aimed at on-line application development.
- Smarty: a template engine, used to separate presentation from business logic.
- SOAP: the Simple Object Access Protocol, used to implement web services that provide the loose coupling of the system to other systems.
- LDAP: the Lightweight Director Access Protocol, used as part of the security model.

The PDS design uses a multi-layered approach which can be seen as a hybrid between a Model-View-Controller pattern (MVC) and a traditional Three Tiered Framework.

The PHP implementation is Object Oriented and follows a set of well-defined coding standards. These features and the implementation process followed were seen as key indicators of a project and system that would provide a long-term solution to the University's need for a system that would be maintainable, extendible, secure and robust.

Interoperability

A key feature of the PDS was the provision of placement management functionality. This was achieved via the Placement Management System[10] (Turner et. al., 2005), a system that enables a structured process for the advertising of placements and enables students to apply on-line. The Placement Management System provides full management information for the placement process. This functionality was integrated in the PDS and is presented to the student as a separate section, but the functionality still remains in the Placement Management System. This approach has provided a pattern for the integration of other systems and functionality within the PDS framework.



Qualifications

date	institution	awarding body	qualification	skills developed	further details
30-06-2000	St Rose	AQA	**G.C.S.E** Office Applications *A**	Typing Skills Communication Skills Organisational Skills	Not only did this subject e it also allowed me to study
30-06-2000	St Rose	CCEA	**G.C.S.E.** Religion *A*	Communication Skills Reading Skills Organisational Skills	This subject made me awa as this subject involved m examination.
30-06-2000	St Rose	EDEXCEL	**G.C.S.E.** English *B*	Writing Skills Communication Skills Organisational Skills	This was one of the subjec to write poetry as well as s
30-06-2000	St Rose's High School	EDEXCEL	**G.C.S.E.** Maths *B*	Numeracy Skills Organisational Skills	I found this subject difficult my tutor I was able to achi

Work Experience

date	employer	job title	responsibilities	skills developed
05-05-2003	Peacock	Sales	My responsibilities involved: 1. Scanning deliveries 2. Putting	Communicatio

Illustration 2: A portfolio can contain any artefact from the PDS.

The University of Ulster uses WebCT as its VLE. Students are familiar with using WebCT for on-line teaching. To aid in the integration of PDS and PDP into the curriculum the PDS was implemented with the ability to be called from a WebCT unit. This feature gives WebCT unit developers the ability to, e.g. open the 'add goals' section of a student's PDS from a WebCT unit which discusses goal setting for a particular module. The overall effect is an enhanced user experience and a perception of the holistic nature of PDP within the student's learning experience.

Pilot Study Results

During the academic year 2004/05 the PDS was provided to approximately 50% of the first year undergraduate programmes within the University of Ulster. The following results summarise the feedback from students and staff, collected via two on-line questionnaires.[11]

Summary of Results

The system was used by students, academics and guest users. The actual usage statistics were:

- 6321 students
- 434 academics
- 49 guests

The users added varied content to the system during the period September to May and this is shown below:

- 9552 qualifications recorded
- 963 work experience events recorded
- 331 extra curricular interests recorded
- 445 achievements recorded
- 1225 skill competencies assessed
- 458 goals set
- 234 plans created
- 93 learning styles recorded
- 653 CVs created

10 Also referred to as the PMS.

11 The questionnaires cover a 12-week period, during the second semester in the academic year 2004/05.

- 661 portfolios created

The number of time students/academics used the system is presented below:

- 47% academics used it every week
- 25% students used it every week
- 37% students every other week
- 36% students every month

The usefulness of the system and related aspects are presented below:

- 74% students thought the PDS was useful
- 75% academics thought the PDS was useful

These figures illustrate that the PDS was used extensively, but that most users focused on specific sections of the PDS, e.g. only Radiography and some other professional practice oriented students created action plans. This is in keeping with the PDS implementation philosophy as it is designed to be used in a modular way, related to the particular PDP process that the student is undertaking at a specific time.

Roadmap

Version 1.0 of the PDS was deployed in September 2004, version 2.0 will be deployed in September 2005. The final version of the PDS, version 3.0, will be deployed in September 2006. The version discussed in this paper was version 2.0 which is currently in the final stages of development and testing. The only significant new functionality in version 3.0 will be with regard to post-graduate and research students, who require some new features, whilst enhancements in code performance will also be implemented. These enhancements are aimed at providing a caching framework for web service objects (to help reduce load on linked systems) and re-factoring of the base PHP object classes to enhance efficiency. It is also likely that version 3.0 of the code will provide additional administrative functionality. This may include features that help manage the interfaces with other linked systems (the Student Information System, University Data-Warehouse and WebCT) and features that enable switching 'on/off' sections within the system.

Conclusion

The PDS fulfils one part of the PDP framework. The PDP processes, defined within each faculty, school and programme, form the complete personal development framework within the University of Ulster. This paper presents the PDS and illustrates that a flexible system can be implemented that fulfils the diverse needs of faculties, schools and programmes. It does this by providing generic functionality, that has wide appeal across these various areas. It is important to note that a 'one size fits all' approach to PDP was never seen as a possible solution to PDP or the PDP recording tool and this was a major driving force behind the modular design of the system.

The usage of the system in academic year 2004/05 illustrates that the system provided a useful tool for the recording of the PDP process. The user feedback regarding the systems usefulness illustrates that the PDS was seen as useful by a large proportion of both students and academics. These figures are all positive and show that the PDS has been successful in its purpose of recording the outcomes of the PDP processes active within the University. Finally, it is worth noting that the processes involved in PDP are key to the perceived usefulness of the PDS and the usefulness of the system illustrates the success of PDP integration as a core activity within faculties, schools and programmes that took part in the initial pilot.

Definitions

PDP ***Personal Development Planning as defined by the QAA.***
PDS ***The Personal Development System developed by the University of Ulster.***
QAA ***The Quality Assurance Agency.***
TQEF ***The Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund.***
VLE ***Virtual Learning Environment.***

References

QAA (2001) Guidelines for HE Progress Files, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/progfileHE/quidelines/progfile2001.pdf

Managing Placement On-line

Gordon Crawford and Colin Turner
University of Ulster

Introduction
Managing the business of placing students and associated activities can be exceptionally labour intensive. This can lead to bottlenecks in the process as well as robbing valuable staff time that could be better directed on the students and companies involved in placement.

The University of Ulster has developed a web-based application known as the Placement Management System (PMS) to allow for much of this activity to be automated and to allow a closer and more direct interaction between companies and students.

The placement process has many steps in common with the process of Personal Development Planning (PDP). The University of Ulster has also developed a web-based system for aiding this process known as the Personal Development System (PDS), which is discussed in detail elsewhere (Crawford et al.). These systems have an increasingly tight integration.

History of the PMS
In the School of Electrical & Mechanical Engineering at the University of Ulster an approach was pioneered to speed up some of the placement related processes by way of an early capture of CV data for each student in a standard template. Companies with vacancies would be listed on a traditional notice board and students who signed under the entry would have their CVs sent on to the companies.

Although this streamlined some of the process, there were several perceived problems with this approach:

- Students created and submitted their CVs early in the year, leaving them "frozen in time".
- Lists were produced for each company and so students had to regularly travel in to review the notice board, sometimes from a substantial distance and outside term-time to find no suitable new vacancies.
- The process was still quite slow and labour intensive.
- Valuable academic time was diverted from more useful placement related activity.

It was decided to move the database of companies, together with the data on the students into an on-line web-based application. A feasibility study was carried out to produce a database to allow students to create and store their CVs online, using open and free technologies:

- GNU/Linux operating system.
- Apache web server.
- PHP web scripting language.
- MySQL database server.

This feasibility study was successful and a fully functional version was produced for the next academic year (2001/2002) for placements within the school.

Over the next years the functionality and scalability of the system was further improved and other schools within the University began to employ the system.

It is now officially adopted as a central system in the University and the next major version (Version 2) will be released in September 2005, with greater integration to the University's PDP system and more features for broader categories of placement.

Current Functionality
The current version of the system is version 1.1.2 and included many improvements on the initial functionality. Version 2 will be released in September. We list some of the key features of the system below. Those features indicated with an asterisk* indicate new features for Version 2.

Features for Students
Students can benefit from these features:

- Students can now review and enter information around the clock and from any location.
- Students can edit their CVs on-line and update them continuously (this is now a feature of the PDP system).
- Students can very flexibly search for and view company and vacancy details; they can also apply for vacancies by "attaching" their CV and a cover letter.
- Students can easily see which companies and/or vacancies have been added or altered in a given time, or since their last visit.
- Students can access relevant resources placed on-line for them.

It is not intended that involvement with the system will end once a student is placed, indeed the system will still provide much important information for these students.

- They have access to their placement information, as well as their academic tutor's contact details and photograph.
- They can download resources outlining their assessment on placement, as well as health and safety information and other relevant documents.
- They also have access to feedback from any assessments performed via the system (see below).
- They can submit evidence of completion of Health and Safety training online*.

Here is a sample screenshot of the student view.

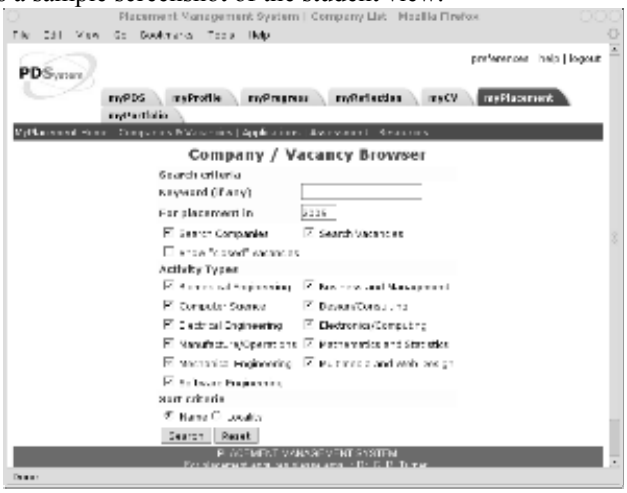


Figure 1: *The Company / Vacancy Browser in the PMS, but appearing as one tab of the PDS.*

Features for Companies
There is a rich set of features for companies and their contacts:

- Company contacts can edit their own contact information to help keep it current.
- They can also edit information about the company and any vacancies, producing much richer and current information and a sense of ownership for the company.
- They can decide whether their vacancies can be applied for directly on the system, or whether students must apply in a traditional fashion.
- Contacts can see relevant resources made available to them and can upload resources for their companies for use by students (presentations, application forms etc.)
- Contacts can view all students that have applied for vacancies together with information about their availability, application time, CV, cover letter etc.

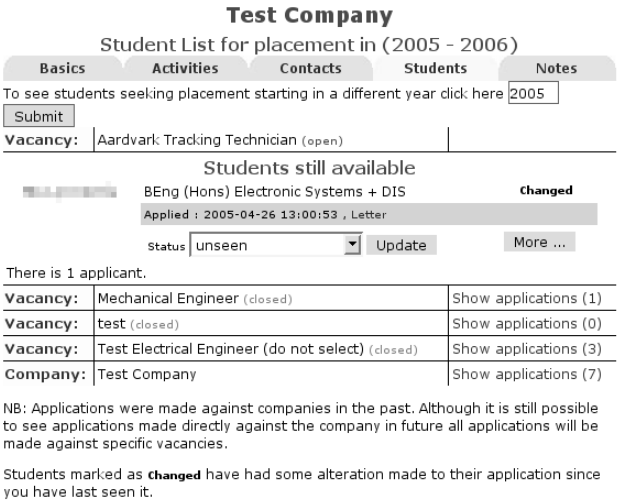


FIGURE 2: *APPLICATION LIST FOR A VACANCY*.

Administrative Features

The system is designed to both audit the placement process and to ease the administration of it.

At the University of Ulster both academic and other clerical staff are involved in the administration of placement. We refer to all of these users as "administrators" in what follows.

The PMS has a security policy based system that limits the power of these administrator users. Any number of policies can be defined and administrators have policies allocated to them. These specify which actions can be taken by that category of users. Furthermore, it is possible to limit administrators to specific cohorts of students. This is done to make it simpler for administrator users to see which students they are responsible for and to prevent accidental data corruption. Some users are given a "viewer" policy specifically designed to allow them to view information within the PMS for relevant students, but to make it impossible for them to alter that information.

In order to allocate these policies and to trouble shoot issues, it is necessary to have one or more (but a small number of) "super administrators". These users are above the policy system and have access to all students and staff.

We now list the main features for administrative users:

- Administrators can access, view and edit information as all other users, based on strict access controls.
- Policy based security allows several categories of administrator to be created.
- Security can be issued on a per course or per school basis.
- Administrators can view information on all students for which they have appropriate permissions.
- They can export information on a whole cohort of students for detailed analysis (for example, in Excel).
- They can view easy to digest graphical summaries of how individual students have been applying for placement, and how the whole cohort is performing*.
- Record keeping is built into the system as well as activity logging.
- Administrators can also create notes that can never be deleted or edited. These allow a record of events to be recorded which can be used in the event of audit or even legal proceedings.

Here is a screenshot showing one type of information available to administrator users.

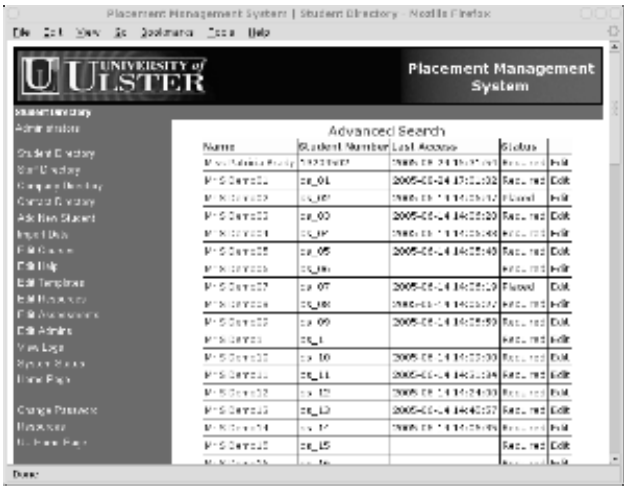


Figure 3: *The student list shows all the students matching given criteria, but also allows quick visibility of when they last logged in and their status. Links to their CVs and to edit status details are provided.*

The figure below gives an example of the graphical tools to summarise information.

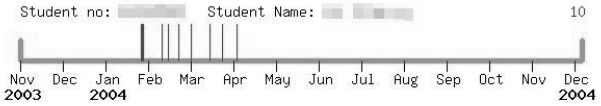


Figure 4: *Timeline showing applications for placement for a given (anonymised) student. The green bar indicates the student is placed.*

Features for other staff

Other academic staff can use the system. These members of staff are either academic tutors charged with the welfare and assessment of placed students, or course directors who need accurate information about where their placed students are or other similar information.

Academic tutors can use the system:

- to maintain and update their contact information;
- to access information to contact the student and to record assessment information for the student online;
- to access appropriate on-line resources.

In addition course directors:

- have access to the student information systems for students on their courses (see above);
- this includes graphical tools to quickly diagnose students not engaging with the process*.

Usage Statistics

The system is used literally 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Over the last year the system has delivered over 7.95 Gigabytes in over 14,000 pages of data.

Here is some data on how many users and companies are currently stored in the system.

Students	1825
Staff	118
Admins	32
Super Admins	2
Company Contacts	1425
Total Users	3400

Table 1 : *Number of Users (24th August 2005)*

Companies	1213
Vacancies (*)	435

Table 2: *Number of Companies and Vacancies (24th August 2005)*

(*) Support for individual vacancies was only added in the year 2004/2005.

Interoperability
The PMS began life as a system for use by a single school within a university. Consequently it has been a slower process to integrate with central systems than for a system originally conceived at that level.

However, we already have a degree of integration with the University's VLE, WebCT, in that students can move from that system into the PMS transparently (without further login). This is also true for staff users (but not for super admin users who are required to login directly for security reasons).

Given that the PMS now uses the PDS to obtain CV information, tight integration with that application is desirable. It is possible to move from the PMS to the PDS and vice versa seamlessly now, in that no further password challenge is required. Moreover, version 2 of the PMS will (for student users) look almost indistinguishable from the PDS look and feel. The end results will be two applications that will look to the student to be an individual application**.**

User Feedback
Extensive feedback has been requested from all categories of users. It is impossible to give more than a few brief (anonymised) samples here.

From Companies

"I only used the web the once yesterday and I thought it was very good. Easy to use and very straight forward and believe me, it would need to be for someone like me."

"I was very impressed by your new Placement Website, you're certainly leading the way forward in communicating students for placement."

From Students

"I would like you to know that I feel the website is more than sufficient and useful while on our placement and provides us with ample information to complete the tasks required."

From Staff

"I am the Academic Tutor for 3 students on placement. I have used the new system and have noted the following;

1. *the system is fast, user friendly and provides all the information that I need to make contact with the student, the employing organisation and the industrial contact.*
2. *all the necessary information is also provided in relation to assessment procedures, timescales, deadlines etc. I find this facility particularly useful."*

We have of course received many suggestions for improvements and in the main these have now been implemented.

The University of Ulster put forward the system as an example of good practice in its recent (successful) institutional audit.

Future Plans
There is still more work to be undertaken on the PMS development cycle. This will include:

- Further adapting the system to deal with diverse practice both within the University and in the education sector generally.

- Closer integration with WebCT and PDP systems. Where possible integration with WebCT will be abstracted to allow integration to other VLEs.
- Improvements in the scalability of the system.
- Further improvements as required from feedback from all classes of users.

Definitions

CV ***Curriculum Vitae – for reasons of space and flow the formal periods denoting the abbreviation have been omitted in this paper.***
PMS ***Placement Management System.***
PDP ***Personal Development Planning as defined by the QAA.***
PDS ***The Personal Development System developed by the University of Ulster.***
QAA ***The Quality Assurance Agency.***
VLE ***Virtual Learning Environment.***

References

Crawford, McGivern and Turner (2005) Managing Personal Development Planning On-line, ASET 2005.

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Attendee	Institution
Abrams, Jeff	Leeds Metropolitan University
Baines, Liz	Aston University
Bullivant, Nicola	Aston University
Capper, Rosemary	Liverpool John Moores University
Crawford, Gordon	University of Ulster
Cronin, Jerry	University of Limerick
de Silva, Carrie	Harper Adams University College
Doppelhofer, Edith	Danube and Leo-Net
Doris, Ann	Queen's University Belfast
Douglas, Clare	London College of Fashion
Fildes, Keith	ASET
Flynn, Sarah	University of Hertfordshire / ASET
Frith, Ian	City and Guilds
Gallagher, Padraic	University of Limerick
Hargreaves, Sylvia	Nottingham Trent University
Harrington, Angela	University of Bath
Hinchliffe, Liz	Leeds Metropolitan University
Hopkins, Sandra	Aston University
Houston, Philip	University of Ulster
Keegan, Helen	University of Salford
Kennan, Anna	University of Leeds
Lijkendijk, Gert	Hogeschool Utrecht
Milsome, Louisa	London College of Fashion
New, Christopher	Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design
Noblett, Joanne	University of Central Lancashire
Norcliffe, Zineb	University of Huddersfield
Offereins, Jelly	Hogeschool Utrecht
Peers, Angela	Manchester Metropolitan University / ASET
Pyne, Tamsin	University of Plymouth
Richings, Cynthia	University of Plymouth
Roberts, Gina	Aston University
Robinson, Harriet	King's College London
Shoor, Seema	Brunel University
Spraggon, Irene	Northumbria University
Stainton, Andrew	University of Huddersfield

Attendee	Institution
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Turner, Colin	University of Ulster
Walker, Paula	University of Sunderland
Ward, Lisa	University of Huddersfield
White, Colette	Sheffield Hallam University / ASET
White, Sue	University of Sunderland
Wilson, John	University of Central Lancashire / ASET
Wilson, Julie	National Council for Work Experience
Wolff, Jo	London South Bank University
Wolsey, Chris	Leeds Metropolitan University
Yarwood, Colin	Nottingham Trent University
Young, Jan	College Of St. Mark & St. John

ASET

Integrating Work and Learning

For almost 25 years ASET, the professional body for work-based learning practitioners, has been at the forefront of developments in sandwich courses and other integrated periods of work in both higher and further education. It has been the catalyst for the development of guidelines in many areas and also the promotion and dissemination of best practice. ASET is a charity run by work-based learning practitioners for work-based learning practitioners and so we are able to offer support, advice, and guidance to all professionals who work in the field.

Our association will do all we can to promote the concept of work placements and to help all staff meet the challenges posed by the ever changing and expanding debate on work experience/placement learning.

ASET now has 88 members from a range of HE, FE and industrial organisations, in the UK and also Eire, the Netherlands, Hungary and Qatar. If you wish to discuss any aspect of ASET's work, please contact the ASET office or any of the executive members. Contact details are below:

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ASET Conference 2006

The 2006 Annual Conference will take place between 5-7 September at Cadbury's Manor House, Birmingham. More details are on the following page and please keep an eye on the ASET website for further news.

Disclaimer

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ASET Annual Conference 2006

The Placement and Employability Professionals' Conference

5-7 September 2006
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A three-day international conference exploring a range of issues relating to the practice of work-based learning. As well as plenary sessions there will be a wide selection of workshop presentations to attend.

Programme to include sessions relating to:

QAA Review and Redrafting of Section 9 (Placement Learning)
QAA Practitioners' Perspectives
Health and Safety
IT to Manage Placements
Sandwich Placements
Shorter Placements
Flexible Work-Based Learning
International Placements

Plenary sessions to be led by:

- Wendy Stubbs - QAA Development Officer, author/ coordinator of the new review.
- Darren Scott – QAA review working group representative.
- Geoffrey Copland – Vice-president of UUK, Chairman of UCEA and VC of University of Westminster, home of the Professional Learning from the Workplace CETL.
- Eversheds LLP – Health and Safety.
- ASET's placement database/learning systems software functionality publication working party - progress report.

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