

In this issue.....

Page

1. **All things International**
- Spring Hub summary
6. **Spring PRN Meeting**
- Report
6. **HKF Celebrations**
7. **Student Competition**
- winners announced!
8. **Professional Development**
- Workshops
- ASET Insights
12. **Coffee and Chat**
13. **2022 NUE Awards**
14. **CPD Corner**
14. **ASET Resources**

ASET

The Work Based and Placement
Learning Association
Charity No: 285104

www.asetonline.org



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1

Spring 2022



Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Spring Regional Hubs at the end of March. At such a busy time for all we were delighted to once again welcome representatives from so many member institutions. Making the most of time out to network in small breakout rooms, members came together to discuss:

All things International

with conversations led by ASET Trustees, your ASET Community colleagues shared some of the key challenges they face, how their institutions are responding, and how ASET might offer support in the future.

Theme One – Home Students travelling overseas

Q1 What are your current challenges supporting Home Students being placed overseas?

- Higher levels of approval needed, adding another layer to the process
- Reduced interest amongst students in going overseas, and fewer opportunities available
- Lack of funding - some concern that unfunded international placements are far more likely to get approved than unfunded UK opportunities
- Barriers to student global mobility; the impact of Brexit, particularly Visa processes and lead-in time. For some this is a larger issue than COVID-19

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- Lack of institutional support and knowledge around Visas for student placements
- Students' attitudes to the risk associated with taking a placement overseas during the pandemic
- Practitioners', and HEPs, attitudes to the increased risks involved with overseas placements during COVID-19
- The Turing Scheme; less money available, the timing of the money release and general confusion about the scheme
- Access. For some students, the sheer expense associated with going overseas for a placement means it is simply a non-starter
- Paperwork and agreements for overseas placements (e.g., Convention de Stage) and working with in-house legal teams to create legal documents
- Risk assessment and the associated paperwork where countries have different approaches/laws around risk assessment. Similar examples were shared around insurance(s) for overseas placements
- Language barriers can prove to be significant obstacles when students are on placement, for example, where a student can encounter issues in communicating with their supervisor
- Residual anxiety for *some* placement staff/teams relating to international travel, risk, and health and safety, which may be (unintentionally) putting off some students from fully exploring an international opportunity
- There are no 'recent returners' from overseas placements who normally might act as ambassadors, positive voices amongst the students to promote awareness and encourage take up of international placements
- Discomfort around using/advertising external 3rd party businesses who charge a fee for sourcing/securing placements overseas
- Students' lack of understanding around the restrictions on travel and that these had not been imposed by the HEP but by Government(s) decisions
- Lack of budget for placement visits overseas

Q2 Has your approach to overseas placements changed? If so, how?

Some solutions

- Writing (or re-writing) due diligence processes for overseas placement activities. Lessons were learnt during the repatriation process at the start of the pandemic, resulting in the development of new pro-formas, in easier to share formats, to better capture information
- Use of DocuSign and RightSign
- Better use of the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's website](#), which students must access and then complete a form for the Placement Office/HEP to demonstrate their research, knowledge and risk assessment
- Advise students to have not only a Plan A, but also a Plan B (and even Plan C). Should the Visa situation prove to be an obstacle, they have a fall-back option

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- Risk assessments are now managed centrally by some HEPs, which has been a good move (although the lack of control and the timescales involved can bring another set of challenges). Target Connect was identified as a useful system to manage the paperwork
- The pandemic has elevated the prominence of placements and risk assessments at institutional level, leading to more collaborative approaches to the issues faced
- More emphasis towards greater wellbeing awareness and support within HE
- Weekly team meetings to discuss and keep up to date with changes to COVID-19 regulations/rules
- Better information sharing with students about international placements, such as holding sessions on “Going Global”

Q3 What can ASET do to support you?

You asked ASET to:

- Continue to offer support via Regional Hubs and work to identify and support solutions to these challenges
- Encourage further sharing of good practice around international placements including ‘how to vet employers’
- Develop a practical ‘getting started’ checklist for use when setting up international placements, along with a central resource on funding streams and sources of advice available to students
- Be a supportive channel to manage students’ expectations for international placements in COVID-19 times
- Develop a repository of information about 3rd party (commercial) organisations and virtual placement providers
- Support the setting up of user groups for the sharing of practice and experience of commercial platforms (e.g., Handshake, Target Connect, Career Hub)
- To define an International Placement
 - if a student works remotely from the UK, for an overseas employer, is this an international placement?
 - Is this a “good” placement?
 - Is there a real chance to develop intercultural or language skills?
 - Could ASET support the changing notions around these perspectives?
- Create an international section on the ASET website, and highlight ASET’s national/international voice to promote and advance UK placement models overseas

Theme Two – International Students Seeking placements in the UK

Q1 How are you adapting your placement support for growing numbers of international students?

Challenges

- Not all HEPs are experiencing growth in the numbers of international students
- High volumes on specific, notably postgraduate, programmes e.g., MBA, MSc

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- Postgraduate students often have expectations for higher level placements
- Resources are needed to properly support students' needs
- Employers' reluctance to take international placement students, often due to misunderstanding/concern around Tier 4 visa
- Employers unable to offer placements at the times of year they are needed
- Increasing numbers of international students have been taking placements in their home countries (both a challenge and a possible solution?)
- Marketing and recruitment campaigns by overseas agents may not reflect the reality of the process of securing a placement and can lead to unrealistic expectations
- International student support, particularly at the application/interview stages can be highly resource intensive
- EU students still being perceived as Home Students, whereas they might still need visas
- Cultural differences between students' home countries and working at a UK employer can be marked

Some solutions

- Increasing numbers of international students have been taking placements in their home countries (both a challenge and a possible solution?)
- Managing expectations. Particularly import for international students to understand that finding a placement will be a competitive process
- Developing resources to support students to draft a UK format CV, and to write good quality cover letters
- Delegates who had also attended our **Supporting International Students with Placements** workshop (16th March) commented upon the high value of the take aways from that workshop which focussed on cross cultural awareness and differences
- Adapting communications around placement support and opportunities to specifically target international students had improved engagement
- Technological support using acquired IT systems has enabled better monitoring of international students for UKVI purposes at some HEPs. As understanding of system capabilities improves, so too should the support options
- Whilst many are treating all placement students the same, there was growing recognition that more could/should be done to provide more highly tailored support to meet the specific needs of international students
- Some HEPs have produced Employer Guides providing information, guidance and support to placement providers on hiring and supporting international students, in some cases also including information on the legal aspects
- Identifying organisations with subsidiaries in a students' home country could open up a future prospect when they return home on graduation

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- Handshake, Target Connect, and the “pathways” within them, can be valuable for setting students’ tasks whilst on placement and good for student engagement

Q2 What is working well in supporting International Students?

Some solutions

- Regular (twice/term) drop- in sessions involving both support and academic staff
- In addition to support with CVs and covering letters, some are also educating on professional etiquette
- Never make assumptions about international students’ knowledge of the UK labour market and resourcing practices
- Events specifically for international students with a range of speakers and specialist staff such as from Wellbeing services
- Running briefing and/or kick-starter sessions designed to rejuvenate students’ interest in placements
- Recording information sessions on MS Teams to share with students who can then listen/watch in their own time and at their own pace
- Online monitoring of international students on placement has proven to be both practical and useful to many
- Monitoring students centrally via Student Support Services can also be both practical and helpful
- Collaborative approaches to student support seem to be effective and work well. Involving Programme leaders has been productive in handling additional international student admin, as has working with international/compliance teams
- Running a pre-arrival module for international students, preparing them practically for the UK labour market. Students have a CV and covering letter ready at the end of it

Q3 What can ASET do to support you?

You asked ASET to:

- Continue to make space for conversation and sharing of good practice, in particular sharing examples for what works well at volume and scale
- Develop an Employer Guide including
 - The business, and broader, benefits to employing international students
 - clarification that the HEP is the student sponsor
 - information on Visas (Graduate Route)
- Support communication around the wide variation in placement fees for international students across institutions which can act as a barrier to placements for some students

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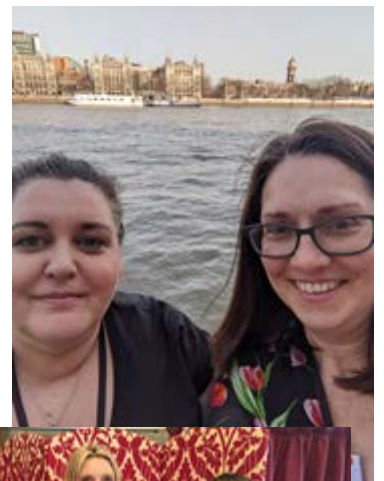
Spring PRN Meeting

Following a brilliant response to the Call for Contributions around **current research or practice** members were undertaking, the Spring '22 Practice and Research Network meeting set high expectations. Presenters were challenged to set out their research or practice in *just 5 minutes and across 3 slides* – which can be tough for seasoned and new presenters alike. The challenge was accepted in good spirits and the result was a dynamic and lively session, attended by record numbers of ASET members. The [Report](#) from the meeting includes abstracts and slides from each presentation to give an overview of the event. We also tested Jamboard as a way of collating questions, which worked well, and we have included the Jamboards in the report so you can see the questions posed to the presenters too.

Dr Julie Udell
(Research Working Group Lead)

HKF Celebrations

Tuesday 22nd March 2022 marked a very special occasion – the 2019 Helena Kennedy Foundation Award Winners Reception, which was finally held after having been postponed from its original date in March 2020. It was well worth the wait. From time to time, we all hear a story of someone who has worked through challenging times, a student who has overcome the odds to progress and succeed. At this event, it was a whole gathering of students who had done exactly that and it was a time to celebrate their successes. On behalf of ASET, Trustee Vicki O'Brien and myself attended the reception in the Cholmondeley Room, House of Lords. The sun shone as the presentations took place, overlooking the Thames. Inspiring speeches were given by two previous award winners, Rosie Wainwright and George Imafidon, who talked engagingly and passionately about their experiences and how the Helena Kennedy Foundation and its support had helped to transform their lives. The awards were given out to



the 2019 winners, which included 2 ASET bursary recipients (pictured). Vicki and I had the honour of meeting them and learning more about their stories – it was clear just how vitally important receiving the bursary had been for them both, how it had been an enabler. It was truly humbling to hear them share their stories with us, and also hugely inspiring to hear them speak of their futures, and their career plans. *Nicola*



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For a number of years ASET has been a loyal supporter of [The Helena Kennedy Foundation](http://www.hfk.org.uk), which exists to overcome social injustice by providing financial bursaries, mentoring and support to disadvantaged students from the Further and Adult education sectors, enabling them to complete their studies in Higher Education and move on successfully into employment or further study. ASET is proud to sponsor Helena Kennedy Foundation bursaries. If you would like to know more, or maybe sponsor a bursary, you can contact the Helena Kennedy Foundation at www.hfk.org.uk, 0121 644 2406 or enquiries@hkf.org.uk.

Student Competition Winners

Undertaking a Placement during the 2020-2021 academic year continued to be beset with challenges, whether the placement was in person or virtual. It was therefore with great pleasure, and admiration for perseverance under pressure, that the judges welcomed entries to this year's Student Competition. Leading the judging again this year, ASET Trustee Vicki O'Brien, *University of Central Lancashire*, and her team commented on how resourceful and dedicated the students continued to be, and how much they appreciated the opportunity to be able to gain vital work experience during these challenging times.

Finding inner strengths and adapting to unexpected circumstances were a common theme, and no doubt experiences that will stand all the entrants in good stead in the future.

The difficult task of choosing between the many excellent entries was finally completed at the end of March, and the winners have been notified, and their tutors thanked for the encouragement and support they have given to their students throughout their placement process. Its congratulations time to all!



This year the winning entry, and prize of **£400**, was awarded to:

Briony Carter, Biology Conservation (2018-2022),
Bath Spa University.

Briony completed her placement at Ferne Animal Sanctuary, supported by Rebecca Taylor-Ford, Placement and Work based Learning Coordinator, *Bath Spa University*



Vicki and her team of judges also awarded two **Highly Commended** awards of **£100** each to inspiring and insightful entries from:

Divya Samant, *University of the Arts, London, London College of Fashion*

Olivia Worringham, *The University of Warwick*

The ASET Trustees would like to thank all of you who supported your students' entries this year.

Wouldn't it be great to see your students' work celebrated here? Look out for news and details for the 2022 ASET Student Competition coming soon.....

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Online Professional Development Events

Our Spring programme of events is already halfway through – make sure you don't miss an opportunity to attend – there are spaces remaining on all sessions currently. Delivery continues to be online for the remainder of this academic year, however we plan to host in-person events as soon as we can.

Whilst events remain online prices will be held as:

Workshops £125 ASET members/£275 ASET non-members

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Workshops at a glance:

W'shop No.	W'shop Ref.	Date	Day	Time	Title
7	WPP	28/04/2022	Thurs	09:30-13:30	Widening Participation and Placements (WPP)
8	FEEP	10/05/2022	Tues	09:30-13:30	Freelancers, Entrepreneurs, Enterprise Placements (FEEP)
9	FPTE	24/05/2022	Tues	09:30-13:30	From Placements to Employability (FPTE)
10	SWP	07/06/2022	Tues	09:30-13:30	Student Wellbeing and Placements (SWP)
11	EDIP	21/06/2022	Tues	09:30-13:30	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion for Placements (EDIP)
12	PGrad	28/06/2022	Tues	09:30-13:30	Placements for Postgraduates (PGrad) DATE CHANGE

7. [Widening Participation and Placements \(WPP\)](#)

Thursday 28th April 2022 09:30-13:30 ONLINE

Discussions surrounding widening participation and the social mobility of our students are perennially on the agenda, nationally, in the HE sector. 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 (or less well-served) backgrounds? How can we reach out to and better engage students with employability in a difficult economic climate and to support the development of their social capital? Furthermore, what suggestions can we share to engage employers in order to further these broad aims? In an interactive session of participation and dialogue, our course leaders will facilitate discussions on ways to support the employability of disadvantaged student groups and ways to potentially overcome challenges and barriers to participation in placements. Delegates will have the opportunity to network online, and to build their own toolkit of practical ideas and top tips to take away from the workshop.

8. [Freelancers, Entrepreneurs, Enterprise Placements \(FEEP\)](#)

Tuesday 10th May 2022 09:30-13:30 ONLINE

- Do you have students who are expressing an interest in setting up and running their own businesses for their placements?
- Maybe they are already freelancing/working as a sole trader outside of university and alongside their studies, and want to expand upon this for their placement?
- If this isn't currently an option which you have open to them, what might you need to do next?

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This may be something you haven't previously considered or were cautious about and are now keen to explore this route more thoroughly as the wider employment and economic landscape changes. This interactive workshop will highlight some of the key points 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 foster success. Our facilitators will encourage discussion and dialogue, networking, as well as the exchange of ideas and good practice.

9. [From Placements to Employability \(FPTE\)](#)

Tuesday 24th May 2022 09:30-13:30 ONLINE

- Perhaps you have expertise in supporting placement students but are now being asked to become involved in curriculum design and development more broadly associated with employability?
- Or you have experience in your subject-based curriculum but are new to placements and employability?
- Do you know what you might do differently if you were assessing a first-year undergraduate placement compared to a Masters level placement?

Single interventions, like the sandwich placement, are no longer sufficient in terms of determining employment success on graduation – we must consider the whole student experience. We will contrast employability in the curriculum with employability through the curriculum i.e., how broader teaching, learning and assessment strategies throughout a programme can impact on employability. The intended outcome of the session is to enable you to use your experience and expertise from placement activities to work with your colleagues in your own institutions to appropriately embed placement and other employability related activities in the curriculum. Workshop facilitators will help encourage the sharing of good practice amongst delegates and will help to equip you with ideas and top tips to utilise in your roles.

10. [Student Wellbeing and Placements \(SWP\)](#)

Tuesday 7th June 2022 09:30-13:30 ONLINE

The wellbeing of the workforce should be an essential thread running through organisations' HR strategies. With the wellbeing of our students rising in importance during the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations, including our own Higher Education Providers, have given focus/renewed focus to student wellbeing.

The challenging set of circumstances created have included working remotely, needing to switch to a virtual placement, a changing job market, feelings of isolation and overall uncertainty about what the future of work might look like. In this workshop, our experienced facilitators will explore wellbeing in the context of work based learning and placements. The challenges your students may be faced with, as well as approaches to how to tackle these issues practically, will be delved into and delegates can expect to learn [#ASETTopTips](#) and

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take away practical ideas to aid their student support mechanisms. Participative in style, delegates will be invited to join discussions in the workshop and to share their experiences and insights.

11. [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion for Placements \(EDIP\)](#)

Tuesday 21st June 2022 09:30-13:30 ONLINE

This workshop will look at equality, diversity, and inclusion for placements. No need for any prior EDI experience, this session will introduce you to the reference points, sources, key duties, and themes that are relevant to offering student placements. There will be an introduction to the equality legislation and our responsibilities, also to raising awareness about specialist sources of EDI information for the sector. We will talk about why we need to focus on particular protected characteristics, minoritized communities and those often excluded. This will include taking a look at how employability or placement performance is judged, and why in some cases, we might need to think again.

We'll move onto a positive approach to inclusion, including the need to have an intersectional mindset, and how to get your practice right from the start. We'll create a safe space for discussion, addressing direct issues and making plenty of space for contributions from delegates on the day.

12. [Placements for Postgraduates \(PGrad\)](#)

Tuesday 28th June 2022 09:30-13:30 ONLINE

Placements are traditionally rooted at undergraduate level. However, placements and internships are now more widely available and increasingly embedded in the employability agendas and strategies of HE providers. This interactive workshop will look at ways to engage those audiences – postgraduates (and to a small extent PhD students too) – as well as prospective employers. Challenges around this agenda will be explored too, and good practices and success stories shared, including practical tools to be taken away. Our facilitators will create opportunities for discussion, for networking and for the sharing of good practice from all delegates' institutions.

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ASET Insights

A companion offer to our staff development workshop programme, **ASET Insights** offer 90-minute interactive insights into broader, complementary professional development themes, and are led by our experienced Trustees. Designed to provide short, impactful updates to your professional toolkit, **ASET Insights** themes are selected to enhance your confidence in practical skills that contribute to work success. You can book your place for these short CPD sessions through our usual online booking system.

£50 ASET Members (£100 ASET non-members)

Session	Date	Day	Time	Title
C	19/05/2022	Thurs	10:00-11:30	Building resilience - tools of the trade
D	14/06/2022	Tues	10:00-11:30	Time Management
E	13/07/2022	Wed	10:00-11:30	Recording, tracking, and reporting placement activity within your HEP

Session C - Building resilience - tools of the trade

Resilience is simultaneously a hot topic, and also a tricky proposition. How do we build resilience in ourselves, and in others? What tools can we identify and internalise in our practice? This informal and introductory session focuses on boundaries, self-care, and the power of effective signposting as a method of retaining the integrity of these important themes. For more in-depth exploration of the breadth of resilience in placement work, see our Resilience and Placements workshop.

Session D - Time Management

Time management is one of the biggest challenges of our current working lives. This Insight session will provide #ASETopTips, tools and techniques to help you to manage your time effectively.

Session E - Recording, tracking, and reporting placement activity within your HEP

Demonstrating the impact of placements and experiential learning can be critical in raising the profile of activity and leveraging investment and resource. This insight session explores how Trustees record and track activity in their own institutions and demonstrate some of the ways the data from a more systematised approach can provide rich management information.

Don't miss out. These short sessions are a great way to keep up to date with your CPD.

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Coffee and Chat

- Save the link for your next Coffee and Chat session

Tuesday 17th May 10-11am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85640201234>

Meeting ID: 856 4020 1234

Tuesday 17th May 10-11am



Are you new to Work Based Learning and ASET, in the past 12 months?

Come along and meet your new network of colleagues across the ASET Community. This one-hour session will begin with a brief intro from an ASET Trustee, for the benefit of first-time attendees, before moving swiftly into breakout rooms where you'll have a chance to meet others, expand your network and share your current challenges and successes. If you've been to a session already, then please do join us again! If you haven't tried it yet, you're missing a great opportunity to build your network.

This is an ASET Member benefit which is free of charge.

There's no need to book, just join via the Zoom link on the day.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85640201234>

Meeting ID: 856 4020 1234

Why not come along? Coffee optional! We'd love to meet you 😊

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2022 NUE Awards

Was it really seven weeks ago? The sheer delight of seeing so many happy faces all in one space again, happy to be celebrating success, still seems just a few days ago. What a treat it was to be able to share the day with all the finalists and to see the winners applauded for their achievement. On behalf of ASET, Trustee Dr Julie Udell, a former winner of the award presented to winners in the ASET sponsored category:



Outstanding Contribution to Work Experience

Huge Congratulations from all at ASET to:



Winner: **Lisa Taylor**



Highly Commended: **James Billingham**



And hearty congratulations to the winners in all the categories too:

University winners:

Best University Placement Service: Careers and Placements, Aston University

Best University Careers / Employability Service: Careers and Employability Service, University of Surrey

Outstanding Contribution to Work Experience: **Lisa Taylor, University of East Anglia**

(Highly Commended: James Billingham, De Montfort University)

Best Collaboration Between Universities and Employers: University of Liverpool and Crowberry Consulting

(Highly Commended: Swansea University and Aspire2be)

Best Widening Participation Initiative: ELEVATE, Kingston University

Student winners:

Best Placement Student: Simona Koleva, IBM, *(Highly Commended: James Lampkin, NHS South East London CCG)*

Best Intern: Georgia Coombs, Yoello

Best Student Contribution to a Small to Medium-sized Employer: Rakshanda Khaunte, BLive

Best Brand Ambassador: Poppy Davenport, CMS

Best University Society: Headucate, University of East Anglia

Employer winners:

Best Recruitment Marketing Campaign: Accenture (In partnership with ThirtyThree), *(Highly Commended: Linklaters)*

Best Virtual Internship: NatWest

Best Diversity Initiative: Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Best Development Programme: IBM

Best Small to Medium-sized Employer: TG Consulting

Best Medium-sized Scheme 2022-2023: CityFibre

Best Student Employer 2022-2023: L'Oréal

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CPD Corner

Nicola Bullivant-Parrish, Learning and Development Advisor



It's all about the green shoots in this edition's CPD Corner. Yes, those little green fingertips of hope and light that are currently sprouting from the ground, poking their way through the soil and grass. It is always a thrill to see the first signs of spring life – the daffodils and the crocuses, bringing a much-needed burst of colour to a rather drab palette after a long (really long!) winter. They're so welcomed. I spent a day in the autumn planting bulbs, bent double, cold and damp, hauling heavy bags of compost and even heavier tubs and planters around the garden. I knew every minute was being well spent though as, when they eventually bloom into life and flower, they'll make a beautiful, vibrant display.

From a learning and development perspective, I can see similarities here. Putting aside time now to invest in your future self can sometimes feel hard going – you need to carve out that time, make sure you don't get double booked, perhaps ask a colleague's support, secure the budget and so on. And yet you (and most likely your students, your team, and other stakeholders too) will reap the rewards of that and will feel the benefit – maybe now or sometime in the future. Here at ASET, there are plentiful opportunities to give your CPD a boost. Our workshop programme is a natural starting point for that activity, and I'd also highly recommend the Insights series too (these being shorter bursts of training in highly complementary topics). For those fairly new to your roles/placements/WBL, our Coffee and Chat sessions will give you a brilliant means by which to meet others like you i.e., quite newly appointed to your role and to connect. I'll leave you with a final #ASETTopTip – planning your CPD is always better with a cuppa and a biscuit 😊

Nicola

ASET Resources

Don't forget we are here to support you. Make the most of your membership:

Join us on **LinkedIn** – The Placement and Employability Professionals Group 1200 + members and growing daily. Request to join here <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1929302/>



Follow us **Twitter** @ASETOnline

Use your **ASET Good Practice Guides**

[ASET Good Practice Guide for Work based and Placement Learning in Higher Education](#) and [TOOLKIT ASET Good Practice Guide for Managing the Health, Safety and Welfare for Student Placements \(2021\)](#):
[ASET Good Practice Guide for Supporting Students with Disabilities on Placement](#) and [TOOLKIT ASET Good Practice Guide to Successful Work Based Learning for Apprenticeships in Higher Education](#)

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Know about the **ASET Viewpoints**

- 1 - [Paid and Unpaid Placements](#)
- 2 - [The Benefits of Placement](#)
- 3 - [HEA Recognition](#)
- 4 - [Alumni Mentoring](#)
- 5 - [The Consumer Rights Act and the Competition and Markets Authority](#)
- 6 - [Making Effective Placement Visits](#)
- 7 - [Insurance and visas for International Placements](#)
- 8 - [Student Engagement](#)
- 9 - [Student Resilience](#)
- 10 - [Degree Apprenticeships](#)
- 11 - [Troubleshooting for Placements – Everyday Troubleshooting](#)
- 12 - [Troubleshooting for Placements – Crisis Management](#)
- 13 - [The impact of budget cuts and steps to mitigate](#)
- 14 - [Making the most of technology to adapt to changes in work and placement opportunities](#)

And Finally

The next ASET members' e-Bulletin will be issued w/c 23rd May. Please forward your news/copy to aset@asetonline.org

Debbie Siva-Jothy

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