

INSIGHT INTO EMPLOYABILITY:

HOW WELSH UNIVERSITIES HONE GRADUATE SKILLS

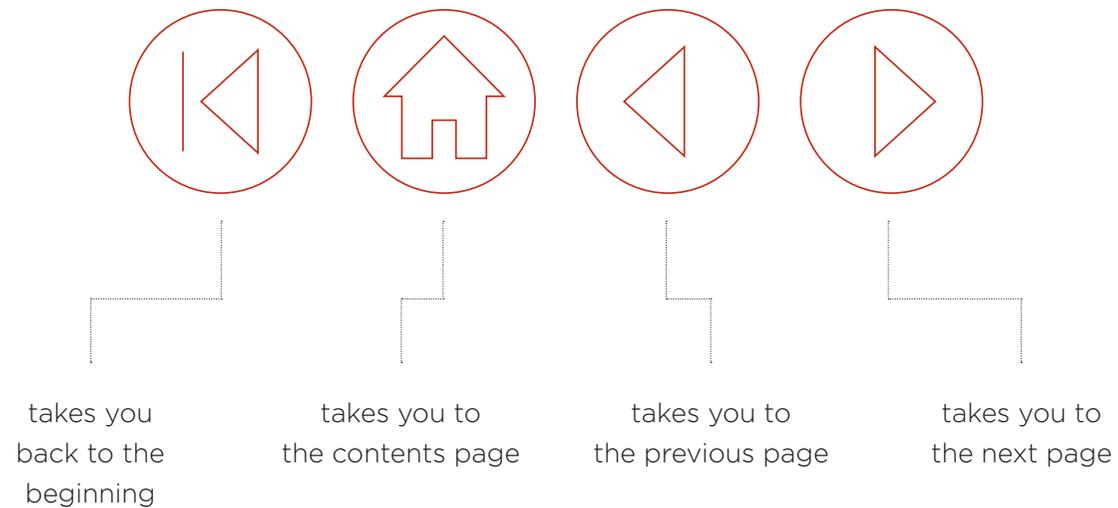
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HEFCW FOREWORD

Insight into Employability: How Welsh Universities Hone Graduate Skills

Graduates' higher level skills are essential to a buoyant economy in Wales and it has been forecast that the need for higher level skills will increase as the global economy develops. Welsh Government's recognition of the importance of these skills to the present and future Welsh economy has been demonstrated in key policy documents, *Policy Statement on Higher Education* and *Policy Statement on Skills*.

Universities in Wales share a commitment to delivering those higher level skills and ensuring that their students graduate with the necessary attributes to meet the demands of a competitive global labour market and are in a position to gain the employment they aspire to. However, it is recognised that the achievement of a high level qualification in itself is not sufficient to meet the demands of the labour market and strengthen the economy. Students need to develop, for example, generic communication, organisational and team working skills that are valued by employers in all occupational sectors. It is recognised that such skills can be developed through a combination of both intra- and extra-curricular activity.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Universities Wales, CBI Wales and NUS Wales, in 2012, signed an *Agreement on Skills and Employability for Wales* with the aim of increasing the employment of graduates from universities in Wales. The agreement identified three priority areas:

- Work placements and work experience;
- Employer approved courses;
- Embedding employability skills across all higher education curricula.

HEFCW sought to deliver its obligations under this agreement by requesting that universities in Wales each develop a Skills and Employability Action Plan (SEAP). The plans were required

to outline skills and employability activity and initiatives for the 2012/13 & 2013/14 academic years and set a baseline to measure future improvements in universities' skills and employability offers to students. In addition HEFCW invested £1,000,000 of one off project funding in universities in Wales to help them develop and try out new innovative initiatives to develop the employability skills of their graduates.

The Skills and Employability planning exercise demonstrated that significant developments and improvements in provision were emerging in the following areas:

- The number and range of employers and professional organisations universities work with to provide input into intra and extra-curricular initiatives across a diverse range of subject provision;
- Work placements, both inside and outside of the curriculum, ranging from one week to one year in duration;
- Volunteering programmes;
- New employability roles for university staff and student representatives;
- Continuous professional development for staff to support embedding skills and employability into the curriculum;
- Overseas study and work opportunities;
- Assessed careers modules which develop career management skills and allow students to reflect on skills developed during their studies;
- Intra and extra-curricular enterprise and entrepreneurship activity;
- Employability awards;
- Online resources to engage students with careers advice.

Universities in Wales have taken huge strides in recent years to develop provision that meets employer needs

Universities in Wales have taken huge strides in recent years to develop provision that meets employer needs and have seen the number of graduates in employment and in graduate employment six months after leaving universities increasing over the past two years. However, universities are aware that the economy and skill needs will always be changing and that

they must meet these changing needs. This publication provides an insight into some of the initiatives that demonstrate how universities in Wales are honing graduate skills to meet the demands of the labour market locally, nationally and internationally.

We hope this publication, and an event hosted on 18 June 2015 to share such good practice, will encourage universities to consider how they can further improve their employability offer to students and complement existing initiatives. HEFCW will continue to encourage universities to build upon their partnerships with students and employers to identify how universities can continue to meet the demands of a changing global labour market and ensure that they are central to a strong Welsh economy.



ABERPRENTICE

“Bids were assessed on how well they met the brief, the technology approach identified, the quality of the written bid itself and the live pitch.”

Thanks to a £15,000 grant from the Higher Education Academy Computing Subject Centre, academic and employability staff at Aberystwyth University created and ran an extra-curricular pilot project designed to give computer science students experience of multi-disciplinary project work in a real commercial context.

Working together in small interdisciplinary teams made up of computer science and management & business students, with access to a legal adviser, students worked with a real client on a real opportunity in just three days. They conducted a requirements analysis and then produced a professional standard tender document, followed by a competitive pitch for four weeks' paid work experience.

They were charged with creating a commercial quality bid to develop and deliver an app-based campus accessibility map for Aberystwyth University Student Services department as a real client. Students also had to identify opportunities for future development such as health and fitness elements to ensure that the app encouraged full inclusivity.

Students learnt about legal and commercial aspects in real time as they progressed through

the project. Topics covered included:

- how to work with a prospective client to understand their needs,
- assessing market size and existing products,
- how to identify bidding and delivery costs,
- project management/scheduling,
- Belbin team role theory, and
- legal issues such as copyright, intellectual property and trademarking.

Skills sessions to deepen existing abilities included several technical sessions on usability and programming considerations, as well as training on business English and presentation skills. In addition, students were able to buy in specialist IT, marketing and presentation consultancy.

The quality of bids and pitches were assessed by a panel of invited judges representing a university user, the end client, the Students Union and the Managing Director (an Aberystwyth University alumnus) of an apps company.

Bids were assessed on how well they met the brief, the technology approach identified, the quality of the written bid itself and the live pitch.

Feedback from the judges and invited audience of senior academics and employability co-

ordinators acknowledged the high standards of the students' work, while students appreciated the chance to experience the reality of commercial life first hand. The level of learning, particularly in terms of mindset and self-efficacy development, commercial awareness and the importance of good planning and focus was both clearly observed and noticed by students and tutors alike.

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CAREERS EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

“The Framework aims to ensure that students are aware of, and fully enabled to make the most of, a range of career management opportunities...”

One of Aberystwyth University's strategic aims as set out in its Strategic Plan 2012–2017 is to 'embed employability across the curriculum and promote experiences that allow students to test and develop their skills'. The University works through its dedicated Careers Service to empower students to realise their aspirations, make informed life choices and achieve their potential. All aspects of their time at university and the experiences they gain should contribute to this and provide them with the skills to plan and manage their career paths long into the future.

To this end, in 2012 the University introduced the Careers Education Framework, a tool for Academic Institutes to use to ensure that employability and skills development are embedded at every point in the student's learning journey.

The Framework aims to ensure that students are aware of, and fully enabled to make the most of, a range of career management opportunities offered by the University, including:

- a) The academic knowledge developed through their course
- b) Personal development plans

- c) Work related experience
- d) Employer and alumni interactions
- e) Advice and guidance from the university Careers Service.

The Framework is based on the development of four themes :

- Personal Awareness
- Careers Information
- Knowledge and Experience
- Applications and CVs.

For each theme the framework sets out approaches for the students' department to use at each stage of the student journey to embed the theme in learning (e.g. alumni visits, case studies, CV sessions). The learning outcomes are clearly set out and suggested tutorial sessions are provided. Supporting resources such as web page links, websites with resources and leaflets are outlined in the Framework.

Embedding the Framework

The Framework was introduced in 2012 as a pilot proposal. In 2013 the University's 17 academic departments were restructured into seven Institutes. Following this, an Employability Action Group was formed, with representation from the Directors of Employability newly appointed to these Institutes and the Employability Co-ordinators

for the departments. The Group has helped to ensure that the Framework is embedded within the Institutes and has provided a forum for discussing its success and development.

Advantages of the Framework

The Framework provides structured guidance to staff across all of the University's Institutes on the embedding of skills and employability training within the curriculum. The Framework tailors the introduction of each stage of skills development to the learning stage of the student and supports staff through clear links to additional resources and information at each stage of the process.

The Framework also ensures better communication and collaboration between the Academic Institutes and the university Careers Service and provides a structure for involving alumni and employers in curriculum development. As such, it supports the University's aim to bring together as many stakeholders as possible in the development and delivery of employability and skills training within its curriculum.

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GRADUATE TRAINEESHIP SCHEME

“Trainees are encouraged to work both as part of teams and independently and are provided with their own projects...”

The University committed in its Strategic Plan 2012–2017 to a graduate traineeships programme as part of a strategy to ensure the best possible employment opportunities for its graduates. Consequently in 2012/13 the University introduced a Graduate Traineeship scheme aimed at providing graduates with an entry point into a career in Higher Education.

The scheme funds twenty appointments per year and entry is competitive. Through the scheme graduates have experienced work in a range of areas of expertise including:

- Human resources
- Alumni relations
- Research administration and data management
- Events organisation
- University planning and information management
- Health, safety and environmental management
- Communications and public affairs.

The scheme was showcased at the National Assembly as part of the Welsh Universities – Driving Growth Campaign in June 2013.

Departmental Career Development

The University has been determined that the trainees must be provided with roles

that enable them to test their skills and make a real contribution to the University's key projects. Participants on the scheme have helped to develop new policies for the University, contributed to the development of management information for planning purposes, helped to introduce frameworks for reducing environmental impacts and assisted with the planning of high profile events. Trainees are encouraged to work both as part of teams and independently and are provided with their own projects to help them develop project management and time management skills.

Training Events

As well as training within their department, participants attend a range of career development events aimed at helping them to reflect on the skills they are developing. These events include:

- A CV workshop involving a problem based learning approach. Participants are invited to bring their existing CV and tailor it to suit a job advertisement
- Training in interview techniques and mock interviews to build confidence
- Personal Skills Reflection where Team Role theory is explored with participants introduced to the Belbin approach and encouraged to reflect on their own skills. The aim is to encourage graduate trainees to

identify their skills and areas they may wish to target with more skills training and to reflect on how their own mix of skills fits into team working.

The aim of both the in-department training and the training events provided centrally is to ensure that the year spent as a graduate trainee is varied, interesting and challenging and that the participants on the scheme are able to develop a range of skills that will equip them for their future careers. Feedback from those on the scheme, many of whom have gone on to further work in Higher Education, has been positive. Some quotes from students on the scheme are provided below:

“It has brought together all the skills that I have gained through my degree and has given me the opportunity to apply myself in a professional environment.”

“Now I've got a trajectory for my career.”

“It will help my future career prospects.”

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DEVELOPING SKILLS & EMPLOYABILITY FOR THE WELSH ENERGY SECTOR: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

“At the event Bangor University students had an opportunity to meet and talk to graduates who have recently entered the industry.”

Bangor University and Horizon Nuclear Power, which is owned by leading global electronics company Hitachi, Ltd, have recently signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding.

The memorandum will enable both parties to work more closely and more openly to explore opportunities and agree activities relating to:

- Student employability and work placements within Horizon Nuclear Power as well as activities related to longer-term graduate employment in North Wales
- Collaboration and support for research in relevant areas undertaken by the University, including potential collaboration in the provision of research facilities
- Collaboration in education engagement activities, linked in particular to promotion and awareness of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects.

The first event organised by the University for its students following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding was a Nuclear Careers Workshop held in partnership with Horizon Nuclear Power, the National Skills Academy for Nuclear (NSAN), and the *nucleargraduates* Programme. The event was hosted with the intention of providing information about careers in the nuclear industry and making students aware of future

local employment opportunities. The event was attended by over 70 students from a range of disciplines including engineering, chemistry, environmental science, business, law, psychology and geography, demonstrating that there are opportunities available to graduates from a diverse range of subject disciplines.

“Wylfa Newydd will require a huge range of nuclear, engineering, construction and organisational skills. It is great to be involved with such a collaborative event to raise awareness of long term career opportunities, not just locally but on a wider scale, across the planned UK nuclear programme, which will require an intake of 8,600 people per year over the next 7 years.”

Allison Hunt, NSAN's Wales Regional Manager

At the event, Bangor University students had an opportunity to meet and talk to graduates who have recently entered the industry – Ross Murison, a Rolls Royce sponsored graduate, and Kevin O'Donoghue, sponsored by Radioactive Waste Management, both on the *nucleargraduates* Programme. The

recent graduates outlined how they had made their career choices and how essential wider problem solving skills, business awareness and adaptability are for graduates hoping to enter and succeed in the nuclear industry.

Two fortunate students, Jessica Roberts from the School of Law and Emily Riley from the School of Ocean Science were also selected at the event to undertake NSAN's Triple Bar accreditation at Coleg Llandrillo Menai. The training and the proficiency test that they will undertake, funded via the University's Cadarn Skills Centre work-based learning project, will give them the industry recognised accreditation needed to work on existing nuclear sites.

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JAC'S STORY: DELIVERING STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS COLLABORATION

“ Jac developed an alternative, commercially viable cable-tray that could, potentially, compete effectively in the market place...”

Bangor University regards working with business as one of its top priorities. Alongside putting knowledge to work through collaborative research & design, its employer engagement activities, through its skills and employability action plan and other mechanisms, Bangor University also delivers:

- essential study and work placements: building confidence, skills and expertise of students beyond the academic to enhance their employability; and
- valuable industrial insights for staff which enriches their teaching.

Bangor University works closely with the Welsh Government officials who deliver business and innovation support to the business community. This relationship yielded an introduction to Mr Brian Piggott, Director and General Manager at Marco Cable Management, an Anglesey based manufacturing company which had been exploring, with Welsh Government, ways of securing manufacturing support for the business.

Initial discussions led to Mr Dewi Rowlands, Course Director, BSc Product Design and Technology Programmes undertaking a short placement with Marco Cable Management, getting to know the business, its products, its processes and its needs.

Dewi commented, “ being involved with an effective modern manufacturing operation was a great professional development opportunity for me and my staff....to identify a portfolio of collaborative projects which could both enhance the learning experience of our students and also, bring benefits to the company was excellent.”

One particular technical problem facing the company, which emerged as a top priority from the portfolio of projects agreed by Brian and Dewi, was the need to redesign a cable-tray system that was a key part of Marco Cable Management's product range. A competitor had recently developed an innovative new design of tray which could be assembled and installed far more quickly and efficiently than any other on the market. This, potentially, undermined Marco Cable Management's position as a sector leader.

Coincidentally, third year student Jac Parry needed a challenging task as a basis for his BSc Product Design final year project. With academic support from Dewi at Bangor University and engineering support from Brian and team at Marco Cable Management,

Jac developed an alternative, commercially viable cable-tray that could, potentially, compete effectively in the market place with the innovative new design that had been introduced by Marco Cable Management's competitor.

Not only did Jac gain his BSc in Product Design but, in so doing, he had re-designed, for the company, a key product, to a patentable and viable ready-for-market solution – in recognition of which Jac was named by Marco Cable Management on their patent application.

Eager not to lose Jac, Marco Cable Management worked closely with the University's Careers and Employability service to secure an Internship for him via the Santander Internship Scheme Funded in part by Marco Cable Management and in part by Santander Universities. A Santander Internship enables 'entrepreneurial students to further develop ideas, skills and experience'. The Internship enabled Jac to remain at the company, following his graduation and he has subsequently become a full-time member of staff.

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UNDERGRADUATE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

“The scheme has been a success, with 100% of interns saying that they would recommend it to a friend...”

The Bangor University Careers & Employability Service coordinates an internal internship scheme, providing paid graduate level work experience for up to 45 undergraduate students per academic year in internships hosted by the University's schools and departments. Each internship lasts up to 150 hours, and takes place between February and June.

The aim of the scheme is to enhance the employability and future job prospects of those Bangor University students taking part, as well as providing many more with the experience of a graduate recruitment and interview process. The scheme also aims to provide opportunities for undergraduates who have had no previous relevant work experience at a graduate level; students without previous experience of similar roles, who demonstrate relevant knowledge, interest, skills and qualities, ideas, and most importantly, potential for the role, are given equal consideration i.e. experience is not be a deciding factor in the appointment process.

The scheme offers many benefits for students including a wage, training in professional compartment, flexible working hours to accommodate academic commitments, support through the Bangor Employability Award framework in recognising and articulating the skills and qualities that they develop

during the internship, and an opportunity to gain graduate level and, for some, subject-specific work experience. The experience also contributes to the Bangor Employability Award and will be recognised on the students' Higher Education Achievement Report.

The scheme, now in its third year, is centrally coordinated by the Careers & Employability Service, with the annual process starting early in semester 1 when schools and departments are invited to submit proposals. Successful bids are chosen based on criteria including:

- how accessible the opportunity is to all students,
- the potential impact of the work on a student's employability,
- the variety of work on offer to the students,
- ensuring a diverse spread of opportunities across the hosting schools and departments.

Students are invited to apply at the end of the 1st semester, with additional CV and application form workshops available during this time, as well as bespoke online resources. The interview process provides students with the experience of facing a panel, often their first experience for a full-time or graduate level role. All candidates receive feedback.

The scheme has been a success, with 100% of interns saying that they would recommend it

to a friend, 90% feeling that they had made a good contact for the future, and 32% having been offered further employment or work experience after their internship had ended.

Student feedback includes:

“My internship has allowed me to gain skills that I have not gained from my degree course such as working in a business atmosphere, communicating professionally through email and proper time management.”

“The internship has provided me with valuable experience, in a field that is often difficult to get experience in, particularly in North Wales, due to my inability to speak Welsh, therefore helping me to access a career where experience is everything.”

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

“This flexible, self-directed learning resource for students also ensures academic tutors have access to a quality-assured resource...”

The Your Career e-Module is available, on the institution's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), to all students and staff at Cardiff Metropolitan University (Cardiff campus-based and for those in collaborative provision in UK and globally). This flexible, self-directed learning resource for students also ensures academic tutors have access to a quality-assured resource to support their interactions with students on employability/Personal Development Planning (PDP)-related issues.

The e-Module delivers 14 interactive and multi-media e-lessons, covering a range of career management skills. Many of the e-lessons contain School and subject-specific examples and materials; others are supplemented by film of real interviews, employers and alumni providing advice and case studies. Cardiff Met's graduate attributes framework is embedded into two e-lessons to enable students to reflect and articulate their strengths and plan to meet development needs.

In parallel with this on-going enhancement of the core e-Module, Career Development Service (CDS) staff have collaborated closely with academic staff to develop a range of core Employability/PDP/Professional Practice modules which are credit-bearing (10 credits). These are blended-learning modules, accessed through the VLE, with CDS staff providing e-lessons and activities customised from the core e-Module.

Also provided is consultancy on (and resources for) assessment and staff development/material for the teams of tutors who provide the face-to-face delivery and support for the students.

Anticipated outcomes

Core e-Module:

For students:

- The key aims of the module are to support the development of career development skills and employability awareness learning.

For academic and support staff (including Career Advisers):

- To facilitate/refresh their own career management skills and employability awareness learning.
- To provide a quality assured learning resource to support curriculum-based learning and the personal tutor roles of academic/support staff.

For the customised Employability/PDP modules:

- To provide authentic learning situations with formative and summative feedback in which students articulate their skills, attributes, knowledge and experience in written form and verbally within a framework of employer requirements.

Evidence of actual outcomes

Core e-Module:

- Feedback from students is consistently positive.
- A key outcome of the quality and relevance of the e-Module, together with the option of customisation and consultancy support from CDS staff has been demonstrated by the increased demand by academic staff for customised modules to be developed within their curricula.
- The numbers of programmes with these embedded modules has risen from 8 in 2009 to 36 in 2013-14, when 2853 students undertook the learning processes previously described.

Customised Employability/PDP modules:

- Significant qualitative and quantitative evaluation on student engagement with the content and achievement of learning outcomes is undertaken in line with module assessment criteria to ensure achievement of learning outcomes.
- Student and staff feedback is also actively obtained in focus groups, surveys and on an on-going basis from students' direct contact with their tutors and Career Advisers. This is routinely fed into future iterations.

On the basis of evidence obtained from a range of stakeholders, the Quality Assurance Agency's Institutional Review of Cardiff Metropolitan University in 2014 cited the e-Module and its customised derivatives as an example of good practice.

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WORK, VOLUNTEERING AND APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY,

“The placement providers assess students against employability skills, and the academic assignment is a critical incident report.”

As part of the process of Initial Professional Development, focusing on psychological literacy, critical thinking, reflection and employability, which runs through the BSc (Hons) Psychology, Cardiff Metropolitan University's Department of Applied Psychology has developed a placement module at level 5, Work, Volunteering and Applied Psychology, using service-learning as its underlying pedagogy.

Barbara Jacoby (1996, p.5) defines service-learning as:

[...]a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning.

Short placements of a minimum thirty hours offer students the opportunity to experience psychology in a work and community focus, and the assessment encourages them to focus on experience and its relationship to psychology theory.

Working closely with community partners to find placements of benefit to both the student and provider, the process starts with advertising the placements and a formal

recruitment process. This is both a very useful learning experience and ensures that placement providers choose the students they feel are most appropriate for their organisation.

Academic delivery initially focuses on service-learning pedagogy and professional behaviour; students then separate into different vocational pathways to learn more about the specific context within which they will be volunteering, followed by individual tutorials which focus on placement experience and the assignment.

Students can choose to be assessed against five applied psychology pathways: clinical; educational; forensic; health and occupational. The assessment is split between the placement provider and the academic team. The placement providers assess students against employability skills, and the academic assignment is a critical incident report.

The pedagogical benefits of work-based experiences depend largely on the extent to which students reflect on them and the extent to which they take understandings derived from an academic context and relate these to work (Smith, Clegg, Lawrence and Todd, 2007). The focus on reflection in this assignment is key, as it forms the link between theory and practice. It helps the students to contextualise their experience and to identify their strengths

and weaknesses, highlighting gaps in their experience that need further development.

In its first year, Work, Volunteering and Applied Psychology has given more than half the cohort the opportunity to gain relevant experience. Initial feedback from students has been very positive:

“It gave me an insight as to what it would be like to work in a school environment, challenging yet worth-while and has made my decision to be a primary school teacher even stronger.”

“It gave me the opportunity to do something I thought I'd never get the chance to, especially as a student. It increased my confidence in my chosen career and my motivation to get where I want to be.”

Further research needs to be done to fully evaluate the success of the module, but it certainly seems to have the potential to provide a structure and rationale for employability development, with a clear place and value within the curriculum.

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BSC BUSINESS MANAGEMENT WITH INTEGRATED WORK PLACEMENT

“The process was a collaborative effort, involving the School and a team of employers who formed a steering group...”

In 2010 a member of Cardiff Business School's International Advisory Board mentioned a concept called 'Co-operative Education' – a structured method of combining classroom-based academic study with real world practical experience. Although quite common in Canada and the US, it is relatively rare in the UK.

Based on the Co-operative Education concept The BSc Business Management with Integrated Work Placement took two years from proposal through to validation. The process was a collaborative effort, involving the School and a team of employers who formed a steering group to ensure that the programme met the necessary academic criteria and achieved the desired employability outcomes.

There are many universities in the UK offering sandwich style degrees of four years duration but none offer a substantial period of work experience within a three-year programme. The Business Management with Integrated Work Placement programme embeds a continuous 20-week period of paid work experience into the second year of study. More importantly, the placement is assessed, credit-bearing and fully aligned with the students' academic programme of study.

The aims of the programme are broadly twofold: To afford students the opportunity

to critically evaluate academic theory in a real world setting, and to improve employability by enhancing the core skills and attributes most sought after by employers. The academic aims are achieved through three Theory and Practice modules covering the core disciplines of Organisational Behaviour, Managing People, and Marketing and Strategy; students learn the theoretical aspects of the discipline in the classroom, and then whilst on placement, they critically evaluate the theories in the context of their employment setting. The development of employability skills is accomplished in the workplace, with all students supported and guided by a line-manager. Assessment is based on critical essays, a reflective portfolio, a presentation and an employer evaluation

From the outset it was hoped that the students would see relevance in their academic studies, develop themselves on a personal and professional level, and become more employable on graduation. Although the first cohort of placement students have not yet graduated, seven of the ten students have either been offered employment upon graduation, or fast-tracked through the graduate recruitment process of their host firm. This has exceeded all expectations. Feedback from students has also been extremely positive:

“I would really recommend this programme because you learn so much more in a real work place than you could in a lecture theatre.”

“[It] gave me the opportunity to put the theory I have learnt at university into a real life working situation. I was given a huge amount of responsibility which allowed me to learn and develop my skills at a fast pace.”

“The experiences I have gained through this programme have made me feel confident that I have something to offer potential employers which wasn't the case prior to this experience.”

Our main constraints at the moment are finding suitable, local employers to participate (to allow students to remain in their student accommodation), and encouraging students to engage with the competitive application process.

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GLOBAL INTERNSHIPS PROGRAMME

“Cardiff University has created the Global Opportunity Centre which offers information, advice and guidance to students...”

The Global Internships programme was introduced as part of a wider initiative to encourage students to engage with international experience in order to develop into globally competitive graduates.

Cardiff University has created the Global Opportunity Centre which offers information, advice and guidance to students that want to work, study or volunteer abroad. The centre has introduced global summer internships, volunteering and study programmes for 2015.

The Global Internships Programme offers non-credit bearing global summer internships accessible to all degree specialisms to enhance student employability and support the development of outward mobility across the academic schools, with the aim of:

- increasing the outward mobility of undergraduate cohorts in line with the University strategy to ensure 17% of all undergraduates have engaged with an international experience by 2017.
- enhancing graduate employability by developing graduates who are competitive in a global labour market.
- supporting 50 undergraduate students in engaging in an internship abroad in the first year of the programme running.

Anticipated outcomes

- To raise the profile of engaging with an international work experience.
- Increased engagement in work experience abroad.
- Increased student employability and the development of skills and attributes that global employers are looking for.
- The development of new and enhanced relationships with global employers and organisations.
- Stronger links with Cardiff University international alumni community.
- To support filling skills gaps in the labour markets of other countries.

Impact measures

- The success in achieving the target outlined.
- Tracking employability outcomes via the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education to collate data and compare outcomes regarding graduates who have engaged in global internships and those that haven't.
- Feedback Questionnaire from students and employers.
- The measurement of distance travelled by the student in terms of career awareness and readiness before and following their internship abroad.
- The growth of the programme.

Future development

Following the programme running for its first year and after an initial review, there will be an increase in the target for engaging students with a global internship and an increase in the number of opportunities offered.

Further development will include a concentration on the areas/sectors where there is a lack of opportunity for students to engage with an international internship. This will support employability outcomes for schools that have less opportunity to support students with relevant work experience due to the nature of the degree specialism.

Collaboration with academic staff to collate a larger database of opportunities to ensure that academic knowledge is fully utilised concerning relevant subject specific global work experience opportunities that will benefit students.

Further engagement with International Alumni to develop bespoke opportunities for Cardiff University students and the development of a Global Ambassador programme to support all marketing activity and the promotion of work experience abroad.

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“The Open Learn is an open education resource platform so the unit is free for its students and the public to access and interact with.”

“USING VOLUNTARY WORK TO GET AHEAD IN THE JOB MARKET”

The Open University in Wales launched a revised version of the Open Learn unit, 'Using voluntary work to get ahead in the job market' that was contextualised for Wales.

The Open Learn is an open education resource platform so the unit is free for students and the public to access and interact with. This 12 hour unit explores how engaging with voluntary work can enhance employment opportunities detailing the benefits of such work, directing the student to volunteering opportunities and how volunteering can impress employers. To promote this unit the Open University hosted a pan Wales on-line forum on volunteering. This was held for two weeks and with the support of Open University Student Association (OUSA) promotion the forum received approximately 150 student visitors over that two week period.

Due to the popularity of the forum, a blended learning approach was designed with individual support and group work. The first group activity was an online tutorial on 'Finding voluntary work', with lunchtime and evening sessions, at which the Internship Programme Co-ordinator from the Wales Council for Voluntary Action's spoke to the Open University in Wales' students.

A student satisfaction survey along with qualitative feedback revealed positive feedback towards the tutorial, and a recording of the tutorial was made available to allow other students to access the resource at a time that suits them. This approach proved to be popular and a tool kit has been written and disseminated across the sector. An evaluation of these findings was circulated to Open University in Wales' staff, including associate lecturers.

This unit was also presented to the South Wales Union Learn Representatives meeting. This was received very positively by the group and the unit was shared as a resource to their members. Using partner networks has proved to be an effective way of communicating free resources and the Open University continue to seek similar opportunities in the future.

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EMBEDDING ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACROSS ALL HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULA

“The resulting plans also included a new Enterprise Society for students, a new ‘E-Zone’ to serve as a focus for entrepreneurship activity...”

In 2013 work commenced on identifying the most appropriate set of graduate attributes (as articulated by employers e.g. the CBI/NUS ‘Working Towards Your Future’ 2011) applicable to the students of each academic College within the university. This became a core part of the information that resulted in our bespoke College employability guides.

Swansea Employability Academy (SEA) worked closely with IfEL (the Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership), recognising the synergy between ‘employability’, ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘intrapreneurship’ to ensure staff are supported in the development of their teaching and embedding these skills and attributes.

The National Centre for Entrepreneurship in Education (NCEE) defines three principles, which informed a campus-wide strategy for entrepreneurship education.

Principle 1: Creating an enabling institutional environment:

SEA, supported by IfEL, will be responsible for the development of entrepreneurship education within Swansea University. There is support from the Vice Chancellor and the Senior Management Team.

Principle 2: Engaging key stakeholders inside and outside the university:

SEA’s Strategy Board has a patron and membership drawn from entrepreneurial

backgrounds, committed to support Swansea students in the development of entrepreneurial skills.

Principle 3: Developing entrepreneurial teaching and learning practices:

The Directors of Employability, supported by IfEL, will:

“Institute a systematic overhaul of academic disciplines so that entrepreneurship education is embedded in every subject. All graduates need to have the entrepreneurial skills that enable them to seize and exploit opportunities, solve issues and problems, generate and communicate ideas, and make a difference in their communities.”

A survey of all existing modules which delivered entrepreneurship was undertaken and gaps in provision identified. Two new Chairs in Entrepreneurship focussed on developing research. New modules and programmes were considered, and work started on ensuring the embedding of entrepreneurial skills in the curriculum for all students.

The resulting plans also included a new Enterprise Society for students, a new ‘E-Zone’ to serve as a focus for entrepreneurship

activity across campus, development of a website to assist students to find out about this activity and engage with it, a ‘Donate a Day Scheme’ website to ensure external support for student start up was easily captured and a programme of staff development.

Through IfEL, a wide cross-section of teaching and support staff have been provided with formal training opportunities under the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) agenda to enable them to develop generic modules and practical advice on entrepreneurship. The CPD provided staff throughout the University with a suite of specific and innovative pedagogies or approaches that have been proven to inform, encourage and develop entrepreneurial thinking and behaviours in students and staff.

The impact of the entrepreneurship CPD for staff will be measured using the following metrics during 2014/15:

1. Number of staff delivering entrepreneurship teaching and learning in participating Colleges.
2. Number of subjects including entrepreneurship learning opportunities in participating Colleges.
3. Case studies of new entrepreneurial approaches adopted on campus within participating Colleges.

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SWANSEA UNIVERSITY: WORK PLACEMENT SCHEMES

“...a paid internship for a longer period to facilitate graduate level work / projects to the mutual benefit of both student and employer.”

Swansea Employability Academy (SEA) aimed to introduce a new scheme to support undergraduate work placement opportunities, utilising the Skills and Employability Action Plan funding from HEFCW.

Interviewing Swansea University students revealed that many had not undertaken relevant work experience because they had to work for financial reward, or they had contacted numerous employers with no success. In the very early stages of SEA (summer 2012), it was recognised that the University required a dedicated Work Placement Team to complement the activities of the professionally accredited Careers Advisers.

In November 2012, SEA launched its WoW (Week of Work) initiative – a one week taster programme. Students apply for a WoW, undertake a 'Masterclass' (to prepare them for maximising the potential that placements offer) and attend a graduate style 'Assessment Centre'. From this, Placement Officers match students with the vacancies offered by a range of employers.

The first WoW's took place in the University's 'Employability Week' 2013, with requests from both employers and students for more WoW's over the summer. In addition, the evaluation

of this pilot phase pointed to the need for something more substantial: in essence, a paid internship for a longer period to facilitate graduate level work / projects to the mutual benefit of both student and employer.

In the summer of 2013, SEA co-ordinated the development of a second placement scheme, through the creation of SPIN (Swansea Paid Internship Network). These internships, for which employers received a wage subsidy, were for a period of 6-8 weeks and again, students were prepared by way of 'Masterclass' and 'Assessment Centre'. This scheme also enabled the team to develop robust supporting documentation and feed into the scoping of a specification for bespoke placement software. The team has also been able to inform the development of the University's credit bearing placement strategy and associated documentation, thereby ensuring the capture and use of best practice.

Some students taking part in internships have been offered further placement work / projects and this has led to the development of WoWee (Week of Work with Extra Experience) for pilot in 2014/15 – and these opportunities, together with other initiatives e.g. 'Create your own placement' form part of the placement team strategy for 2014/15.

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EMBEDDING EMPLOYABILITY: DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING RESOURCES FOR USE WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

“The aim of this initiative was to develop easily accessible online learning resources aimed at improving students' employability skills...”

The University of South Wales is taking active steps to enhance student experience through active participation and simulation, delivered via flexible models.

The aim of this initiative was to develop easily accessible online learning resources aimed at improving students' employability skills and provide up-skill continuous professional development (CPD) employability sessions for academic staff, as well as access to best practice examples online to further enhance their ability to deliver employability within the curriculum.

Academic Staff Employability CPD:

Academic staff were keen to have support with the collation of best practice, so they were able to benefit from what their colleagues were already delivering within the curriculum. They also wanted a central on-line location for resources such as employer videos, case studies and simulation activities which could be used within the teaching timetable, as well as resources they could signpost students to for further learning. Alongside this, a series of external speaker events were arranged to provide staff with employability CPD and to increase employability knowledge and expertise which staff could use with their students. These speaker events were offered on a pan-Wales basis to other HEIs.

Resources: Research suggested that interactive online resources were required that would be accessible 24/7. Multimedia, and where possible a “Facebook” type and “gamification” feel to the resources would have greatest appeal to students. A single online employability platform was key – a one stop shop for student employability as students do not want to have to go to various resources to find what they need. This has been provided by a new online system UniLife Connect. An Interview Simulator, CV Builder (complete with employer videos that talk the student through each step) and other e-learning resources were sourced to sit within Unilife Connect.

Partnership working was key to the delivery of this initiative: Close working relationships were created with the faculty Heads of Student Experience, the Students' Union and the Skills and Employability team. Partnership working has meant that all stakeholders feel a level of involvement, have had the chance to influence the end product and have been well placed to support the roll out and encouragement of others to take advantage of the resources.

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EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO WORKING WITH USW STUDENTS

“The willingness of organisations to engage with USW as a whole, specifically with employability activity and with our students has been very positive.”

The University's recently published Academic Plan highlights the importance of ensuring that our students graduate with a “distinctive and competitive edge” to enable them to stand out in the graduate job market.

We recognise that we need to develop our relationships with employers/industries in a way which markets our strengths and creates a platform for their engagement in the development of provision.

It was decided that an 'Employer's Guide to Working with USW Students' would aid this engagement. Our aims were: to demystify for organisations the methods by which they can interact with our students; to ensure that our understanding of what makes graduates employable in the current marketplace is relevant and up to date; and to increase employers' awareness of our students' skills and attributes.

In addition to the 'core' services we provide to employers looking to engage with our students, we set about a campaign of proactive relationship building with local and national graduate employers. To do this, we conducted two streams of activity. Firstly, we tapped into existing talent management and recruitment connections within organisations that had

already been involved in some sort of USW employability activity. Secondly, we networked to establish new contacts, both in person via careers events and online, via LinkedIn and other social media channels. These new contacts have been added to an improved employer database, which can be used to support students who are searching for work experience opportunities. This database will be housed in our new online system, 'UniLife Connect', which will be accessible to staff across the institution, allowing for relationships to develop in other areas such as curriculum development and commercial engagement.

We used the intelligence we gained from these organisations to put together the 'Employer's Guide to Working with University of South Wales Students', as an online and hard copy resource, and also to inform the content and structure of the evolved Grad Edge Award, the University of South Wales' employability award. The Employer's Guide has already proved a very useful resource, having been used to demonstrate to a range of organisations the benefits of offering work experience to University students. A supplementary 'matrix' has been produced, to promote the variety of cost effective ways the University can enhance an organisation's recruitment efforts.

We experienced significant interest in the re-development of the University's employability award, the Grad Edge Award. As a result, we assembled an Employer Steering Group to provide practical input into its formation, made up of representatives of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. A small number of these representatives then also contributed to a video, produced to promote the Award.

The willingness of organisations to engage with USW as a whole, specifically with employability activity and with our students has been very positive. Within USW Careers, the introduction of a single point of contact for employers has proved popular with employers and productive in terms of relationship management.

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CREATIVE BUBBLE

“...deliver leadership along with marketing and operational improvements for businesses located in the BID area.”

University of Wales Trinity Saint David was given the use of a city-centre commercial unit by Swansea Business Improvement District (BID) to create economic and social impacts for the city, through employability activities and the arts. Swansea BID represents over 800 businesses in Swansea city centre.

Working alongside South Wales Police, the City and County of Swansea and other public agencies and associations, Swansea BID deliver leadership, marketing and operational improvements for businesses located in the BID area.

The Creative Bubble shop provides a space where students can develop and implement creative ideas that will use the city centre as a canvas for both creative practice and entrepreneurial and business developments. The project highlights the University's aim of supporting cooperation between companies and institutions to develop initiatives designed to benefit economic and social development with the region.

The students gain invaluable employability skills and apply entrepreneurial thinking to their studies. They are also encouraged to apply creative thinking to come up with regenerative solutions to Swansea's changing economy.

Since its launch in June 2013, Creative Bubble has grown rapidly with more events and students and general public engaging with it. So far Creative Bubble has:

- Staged theatrical games across the city centre
- Worked with businesses such as Swansea Market to support external initiatives e.g. "Love Your Local Market", Swansea Open House and independent coffee shops with the "Big Swansea Coffee Crawl"
- Run "Have a Go" workshops led by students/ graduates for other students and the public
- Established "Like a Boss" – a project that inspires women from communities first areas to be entrepreneurial by matching them to successful businesses (and supported by student led workshops)
- Supported graduate start-ups and entrepreneurs e.g. community artists 15 Hundred Lives and A.K.A. Collective production company Turnshoe Productions and provided a space for numerous other graduate artists
- Supported Swansea BID with campaigns such as the Chewing Gum Action Group launch, Get Welsh Day, Golden Ticket, Easter Mad Hatter's Tea Party promotions
- Hosted student and graduate exhibitions
- Been turned into pop up craft shops and enterprises
- Worked with Swansea BID to employ

Swansea Ambassadors to work on city centre promotions

- Run a workshop for an international conference of entrepreneurs
- Run a Summer Stage throughout July/ August/September showcasing talented student musicians and poets (supporting the participants by encouraging commercial thinking to enhance their future career choices).

The projects to date have attracted participation from over 1,000 students and audience members.

It has given students the opportunity to engage in a range of employability activities that can be included in their CVs. Some students have gained paid work as BID Ambassadors, assisting the BID in its marketing and promotional activities.

“Not only does it benefit the students in their studies and employability in the future but also helps recruit more people into the city centre, plus adding to the atmosphere. It's certainly something different, adding to the dynamic of the city centre.”

Russell Greenslade,
Chief Executive of Swansea BID.

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LIFE DESIGN

“As part of the merger process, the TSD+ award was reviewed with feedback from students and employers.”

Prior to the institutional merger with Swansea Metropolitan University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) developed an employability award called 'TSD+' which was designed to enable students to receive an assessed award for extra-curricular activities undertaken at university and which contributed to their employability attracting more than 150 students.

As part of the merger process, the TSD+ award was reviewed with feedback from students and employers. The need to develop an inclusive approach that all students participated in, and which focused on engaging students with the wide range of opportunities available to them during their time at university was identified, along with the recognition that employers value evidence and examples that demonstrate specific skills and abilities.

In order to offer additional opportunities for those students who are already highly motivated, two new accredited programmes, the Professional Certificate in Employability Skills, and the Professional Certificate in Skills for Self Employment were developed and validated. However, in order to engage all students, including those who need support the most and may not 'opt-in' to programmes like TSD+ or the professional certificate, the

need for another approach was also identified. Working with Dr Tim Clark, the author of 'Business Model You', staff at the University have developed and piloted a new programme of extra and co-curricular support for all students, which, when combined with the Higher Education Achievement Report and the wide range of extra-curricular and embedded opportunities available to our students, will provide them with a toolkit for 'employability security' (Opengart and Short, 2002).

This process, which uses Design Thinking as its basis, aims to help students solve the 'Wicked Problem' of their future career, taking into account their values and life goals. In a world where we do not know what kinds of jobs will exist in two years' time, this approach seeks to prepare students to understand and adapt their transferrable skills and create their own opportunities, something they can apply at any time in their future.

This project which was rolled out to the whole university from January 2015 providing 'dip-in/ dip-out' online resources, scheduled workshops and events, short bookable sessions on key topics like the use of LinkedIn, and drop-in services in a dedicated 'Life Design Studio'.

- Opt-in employability awards may benefit those students who are already most likely to

succeed. We need to reach out to and engage all students – particularly those at risk of dropping out or who are less engaged with their studies

- Our curriculum already offers opportunities to develop a wide range of employability skills – what our students needed was help with understanding their skills, building their confidence, spotting, exploring and creating opportunities, and articulating the skills they have to employers or investors
- Students benefit from working with those from other subject areas – this helps them build their social capital and discover opportunities for collaboration and co-creation. With 60% of students going into work that is not directly related to their degree subject it's vital that students are exposed to the widest range of potential career opportunities and trans-disciplinary work can help them see the possibilities.

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METPOL

“Some third year students are using some of the projects they are working on as the basis of their research project/dissertation.”

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METPOL was set up in 2012 as Swansea Met Police student Volunteer Scheme in partnership with South Wales Police, The Safer Swansea Partnership, the City and County of Swansea Council, The British Business Crime Prevention Organisation and University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

All students are given the opportunity to join the scheme from the first week of the first year of study and are encouraged to volunteer for the three years. In the second year it forms part of a work experience 20 credit module. The University is working with Millennium Volunteers (MV) to make sure that in their first and third year students achieve the MV award for voluntary work. Some third year students are using some of the projects they are working on as the basis of their research project/dissertation.

The schemes run to date are:

Operation Textbook

This involves talking to and advising people living in the student areas on home safety and up keep. This is mainly aimed at students in the area and to create amicable relations with the local residents.

Operation Noise

This operation was run on Wednesday nights throughout the term, looking at the behaviour

and attitudes of students, going out and coming in from town on student nights.

One Punch Campaign and Operation Advent

This scheme informs and educates people of the dangers and implications of alcohol induced fights and the impacts.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=BECiPpsl-d4

HELP POINT

The students have been involved for the last two years in this scheme to reduce unnecessary alcohol related injuries to A&E and to help vulnerable people on a night out. The scheme is run by St John Ambulance, the Police, the student volunteers and funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Business Crime Prevention Partnership

This is a national scheme looking at reducing crime in the local shopping areas by linking the organisations together and working with each other to inform and report sightings and crimes.

Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) Checks

Some of the students were involved in VOSA spot checks on the taxis and coaches coming into the night time economy of Swansea to make sure they were all legally taxed and insured.

Youth Engagement in the City Centre

This scheme involved engaging with the crowds of young people who hang out in castle gardens in the city centre to try and reduce anti-social behaviour and to try and interact with the youngsters.

Drug Awareness Campaign

The students spoke with local businesses about their concerns about drug misuse in the area and any problems they encountered.

“The student volunteers have made a significant contribution to the success of the Help Point. They have been key to getting vulnerable individuals to the safety of the help point and have engaged well with other partners agencies working in the night time economy, changing the opinions of those who doubted their worth through their hard work and professionalism!”

Janine Roderick Violent Crime and Health Liaison Manager Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales.