

Practice and Research Network (PRN) Spring Showcase

Online 12th March 2025

**Editors: Dr Helen Hooper
Debbie Siva-Jothy**

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FOREWORD

The Practice and Research Network (PRN) Showcase is an annual event organised by the ASET Research Group in Spring. Our aim is to disseminate evidence-based practice and support the growth of an active research practitioner network. We welcome contributions at any stage of development, from work in progress to fully evaluated projects, across all disciplines, at operational or strategic level, and covering any aspect of work based or experiential learning (including apprenticeships and volunteering).

The PRN Spring Showcase is a super informative and fast-paced session during which eight speakers rise to the challenge of providing insight into their research or practice with *just 5 minutes and 3 slides!* The abstracts and slides from each presentation, provide a good overview of the breadth and depth of research and practice shared.

This year's event took place on 12th March, and I'd like to thank each of the Presenters for making it such a successful and informative event. I was impressed and inspired in equal measure by the innovative practice and research being shared across our ASET community, and I hope the presentations below, will inform your own research, introduce new ways of working you can incorporate into your own practice, and highlight potential collaborators.

ASET is committed to supporting the growth of a strong community around research practitioners and to providing a collegiate and supportive space for you to share your work, test out your ideas and get constructive feedback and advice from peers. The range of ASET research support (including research and practice development funding), projects occurring across the ASET community, and additional dissemination and networking opportunities can be accessed from the ASET website [research pages](#). Further details are also available in the Closing Remarks.

**Dr Helen Hooper, Northumbria University
ASET Trustee and Research Group Lead**

2025 Spring Research Showcase Programme



11:00 am Open and Welcome
Dr Helen Hooper, ASET Trustee, *Northumbria University*

Research Showcases

1. From Anecdote to Analysis: Evidencing the 'Added Value' and impact of Placements on Student Performance
Philip Oliver, Assistant Professor / Senior Lecturer, *Northumbria University*
2. Enhancing Employability in Chemical Sciences: Student Perspectives on Career Support and Inclusion
(Julietta) Litka Milian, Associate Professor, *Durham University*
3. Inclusive Event Support
Cara Walker and Kirsty Verigotta, Placement Engagement Coordinators, *Manchester Metropolitan University*
4. The Characteristics of Bioscience Students who Consider taking a Placement Year
Beth Lawry, Lecturer and placement lead, *Newcastle University*

11:30am Q&A
 11:45 BREAK – 15 minutes

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Programme contd.



Research Showcases

5. The impact of Experiential Learning at Northumbria on students' Career Readiness
Lesley Wilson, Experiential Learning Project Lead and **Daniel Lewis**, Employability Partnerships Advisor, Graduate Futures, *Northumbria University*
6. Adopting a collaborative approach to embed Employability into the curriculum through Work Integrated Learning
Graham Whyborn, Employer-Led Projects Manager, *Nottingham Trent University*
7. What were you wearing? Sexual and gender-based misconduct in international internships
Julie Ann Andreshak, Chief Academic Officer & Provost, *FIE: Foundation for International Education*
8. Developing Professional Skills Through Peer Review Learning
Helen Costello, Assistant Professor (Teaching) & Faculty Lead for Science, (DCAD) *Durham University*

12:30 Q&A
 12:45 Closing reflections

1. From Anecdote to Analysis: Evidencing the 'Added Value' and impact of Placements on Student Performance

Philip Oliver and Simon Lillystone
 Northumbria University
Philip.Oliver@northumbria.ac.uk

Abstract

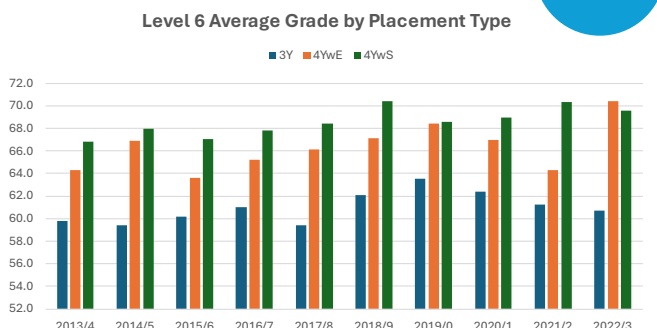
Placements are often hailed as transformative experiences for students, fostering skills development, professional maturity, and employability. But how much do they truly impact academic performance? And does every student experience the same benefits? The aim of the research was to move beyond anecdotal claims to uncover evidence of the effects of placements on student performance. Drawing on 10 years of business school student data (2013–2023), this research examines the relationship between placement experiences, final-year grades, and whether factors such as widening participation levels and university entry points have any influence. This session will present key findings, challenge common assumptions, and provide evidence to back the oft-cited claim that placements can improve final-year performance by a full degree classification. Key Highlights: > Quantitative analysis of student performance data: the real impact of placements > Insights into whether widening participation and entry points influence outcomes > Preview of upcoming qualitative studies on student and employer reflections on placements, aiming to shape future placement marketing and pre-placement teaching

Presentation - 3 slides

Student performance data: the real impact of placements

Student Numbers by Study Mode and Year

	Total Records Analysed	No Year Out	Placement Year	Exchange Year
2013/4	483	319	162	2
2014/5	547	276	265	6
2015/6	670	476	188	6
2016/7	716	449	259	8
2017/8	736	407	206	123
2018/9	590	350	160	80
2019/0	669	353	222	94
2020/1	782	464	236	82
2021/2	666	513	132	21
2022/3	686	476	162	48
Total	6545	4083	1992	470
		62.4%	30.4%	7.2%



Years	Differences		
	4YwS-3Y	4YwE-3Y	4YwS-4YwE
2013/4	7.0	4.5	2.5
2014/5	8.5	7.4	1.1
2015/6	6.8	3.4	3.4
2016/7	6.8	4.2	2.6
2017/8	9.0	6.7	2.3
2018/9	8.3	5.0	3.3
2019/0	5.1	4.9	0.2
2020/1	6.6	4.6	2.0
2021/2	9.1	3.1	6.1
2022/3	8.8	9.6	-0.8
Avg	7.6	5.3	2.3
Std	1.3	1.9	1.8

- The analysis of L6 averages shows that 4YwS students outperform 3Y students by 7.6% whilst 4YwE students outperform them by 5.3%
- This suggests that an experiential year in addition to the core 3Y degree adds value to the final degree classification
- The difference in average between 4YwS and 4YwE students, whilst small, is positive across 9 of the 10 years

'From Anecdote to Analysis' Dr Philip Oliver & Dr Simon Lillystone

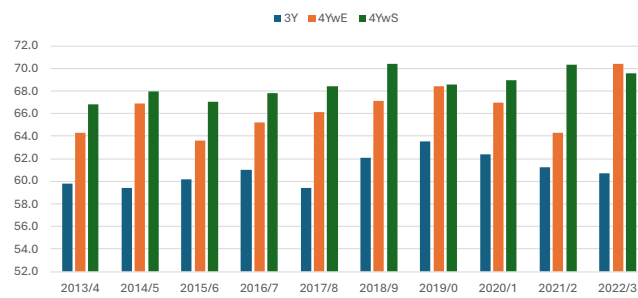
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Level 6 Average Grade by Placement Type



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*From Anecdote to Analysis' Dr Philip Oliver & Dr Simon Lillystone

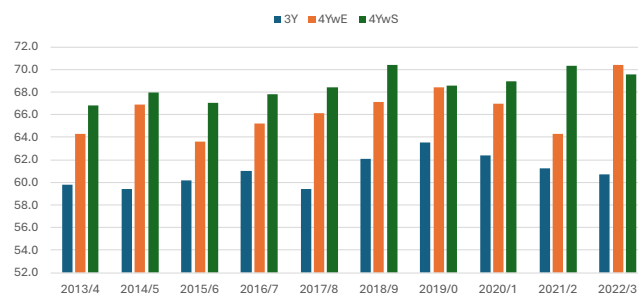
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*From Anecdote to Analysis' Dr Philip Oliver & Dr Simon Lillystone

2. Enhancing Employability in Chemical Sciences: Student Perspectives on Career Support and Inclusion

(Julieta) Litka Milian

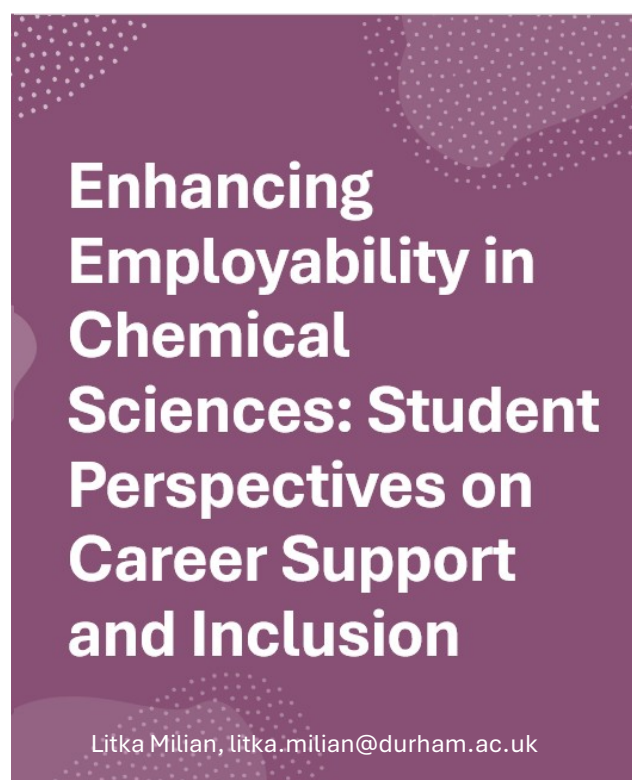
Durham University

Litka.milian@durham.ac.uk

Abstract

This study examines university chemistry students' perspectives on career development and future plans, focusing on differences in career experiences between underrepresented ethnic groups and white students. Through interviews, it explores the challenges, opportunities, and expectations students face as they prepare for professional careers. Key areas include perceptions of career support services, the impact of work-based learning, barriers to access, and personal career planning strategies. Findings highlight the vital role of internships and placements in shaping career goals and employability. However, disparities exist in career development and support, particularly for underrepresented students. The study underscores the need for tailored programs to promote diversity and inclusion in the field. This comparative approach provides deeper insights into the barriers and opportunities faced by different student groups. Ultimately, the research contributes to the understanding of student career development and offers recommendations for improving inclusive career outcomes in higher education and the chemical industry.

Presentation - 3 slides



- **Aim:** Investigate career perspectives and experience differences between underrepresented ethnic groups and white students
- **Methodology:** interviews with chemistry students
- **Key Areas:**
 - Career support services perceptions
 - Work-based learning impact
 - Access barriers
 - Career planning strategies

Key Findings



WORK-BASED
LEARNING CRUCIAL
FOR CAREER GOALS
AND EMPLOYABILITY



DISPARITIES IN
CAREER
DEVELOPMENT AND
SUPPORT FOR
UNDERREPRESENTED
STUDENTS



VARYING
PERCEPTIONS OF
CAREER SUPPORT
SERVICES



OBSTACLES FOR
UNDERREPRESENTED
ETHNIC GROUPS(?)

Implications

Need	Enhance	Increase	Strengthen
Need for tailored programs promoting diversity and inclusion	Enhance inclusive career services	Increase work-based learning access for all students	Strengthen university-industry partnerships


3. Inclusive Event Support

Car Walker and Kirsty Verigotta
 Manchester Metropolitan University
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K.Verigotta@mmu.ac.uk

Abstract


On Wednesday 5 February we ran our annual Place to Be placements fair, with employers coming onto campus to speak to students about their placement roles. To ensure the event was inclusive, we developed an inclusive event support package ahead of and on the day for disabled and neurodivergent students, or generally for students who may find a traditional 'careers fair' overwhelming. Pre-event, we offered two 'Network with Confidence' sessions, where Peer Guides (peers with lived experience) provided quality peer-to-peer advice on what the fair involves, how to talk to stands, and ask any questions. On the day, attendees could book a 15-minute group introduction to the fair, where a Peer Guide would accompany them around the fair, to help them feel familiar and navigate the space. Throughout the day we had a wellbeing/sensory room which all attendees could access, to take time out from the main event. There were mindful activities and refreshments on offer, alongside staff support. This offer was originally developed in response to student feedback from our Student Advisory Board, collaborating with Placements colleagues who were developing their inclusive practice. This support has been positively received and will be replicated at future Careers events.

Presentation - 3 slides

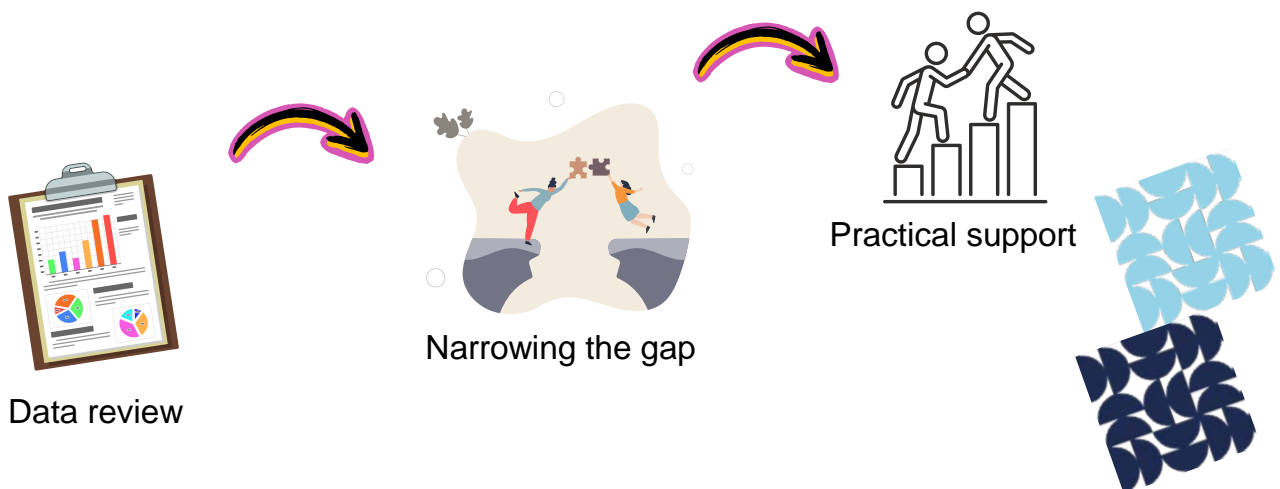


Inclusive Event Support (IES)

Place to Be - placement fair



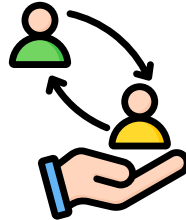
Why did we run the IES pilot?



What was included in the IES package?



Pre-event networking skills sessions



Small Group Introductions



Quiet breakout room



4. The Characteristics of Bioscience Students who Consider taking a Placement Year

Beth Lawry
 Newcastle University
Beth.Lawry@newcastle.ac.uk

Abstract

This study examines confidence and independence in first-year biosciences students interested in a placement year versus those who are not. A survey with four question sets—demographics, mental toughness, self-esteem, and independence of learning—was completed by 204 students, including 25 international students and 46 from the PARTNERS scheme (reduced grade entry).

Students uninterested in a placement year had significantly lower self-esteem and independence of learning scores than those interested, though no difference was found in mental toughness. While PARTNERS students did not score lower than non-PARTNERS students in the interested in a placement year "yes" or "no" groups, they scored significantly lower in the "unsure" category, suggesting a need for targeted support.

Future work includes deeper demographic analysis and implementing interventions, such as emphasising PARTNERS students in placement talks and collaborating with psychology teams to boost PARTNERS students' self-esteem.

Presentation - 3 slides

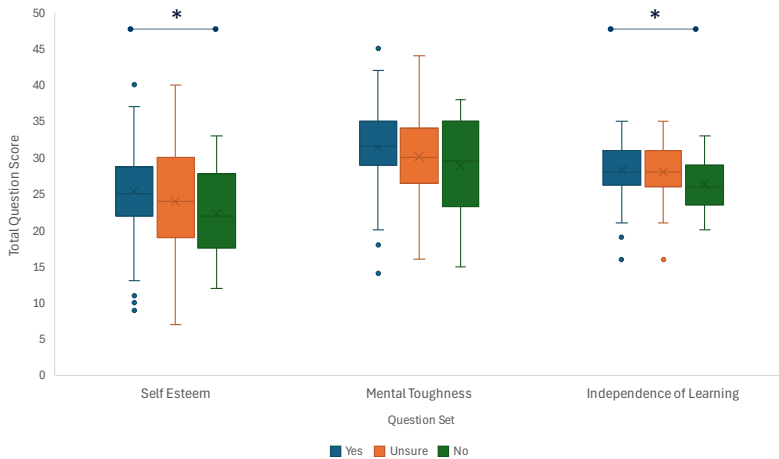


The Characteristics of Biosciences Students who Consider Taking a Placement Year

- Previous project -> student demographics impacts placement uptake
- Inspiration ([Clair-Thompson and Chivers 2019](#))
- Pilot work -> confidence and independence
- Survey
 - 10 Q on Mental Toughness (some Qs are reversed) ([Papageorgiou](#))
 - 10 Q on Self Esteem (some Qs are reversed) ([Rosenberg](#))
 - 7 Q on Independence of Learning ([Macaskill](#))
- 204 stage 1 respondents
 - No gender data
 - 46 PARTNERS
 - 25 International

} Confidence

Students interest in placements and their average characteristic set scores



Students interested in a placement year scored significantly higher than those who are not

- Self esteem
- Independence of Learning

No SD for mental toughness scores

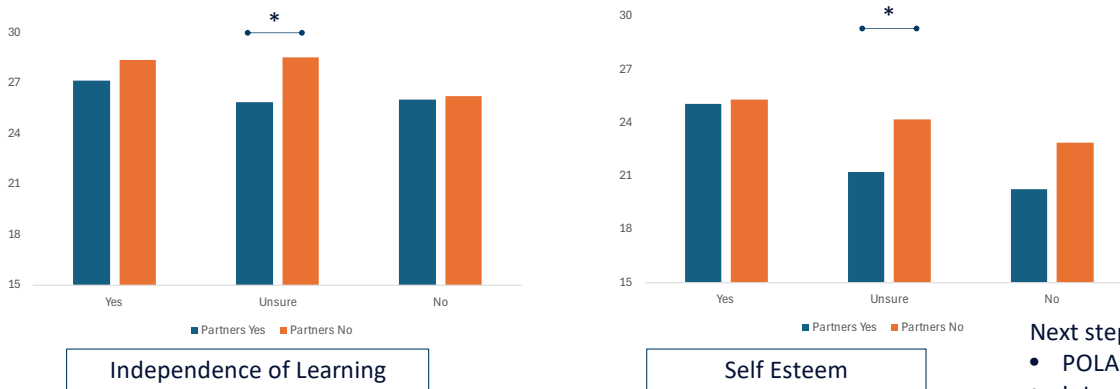
* P = <0.05 (One Way ANOVA)

Dr Beth Lawry beth.lawry@ncl.ac.uk

From Newcastle. For the world.

PARTNERS Students

	Placement interest ratios		
	Yes	Unsure	No
PARTNERS YES	63.04348	28.26087	8.695652
PARTNERS NO	58.95522	29.85075	11.19403



Next steps:

- POLAR scores
- International v Home
- Intervention for unsure
- Survey stage 2 students

Score for Placement Interest, PARTNERS yes V no * P = <0.05 (One Way ANOVA)

Dr Beth Lawry beth.lawry@ncl.ac.uk

From Newcastle. For the world.

5. The impact of Experiential Learning at Northumbria on students' Career Readiness

Lesley Wilson and Daniel Lewis
Northumbria University
lesley.wilson@northumbria.ac.uk

Abstract

Our project examines the impact of Experiential Learning (EL) at Northumbria on students' Career Readiness (CR), with a particular focus on reducing the Graduate Outcomes (GO) gap between widening participation (WP) and non-WP students. We aim to identify the most effective EL approaches for building skills and social capital among WP students, with a view to enhancing their graduate prospects and informing institutional policy around EL approaches. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, utilising both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Quantitative analysis involves examining pre-existing CR survey data, comparing WP and non-WP student outcomes before and after EL engagement, and evaluating the impact of different EL types such as placements, live projects, and clinics. Qualitative analysis will include focus groups with students and staff, a review of EL-focused module descriptors, and understanding the skills and social capital developed within EL activities. Findings will provide insights for curriculum design, contribute to institutional strategic approaches to Experiential Learning, and support future Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submissions, ultimately enhancing EL opportunities at Northumbria and outcomes for our WP students.

Presentation - 3 slides



Career Readiness and the University Strategy



Every on-campus undergraduate student will benefit from experiential learning as part of their studies, enhancing their post-university prospects by helping to build skills and social capital.

For 2 of our 3 strategic ambitions, long term measures of success use Graduate Outcomes survey data.

Progress measures:

- Proportion of students reporting they are 'career ready' at L6 enrolment.
- Increase % of students from low participation backgrounds reporting they are 'career ready'.

Our research question: Can Experiential Learning contribute to improving the career readiness of Northumbria students, and particularly our widening participation students?

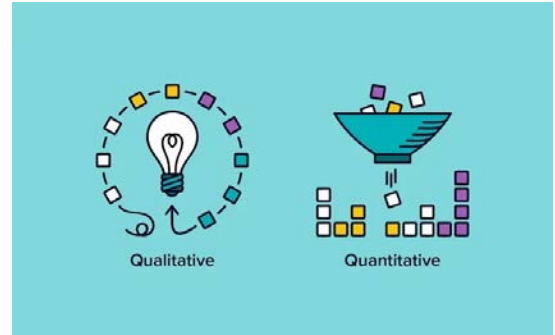
Aim to identify the most effective experiential learning approaches at Northumbria for building skills and social capital among our students.





What We're Actually Doing...

- Quantitative/qualitative data collection and analysis
- CR survey embedded into key EL-focused modules at different levels
- Measures of Career Readiness taken before/after- at Levels 4/5, follow-up via enrolment in the next academic year; with L6 via internal congregations survey
- Qualitative impact questions included in follow up survey. Focus groups to follow with students and staff to gain greater qualitative insight into impact
- Three-year project – view to understanding impact on GO by end
- Aim to understand impact on WP students, the wider cohort and of different types of EL across the University
- From a careers perspective, also interested in general movement of students between CR ‘stages’ and why this is happening



Survey Approach & Initial Findings

Embedded in a range of different core and optional experiential learning modules this academic year as a pilot, including activities such as live projects, clinics, study abroad and yearlong placements.

Example Initial findings – CIS Module

- CIS EL module is a new, whole department module for 24/25 academic year
- 90+% of students in Decide/Plan for CIS at L5 enrolment CR survey
- Approx. 55% of CIS students have seen no 'progression' in CR from L5 to L6 in previous academic years
- Cohort has traditionally 'lagged' behind other L5 cohorts within the department

Career Readiness Changes – In-Year

At enrolment	At start of module
32% - Decide	19% Decide
60% – Plan	68% Plan
7% - Compete	10% Compete
1% - Achieve	3% Achieve

As part of this module, we are conducting some research to understand its impact on your Career Readiness. Information about your Career Readiness is collected at the start of each academic year and is used to help develop careers and employability resources. More information about the research can be found in the attached documents

Please select the statement that best describes your current Career Readiness. By responding to this statement, you confirm your willingness to participate in the study.

Question 1

Please select the statement that best describes your current Career Readiness.

I am not ready to start thinking about my career yet

I have no career ideas yet but want to start thinking

I would like to consider career options not directly related to my degree programme

I have a career in mind and intend to gain relevant work experience

I have some ideas about my career and am ready to start planning

I know what I want to do but not sure how to get there

I am ready to apply for further study

I am ready to apply for graduate level/professional opportunities

I have been applying for opportunities and have not been successful

I have a job, further study or my own business plan confirmed

Question 2

What have you learned through this module, particularly from the practical activities, real-world projects, or hands-on experiences, that you feel has impacted your career readiness? This might include:

- Skills you have developed through these activities or experiences.
- New knowledge you have gained by applying concepts in real-world or practical contexts.
- If you feel there has been no impact, please describe why this might be.

Students can use the editor to answer

Question 3

To what extent has this module, through its practical activities/real world projects/hands-on experiences, had more or less impact on your career readiness than more theory or knowledge-based modules on your degree?

Much Less Impact 1 2 3 4 5 Much More Impact

6. Adopting a collaborative approach to embed Employability into the curriculum through Work Integrated Learning

Graham Whyborn

Nottingham Trent University

Graham.Whyborn@ntu.ac.uk

Abstract

This presentation will focus on how Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is embedded into Level 6 English at Nottingham Trent University to enable students the opportunity to explore potential career options available to them whilst challenging both their own and societies perceptions of what careers an English student can pursue. This project is part of a scaffolded offer that follows on from other in levels 4 and 5. The employer-led projects are undertaken in term 1 of their final year and provide an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge of what they have learnt in the classroom into the workplace. Working in small groups they adopt individual roles to reflect the workplace whilst responding to the employer's initial brief. At the end of the project students will present their work and findings at a showcase event attended by participating employers, academics, employability colleagues and alumni. The Employer-Led projects reflect a collaborative approach with academics, both employer facing and student facing members of the employability team and alumni coming together to deliver personalised projects that reflect both the students and the Graduate labour market needs.

Presentation - 3 slides

An overview of WorkLike experience at NTU through Level 6 English

- Each UG course at Nottingham Trent University has 240 hours Work –Like Experience or Work Integrated Learning embedded into the curriculum.
- Level 6 English Students work on employer led projects that challenge both the perceptions of what they and society believe they can do.
- Students work in small groups and allocate themselves roles over 12 weeks in Term 1
- Many students have part time jobs, so value time allocated to undertake experience.
- Adopt a personalised approach to enable students to work on the projects that reflect their interests and career aims
- At end of project students present work at a showcase event in front of employers



Example of Student projects

- *A series of podcasts for a group of GP Surgeries*
- *Creating and designing a children's book for a publishing house.*
- *A Tik-Tok campaign for PFK Smith Cooper Systems.*
- *Research into language and communication at Hardwick Hall.*
- *Researching the history of Nottingham Rowing Club and providing a voice for rowers of all ages.*



Adopting a collaborative approach

- Academic created the module “The English Graduate Portfolio” to explore career options available to English Students.
- Academic meets with Employer-Led Projects Officer to identify potential employers that reflect students' requirements e.g. this year many students wanted to work in publishing.
- Employer-Led Projects sources appropriate employers and links with Alumni Relations Executive
- Career Development Learning is embedded around projects through Careers Coach delivering post project reflection session and exclusive 1-1 careers appointments.
- Students also access online employability resources to develop CV and undertake interview support.
- Showcase event attended by employers, academics, employability colleagues and Alumni who all provide feedback to students.



7. What were you wearing? Sexual and gender-based misconduct in international internships

Julie Ann Andreshak

FIE: Foundation for International Education

jandreshak@fir.org.uk

Abstract

Sexual and gender-based misconduct has received a great deal of attention in recent years in numerous spaces such as higher education and the workplace. And, although study abroad (including the Forum Standards) recognizes that this is a topic that needs addressing in international education as well – the cross-roads of ‘workplace’ and ‘study abroad’, i.e. the international internship – has failed to garner the same attention in scholarship and practice. Hence, this session aims to fill that gap. Irrespective of our specific roles in international education, the health and safety of participants is our number one priority. Students also have a responsibility to look after their health and safety but require the tools and guidance to do so. Objectives: 1. To raise awareness about the prevalence and impact of sexual and gender-based misconduct involving interns. 2. To analyse the specific vulnerabilities and challenges faced by interns in unfamiliar cultural and organizational environments. 3. To present best practices for preventing and addressing sexual and gender-based misconduct within workplaces in study abroad programmes. 4. To encourage collaboration among universities, programme providers, employers and students in developing comprehensive policies and support systems.

Presentation - 3 slides

What were you wearing? Sexual and gender -based misconduct in international internships

Dr. Julie Ann Andreshak Chief Academic Officer & Provost, FIE

Importance: Sexual and gender-based misconduct in international internships is drawing more attention.

Relevance Increasing awareness and preparedness among institutions and students is vital.

Objective: We must equip stakeholders with knowledge and tools to handle misconduct effectively.

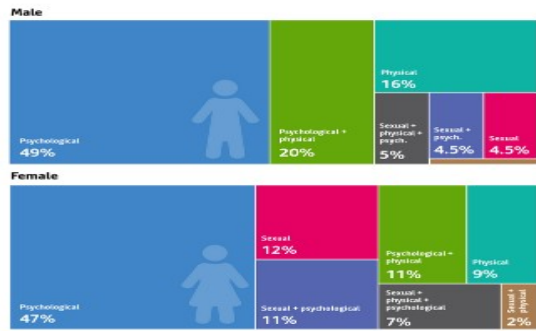
Definition: Sexual and gender-based harassment includes verbal, nonverbal, and physical acts, creating a hostile environment.

How prepared is your institution to deal with these cases?



Experience of different forms of violence and harassment in the workplace, by gender (proportion of those who reported any experience).

Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical / psychological / sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?



<https://wip.lfoundation.org.uk/aboutthe-lloyds-registerfoundation-world-risk-poll/>

Three in five (58%) women and almost two-thirds (62%) of women aged between 25 and 34 say they have experienced sexual harassment, bullying or verbal abuse at work (TUC, 2023)

Background & Literature

- 2018 University of Canberra: overseas students are at triple the risk of being to be sexually assaulted than domestic students on campus. They are also a third less likely to know about the university's sexual assault policy (Ross, 2018).
- In a recent study of hospitality interns, widespread sexist and sexual hostility was found. The majority of respondents said they were not informed what they may encounter during their internship nor given training by the internship coordinator or employer on what to do if harassed (Laopa & Gong, 2020).
- Of female students in sport management internship, 66% cited that they experienced some type of sexual harassment during the internship. (Harden et al, 2021).
- Cultural relativism: 'Cultural beliefs and values comprise key foundational elements underlying what will or will not be perceived as sexual harassment,' (Zimbardo, 2007, p 1317)
- Rates of reporting lower in certain places, e.g. South America and Asia and cultural views on male-female relationships may play a part
- Victim-blaming: certain cultural groups are less likely to report harassment as they feel they would be blamed for acting or dressing inappropriately as the cause of the harassment. (Zimbardo, 2007; Thomas, 2024).
- The work of Hofstede and Triandis in relation to cultural dimensions/categories is useful in understanding how misconduct is defined and perceived (Zimbardo, 2007)

Pitfalls of the Overseas Environment

- Assumptions and misunderstandings about what is going on around us and other people's behaviours (cultural knowledge)
- Lack of knowledge of how to get help or support when it's needed, or of legal parameters (practical knowledge).
- Lack of support network (importance of the local study abroad staff)
- Language barriers
- Feeling of powerlessness/power dynamic in the workplace
- Age and life and work experience a factor
- Doubting report will be taken seriously
- Fear of retribution
- Feeling marginal and vulnerable
- Power dynamic is great between intern and everyone else in the workplace
- Add to that alcohol...

(Bowman & Lipp, 2000; Pedersen et al, 2020; Thomas et al, 2024)

Call to Action

- Interns: 'Ambiguous identity as not - students and not-employees' (Bowman & Lipp, 2000, p 100)
- Preparation:
 - Share relevant university (and other) contacts and resources during orientation.
 - Provide bystander intervention training.
- During Program:
 - On-site orientation on cultural norms and legal issues.
 - Mid-term evaluations for feedback.
- Post-Program:
 - Program evaluation and reentry support.
 - Document and review incidents to improve processes.



8. Developing Professional Skills Through Peer Review Learning

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Abstract

This session explores a collaborative initiative between Durham University's Chemistry Department and Academic Skills Centre, designed to integrate learning principles into the academic curriculum. The focus is on enhancing first-year students' essay writing and peer review skills, which are crucial for their future professional development in STEM fields.

This will discuss the implementation of a formative peer review process that aims to develop critical reading and writing skills, foster a research-oriented mindset, and improve understanding of assessment criteria. These skills are directly transferable to work-based learning scenarios and future placements in scientific research environments.

The presentation addresses key challenges identified through student feedback, including lack of perceived value, confidence issues, and unfamiliarity with marking criteria. This will outline strategies to overcome these challenges, such as explicit instruction on the benefits of peer review in professional settings, scaffolded training, collaborative criteria development reflecting industry standards, and anonymous review processes similar to those used in scientific publishing.

This activity can create a culture that values peer review, enhances student confidence, and prepares students for collaborative scientific research in both academic and industrial contexts.

This initiative bridges the gap between academic study and professional practice, equipping students with skills that are highly valued in STEM-related industries and research institutions.

Presentation - 3 slides

Developing Professional Skills Through Peer Review Learning

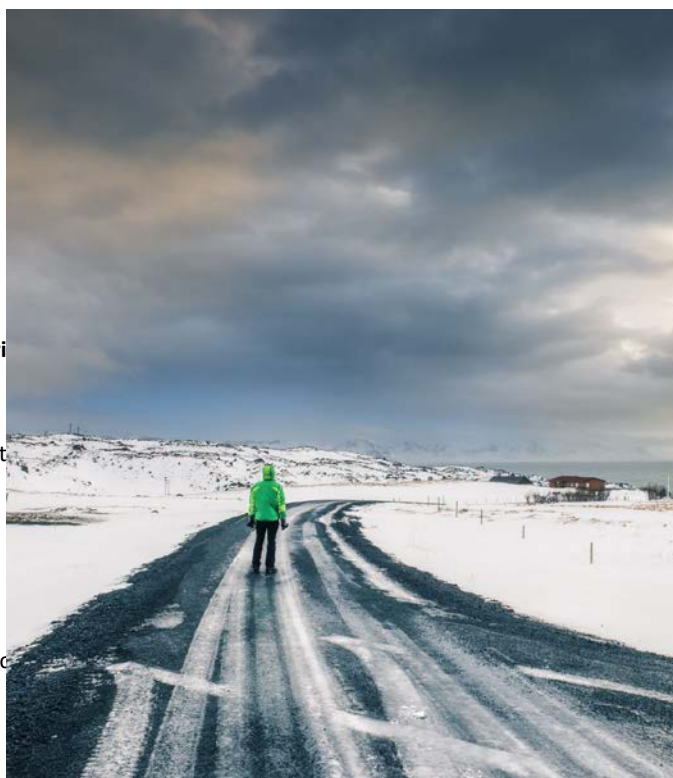
Helen Costello, Durham University

Study Overview

1. Essay Writing: 700-word essay '**Why do we use salt to grit roads in winter-time?**'

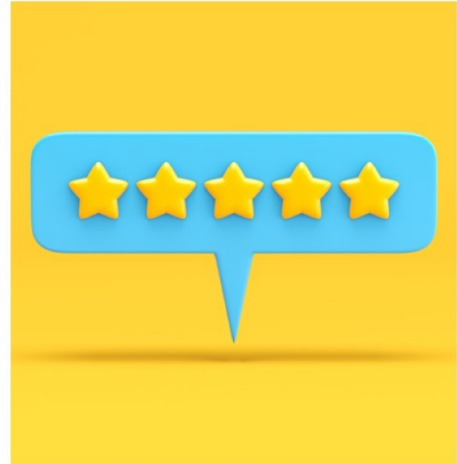
Timeline:

1. One-hour Academic Skills Centre (ASC) input – essay writing
2. Students complete essay to deadline
3. Peer assessment process
 - Randomly assigned
 - Anonymous assessment process
 - Marking criteria
4. Two -hour ASC feedback workshop –global essay feedback & feedback on quality of student feedback



Key Findings - Benefits

- Improved essay quality
- Enhanced critical thinking skills
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Development of self-assessment skills
- Preparation for future academic and professional activities
- Non-Judgmental feedback environment



Feedback Samples from Students

1. There was no referencing within the essay and figure 2 was mentioned in the essay but not actually included further down.
2. There weren't any references in the text so I can't see where each article has influenced your writing. It might be a good idea to include this next time to prevent any plagiarism issues.
3. Use of some diagrams or figures in the explanation about freezing point depression or formation of hydrogen bonds and lattice structure might be useful just to help further explain .
4. The end felt a little rushed with CaCl₂ being introduced as another option and then the conclusion being immediately after. It would have been interesting to see CaCl₂ being introduced in the introduction and then an evaluation of which salt is better throughout the essay. I can see that this is sort of what you were doing in paragraph four, but it was never fully resolved as to which one was, in your opinion, better.

CLOSING REMARKS

I would like to reiterate thanks to each of the presenters for making the ASET 2025 Spring Showcase such a success! I remain impressed by the time management skills of presenters. With just 3 slides in 5 minutes, each presentation distils; the rationale for the work, main methodology and key findings, meaning a lot of information is covered in a relatively short meeting!

The titles of the presentations this year somewhat obscure the common research themes of developing data driven and inclusive practice initiatives, running throughout this year's Showcase. The work presented included projects focussed on data analysis to identify and remove barriers to engagement for persistently under-represented groups, including enhancing opportunities embedded within the curriculum. We also enjoyed the opportunity to gain insight into work at a range of stages of development.

Philip Oliver discussed key findings from the statistical analysis of a 10-year degree-outcomes data set compiled from Business School students. The work was undertaken with his colleague **Simon Lillystone**. The aim of the project was to determine the evidential basis of the oft-cited claim that *a placement year can improve final-year performance by a full degree classification*. A systematic analysis of the final year average marks of students who had undertaken placement, or international study years, was compared with those who had progressed directly into the final year of their degree programme. To explore potential student self-selection bias the data was analysed by POLAR4 Participation in HE postcode and entry tariff points to determine whether an improved final year performance associated with a placement year was also associated with students from high participation in HE backgrounds and/or with good A levels (or equivalent). In short, the analysis demonstrated that both a placement year and a study abroad year resulted in a significant positive improvement in final year performance and that the improvement in performance is independent of a Widening Participation (WP) background. This project highlights scope for more quantitative research to establish a high quality evidence base for the impacts of WBPL.

Phil and Simon's conclusion emphasises the relevance of the work of **Beth Lawry, Litka Milian, and Cara Walker and Kirsty Verigotta**. Beth and Litka reported on projects focussed on identifying barriers to engagement in WBPL opportunities, especially for students from WP backgrounds and under-represented groups. Findings from both Beth and Litka's research suggest targeted support would enhance inclusion. **Cara and Kirsty** shared their experience surrounding developing targeted support for students with a neurodivergent condition or disability, to attend and engage with careers fairs events.

Beth's research focusses on barriers to engagement in a placement year in biosciences, including students entering from a PARTNERS scheme (a reduced grade entry scheme for students from WP backgrounds). Beth discussed findings from a survey of 205 first year students, including 25 international students and 46 from the PARTNERS scheme. Data analysis demonstrated students uninterested in a placement year had significantly lower self-esteem and independence of learning scores than those interested and highlighted both a need and a focus for the development of targeted support for PARTNERS students. **Litka's** study adopted a qualitative methodology to focus on exploring the career development and readiness experiences of students from ethnic minority groups. Findings highlight the importance of internships alongside perceived disparities in career development and support for underrepresented students and highlights a need for tailored support to enhance inclusive career outcomes.

Cara Walker and Kirsty Verigotta shared their experience of designing and implementing an inclusive event support package for students with a disability, neurodivergent condition, or more generally for students who may find a traditional 'careers fair' overwhelming. Cara and Kirsty developed their support package in response to a student-identified need and given the very positive student feedback they have received; they will roll their support package forward to future Careers events.

Relevant and inclusive learning opportunities embedded within the curriculum was the focus of presentations from **Graham Whyborn, Helen Costello, and Lesley Wilson and Daniel Lewis**.

Graham discussed an established approach to Work Integrated Learning embedded in the final year that enables English programme students to engage with wide-ranging employer led projects. This approach both challenges stereotypes surrounding the careers open to English students alongside providing students with the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge to authentic workplace based projects. **Lesley** and **Daniel's** project is at an earlier stage and is focussed on evaluating impacts of Experiential Learning on students' Career Readiness, with a particular focus on reducing disparities in graduate outcomes for students from WP backgrounds. The aim of this work is to identify the most effective Experiential Learning approaches and provide insights for curriculum design, contribute to institutional Experiential Learning strategy, and support future Teaching Excellence Framework submissions.

Helen presented an initiative which bridges the gap between academic study and professional practice, equipping students with skills that are highly valued in STEM-related industries and research institutions. The approach involves a formative essay peer review and feedback process and embeds professional development principles surrounding writing, understanding assessment criteria, critical reading, peer review and feedback skills into the first year chemistry curriculum. Helen discussed key challenges identified through student feedback, including lack of perceived value and confidence issues and outlined strategies to overcome these issues, such as anonymous review processes similar to those used in scientific publishing.

Julie Ann Andreshak generously shared her specialist knowledge and practice surrounding sexual and gender-based misconduct in international internships - an important, but under-researched area of practice. Given the worrisome data on the prevalence and student impacts of such misconduct that Julie Ann discussed, this is an area of practice we all need to take seriously. Julie Ann's research provides much needed advice and good practice surrounding prevention and addressing sexual and gender-based misconduct within workplaces in study abroad programmes.

I will round off by taking the opportunity to acknowledge the generosity and collegiality of the 55+ attendees at the 2025 Showcase, as speakers were provided with a great range of questions to field, insightful advice and encouraging feedback about their presentations. I would like to encourage both presenters and attendees to consider sharing their work more broadly across the ASET community via a 2025 conference presentation and/or a Community Knowledge Exchange article (more information about both is provided, below).

I look forward to meeting you again at future ASET Research Group events!

**Dr Helen Hooper, Northumbria University
ASET Trustee and Research Group Lead**

ASET offers a range of support, including finding opportunities to get involved with Research into Work based and Placement Learning:

The ASET Annual Conference

The theme for the 2025 ASET [Conference](#) is **Partnerships and Building Skills for the Future** and will focus on the crucial role of partnerships in addressing the rising demand for skills development, both in the UK and globally. The 2025 is at Loughborough University on 02nd-3rd September. Contributions across all disciplines, at operational or strategic level, and covering any aspect of work based or experiential learning (including apprenticeships and volunteering) are welcomed, and there are a range of presentation formats (posters, workshops, and oral presentations). This provides PRN presenters and attendees an excellent opportunity to disseminate their work alongside in person networking- and in a fabulous location!

The published **Conference Proceedings** from previous meetings (including abstracts and slides etc) are available [here](#).

Community Knowledge Exchange articles- do you have something to share across the ASET community?

We welcome presenters and attendees inspired by the 2025 PRN Research Showcase to consider writing a CKE to share their research, practice and specialist knowledge. There is excellent scope for impact, the ASET Community has around 2000 individuals working at HEPs across the UK, republic of Ireland and Overseas.

CKEs are concise written papers authored by ASET Community members on topics related to specialist/ good practice and/or employability research. An overview of [initial CKE articles](#) provides an insight into the range of topics covered. Login to the [Community area](#) to access full articles and author guidelines. CKE submissions are welcomed across the year and will be reviewed at 3 points (6 weeks after the Annual Conference, PRN Spring Showcase and at the end of January).

Funding- ASET Student Bursaries

ASET annually offers competitive funding opportunities for small scale projects in any area of work based or experiential learning.

Two Student Bursary schemes are available annually

- Student Research Bursary
- Geoffrey Copland Practice Development Student Bursary

Research and Practice Development bursaries support you to employ a student/recent graduate from your institution to undertake a paid project (up to 300hrs with a Bursary of £3750 plus an additional £750 to your institution towards costs of attending the ASET Conference to support your student to present their work on your project).

Previously funded Project Reports are provided [here](#) The 2026 Bursaries will be launched at the 2025 ASET conference. Again, we welcome PRN presenters and attendees to start planning a project and an application in 2026!

Published PRN Spring Showcase Reports from previous meetings are published [here](#). We welcome both presenters and attendees to contribute to future Showcase meetings.



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Request to join here: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1929302/>
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