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### ASET

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**Summer 2016**

## Brexit and Placement Learning

*Professor Colin Turner, ASET Trustee and  
Head of the School of Engineering, Ulster University*

The implications of the EU referendum held on the 23rd of June, and the result in favour of the UK leaving the EU are reverberating around all sections of society, but this is particularly keenly felt in the Higher Education sector.

A month after the result, there is still very little clarity on the form Brexit will take when (and indeed if) it comes. Challenges are already emerging with National Academies such as the Royal Society and others indicating a chilling effect on international collaboration and funding in research<sup>[1]</sup>. The UK Government has noted that for two years after triggering Article 50 the UK will be bound by EU law, but also enjoy EU privileges. So it is important to reassure international EU colleagues and students within the UK or otherwise that existing arrangements have some degree of solidity in the short and medium term. This is especially true as Government Lawyers have told the High Court that Article 50 will not be triggered before the end of 2016, so we can expect business as usual for some time<sup>[2]</sup>.

The impact of Brexit within placement learning is hard to predict, assuming that exit does indeed take place it is so far unclear what existing arrangements

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might still be kept in place. The Erasmus scheme is, for many, a vital source of funding to support international exchange including for placements. There is already a petition to Parliament to continue this arrangement – specifically started by a student whose placement could be affected. The petition has just crept past the 10,000 signatures necessary to garner an official Government response<sup>[3]</sup>. There is a precedent, Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey have all been included in the Erasmus and Erasmus+ scheme along with existing EU member states<sup>[4]</sup>.

There is a reasonable chance therefore, that our existing arrangements within Europe will remain stable even after the UK formally exits the European Union if it does so some two and half years from now. We should reassure international staff and students already in the UK and those likely to travel here – and reassure our own staff and students and encourage their travel to the EU.

We should also seek to explore any advantages that Brexit may bring – we might hope for other schemes and funding that might promote internationalization opportunities for placement outside the EU. Since these links can take a long time to establish, it might be worth Universities starting conversations with more remote geographical partners, or strengthening their existing relationships. It's certainly clear that now is the time for us to redouble efforts with international partners both within and outside the EU.

In the run up to the referendum, an open letter written by over 100 Vice Chancellors set out the case against Brexit<sup>[5]</sup>, reflecting the level to which opinion was settled within Higher Education in many respects. As we know, this wasn't the result that emerged, but importantly Higher Education should be a place where diversity of viewpoints is welcomed and debate is encouraged. There are suggestions that University staff who voted in favour of Leave feel intimidated and marginalized<sup>[6]</sup>. It's important that moving forwards we address the issues of Brexit with confidence and inclusivity with all of our colleagues, students and international partners.

With the vital importance of this key issue, there will be a special session about Brexit at our up-coming conference in York in September (see conference programme below). We look forward to hearing your views and continuing the discussion.

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-36834045>

[2] <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jul/19/government-awaits-first-legal-opposition-to-brexit-in-high-court>

[3] <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/136595>

[4] [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-16-143\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-143_en.htm)

[5] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/leaders-of-100-top-uk-universities-warn-of-brexit-risk-to-global-standing-a7092516.html>

[6] <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/comment/brexit-pity-parties-show-how-out-of-touch-academia-is>

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### ASET Annual Conference 2016

#### The Placement and Employability Professionals' Conference

6-8 September 2016, University of York, Campus East

*“Enhancing the Experience, Supporting the Student”*

[Book Online](#)

With just six weeks to Conference 2016, final preparations are underway. If you are planning to attend, please [book your place online](#) as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Please note booking is on a first come first serve basis, with a final closing date of **17<sup>th</sup> August**.

The full conference programme is detailed below – with an amendment to Day 1, to include an ‘ASET on Brexit’ session led by ASET President, Dr Geoffrey Copland and ASET Chair, Sarah Flynn.

The theme for this year’s conference remains, as it becomes ever more important to focus on **Enhancing the Experience, Supporting the Student**. Acknowledging that timely support and guidance during the key stages of a student’s Work Based and Placement Learning is vital, conference will consider:

- What a student needs to succeed, how best to prepare students for the experience
- The needs and requirements of the differing student population
- Support and Guidance whilst on placement
- Post placement, how to best use the placement experience



Over three days you will have the opportunity to hear from:

**Dr Gurnam Singh**, National Teaching Fellow and Principal Lecturer in Social Work at Coventry University and Visiting Professor of Social Work at the University of Chester

**Dr Vicky Duckworth**, Helena Kennedy Foundation Trustee and Senior Lecturer and Research Fellow in the Faculty of Education at Edgehill University



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**Johnny Rich**, *HEA Board of Directors and Chief Executive of Push*

And in addition there will be up to 25 parallel sessions around the theme of conference and plenty of opportunity to network with colleagues UK wide, in the spacious and well-appointed Ron Cooke Hub conference venue.

## Conference Programme

### Day 1 - Tuesday 6 September

- 08:00 - 09:00** Breakfast (Monday night delegates only)
- 10:00 - 11:00** **Registration and refreshments**
- 11:00 - 11:15 ASET Welcome
- 11:15 - 11:30 Welcome from the University of York
- 11:30 - 12:15 **Keynote: Dr Gurnam Singh, Coventry University**  
**BME attainment and the challenges for employability**
- 12:15 - 12:30 **ASET AGM**
- 12:30 - 13:30 Parallel Session Stream 1 (see Parallel Session Timetable)
- 13:30 - 14:30** **Lunch**
- 14:30 - 15:15 **ASET on Brexit: ASET President & ASET Chair**
- 15:15 - 15:45 Parallel Session Stream 2 Regional Hub Meetings (see Parallel Session Timetable)
- 15:45 - 16:15** **Refreshment break**
- 16:15 - 17:00 **ASET Research Bursaries**  
Research Bursary Project Presentation/Exploration & Enhancement Bursary Project Presentation
- 18:30** **Drinks Reception**
- 19:30** **Gala Dinner, moving on to The GlassHouse**

### Day 2 – Wednesday 7 September

- 08:00 - 09:00** Breakfast
- 09:00 - 9:15 Registration for day delegates
- 09:15 - 10:15 Parallel Session Stream 3 (see Parallel Session Timetable)
- 10:15 - 11:15 Parallel Session Stream 4 (see Parallel Session Timetable)
- 11:15 - 11:45** **Refreshment break**
- 11:45 - 12:15 **Keynote: Dr Vicky Duckworth, Helena Kennedy Foundation**
- 12:15 - 13:15 **Q&A Experts Panel**
- 13:15 - 14:15** **Lunch**
- 14:15 - 15:15 **Parallel Discussion sessions with Panel Experts on:**  
**Disability, Socio-economic background, Gender and sexual identity,**  
**International status and Race**

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### Day 2 – Wednesday 7 September contd.

15:15 - 16:00 **RMP Masterclass: It's your time to shine in the NUE Awards 2017**

16:00 - **Refreshment break**

Optional ASET Practice & Research Network Meeting

Free time, to explore York?

18:30 Drinks Reception

19:30 **BBQ**

21: 00 **The GlassHouse**

### Day 3 – Thursday 8 September

08:00 – 09:00 Breakfast

09:00 – 09:30 Day registration / Time available for checking out and baggage store

09:30 - 10:30 Parallel Session Stream 5 (see Parallel Session Timetable)

10:30 - 11:00 **Refreshment break**

11:00 - 12:00 Parallel Session Stream 6 (see Parallel Session Timetable)

12:00 - 12:45 **Keynote: Johnny Rich, CEO Push**

**The Employability Edge**

12:45 - 13:00 Conference Wrap-up & Close

13:00 Packed Lunch and depart

**Please note: The Programme and/or individual workshops may be subject to change at short notice**

[Parallel Session Abstracts](#) and [Timetable](#) can be downloaded from the ASET website. These are intended to be open discussion sessions and ones that everyone present can take part in. There is no need to book ahead of conference. A [Delegate Guide](#), with travel and accommodation details is also available.

Conference will also feature Posters, covering a wide range of topics, presented by students, practitioners and academics, and will be available to view throughout conference.

Our Conference Partners and Sponsors will also be playing a key role, offering delegates the opportunity to take time to consider how their products and services might be of value at their own institution.

We are pleased to welcome:

**2016 ASET Conference Partner**



## 2016 ASET Conference Sponsors



**Nicholas  
Associates  
Group**

## Placement programme survey

The presenters of the first 2016 ASET Conference parallel session, on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September are hoping to involve the entire ASET community in their research via a short survey on placement programmes. Whether you are able to attend conference this year or not, you can take part by following the link below.

*Universities offer a variety of initiatives to support the continuation of learning whilst students are on placement. During the ASET Annual conference the School of Business, Management and Economics of the University of Sussex will present an overview of the levels and type of support offered. You are therefore invited to participate in a short survey relating to your placement offering. The results will form part of our Practitioners Workshop entitled "Staying Connected – Supporting students during their year out on placement". The survey closes on Wednesday 24 August at 5pm. The results will also be made available through ASET and will contribute to our research.*

**Ing. René Moolenaar MSc FHEA & Kate Thorpe**

[https://universityofsussex.eu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_3WZa9VBLuwAWAHb](https://universityofsussex.eu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3WZa9VBLuwAWAHb)

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### ASET Staff Development Workshop Programme

After our busiest spring workshop season ever, there will be a short break over the summer whilst we prepare for conference. Dates for the Autumn workshops are listed below, and you can now [book online](#).

Date	Location	W'shop No.	Title
06-Oct	London - Senate House	12	An Introduction to Work Placement Management
25-Oct	Aston University	13	Placements, Work Based Learning and Social Mobility
03-Nov	London - Senate House	14	Supporting International Students with Placements
17-Nov	Aston University	15	Marketing for Placements
08-Dec	London - Senate House	16	From Placements to Employability

### SEPnet

SEPnet is a consortium of 9 university physics departments at Hertfordshire, Kent, OU, Portsmouth, Queen Mary, Royal Holloway, Southampton, Surrey and Sussex. As part of the consortium, they facilitate a summer placement scheme and have recently released a report on last summer's placements based on feedback from 78 employers and 77 students.

The key findings were that:

- CVs and interview skills still need to improve
- Students' skills (software, communication, teamwork and practical/lab work) were rated as good or very good overall by employers
- For students, the nature of the project was the most important criterion when choosing a placement
- Programming skills were highlighted as important for many placements and using new software was essential to many roles
- Self-management was identified above problem solving and communication as a key skill acquired by many students.

The full report can be viewed at:

<http://www.sepnet.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/SEPnet-Summer-Placement-Report-2016.pdf>

### New Placement Scheme

This month our special thanks go to FDM Group for hosting the recent ASET Executive Meeting. It was great to see their facilities and to hear about their new [placement scheme](#).

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### Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA) seminar

The Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA) is hosting a seminar looking at

#### 'Mental Wellbeing Supporting Staff: Supporting Students'

Speakers include:

- Norman Lamb MP – Chair of the Cross Party Committee on Mental Health
- Dr Ruth Caleb - Chair of Mental Wellbeing in Higher Education
- Paul Farmer – Chief Executive of MIND
- John de Pury – Assistant Director of Policy for UUK
- Mandi Barron – Executive Member of AMOSSHE student services
- Sir Anthony Seldon – Vice Chancellor University of Buckingham

Sessions will focus on;

- Identifying how mental health difficulties may impact on a student's capacity to study in various academic settings
- Raising awareness of the mental health difficulties staff may come across, in order to increase confidence and knowledge
- Support routes available across the university
- How we all can support students and each other regarding mental health.

The event, hosted by USHA is in partnership with AMOSSHE and supported by UUK, and is on the 11th October 2016 at The Barbican in London. For the full programme, booking form and payment terms please go to [www.usha.org.uk](http://www.usha.org.uk) . £199 per delegate.

### And Finally

Your next ASET members' e-Bulletin will be issued in September. Please forward any copy to [aset@asetonline.org](mailto:aset@asetonline.org) by Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September.

Debbie Siva-Jothy [aset@asetonline.org](mailto:aset@asetonline.org) [www.asetonline.org](http://www.asetonline.org)