

In this issue...

- Student Engagement
By James Corbin
- ASET Bursaries –
deadline 1st February
- 2017 Staff Development
Programme
- ASET on Brexit
- Good Practice Guides
- Order your copy
- Job opportunity

ASET

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Image: NOAA's GOES-16 Satellite

Happy New Year

I hope it's off to a good start for you?

We already have a busy diary of ASET events planned and will soon be adding details of our next Regional Hub events coming up in April. Below, ASET Vice Chair James Corbin shares feedback from the December meetings on Student Engagement.

We also have details of the Staff Development Workshop Programme, which gets underway in February, and a request for your thoughts on Brexit risks and opportunities. We always welcome your comments and input and hope we will see you at an event this year. In the meantime, don't forget we are keen to share news of your events and experiences that will add to best practice for everyone, so do get in touch via the ASET office to have an item included in the next e-bulletin in February.

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Student Engagement

*James Corbin, ASET Vice Chair and
Placement Development and Employability Manager at the University of Kent*

I'm going to be honest – and possibly save you some time – I don't have all of the answers. Student engagement is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. What I do have though is the collective wisdom of the ASET membership. The Regional Hubs met a little while back and tackled the issue of Student Engagement. In particular, I challenged attendees to look at the following areas;

- Participation
- Immediacy of support
- How to engage the disengaged
- Our role in student recruitment

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What we have below is a short piece of text framing the conversation, and then the collective wisdom of around 40 institutions giving us their insight into how they tackle one of the biggest issues in Higher Education.



Participation

Engagement is broader than just workshops and 1-2-1s. It is also about participation. Students taking ownership and responsibility in the process of securing and managing their placement. At what point does this process need to begin? Sometimes, it's like they think it's their Yr 10 work experience all over again. For me, this gets to the point of part of the issue. They are given everything throughout their education. The Yr 10 work experience is their only comparable experience. Sure, many secure internships off of their own back – but this is different. It is a part of their educational experience.

A common theme through the Hubs was the need for a comprehensive communications plan. Engaging academic staff, support staff and peers. The use of student ambassadors both from within the peer group and those on, or returning from, placement is something that seems to be building across the sector. The use of students on placement as mentors was an interesting theme too. Careful consideration would be needed around rules and a suitable platform.

Working closely with student societies and using student ambassadors to deliver subject talks has been successful. Students have set up their own employability society at a member in the South West Region, which is supported by placements support staff. In other institutions, entrepreneurship and employability student run groups through SU have been unsuccessful in the past, due to continuity problems. Peer to peer events can be successful, but need professional support.

Facebook and Twitter came up, with a member institution in the South East hosting Facebook Live chats with Careers Consultants and Rate My Placement running #placementchat sessions. Modes of communication such as text messaging, WhatsApp and Mail Chimp are also in use.

We also discussed the concept of there being 'placement cultures' in particular faculties, particularly in more vocational or industry-specific departments, where the students tend to be more focused and engaged. One colleague noted that there was a 'sheep culture' amongst the students where it only took one or two to

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persuade or dissuade the other students from engaging with placements. Maybe this is where the placement ambassadors would come in useful?

We also talked briefly about students not speaking up when things are not going well, and whether this was down to a lack of confidence, fear of ending a placement that they need in order to complete their course, or because of a lack of engagement with the placement staff. Indeed, another colleague noted that a student had told her that placement staff were viewed as part of the 'institution', so students were less likely to approach them, either because they were seen to be faceless bureaucrats or in case any complaints would damage their grades. How we establish that relationship with students is central to success.

Immediacy

I believe that there is also an issue of immediacy in the student body. We, as universities, require more of our students than ever before. They are busy, and are therefore required to prioritise, and placement preparation and searching workshops fall down the list. This, coupled with students treated as customers, who can demand service when it suits them, are a dangerous mix. How do we reach this group of busy people? What are your 'on demand' support techniques? Do you provide out of hours or online support?

The Hubs talked a lot about student attitudes and expectations - we do a lot of the leg work for the students, they seemed to engage less with the process, perhaps because they had invested less in it. Following on from this, it was suggested that if being too nice to students also left them unprepared for the real world, where they would be expected to pull their weight.

The issue of over-emailing students came up. With students getting dozens of emails from academics, departmental staff, the wider university, societies etc., they tend to switch off.

The issue of students viewing themselves as customers and expecting a complete product from their placement staff with minimal input came up too, and also whether we were helping to reinforce this consciously or unconsciously by our behaviour.

Additionally, the role of recruitment staff, particularly overseas agents, in providing students with a false expectation of how the placement process works needs to be addressed.

Engaging the Disengaged

This is possibly the area that we either spend most, or next to none of our time. A busy placement service often has the time to work with the keen and the willing – but arguably, the quiet ones are where we could make the most difference. How do you reach out to the quiet one in the corner? Or conversely, the loud one whose grades and attendance are slipping? Should we be working more closely with student support/retention/engagement staff?

We felt that a lack of student engagement was responsible for wasted time more than anything else. The time we spend endlessly chasing students could be better spent supporting more students find great placements. A colleague from another South East member institution has ACTION REQUIRED: ... with the deadline as the

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subject for all of her emails to students to try and combat this. Another colleague said the more we can personalise emails the better.

Ask the students what works for them was suggested by a few members, indicating specific days/times/methods of communication may be better than others which we are maybe assuming, rather than asking.

We have lower engagement from students where the placements are not assessed. Some students work out the effect on their grade of not participating or submitting.

Deposit scheme for smaller events (although admin-heavy), or punitive measures for not attending (refusal of service or inability to book onto future events).

Role of students in recruitment

All placement support staff are involved in the attraction and recruitment of students, but it is also important to involve students.

Success has been seen in the use of student employability reps, recent graduates and Alumni. Use of student profiles on websites and in prospectuses is seen as a powerful promotional tool. Some of the members suggested they engage with their students to get them to complete profiles/diaries of what they did during their year; as a marketing material.

Students speaking to students: video case studies, mid-placement vlogs.

One member institution runs a Placement PAL scheme where former placement students work within the placements team to engage and motivate other students, and help run preparatory sessions.

Another institution also use students (unpaid) to do most of their placement outreach work, and have this as a HEARable activity.

Other places try to engage with student academic and sporting societies around specific events. Some institutions needed high-profile employers in to draw the students in.

Student Marketing also came in for a bit of flak, mainly for creating these high expectations that aren't in line with the typical placement experience, particularly with regard to international students.

There was a split down the middle of those who did engage with the open days and heavily marketed their course option, versus those who did not. This seemed to heavily centre around who did or did not have budget.

What we have here is but a snapshot of the discussions had around the membership at the recent Hubs. As your Vice Chair, I am keen to encourage our wider membership to engage in the conversation, whether through the Hubs, the LinkedIn group, conference or training sessions. We would also really want to hear of any initiatives you have implemented that have seen results. Equally, let us know if you have any particular problems or challenges that we could help to solve. Drop us an email at aset@asetonline.org.

Look forward to hearing from you

James

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2017 ASET Bursaries - Deadline 1st February

ASET is once again offering **two student bursaries**. Open to ASET member institutions, full details are available on the ASET website and here [2017 ASET Bursaries](#):

2017 ASET Student Research Bursary



2017 Student Research Bursary

For small-scale research into Work Based and Placement Learning



ASET will provide payments totalling £2400 to fund a **current student or recent graduate** to carry out a clearly defined piece of small-scale research (of approximately 300hrs / 40 days) designed to grow the body of research into work based and placement learning. The work must be feasible within the timescales but may be used to fund a feasibility study, or early part of a larger project. ASET will provide a further £600 to your institution towards the expenses required to carry out the work.

2017 ASET Summer Project Bursary



2017 Summer Project Bursary

For small-scale projects on Work Based and Placement Learning



ASET will provide payments totalling £2400 to a **current undergraduate** to carry out a project (of approximately 300hrs / 40 days) examining an aspect of your institutional practice, or exploration of a new initiative with the goal of sharing the learning with the ASET community. ASET will provide a further £600 to your institution towards the expenses required to carry out the work.

Application deadline for both bursaries: **1st February 2017, 9am.**

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2017 Staff Development Programme

Please see below full details for the 2017 ASET Staff development Workshop programme.

[BOOK ONLINE](#)

Please note we have new venues in London, Leeds and Sheffield for spring as we continue with our commitment to bring ASET events to our members UK wide. If you think your institution might be a suitable venue for ASET and would like to discuss this further, please contact Debbie at the ASET office aset@asetonline.org. NB **Prices held for 2017** (£165 ASET members/£195 non-members)

1. Risk Assessment and Due Diligence (RADD)

Tuesday 21st February (10am-4pm) **Student Central, Malet Street LONDON**

In 2010 ASET published a Good Practice Guide with advice on how to implement the new, risk based approach to Health and Safety, resulting from the release of new policy guidance from UCEA in 2009. The revised and updated edition of the ASET Good Practice Guide for Health and Safety for Student Placements was released in September 2016.



Student Central, Malet Street LONDON

This publication is part of a series of ASET Good Practice Guides including the ASET Good Practice Guide for Work Based and Placement Learning in Higher Education (September 2013), which was designed to support practitioners in meeting the expectations of the QAA Quality Code.

Discussions across the sector have raised concerns about managing the risk assessment and due diligence processes associated with placement provision in Higher Education.

- Are you confident in your risk assessment processes before placement?
- Do you know what you should be doing in terms of due diligence?
- Do you realise the extent of the university's legal liability for all of this?

This workshop will explain the philosophy behind the both sets of guidance, particularly focusing on establishing manageable, proportionate and appropriate risk assessment and due diligence processes for placement provision. It is aimed at university staff who work with student placements / work experience,

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whether new to the position or experienced, whether academic or administrative, wanting a refresher and update. **Last day for booking on this workshop is Tuesday 14th February**

2. Supporting Students with Disabilities on Placement (SSDP)

Tuesday 7th March (10am – 4pm) Senate House, LONDON

The aim of this interactive workshop is to provide advice and guidance on the support of disabled students to those working in work experience, work based learning and placement roles, as well as encouraging dialogue and discussion amongst delegates. The following topics will be covered:

- An overview of the Equality Act; how does it help disabled placement students and how can you help employers interpret and understand what the Act means?
- Guidance on assisting students with disclosure in the recruitment process. Should they disclose or not? If so, how and when should they disclose?
- Case study examples to highlight placement success stories
- Further resources and support available to students and employers, and others involved in the placement

Last day for booking on this workshop is Tuesday 28th February



Senate House, London

3. An Introduction to Work Placement Management (IWPM)

Thursday 16th March (10am-4pm) ASET Offices, SHEFFIELD

This introductory session on the broad topic of work placement management will provide guidance for the support of work placements by practitioners. Participants will be furnished with a basis from which they can develop their own plans and manage the day-to-day problems likely to be faced in their jobs. This is aimed at work placement managers, officers, administrators and academic placement tutors, particularly those with little experience, who are new to their role, about to be appointed, or those wanting a refresher course. This session is designed to introduce all the fundamental aspects of working in the field. The workshop is intended to be flexible and



ASET Offices, The Burton Street Foundation, Sheffield

ASET e-Bulletin

responsive to participants' needs and interests and therefore emphasis may vary between topics. As well as opportunities for discussion and dialogue, the workshop will also enable time to network with other delegates too.

Last day for booking on this workshop is Thursday 9th March

4. Innovation in Placement Assessment (IPA)

Thursday 6th April (10am-4pm) Senate House LONDON

There's more than one way to....assess a placement. From moving visuals, PDPs and journals, to written artefacts and peer assisted assessment, posters and presentations, our trainers will facilitate discussion and exploration around contemporary, relevant and authentic methods of assessment for placements and work based learning programmes. In this participative workshop, delegates will be invited to engage in discussion and dialogue on the topic including issues such as:

- What are you assessing?
- Who is involved in the assessment?
- Is it fit for purpose?
- How can/do you encourage your students to engage in reflective practice?

There will also be opportunities for networking with delegates.

Last day for booking on this workshop is Thursday 30th March

5. Placements for Graduates, Postgraduates and PhD students (PGrad) NEW

Tuesday 25th April (10am-4pm) University of Sheffield

Traditionally rooted at undergraduate level, placements and internships are now more widely available than ever, becoming increasingly embedded in the employability agendas and strategies of a greater number of HE providers than ever before. This one day, interactive workshop, will look at ways to engage those audiences – graduates, postgraduates and PhD students - as well as prospective employers too, and our facilitators will create opportunities for discussion, networking and sharing of good practice from delegates' institutions.

Last day for booking on this workshop Wed. 19th April



Pam Liversidge Building, University of Sheffield

ASET e-Bulletin

6. Developing Overseas Placements (DOP)

Tuesday 2nd May (10am-4pm) Senate House, London

Graduate employers want students with multicultural awareness, flexibility, adaptability and who are robust enough to deal with business on a global scale. International placements enable students to develop these highly transferable employability skills yet Higher Education providers can find the development and management of these placements daunting. Topics such as insurance, health and safety and visas have the potential to detract from the positive benefits which such placements can offer the parties in these partnerships. Issues relating to visiting students whilst overseas on placements and managing students' expectations are prevalent too. This highly interactive one-day workshop, led by experienced placement practitioners, will guide you through these areas and many more, with examples being shared and discussed. The day will also include sound networking opportunities with other delegates and course leaders, as well as the chance to share experiences and good practice in this field.

Last day for booking on this workshop - Monday 24th April

7. Freelancers, Entrepreneurs and Enterprise – Placements (FEEP) **NEW**

Tuesday 23rd May (10am-4pm) Rose Bowl, Leeds Beckett University

Do your students wish to run their own business for their placement? Is this something you haven't previously considered or were cautious about? This one day workshop will explore the key areas to be taken into account when approving these types of placements, as well as looking at what university support could be provided for placement student entrepreneurs to aid this agenda and foster success. Our facilitators will encourage discussion and dialogue, networking, and the exchange of ideas.



The Rose Bowl, Leeds Beckett University

Last day for booking on this workshop - Monday 15th May

8. Placements with SMEs – engaging and supporting employers and students (SMEs)

Tuesday 13th June (10am-4pm) Senate House, London

Engaging with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) can be an effective way of generating new and more varied placement opportunities for students. However, considering that many SMEs do not have formal internships or year-long placements, or may not have considered taking on a student/graduate before, there can be barriers that make engagement difficult. In addition, how many of your students are

ASET e-Bulletin

keen to apply for roles with SMEs or understand the value that such experiences can offer? This participative, staff development workshop aims to explore:

- sources and means by which to locate suitable SMEs
- methods for engaging with SMEs (marketing the benefits of taking on students)
- ideas to overcome student disengagement
- service level agreements or contracts to have in place
- how to make life easier for SMEs: things to do before, during and after internships and placements

Last day for booking on this workshop – Monday 5th June

9. Marketing for Placements (MP)

Tuesday 20th June (10am-4pm) Leeds Beckett University

For placement practitioners, our approach to marketing placements and the range of support services we offer, needs to be adapted to our audiences, of which there are many – students, prospective students (and their parents), academic colleagues, the sector, employers (including SMEs) and HE management. Better promotion can lead to a greater profile for placements within and beyond your institution, an increase in the number of students taking placements and/or more opportunities being made available by employers to your students. With technologies and social media advancing and evolving, we also need to think about innovative ways to market placements.

In this workshop, our facilitators will discuss techniques you can employ to market placements to these audiences, will encourage your participation to share your experiences and engage in active dialogue, and will support learning from best practices nationally through networking opportunities.

Last day for booking on this workshop - Monday 12th June

10. Social Mobility and Placements

Tuesday 27th June (10am-4pm) Leeds Beckett University

Discussion surrounding the social mobility of our students is once again on the agenda nationally in the HE sector (the Government's 2016 White paper Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice). Yet for those of us on the ground, what can we do, practically, to increase the take up of placements by students from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds? How can we reach out to and better engage students with employability and to support the development of their social capital? Furthermore, what solutions can we share to engage employers in order to further these broad aims?

In an interactive day of participation and dialogue, our course leaders will facilitate discussions on ways to support the employability of disadvantaged students and ways to overcome challenges and barriers to

ASET e-Bulletin

participation in placements. Delegates will have the opportunity to network and to build up a tool-kit of ideas and suggestions to take back to their institutions.

Last day for booking on this workshop - Monday 19th June

11. Exploring Social Media and Placements for the New and Nervous **NEW**

Thursday 13th July (10am-4pm) Leeds Beckett University

Do you feel like you are getting left behind when it comes to social media? Would you benefit from exploring some of the main social media platforms and how these can be used in the placements arena? This one day course is aimed at staff working in the placements field, who wish to use social media and haven't used it previously (or to a limited extent only). Our course leaders will be introducing social media for those at the entry level, and will facilitate discussions on a range of topics such as using social media to engage students. This is an interactive session and delegates will be encouraged to share practice from their institutions.

Last day for booking on this workshop - Wednesday 5th July

Bespoke Workshops in 2017

If you would like to talk about ideas for a bespoke workshop to suit a specific requirement at your institution, contact Debbie at the ASET Office aset@asetonline.org.

ASET on Brexit

Have you seen the recent LinkedIn discussion started by ASET Trustee Professor Colin Turner? We hope you will join in the conversation either on LinkedIn, or by emailing your thoughts to the ASET office.



"The ASET Executive wants your thoughts on Brexit risks and opportunities

The Executive Committee is interested in exploring the impact that members feel that Brexit will have on their work placement related activities. We would encourage you to think broadly about these matters; how will it affect your international placements? Do you anticipate that it will impact staffing in your areas that has other more indirect effects on the student experience? How important are schemes like Erasmus to your operation?

Please also consider that we are interested in any positive opportunities or advantages that you feel Brexit might bring to your students, staff and the placement experience.

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We hope that having established the breadth of these issues that we can then explore in what way members would wish us to represent these concerns and opportunities to ensure the best outcome for students and staff.”

ASET Good Practice Guides

Do you have the latest version? Hardcopies of all ASET Good Practice Guides are now available to order at a cost of **£3 per copy** (inclusive of postage and packing):



ASET Good Practice Guide for Work based and Placement Learning in Higher Education (Sept 2013)
ISBN 978-0-9564559-8-7 £3.00

ASET Good Practice Guide for Health and Safety for Student Placements (revised and updated Sept 2016)
ISBN 978-0-9955411-0-8 £3.00

ASET Good Practice Guide for Supporting Students with Disabilities on Placement (Sept 2016)
ISBN 978-0-9542231-8-2 £3.00

To order your copies please complete and return the order form attached with this e-bulletin.

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Job Opportunity

Your colleagues at Bournemouth University would like to draw your attention to a current vacancy for a Placement Development Adviser in the Faculty of Media and Communication. Further details and how to apply can be found through this link: <https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/placement-development-adviser>

And Finally

Your next ASET members' e-Bulletin will be issued in February. Please forward your news/copy to aset@asetonline.org by Friday 17th February.

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