ASET Annual Conference 2014

Proceedings of the 2014 Placement and Employability Professionals’ Conference

Editor: Debbie Siva-Jothy

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21st Annual Conference
Northumbria University, City Campus
2nd – 4th September 2014
# ASET Annual Conference 2014
## The Student Journey towards Employability

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Northumbria University, City Campus, 2\(^{nd}\) – 4\(^{th}\) September 2014
Foreword

ASET is very pleased to be able to share with you the proceedings of the ASET Annual Conference held at Northumbria University Business School, from 2nd - 4th September 2014. As Chair, I have the privilege of working in a sector of engaged, enthusiastic and expert practitioners who never fail to give us the content and community that make for a splendid conference. I said last year that our annual conference was becoming the essential calendar date for professional development in the work based and placement learning HE sector; 2014 has cemented that opinion, our biggest conference ever, more institutions represented, more research papers, more workshops and more magic (you had to be there for that one!). Colleagues continue to be generous in sharing their innovations, frustrations, inspiration and support at conference, and for this we are ever grateful.

Thanks to all our speakers and workshop presenters for such informative and interactive sessions, particularly those providing the warm welcome from Northumbria University; Lucy Winskell OBE and her team of Directors of Placements. Our keynote speakers, Stephen Isherwood of the Association of Graduate Recruiters and Charles Hardy of LinkedIn, both spoke of the challenges and the opportunities and left our delegates with lots of ideas for the upcoming academic year. Thanks must be noted to our conference sponsors; Nicholas Associates and Pearson Education, and our partners RMP Enterprises. We do hope you found your conversations with them at conference useful and enjoyable.

A huge thank you to the Staff Development and Events team of volunteers who make this event so successful, and particularly to Debbie Siva-Jothy our Company Administrator whose keen eye for detail delivers a superb conference, and this very publication. And finally, I wanted to share words from our President Dr Geoffrey Copland from his conference address which have stayed with me and which I intend to use frequently this year. He asked us to challenge both ourselves and our students to think about, what do you want your place in the world to be? A good question indeed.

We look forward to seeing you again at Conference in September 2015.

Sarah Flynn
Chair, ASET
ASET Presidential Address  
2014

I have the privilege of giving the Presidential Address at the conference each year and I try to sketch out what I see as some of the key issues that Higher Education students and staff are likely to face in the future with particular reference to the work of ASET.

ASET is in good health with growing membership and participation in this annual conference. That is very good news and I thank all you of here today for your support and engagement in the work of ASET.

Let me start by refreshing our minds of the objectives of ASET. They guide what we do. We have made good progress on all fronts this year thanks to the Executive and the members, throughout the UK and indeed further afield.

ASET AIMS

- To support and encourage Higher Education work based and placement learning by providing high standard staff development opportunities in whatever area of professional activity may be appropriate to this system.

- To strengthen the operation and enhance the quality of Higher Education work based and placement learning by promoting closer and more effective partnership between employers, educationalists and students.

- To provide a forum for employers, educationalists, students and other appropriate groups and individuals to discuss and formulate policies on Higher Education work-based and placement learning.

- To provide a national voice, for Higher Educational professionals, on matters concerning Higher Education work based and placement learning.

- To serve as a central agency for the stimulation, discussion and dissemination of ideas, guidance and information on Higher Education work based and placement learning.
• To prepare, develop and publish information relating to Higher Education work based and placement learning, or the study thereof, and to disseminate such information through appropriate media or events.

I have looked back to what I said when I made my first presidential address in 2006. In those eight years the Higher Education world has changed far more and faster than I, or many others, had predicted. The most striking aspect of this was that in 2006 I spent a considerable time speaking about government funding and the likely impact of £3000 tuition fees for UK students in English universities. Now in England £9000 seems to be accepted as the norm for home and EU students. For international students there are no restrictions on fees and substantially more is usually charged for a student from outside the EU. Increasingly there is talk about complete de-regulation of tuition fees, so a university could charge what it wants, as is the case for non EU students now. The argument is that this would enable any universities to strengthen its provision to students, invest more in technology and buildings and cover the real cost of teaching according to its model for example small group tutorials, specialist groups, intensive individual tuition and improved services. The debates in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are different but in the end someone has to pay the bill for high quality teaching of students with high quality resources. Who pays comes down to the political arguments in each administration. The debate before the Scottish independence referendum between Alistair Darling and Alex Salmond made clear just how sharp and passionate that debate can be.

But some things I spoke about in 2006 have changed less, particularly the importance of work based learning and student engagement with the work place in all its manifestations. What has changed is the much greater participation in this agenda than was the case then. I had, a few months earlier in 2006, given a speech to a conference where I shared a platform with the then minister for Higher Education, Bill Rammell, now VC of the University of Bedfordshire. I was speaking on behalf of Universities UK and was trying to point out to the minister that the great new idea of work based learning had actually been around for many years but perhaps in forms that his department had not recognised, going well beyond eg sandwich degrees or placements for professional development of doctors, dentists, architects and occasionally engineers.

What we were both agreed on was that employability and the preparation of students for the workplace were important and by then had even extended beyond the post 92 universities. But it
was still seen, except for the traditional sandwich degrees and professional development internships, by the longer established universities as something to be regarded with suspicion. I was even moved to say that “Traditional recruitment patterns suggests that the major employers pay less attention to factors, such as work based learning, than to A level points score and university attended. I said in 2006 that “From where I sit as the vice chancellor of a post 92 university, I gain the impression that new approaches to WBL are seen as something for the less well regarded universities to do for the less able students to go into less favoured jobs. Such attitudes lead to a polarisation of attitudes to WBL and similar initiatives and to the universities that deliver these.”

The really good news now is that, as this conference and ASET membership shows, this is less true and the importance of placements is now much more widely recognised, but there is more to do.

We are, I understand, in the age of the “Gringo” (Graduate not in graduate occupation). There are many stories around of graduates who are either in no employment or in low pay, low skills work. However at one level there is good news in that more are self-employed, using their skills to develop their entrepreneurial skills though whether that is a cover for actual unemployment or zero hours contracts needs closer examination. However, what does seem to be the case is that there is a widening pay gap between the well paid secure graduate job enjoyed by possibly by a minority and the low paid underemployed graduate. In recent years this has been slightly masked by graduates taking up postgraduate degrees but with increasing student debt and virtually no financial support for postgraduate study, there are real concerns that the take up of such study by English students is declining.

The report published in August 2014 by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission\(^1\) reiterated the problems of a society where to quote The Independent: “A cosy club of people educated at private schools and Oxbridge still dominates politics, the judiciary, and media and locks out talented people from more modest backgrounds”. One of the proposals was that “Employers should end unpaid internships and bring in “university blind” applications so that they do not know where people were educated.” I could spend the whole of this talk on the substantial issues raised in the report. It is of course not the first time this has been said but there has not been much change although we are seeing signs of some employers taking a more enlightened approach to recruitment.

Autumn 2013 was 50 years since the immensely important Robbins report that shaped British Higher

Education in the subsequent half century. The Social Market Foundation published two important papers to mark this half century:

- Robbins Revisited – Bigger and Better Higher Education
  by Rt Hon David Willetts MP, then Minister for Universities and Science Autumn 2013

- Robbins Rebooted- How We Can Earn Our Way in the Second Machine Age by Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP, Shadow Minister for Universities, Science and Skills

The Willetts paper “Robbins Revisited” provides an interesting review of the issues that Robbins was tackling in 1963 and the evolution of the sector to 2013. He expresses concerns about the quality of the student experience and the eternal debate about the balance between research and teaching in universities but nowhere does he discuss the value that can be gained to enhance the student experience and performance through work-based learning.

The Byrne paper “Robbins Rebooted” argues for greater co-operation across the school/FE/university sectors with links to industry to provide new routes into quality vocational education for the future, giving a strong message about the value of experiential and work-based learning. He proposes that there should be new “technical universities” offering earn-while-you-learn degrees in technical subjects (including social sciences) vital to the future of the UK economy. These would involve collaboration between employers, major university science and engineering departments and colleges and would offer a range of technical degree subjects to students who could be earning on apprenticeships while they study.

This is refreshing, but isn’t that what the former polytechnics and some more vocationally based universities did and to a certain extent still do?

The political debate about work based learning could do with more informed discussion than currently takes place in the public domain which is still dominated by criticisms that graduates are ill prepared for work and lack the skills being sought by employers. We need employers to engage better with us and to support meaningful and paid work-based learning.

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Both reports point to something which should concern us all and that is that the current funding system in England is unsustainable and is not delivering what is necessary for a future strong economy in a global environment. There are now real concerns that the £9000 fee approach with its loan system with deferred payback will not deliver the projected reduction in public expenditure in future because of unpaid loan debt.

To return to today, the theme this week is the “engagement process at each stage of the student journey towards employability.” There are many here who know much more about this than I do or ever did. There are many journeys to be developed from different starting points to reach different end points, with different hazards along the route.

For example, one student starts with a highly supportive and affluent home background, has had an excellent school educational experience, proceeding to what is regarded as a “leading university”. The path looks secure with good opportunities for paid or unpaid internships with leading employers and the several firm graduate job offers. Of course it does not always work out like that. Beware of hazards on the path and serious problems arising from dashed expectations.

A second student comes from a stable, less well endowed home but with strong parental aspirations for his success. He lives in a small village in the country and attends a comprehensive school in the nearest town. He wants a different experience and applies to a well established university in an industrial city but finishes up studying there but not on the chosen course. He has a rather unhappy three years studying a degree that he found uninteresting and disliked city living. He has no path to follow. No professional work experience is offered, possibly he shows no interest in this option. On graduating with a good degree he has not a clue what to do and very little support to help move forward. After working back near home in low skilled jobs someone recognises his potential and opens up a professional career completely unrelated to the degree or prior interests. He has stumbled onto his path.

A third student comes from a family with no interest in education, no support for study and fails all A levels first time around despite a promising report from his local comprehensive school. Second time, he achieves three not very good passes, gains entry to a post 92 university to study a science subject, gains a good degree but has no work opportunity. He cannot find a professional job so goes abroad, very successfully as it turns out. He had no path but belatedly found one. These have
different paths and outcomes and you will have met all such characters and backgrounds. They all need support even if they do not realise this.

My journey towards employability as a physics student at Oxford University in the early 1960s was rather different. I still remember clearly what I felt like as a new student coming to that august university from a small country grammar school with no family university experience to draw on. I felt daunted by all around me and had no thoughts of what I might do. Most of my college peers were already expecting to walk into jobs in well established professions using their backgrounds, contacts and self-confidence. Some to the despair of their tutors went into television and what we now call the media, some becoming significant figureheads in that new world. Like all students of my time, career discussion formed no part of my tuition and the University Appointments Board was something one went to in the latter part of the final year if a good job in the city or civil service had not already been offered. I don’t remember much of my interview there except an imposing office and someone who suggested the Scientific Civil Service. I was rescued from having to make such a decision then by my tutor who asked me to become one of his research students, which I did. That then opened up research and academia which took me down the route that I followed ever since. I was lucky, it was a good path but these days it could be so different.

As you help your students through their pathways to employment there are many pitfalls and obstacles to face from their various starting points, end points and hazards. Let me suggest a few.

- Are they willing to take opportunities for placements?
- Are some so committed to casual work to help meet bills and reduce overdrafts that they cannot take something else on?
- Are placements suitably rewarded financially or is the culture of unpaid placements still rife?
- What do you do when you come across these?
- Do your students have the confidence or opportunity to take work away from home?
- Even more so are they willing and able to look at an international assignment?
- How much support or encouragement is given by top management to the services necessary to help students to take on a challenging or international opportunity?
- Do you find that major employers still assume that they only need to offer opportunities to a limited and rather elite group of universities?
- Do they positively try to encourage the less traditional student to apply to work for them, or even to offer a work experience placement to help them?
- Do you find academics who still question the validity of such work experience?
• How do you evaluate the experiences gained through work based learning, casual work or volunteering?
• Does this have any academic credit value or just seen as helping with the CV?

I have an interest in these last two questions as the Chair of the Learning from Experience Trust that pioneered, in the UK in the 1980s and 90s, the development of structured evaluation of experiential learning, formal or informal. This formed the basis for APL/APEL. I was very pleased a few weeks ago that an academic approached the Trust to ask for a seminal paper on experiential learning written nearly 20 years ago to place on a website for his students. As we move more down the route of helping students to develop their pathways and particularly to help those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, I am sure that rigorous evaluation of experiential learning will play an increasingly important role. It certainly has a significant role in opening up opportunities for those who had opted out of formal education at an early stage. If nothing else not it could enhance any HEAR record of students in words that might enhance their attractiveness to potential employers.

In this changing world the work that you are doing to promote quality work based experience and preparation for employment should be gaining increased recognition. For those who doubt it, tell them to look at the attention that is given to the NSS scores and DELHE rankings that form parts of league tables. Whilst I am highly sceptical of league tables as they are statistically unsound and constructed to produce competition and argument, they are nonetheless influential. They can be used far too simplistically to give a university VC bragging rights at UniversitiesUK or a tool to beat their staff to do better next year. But it is not only heads of institutions and their managers who increasingly scrutinise them, so do members of governing who generally are less well equipped to understand the nuances behind the tables published in the broadsheets. And of course the media, pundits and politicians use them as convenient labels to categorise universities.

So the topic of this conference is timely and important. Use your time wisely to share experiences and ideas with colleagues and to paraphrase a political leader of some years ago “Go back to your universities and prepare for success in the coming year”

Finally, let me say thanks to the members of ASET and its leadership through the Executive Committee and particularly those who organised and are managing this conference especially Debbie Siva-Jothy who, as ever, has worked tirelessly to make sure everything runs as smoothly as possible.

Dr Geoffrey Copland
KEYNOTE

Stephen Isherwood

Stephen Isherwood was appointed Chief Executive of AGR in June 2013 following seven years as Head of Graduate Recruitment UK & Ireland at Ernst & Young, one of the largest recruiters of graduates in the UK.

In many ways the student market is dysfunctional. Even in the depth of the recent recession some AGR members were unable to fill all their graduate vacancies. Headlines that infer there are no graduate jobs or that employers think graduates don’t have the right skills are not helpful. Too many commentators generalise when it comes the students. With over 300 hundred employer members, it’s the AGR’s role to help the graduate market work better through better understanding of employers’ objectives whether in the schools market or global market.

ASET members will hear from Stephen on the current state of the graduate market, issues faced by employers and gain an insight into what employers look for in the talent they seek to hire.

Stephen started his recruiting career at Coopers & Lybrand in 1997 sourcing experienced management consultants before moving into graduate recruitment when Coopers merged with Price Waterhouse to form PwC. After five years at PwC he lead the graduate recruitment and development programme at Safeway before working in the public sector where he developed and managed a number of careers related programmes. At Ernst & Young, Stephen instigated the project that led to a switch from competency based recruitment to a ‘Strengths’ based methodology. In addition to his current role Stephen is a member of the Burgess Report Implementation Committee and a Trustee of The Centre for Recording Achievement.
Presentation

The Graduate Market
Stephen Isherwood
Chief Executive
Association of Graduate Recruiters

The headlines
• Graduate vacancies up 17.1%
• 23% of employers with vacancies unfilled
• Mean graduate salaries up £500 to £27,000
• Applications per vacancy down 19%
• 66% average graduate retention at 6 years
• 4.7 point rise in numbers measuring socio-economic diversity of applicants

Vacancy levels

Vacancies unfilled – in a recession!

So why the shortfall?
• Myths of the market – no vacancies
• Perceptions of industries- particularly engineering
• Short-term business changes
• Skills shortages: electrical engineers, technology
• Lack of “work ready skills”

UK graduate hiring
• Degree discipline doesn’t always matter
• UCAS tariff and degree grade part of the mix
• UK recruitment practices more complex than elsewhere
• University targeting an allocation of resources
• Graduate hiring resources a mix of time and budget

Talent spotting
• Shift in emphasis to talent spotting
• Candidate processing outsourced
• Campus brand building (ROI)
• Early identification
  – Internships
  – One-year placements
  – First year spring weeks
• Degree partnerships
### What does good look like?

1. An ability to work collaboratively with teams of people
2. Excellent communication skills: both speaking and listening
3. A high degree of drive and resilience
4. Ability to analyse make sense of complex situations
5. An ability to embrace multiple perspectives and challenge thinking
6. A capacity to develop new skills and behaviours according to role requirements
7. A high degree of self-awareness
8. An ability to negotiate and influence
9. An ability to form professional networks
10. Awareness of issues affecting sector applied to

### Future trends

- More competition
- Increase in school-leaver opportunities
- Talent spotting
- Systemisation of HEAR

### Competition returns

- Practically intelligent problem solver
- Can get things done with and through others
- Passion to do the job
- Resilient and flexible

### Questions?
KEYNOTE

Charles Hardy

Through a career that spans IBM, TMP Worldwide and now LinkedIn, Charles has focused on leveraging technology to improve (and in some cases revolutionise) recruitment. Charles has worked with many well-known UK, Europe and global organisations to improve brand engagement, candidate experience and recruitment process efficiency. Ultimately it’s all been about intelligent focus – connecting the right person to the right opportunity at the right time. In his current role Charles is responsible for LinkedIn’s engagement with Education (school, university and business school) across Europe, providing insights and tools to help educational organisations get the most of LinkedIn, and helping entry-level talent make informed decisions about courses, careers and employers.

Once known primarily for only “experienced hires”, student employability is now a key priority for LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the platform that brings students, educational institutions and employers together, facilitating the right connections and helping to build relationships. With many of the 300m members providing information not only on their education but their subsequent career path and destinations, LinkedIn possesses content, data insights and connections that can help students make informed decisions about careers and employers, and give them the best chance of success. Your LinkedIn profile is so much more than a list of qualifications – it represents your personal brand in the workplace and provides students the opportunity to showcase their capabilities, their passions and their potential.

In this session Charles will showcase the 3 Pillars of Success on LinkedIn, how employers use LinkedIn to attract, source and engage people, and the latest tools / features available for Careers & Placement Services.

Presentation

Charles’ presentation can be viewed here

https://linkedin.box.com/s/ezeo6i271spifik1s4df0
Today's agenda

- So why LinkedIn?
- The 3 Pillars of LinkedIn Success
- The Power of Data – the LinkedIn Alumni Tool
- The Employer Perspective
- So what next...?

Facebook for old people!

"Professional = Scary old stuff!"

"You join LinkedIn when you have a job."

"I have nobody in my network."

"It costs money, right?"

"I have nothing to put in my profile."

LinkedIn

- My skills include donut eating
- I'm qualified in donut making
- I work in the donut industry
- I'm passionate about the future of donuts
- I'm connected to donut experts
- Here's a video / photo / recipe on donuts

The Economic Graph

Mapping every global connection between...

- 313M+ jobs
- 3.5M+ active company profiles
- 150+ industries
- Executives from every FTSE 100 company
- 39M+ students and recent grads
- 1M+ companies
- 3.5M+ college and university alumni groups
- 16M+ UK professionals
- 60K+ educational institutions
- 16M+ professionals
- 16M+ students and recent grads
- 3.5M+ active company profiles

Connect the world’s professionals to make them more productive and successful.

LinkedIn globally
LinkedIn provides the environment to bring all parties together

**UNIVERSITIES**
1. Attract Students
2. Career Centres
3. Alumni Relations

**EMPLOYERS**
1. Find Talent
2. Build Brand Engagement
3. Streamline Process

**STUDENTS**
Influencers
- Alumni
- Parents
- Teachers

**Why do You want Your students on LinkedIn?**

- **To help them get hired**
  - Search opportunities and be sourced by employers
  - Sell their capabilities and potential
  - Network for opportunities
  - Gather intelligence

- **Employability** – your university’s brand

- **Tracking** – data on graduate destination and career paths

- **Engagement** – with your students/alumni - now and in future

**Why join LinkedIn?**

To move the odds in your favour...

1. **Who you are**
   - Your Identity
   - 1. Be **FOUND** 2. Be **GREAT**

2. **Who you know**
   - Your Network – not just for today but for the future

The Power of the Extended Network

Let’s just say I know a guy... who knows a guy... who knows another guy.
Netiquette

What you know – Research & Intelligence

- Industry experts and influencers (via Groups)
  - Can students join your Alumni Group?
- Employer intelligence (via Following Companies)
- Culture and role insights (via Employee profiles)
- Market intelligence (via Following Influencers & Sectors)

The Power of Data
The LinkedIn Alumni Tool

Launch of University Pages on LinkedIn
– marrying DATA and BRAND

Unparalleled graduate destination data

Northumbria University, City Campus, 2nd – 4th September 2014
Unparalleled graduate destination data

In summary
- The benefits to both student and institution
- **Identity** – be found and be great
- **Networking** – tools and netiquette
- **Knowledge** – leverage insights and alumni

The Employer Perspective

What’s next for LinkedIn?
- **Mobile** activation
- Evolve and improve - enhanced tools and resources for Career Services and Students
  - With your help
- More tools targeted at pre-university
- Exploring Degree Verification partnerships
  - e.g. HEAR
What should you do next?

1. Help your students onto LinkedIn

2. Team-up – you can’t do it alone!
   - Executive leadership
   - Work with Careers, your Faculties, Communications and Alumni Relations:
     - To convince students
     - To leverage your LinkedIn assets

3. Work with Employers to optimise the use of LinkedIn from both sides

Driving this student growth on LinkedIn

1. Direct to Students
   - Resources for using LinkedIn
   - Dedicated UK student site and videos
   - Direct marketing via several social media channels
   - students.linkedin.com/uk

2. Through Universities
   - Development of relevant tools
     - e.g. University Pages, Alumni tool
   - Resource Centre
     - Training materials
   - Direct engagement / coaching for influencers
     - Careers Staff
     - Academics

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PLENARY

Bridging the gap; an insight into employer and student perceptions on the recruitment process

Oliver Sidwell, Co-founder, RMP Enterprise
Lizzie Brock, Head of Marketing, RMP Enterprise

After several years of working closely with ASET, we’re delighted to be giving the opening plenary session at the 2014 ASET Conference.

Our presentation aims to bust the myths around employer and student views when it comes to student attraction, selection and career prospects. We’ve carried out two surveys; one to the RateMyPlacement student database and one to our employer database of over 700 professionals in graduate recruitment.

Our aim? To give you an insight into what both stakeholders are thinking and feeling about the whole recruitment piece; from what motivates students to apply to a placement scheme to how important work experience is to an employer’s talent pipeline.

Key questions we’ll explore in this plenary session include:

“Which activities would most likely drive you to consider making an application for a placement?”
“What is the most challenging part of the selection process?”
“How important do you believe having a placement year is to your future career?”

Ollie and Lizzie will be presenting the results of the research and offering insights into how placement professionals can help ‘bridge the gap’. We’ll also look at how we can continue to move forward together and increase levels of engagement and employability in your respective institutions.

Enjoy!

Presentation

The Prezi for this session is available to view here.
PLENARY

Maximising our Impact

Sarah Flynn, ASET Chair and University of Hertfordshire

2013/14 has been a busy year for practitioners, ASET and the sector as a whole. This plenary session will take a look at some of the developments, the challenges and aspirations for us all moving forward into 2014/15 and beyond.

One thing is clear; employability is not going away as a driver for universities. Recent research commissioned by the Quality Assurance Agency will investigate the impact of employability initiatives offered by universities and colleges to their students. The QAA funded project will involve small and large graduate employers, industry experts and the government, as well as students. The research findings will publish next spring, but it is not just national data that is needed, evidence of impact on a local level is important for our ongoing budgets and expansion. There is a rich vein of data already available that is being under-utilised and we want to challenge our delegates to:

- Identify their known knowns; the things that they know that they know
- Identify their known unknowns; that is those things they know they don’t know

And as a collective we might possibly uncover the unknown unknowns; those things that we don’t know we don’t know. Evidence based practice is where the future lies, but not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted. This plenary aims to provide ideas for making our practice sharper, better informed and focussed on impact.
2013/2014 has been a very busy year

- 92.1% university leavers were in employment or further study six months after graduating in 2012-13, up from 90.8% in 2011-12 (HESA)
- That represents the largest year-on-year rise in graduate employment since 2008-09 when graduate employment reached a low of 89.9%
- 240,000 recent graduates
- Most HEIs had graduate employment levels 90 - 95%
- 25 institutions above 95%

**Maximising our Impact**

- Practitioners have known for years that placements and work based learning is impactful, but increasingly we and our institutions want to see the evidence
- ASET happy to support this – research, exploration and enhancement bursaries; conference research stream and the Practice and Research Network via our LinkedIn area
- Working with the Higher Education Career Services Unit to develop a range of thematic literature reviews (Publication 2014/15); Impact of Placements, Internationalisation and Placements, Diversity and Placements
- ASET working with the QAA on their current research project looking at impact of employability initiatives

**Identifying your known knowns**

- What data do you already collect and analyse?
- Talk to the people around you and share your ideas
- Online? Open your web browser and go to: http://padlet.com/s_j_flynn/ASET2014
- To enter a new item just tap in the window and start to type - you can post anonymously or with your name, which is great for increasing dialogue in the session
- Tweet using ASET14 and #data

**Identifying your known unknowns**

- What do you know that you need to know but you know that you don’t?

**Have we uncovered any unknown unknowns?**

- Have we uncovered any unknown unknowns?
But are we missing another opportunity?
Do you link your outcomes to student experience?

Draws on decades of research using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).
High impact activities include:
- First year seminars
- Common intellectual experiences
- Sequential service-learning coursework
- Learning communities
- Writing-intensive courses
- Undergraduate research
- Diversity/global learning
- Internships and project-based learning
- Service-learning and community-based learning
- Capstone courses and projects


National Student Survey, and others
- Results are publicly available to prospective students and advisors to help make informed choices of where and what to study
- Universities, students’ unions or colleges also use results internally to facilitate best practice and enhance the student learning experience
- http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/
- THE Student Experience Survey

Can you / do you / how do you measure your impact?
- Can you measure all types of placement or work based learning activity you offer?
- Can you adequately / accurately cost your activity?
- What is your return on investment?
- Can you examine your existing data to support, enhance and extend your practice?
- Are there other sets of data available, outside your team, School, Faculty for you to compare and contrast with your own?
- Within current resources, what do you need to do to increase your impact on the student journey?

What type of employability intervention has the greatest impact at your institution? How do you know?
- How do you know what you are doing is working?
- Will you come to conference next year and share your investigations?

A note about the rest of the day
- Deborah Taylor, Bournemouth University
  ASET Bursary: Masters in Career Education Information and Guidance in Higher Education (CEIGHE) at the University of Warwick
- Charles Hardy, LinkedIn
  3 Pillars of Success on LinkedIn, how employers use LinkedIn to attract, source and engage people, and the latest tools / features available
- Wednesday afternoon
  Meet the ASET Executive Practice and Research Network (PRN) meeting
  Free time - Explore Newcastle
  19:00, drinks for 19.30 dinner
  The Great Hall, Sutherland Building
PLENARY

Directing Placements

Northumbria University Directors of Placements:
Gerhard Fehringer, Elisabeth Griffiths, Carrie McCullock and Carole Proud

Northumbria University is undergoing a transformation to achieve Vision 2025. Part of this change has been to create a one university structure where the opportunity for placements and learning in practice is available to all students.

This session will give an overview of how this has been organised with regards to placements at university and faculty level, how it is working and the challenges we have faced and are facing along with the benefits of working together.

Within the session, we will also share good practice from the four faculties around student engagement, curriculum development, streamlining processes and IT solutions.

Gerhard Fehringer is a Principal Lecturer in the department of Computer Science and Digital Technologies and lectures in Computer Networks.

Elisabeth Griffiths is a Principal Lecturer at Northumbria Law School and teaches Employment Law to undergraduates and postgraduates.

Carrie McCullock is a Principal Lecturer in the department for Social Sciences and Languages. She teaches English for Specific Academic Purposes to international students.

Carole Proud is a Principal Lecturer in the department of Health Care, teaching Public Health and Mentorship.

Presentation
Eight Schools became four Faculties

- School of the Built & Natural Environment
- School of Computing, Engineering & Information Sciences
- School of Health, Community & Education Studies
- School of Life Sciences
- Northumbria Law School
- Newcastle Business School
- School of Arts & Social Sciences
- Northumbria School of Design

Faculty of Arts, Design & Social Sciences
Faculty of Engineering & Environment
Faculty of Health & Life Sciences
Faculty of Business & Law

Where we belong

Business & Engagement
Placements & work-based learning
Learning & Teaching

Student Engagement Centre

Two distinct brands:
- Newcastle Business School
  - Accounting & Finance Department
  - Business & Management Department
  - Corporate & Executive Development Department
- Northumbria Law School
  - Law Department

Student Engagement Centre serves the whole faculty – Placements and Partnerships Manager, Co-ordinator and 2 PT job share staff (placement student)

Student Engagement Centre

- The Student Engagement Centre (SEC) is a catalyst and focal point for connecting students with business and the community.
- The aim of the SEC is to improve our offer to students to undertake work based and placement learning opportunities (WBPL).
- Through the SEC we will grow the number of students undertaking WBPL opportunities to create and develop distinctive, employable professionals.

Student Engagement Centre

- Increase stakeholder engagement activity
  - Students know where to go
  - Created a focal point in the faculty for engagement activity for staff
  - Manage the full range of WBPL activity – one year sandwich placement to a one day shadowing opportunity with a district judge
  - Improve the quality of business interactions

Student Engagement Centre

- Spectrum of WBPL activity:
  - 217 students 1 year sandwich placement/ 2 year placements
  - Passport to Employability
  - Projects
  - Volunteering
  - Shorter placements/vacation placements/ Internships/Semester Placements – 50% time spent on these
  - Semester or year abroad
  - Placements overseas (overlap with Study exchange)
  - Insight Days
  - Work Shadowing – one day to one week long placements
  - Mentoring
Managing the challenge of diversity

Carrie McCullock
Director of Placements: Faculty of Arts, Design & Social Sciences

A myriad of processes

School of Arts and Social Sciences
- History
- French & Spanish
- Criminology
- Sociology
- Politics
- Journalism
- Advertising
- Media Production
- Fine Art
- Preventative Art
- Conservation

Northumbria Design School
- Fashion
- Fashion Communications
- Design for Industry

Processes
- Placement option module: Sociology, Criminology, Politics, (Forensic Science)
- Placement team led: Design for Industry, Fashion, Fashion Marketing
- Student led: History, Media, Advertising, Journalism, Fine Arts
- Study Abroad: slightly different process

Types of placements providers
- Fashion houses
- Charities
- Media production companies
- Advertising & branding companies
- Local councils
- MPs/MEPs
- BBC/ITV
- Police
- Local prisons
- Museums/Galleries
- Cultural heritage venues
- Youth Offending Team
- Print media
- Small Design companies
- Multi-national design companies
- British Council
- Local film sets
- Public relations
- Social media
- Marketing
- Regional press

Placement Consolidation

Gerhard Fehringer
Director of Placements: Faculty of Engineering and Environment

Departments in Engineering and Environment
- Mathematics and Information Sciences
- Computer Science and Digital Technologies
- Physics and Electrical Engineering
- Mechanical and Construction Engineering
- Architecture and Built Environment
- Geography
Initial Placement Modules

- One year placement modules when Faculty was established:
  - CM0567 Professional Placement
  - BE1030 Professional Experience Placement (Building Surveying)
  - BE0214 Professional Experience Placement
  - BE0651 Professional Experience Placement EM/POS
  - BE2031 Professional Experience Placement CDI
  - BE0744 Built Environment Placement
  - GED1009 Environmental Management Placement
  - BE1322 Placement (Civil Engineering)

- Different hand-in dates, different support mechanisms, different communication channels with students, confusing for Business Development Managers (BDMs)...

Re-structure of placement provision

- Aim to develop one sandwich year placement module

Challenges:
- Many stakeholders – e.g. Professional Bodies: IMechE, IET, ICS, IES, CIOB, CIBSE, IIR
- Different support structures

Incentives:
- Large companies are often interested in students from different areas within our Faculty
- One message for students, BDMs, companies
- Efficient use of administrative support
- Efficient development of marketing material

Placement Re-structure: 46 Programmes affected

EE0500 Professional Placement

- From 2014/15 academic year
- Same level of support across the Faculty to enhance student experience:
  - Visiting Tutor – Placement Tutor – Placement Director Placement Office
  - One Blackboard placement organisation
  - Vacancies, events, assessment etc.
  - Five assessment components
  - Monthly and quarterly logs, reflective report, CV and poster
- 280 students placed so far (21/07), compared to 317 in 2013/14

Best Practice

- Placement Approval Sub-Committee
  - Every placement formally approved, any risk assessment discussed
  - Independent Chair

- Employment Skills Award for Placements
  - Additional, optional recognition
  - Awarded by Faculty and endorsed by Careers & Employment Service and Academic Quality

- Involvement of companies in placement preparation
  - CV writing, interview preparation, mock interviews etc.

IT Solutions

Carole Proud
Director of Placements. Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

Different Programmes, Different Challenges for Placements

Employment and Placements

Core undergraduate awards employment = 100%

Professional awards employment = 60%
Example: Healthcare programmes

Organising 6500 health placements, updating 10500 mentors/educators: Systems and Process

The ARC System:
- ARC Database
- ARC Placements on the Web (ARC POW-Net)
- ARC Practice Environment Profile (ARC PEPnet)
- Arc Auditnet

ARC Project Live: May 2014

By working together, What have we achieved?

Summary & Outlook
Share best practice to create excellence:
- Quality
- Capacity
- Partnership & Engagement

Northumbria University, City Campus, 2nd – 4th September 2014
ASET BURSARY PROJECTS

2014 ASET Research Bursary

The 2014 ASET Research Bursary was awarded to Francesca Walker, University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), Lancashire Business School, for the research project outlined below:

Project

Peer to Peer support – gaining a placement at UCLan with the help and support of post-placement students

Objectives

The aim of the project is to understand and measure the impact of Peer to Peer support for those students wishing to undertake a placement (48 weeks). The aim is to develop a structured and sustainable approach to peer support, which will encourage 2nd year students to undertake placements via continuous support and guidance from their peers who have already been successful in gaining and sustaining their work placement.

Method

The research will focus on a current Pilot project within BC2000, Transition to Work, a pre-placement module for 2nd year students wishing to undertake a placement within the Lancashire Business School at UCLan. The project links current 4th year students on BC3001 who have completed their full year placement in industry to BC2000 students. The 4th years are required to work with and support the 2nd years. Both modules have this relationship as part of their assessment.

We have known (anecdotally) for some time that the student voice has a great deal of power and ability to influence; the peer to peer project enhances and structures that voice, via presentations, student-lead workshops, and peer to peer mentoring.

Our measure of success will be the number of students achieving a placement who have been positively influenced by their interaction with their experienced peers. We will compare this group with the current 4th years who received a single information session with their peers prior to going on placement.

Proposed analysis

1. Internal report
2. Conference paper
3. Journal Article
Outcomes and outputs

It is envisaged that the major outcome of the project will be identification of the value of peer to peer support and the importance of linking such interaction to assessment. With a further outcome being a proposed set of solutions which would inform students wishing to go on placement and staff members supporting students both locally and nationally as they search for their ideal placement.

Timescales

The pilot project at UCLan commenced in September 2013; the support of the Research Bursary from ASET will provide essential support to gaining and ultimately disseminating detailed information. The project will follow 7 phases, commencing February 2013:

Phase 1  Finalise hypothesis with researcher(s)
Phase 2  Initial questionnaires to sample group(s) to ascertain the students’ view on the current interaction between the 2nd and 4th year students. The questionnaires will comprise both qualitative and quantitative elements.
Phase 3  Analysis of initial findings which will then inform the final questionnaires which will be disseminated at the end of the BC2000 and BC3001 modules
Phase 4  Distribution and completion of questionnaires.
Phase 5  Focus Groups to discuss main issues
Phase 6  Analysis of data
Phase 7  Report on Findings
Phase 8  Development of solutions
Phase 9  Dissemination of findings at ASET 2014

The student project will conclude in June 2014 (Phase 7), giving ample time to prepare for ASET 2014. Ideally, we would aim to fund the successful student’s attendance at ASET to present the findings along with the project supervisor.

Supervisor’s role

The project supervisor will be Francesca Walker, Senior Lecturer and Employment Lead within the Lancashire Business School. Francesca has a particular interest in this subject area; she is a major advocate of Peer to Peer support, as evidenced by her work on the LaunchPad Leadership Development programme and a current Pilot project within one of her pre-placement modules. Francesca’s work includes a special interest in work placements, this is evidenced by numerous workshops and papers delivered at WACE, ASET and PlaceNet:
Francesca is currently the Placement Tutor within the Lancashire Business School, with overall responsibility for students on placement across Business subjects; this includes allocation and briefing of visiting tutors, responsibility for escalated situations and a personal allocation of 4 placement students per annum.

Over the last 5 years Francesca has supervised 20+ students on placement (in accordance with the ASET Best Practice Guidelines) and in addition supervises short work-based projects, undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations.

**Student’s Role**

Gaining academic credit for work-based projects is highly important to student motivation, Therefore the student(s) undertaking this project will enrol on a 20 credit project module (BC3005), which clearly defines learning objectives and learning outcomes. This will provide timescales, supervision, guidance, a reference and academic credit. Students not wishing to undertake further
academic credits will not be excluded from applying and will receive the same level of supervision and support.

Relevance to other universities
This project is directly relevant to any university engaged in placement or work-based learning. Our findings will be made fully accessible, as per previous project work.

Agreement of support from an appropriate senior manager
This application is fully supported by Dr Jan Hewitt, Associate Dean of the Lancashire Business School.
Dr Janet Hewitt
Associate Dean, Lancashire Business School
University of Central Lancashire
Preston, PR1 2HE
JHewitt@uclan.ac.uk / 01772 894711

Indication of students to whom this opportunity would be made available, including recruitment process
This opportunity will be open to all second, third and fourth year students within the Lancashire Business School. Recruitment will be as follows:

1. Vacancy Advertisement
2. Application process – via CV and covering letter
3. Interview
4. Decision made to offer the project to either a single student or a small group
5. Project allocation
6. Project start

The project was undertaken by Vicky O’Brien, University of Central Lancashire.
To what extent does peer to peer support encourage second year students to actively seek placements?

Aims of the pilot study
- Integrate pre placement and post placement students.
- Encourage a peer support relationship between Year 2 and Year 4 students.
- Test the effectiveness of peer support in those looking for a placement.

How did the interaction take place?
- Workshop sessions
- Video blogs
- Flyers
- Hand Outs
- One to One Sessions
- Lectures

Compulsory and Assessed

Year Two students (Pre Placement) Findings

I will apply when I have more time / deadlines have passed - Two responses
I have given up, I don’t think it’s possible... Looking for work experience instead over summer.
I no longer wish to take a placement year – Two Responses
I have already secured a placement
Got a summer internship

Number of applications made for placements by gender

Applications made for placements in relation to workshops attended
I started thinking into what type of career path I wanted to go into.

Q1. Did you make any changes to your approach to placements after attending workshop sessions?

- Applied for more (Placements)
- Applied to other roles

I decided a placement was not for me after discussing my options.

Q2. How motivated are you after attending a workshop session?

1. Not at all motivated
2. Slightly motivated
3. Neither motivated or not
4. Motivated
5. Very motivated

This questions looks at students who did not attend workshop sessions...

Q2A. Have you been in touch with the 3rd year students?

1. Yes, personally
2. Yes, on LinkedIn
3. Yes, via Workshop group
4. No
5. Other

Year Two students (Pre placement) - Overall Findings

- Students felt an increase in motivation to apply for placement following workshop sessions.
- 17 of Year Two students kept in touch with a Year Four student for the purpose of placement support.
- Students who did not participate in workshops would do so if they were to run again.
- Students believe in the benefit of peer support and recommend that it is made compulsory within the module.

In addition the module has...

- 15 students (38%) placed on year long placements.
- 5 students placed on summer internships (10.63%)
- Giving an overall total of 23 students (48.93%) placed this academic year (June 2014)

BC3001 - Continuing Professional Development module
Year Four Post Placement
Findings

Q3. If you were to be given the choice again would you still take a placement year?

1. Yes, without hesitation
2. Yes, possibly
3. No
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Q4. Did reflecting back on past placements help you with your search for a placement?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Q5. How useful was the contact with senior year/graduates?

1. Very useful
2. Useful
3. Neither useful nor not
4. Not useful
5. Very not useful
4th Year students - Overall Findings

- Positive in that students would seek out placements again.
- Students generally felt well supported, however they would have liked more interaction with post year students.
- Believe it's important to pass on their own skills and knowledge.
- Developed new skills and gained benefits from interacting with second year students.

Aims of the pilot study

- Integrate pre placement and post placement students.
- Encourage a peer support relationship between Year 2 and Year 4 students.
- Test the effectiveness of peer support in those looking for a placement.

Overall conclusions

- Rise in student placements from the business school of 20% in 2013-14.
- Year Two students who are supported by Year Four students were more successful in gaining a full-year placement.
- Year Two students supported by Year Four students remained more motivated to securing a placement.
- Post and Pre placement students recommend peer interaction.
- Year Two students supported by Year Four students maintain contact in order seek support in the search for placements.
- Year Four students benefitted from peer interaction with Year Two students; this was beyond any expectations.

Unexpected Outcomes

- Increase in grades: Year Two students an average increase of 7%, Year Four students – record number of students achieving a First Class degree.
- Placement matching service: Students began to share contacts and place year two students in positions that they had previously held.
- Fresh from the workplace, first hand knowledge. Transferred from student to student.

Vicki O’Brien - vlo-brien@uclan.ac.uk
ASET BURSARY PROJECT

2014 ASET Exploration and Enhancement Student Bursary

In its inaugural year, ASET awarded two Exploration and Enhancement Student Bursaries. The first to Felicity Mendoza, of Sheffield Hallam University for her project outlined below:

Project

Evaluation of pilot work shadowing scheme

Description of the area of practice under investigation

In a series of focus groups carried out in 2012, feedback from students indicated that they lacked insights into the professions that they were studying towards. Placements, internships and work-based learning opportunities are enormously valuable to students but those who lack CV enhancing experiences often struggle to secure them. Home students with permanent part-time jobs (for example in shops and bars) are often prevented from taking up temporary internship or work-based learning roles for financial reasons and therefore they miss out on work experience relevant to their courses. International students, in particular post -graduates, often come to their course with previous work experience from their own country but lack cultural insights into British working cultural and etiquette.

Sheffield Business School (SBS) will pilot a work shadowing scheme during semester 2 2014. Work shadowing will provide CV enhancing experiences for students who lack work experience, thereby breaking the cycle of being unsuccessful at application stage due to lack of experience. Work shadowing will provide careers insights and networking opportunities for home students who cannot take up temporary positions. In addition work shadowing visits will provide international students with insights into British work culture.

SBS will facilitate work shadowing opportunities between SBS students and business professionals from external organisations and internal SHU departments. In collaboration with the SBS Employment Advisers and the University Careers and Employment Service the scheme will target students from levels 4, 5 and 7 with no (or minimal) work experience and international students with no (or minimal) experience of working in the UK.

Broad objectives for the project

It is hoped that the ASET Exploration and Enhancement Student Bursary will fund a student to carry out an evaluation of the pilot work shadowing scheme. If successful SBS will incorporate work
shadowing into its employability offer and launch the scheme at the beginning of the 2014/15 academic year.

Project activities
The work shadowing scheme pilot will be small-scale, aiming to arrange 3-6 visits for between 3-12 students (employer hosts will be given the opportunity to take students individually or in small groups of 2 or 3). Therefore, in order to evaluate the pilot, the student, with the support and guidance of a supervisor, will conduct the following activities:

- issue, follow up and collate feedback questionnaires from all participants (students and employers)
- 2-3 telephone or face to face interviews with participating students
- 2-3 telephone interviews with participating employers
- 1 video interview with a participating student
- 1 video interview with a participating employer
- 1-2 interviews with administrative team
- 1 interview with employment advisor
- review of how employer hosts were sourced
- an evaluation report detailing feedback from a student, employer and internal perspective with recommendations on whether the scheme should be taken forward into the new academic year, what resource implications should be considered and what changes should be made.

Timescales
The work shadowing scheme pilot is scheduled to start in February 2014. If the bursary application is successful, a student will be recruited in April with a view to starting working on the evaluation project in May. Flexibility will be built in to allow for the recruited student's circumstances such as exams, visa restrictions, holidays and other commitments. The evaluation project will be completed by the end of August 2014.

Supervision
Felicity Mendoza will be the nominated supervisor for the evaluation project student. Felicity Mendoza is a research associate in the Employability Hub team in Sheffield Business School. The Employability Hub is a relatively recent initiative and team in SBS and is responsible for providing a holistic employability offer to our students and external organisations. Felicity's role involves linking
businesses with students and academics through initiatives such as internships, projects, guest lectures and events.

The evaluation project student will join Felicity, Gemma Lancaster (Employability Officer), Rachel Keeton (Employability Officer) and James Laley (Employability Administrator) in the Employability Hub which is part of the Business and Research team within Professional Services in SBS. Both Rachel and Gemma will provide supervisory support in Felicity’s absence. The student will be integrated into the wider team which, as well as permanent staff, currently includes 2 placement students and a graduate intern. Support for the evaluation project has been confirmed by the Business and Research Manager, Jon Inns and the University Employability Lead, Paul Helm. Felicity’s supervisory support will include:

- An introductory meeting and tour of the office
- Confirmation of expectations e.g. hours / days and time sheet management
- Health and safety training including fire safety and display screen equipment
- Equality and diversity and data protection training
- Arrangement of IT and security access
- Booking appropriate training sessions (CRM database and Google Apps)
- Overview of work shadowing scheme
- Project management
- Task setting, review and feedback
- Progress monitoring including learning objectives
- One to one pastoral care (fortnightly meetings set aside for student-led discussions)
- Interview practice and coaching
- Presentation practice and coaching
- Proof reading of report and feedback

**Student’s plan of work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction and orientation</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems training (e.g. CRM database, Google Apps)</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; safety training</td>
<td>0.5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to one meetings (outside project / task supervision)</td>
<td>0.5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collation of feedback questionnaires</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, arrange, carry out and transcribe interviews x 9</td>
<td>9 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, arrange, carry out and edit video interviews x 2</td>
<td>6 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track and log source of participants</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Review communication channels 3 days
Report 9 days
Prepare and practice presentation 2 days
Attend conference 1 day
Total number of days 40 days

Learning objectives
Supervised participation in the activities listed above will contribute to the student's achievement of the following learning objectives:

Knowledge and Understanding
- Apply concepts and techniques based on qualitative and quantitative approaches to business problems and issues in the pursuit of solutions
- Exhibit a critical approach to information and knowledge and demonstrate the contestability of knowledge

Intellectual / Subject / Professional / Key Skills
- Evaluate and analyse information, concepts and processes and synthesise essential aspects of ideas and information
- Make and justify independent judgements and employ skills of critical self-awareness
- Communicate effectively in a variety of formats
- Operate as an effective member of a team
- Select and apply appropriate numeracy and IT skills
- Exercise professional behaviour and ethical judgement in decision-making and actions

The student's learning objectives will be discussed during one to one meetings with the supervisor. In addition the student will be given an appointment with an Employment Advisor at the beginning of the project in order to discuss how he or she is going to get the most out of their work experience as well as a debrief appointment at the end of the project to consider their next steps.

Recruitment and selection
A job description and person specification will be drafted and the vacancy will be advertised to all students via email, social media and web based channels. The opportunity will be open to all Business School students and the successful candidate will be selected according to his or her suitability to the role. Students will be given a minimum of 2 weeks to apply via CV and covering letter (email). All applicants will be advised to seek careers advice prior to submitting an application.
Four candidates will be shortlisted for interview by the Employability Hub team based on the criteria in the person specification. Panel interviews will be carried out on campus and candidates will be asked to give a short presentation. The successful candidate will be recruited on a casual contract and their hours will be monitored by timesheets.

Relevance to other universities

Placements, internships and work experience opportunities are often secured by students via a competitive process. Students without work experience are caught in a vicious circle and need to engage in other employability enhancing activities in order to become attractive candidates. Run well a work shadowing scheme could allow students to develop their professional networks and gain insights into a job role, business sector or organisation. Other universities engaged in placements, work-based learning or employability development will be interested to learn about the challenges and issues faced during the pilot as well as share best practice in terms of its administration.

The project was undertaken by Lucy MacBeth, Sheffield Hallam University.

Presentation
**Methodology**

- Secondary Research
- Focus Groups
- Student Interviews
- Employer/Staff Interviews

**Secondary Research**

- Internet research found...
- Sessions are short (averaging around 4 hours a session)
- The students participating do not undertake any form of task/work; they observe, listen and ask questions to gain as much knowledge about the role as possible
- Focus on building networks
- Skill development (e.g. customer service, communication, professional and commercial awareness)
- Provide insight into chosen career sector

Feedback Prior to Pilot

- Student and Staff feedback included
  - Sessions were not long enough
  - Lack of responsibility
  - 'Work shadowing' title wasn't popular or appealing

Post Pilot Feedback

- Feedback was much more positive & outweighed initial negative issues immensely. Therefore, SBS will run the scheme if approved by management and executives
  - I think our staff liked the fact that everybody was involved in what they did and felt they had contributed to a young person's development. Host
  - I applied because it’s a great insight about a family run business and for only a couple of hours - it was worth it. Student

Issues and Solutions

- Employer Information
- Health and Safety
- Timings
- Promotion of the scheme
- Issues and Solutions

- What's in the message?
- Who is the target market?
- How is it promoted?
- What are the most effective mediums?
- Is the procedure over complicated?
- How long does the process actually take?
- What time of year?
- How resource intensive is the scheme?
- Which B2B relationships need to be utilised/maintained?

**Thank you for listening**

Any questions?
ASET BURSARY PROJECTS

2014 ASET Exploration and Enhancement Student Bursary

In its inaugural year, ASET awarded two Exploration and Enhancement Student Bursaries. The second to Paul Fennell, of the University of Sheffield, for the project outlined below:

Project

An investigation into student experiences of summer internships

Introduction

In line with the universities employability strategy there is an increasing focus on students engaging with employers both through year out placements but also through much shorter vacation placements. While the university is well placed to track those undertaking longer placements we have limited information on the numbers, range and learning being gained from vacation placements. The project aim is for us to have a greater understanding of vacation placements undertaken by students (both within the UK but also overseas placements). The research undertaken will provide us with both a benchmark set of information, plus a system to repeat the survey identifying trends and also in the longer term the opportunity to track student progression into graduate employment.

A description of the area of practice under investigation, broad objectives for the project and clear timescales

The area of practice under investigation relates to the take up of vacation placements by students, their rationale for doing so, the sources of vacancies they use to gain placements and their learning from the experience. We are keen to gain an increased insight into how students make the choice between undertaking a vacation placement versus a year out option. The project will focus on:

- The extent to which students at the university undertake vacation placements (or in some cases possibly undertake both vacation and year out placements)
- How students source vacancies (including international vacancies)
- Summer placements versus year out – what are the key factors in making that decision?
- Key learning points from the experience of a vacation placement
- To identify if there are any significant ‘patterns’ in the take up of different types of placements, such as high achieving students undertaking year out placements
Beyond the lifetime of the project we hope to track the destinations of current students involved in the project through to graduate destinations.

The work would be undertaken within an 8 week period between mid June to August dependent on the successful students availability staff from the Careers Service will be available throughout this period to supervise the student.

Through having a greater understanding of the above we hope to be in a better position to support students in whichever option (vacation placement or year out placement) is appropriate to their individual choice.

**The supervisor’s role in the project, and agreement of support from an appropriate senior manager**

We see the supervisor’s role as not only crucial to the success of the project but also to act as a gateway to the placement student gaining access to information and senior staff within the university as well as ensuring the individual’s learning outcomes are achieved.

The supervisor(s) will:

- Further scope the project with the successful applicant in the light of their skillset
- Provide a body of existing evidence
- Agree with the placement student their learning outcome
- Agree timescales and milestones
- ‘Mentor’ the placement student
- The Director of the Careers Service has agreed to provide support to this project. His role will be to provide an institutional wide context to the development and also ensure the findings from the project are used to make informed decisions by the university.

As this project will take place over the traditional summer vacation period we intend to provide two project supervisors to ensure there is adequate support throughout the project.

**The student’s role within the project, including details of their own learning objectives will be set and incorporated in the project**

From a service perspective the student’s role will include:
• Designing a strategy for data collection using a range of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The student will be able to draw on existing expertise within the service with regard to the design of a data gathering strategy

• Survey and interview current students of the university. We hope to gain a significant amount of quantitative data supported by a number of focus groups to provide a greater insight into the process

• Using appropriate software store and analyse data. This we hope will identify any key trends that emerge from the dataset

• Produce reports in a format that can be used to inform key development decisions

• Present their findings to senior university staff. This is a key part of the project. This project is taking place at a time when key decisions are being made about the development of institutional support to students on placement. The outcomes of the project can enhance the information base on which these decisions are made

**Why the learning from your institution might be relevant to other universities engaged in placements, work-based learning or employability developments**

As within the University of Sheffield, discussions with staff at other institutions suggest that there is a lack of clarity about the range of vacation placements undertaken by students. We hope to shine some light on this issue and to identify a greater understanding of the students rational for undertaking such placements. The outcomes of this project will be made available to all other institutions

• A number of universities have existing data on students taking a ‘year out’ but little information on numbers or the destinations of students undertaking vacation placements

• The project would help us understand more students motivations for applying for such placements, their preferred or current access to vacancy sources and why they have chosen this type of employer engagement

**Agreement from support of an appropriate senior manager in the university**

• This project is supported by senior staff within the university both within Student services and within Learning and Teaching

**An indication of the students to whom this opportunity would be made available, and how you intend to recruit**

We hope to recruit from the widest pool of talent within the intuition, therefore we will:
• Place a university wide advertisement
• Use a recruitment process, similar to that when applying for a graduate position (application, interviews, presentation etc) as part of the overall learning process

Summary
The above project is in line with wider institutional developments where we aim to provide more opportunities for students from across the institution to gain from employer engagement. In order to ensure effective and efficient support to students we need to better understand their current level of engagement, their rationale for the engagement and their learning. We also will use the data set created to track the students’ future progress into graduate employment to try to further identify linkages between placements and final destinations.

The project was undertaken by Rebecca Stevenson, University of Sheffield, and supervised by Helen Thorpe.

Presentation

AN INVESTIGATION INTO STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF SUMMER INTERNSHIPS
Rebecca Stevenson
University of Sheffield

Introduction
• Definitions
• About the project
• Why was the research needed?
• Methodology
• Research questions
• Results and Analysis
• Conclusions/further research opportunities?

Definitions
• What is a summer internship?
  • Work experience undertaken during the summer vacation period.
  • Can be taken at any level.
  • Mainly undergraduates.
  • Paid or unpaid.
  • Not for academic credit or a course requirement.

The Project
• Why was the research needed?
  • Increasing focus on work experience for students.
  • Increasing number of summer internships.
• Methodology
  • Two surveys were created, one for all current students, and one for people who had graduated in the last two years.
  • Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected.
  • The results were analysed using IBM SPSS.
The Project

- Aims of the project

1. To determine the extent to which students undertake summer internships.
2. To discover why students undertake internships, and what they gain from the experience.
3. To discover how students source internships.
4. To discover what kind of internships students are undertaking.
5. To discover if there are any patterns in the type of students who choose to undertake an internship.
6. To explore whether there are any differences in student experiences of summer internships vs. placement years.

Results

1. Determining the extent to which students undertake summer internships.

   - How many students undertake internships?

     | No. of students | Percent |
     |-----------------|---------|
     | I have completed an internship / I am considering undertaking an internship | 307 | 60.4% |
     | I haven’t completed an internship / I don’t intend to | 201 | 39.6% |
     | Total | 508 | 100% |

2. Discovering why students undertake internships, and what they gain from the experience.

   - What do students gain from undertaking summer internships?

     - Recent Graduates
       - Learnt more about another culture: 7%
       - Gained a CV reference: 12%
       - Attended extra training sessions: 5%
       - Increased self-confidence and skills: 12%
       - Increased academic performance: 6%
       - Increased interpersonal skills: 6%
       - Increased academic performance: 4%
       - Work was published: 4%
       - Travel opportunities: 1%
       - Learnt about responsibility in a business environment: 1%
       - Increased interest/knowledge of area: 1%
       - Teamwork skills: 1%

     - Current Students
       - Learnt more about another culture: 5%
       - Gained a CV reference: 5%
       - Attended extra training sessions: 4%
       - Increased self-confidence and skills: 2%
       - Increased academic performance: 2%
       - Work was published: 1%
       - Travel opportunities: 1%
       - Learnt about responsibility in a business environment: 1%
       - Increased interest/knowledge of area: 1%
       - Teamwork skills: 1%

3. Discovering why students undertake internships, and what they gain from the experience.

   - Did recent graduates find doing an internship helped them find a job after graduation?

     - Yes: 97.5%
     - No: 2.5%

   - Would students and graduates recommend doing an internship to future students?

     - Yes: 99.5%
     - No: 0.5%
## Conclusions

1. The extent to which students undertake summer internships.
2. Why students undertake internships, and what they gain from the experience.
3. How students source internships.
4. What kind of internships students are undertaking.
5. Are there any patterns in the type of students who choose to undertake an internship.
6. Are there any differences in student experiences of summer internships vs. placement years.

## Key Findings

- Increasing number of students interested in summer internships.
- Employability is the main reason why students undertake summer internships.
- Students are using more sources to find summer internships, especially online sources and services provided by the University.
- 25% of internships are still unpaid.
- Students from the Arts and Humanities faculty are the least likely to do a summer internship.
## DELEGATE LIST

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**Guests**

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The Placement and Employability Professionals’ Body

ASET is the professional body for placement and employability staff. It has been at the forefront of developments in sandwich courses and other forms of work placements, in both higher and further education, for more than 30 years. We represent over 1600 academic and administrative placement staff at more than 110 HE and FE institutions.

ASET has been the catalyst for the development of guidelines in many areas and also the promotion and dissemination of best practice. We also seek to champion the general concept of work-based learning.

ASET is an educational charity run by work-based learning practitioners for work-based learning practitioners and offers support, advice, guidance and representation to all professionals who work in the sector.

As the leading organisation in the work-based and placement learning sector we seek to provide independent and influential strategic leadership for it.

Membership gives all relevant staff at universities, further education colleges and employers the opportunity to benefit from, and contribute to, a wealth of experience and expertise.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of ASET’s work, please contact the ASET office or any of the executive members. Contact details are below:

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ASET Conference 2015
The next Annual Conference will take place 1-3 September 2015. Please keep an eye on the ASET website for further news.
www.asetonline.org

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