




Careers Skills in the Curriculum and the Employability Agenda

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Career Skills in the Curriculum and the Employability Agenda

- Context: the employability agenda
- Quality Assessment of HE careers provision
- New requirements: Progress Files and Personal Development Planning (PDP)
- Response at University of Edinburgh



Context

- Changes in graduate employment:
 - Supply and demand
 - Change in nature of careers
 - Changes in recruitment
- Formula for success
 - Old $d=c$
 - Recent past $d+ts+we=c$
 - Future $d+ts+we+cps=c$

*[d=degree ts=transferable skills we=work experience
cps=career planning skills c=career(s)]*



What Employers want...

Skills for Graduates in the 21st Century (AGR, 1995)

- Self-reliance skills
 - Self-awareness
 - Coping with uncertainty
 - Matching & decision making
 - Exploring & creating opportunities
 - Transfer skills
 - Political awareness
 - Networking
 - Self-promotion
 - Development focus
 - Negotiation
 - Action planning
 - Self-confidence



What Employers want...(2)

Graduates' Work (Harvey, Moon & Geall, 1997)

- Self-skills, intellectual skills, communication skills, interpersonal and teamworking skills, ability to learn, adaptability, understanding of organisational culture
- *"...people who have highly developed interpersonal skills and multi-layered communication abilities and who can combine these with their higher level intellectual skill are required to help transform organisations to enable them to stay ahead of their competitors."*



Student Needs and Views

- Students need to:
 - Understand the changes in graduate employment and work requirements
 - Start thinking early about career strategy in order to get the most out of time in HE
 - Learn how to make effective use of Careers Service and other resources
- Students' views conditioned by:
 - Financial pressures
 - Academic pressures
 - Societal pressures – including current “vocationalism” – which may put undue emphasis on skills and competencies at the expense of other critical factors in career choice, such as values and interests



The UK Government Response

- Dearing Report (1997): Emphasises need to better facilitate the personal and career development of students in preparation for the rapidly changing world of employment
 - Integrating careers services into academic affairs
 - Developing *Progress Files* and Transcripts
 - Quality assessment of careers provision at each HEI
- Growing utilitarianism and central direction, working through project funding and Funding Councils (e.g. conditions of grant)



CEIG Code Requirements

- 14 Precepts, including
 - a clear, documented and accessible policy for CEIG with statement of institution's objectives and of students' entitlements and responsibilities
 - CEIG provision designed to prepare its students for a successful transition to employment or further study and for effective management of their career thereafter
 - Promote close collaboration with employers
 - Take account of developments in the employment market
 - Account formally and regularly for quality and standards of CEIG provision
- Guidance emphasises integration of CEIG provision across the institution and need for all staff involved to have appropriate skills, training and knowledge
- HEIs to "demonstrate adherence to the precepts by January 2002"



Progress Files: Transcripts and Personal Development Planning

- Transcripts: “a comprehensive and verifiable record of the learning and achievement of an individual learner” to help monitor and reflect on progress – expected by end 2002/03
- At UoE: Registry responsibility, using Student Record system – likely to be 2003/04



Progress Files: PDP

- “a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect on their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development” – operational by 2005/06
- Personal record plus supporting activities
- Responsibility of teaching unit with expert input from Careers Service
- UoE will work towards implementation by 2005/06 but not expect 100% coverage by then



Key Documents

- Code of Practice on Career Education, Information and Guidance (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2001)
- Guidelines for HE Progress Files (QAA/UUK/SCoP, 2001)

Available from the QAA website:

www.qaa.ac.uk



Implications for HEIs

- More explicit skills development in Programme Specification for each HE course
- Development of Transcripts
- Development of Personal Development Planning (including career planning) and Progress Files for each student

All complemented by enhanced Careers Service activity (individual careers guidance, information and practical help, "placement" activities, interdisciplinary skills and career taster courses, support for work experience, Student Employment Service, work with SMEs....)

...and in the context of Quality Assessment and the need for an enhanced input from employers



Managing developments at UoE

- Much Careers Service experience of working with teaching units to develop Personal & Career Development Records – though mostly not integrated with academic activity
- Developed a UoE-wide policy and implementation strategy to meet external requirements but also primarily to meet needs of students and teaching units
- UoE Policy clarifies responsibility for action



University-wide Action

- Update UoE Mission/Strategic Plan, Learning & Teaching Strategy, integrate into Quality Assessment procedures
- Training for academic staff
- Support web-based solutions
- Student Record system to produce Transcripts
- Update prospectus, course descriptions
- Provide framework for PDP developed “to meet the specific needs of students in each subject area and take full account of academic requirements as well as potential career outcomes (whether professional or more general)”.



Headline from the Times Higher
Education Supplement 19.10.01

- **Student Records 'just more red tape'**

- *Report of the reaction of some Nottingham University lecturers' reaction to the introduction of compulsory personal and academic records*



College/Faculty Action

- Policy on CEIG with expert support from Careers Service
- Annual review of CEIG provision – for teaching and learning and quality assessment



Teaching Unit Action

- Nominate member of staff to liaise with Careers Service, brief colleagues
- Work with Careers Service to develop PDP for courses (materials and supporting activities) as fast as possible within resource constraints
- Timetable additional CEIG input
- Provide information on skills development and CEIG provision in *Programme Specification* and other course documentation
- Seek feedback from employers and alumni
- Promote value of work experience
- Focus on what is of real value to students (and teaching units)



Careers Service Action

- Achieve AGCAS Quality Standards
- Provide expert support for development of policy and practice across the UoE
- Produce materials (inc. web-based) to support CEIG in the curriculum
- Facilitate employer input into central and departmental policy and activities; provide labour market feedback; develop links with SMEs and other “non-traditional” employers
- Provide information on work experience opportunities
- Develop work with alumni



Making it happen

- Pressures on academic staff
- Build on existing Careers Service projects and other work in teaching units (e.g., Biology PDR, Medicine)
- Difference between professional/vocational courses and others
- Need to test out what is realistic and feasible in courses less directly related to career outcomes
- Major project in Arts Faculty



Arts Faculty: Career Skills in the Curriculum

- 2 year project, with support (and some funding) from major employers, with seconded academic and additional input from the Careers Service
- Employers: Accenture, J P Morgan, Schroders, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Standard Life, Unilever, Royal Bank of Scotland



Arts Faculty: Career Skills in the Curriculum: Objectives

- Develop strategy for integrating careers skills into the curriculum
- Identify ways to involve employers
- Develop a Progress File to link with Transcripts and explicit statements of skills developed
- Develop “careers” input for courses - career planning, occupational awareness (inc. SMEs and entrepreneurship, work experience, application/interview skills, relating transferable skills development to personal and career development
- Review contributions of academic and careers staff
- Review balance of departmental/Faculty/cross-university “careers” activities
- Identify future academic staff development/training needs
- To plan for continuation after the pilot project



Arts Faculty: Career Skills in the Curriculum: Outcomes (1)

- Career Planning course:
 - Aims:
 - understand process of making career decisions
 - Be able to explain what is important to them in making career decisions
 - Know about the job market for Arts graduates
 - Be able to present themselves positively in writing and at interview
 - Flexible delivery (total 8 hrs + 4hrs independent study)
 - Emphasis on practical exercises, student participation and reflective learning
 - Links with web-based Career Planning Programme which allows each student to record progress



Arts Faculty: Career Skills in the Curriculum: Outcomes (2)

- Career Profiles of UoE Arts Graduates
- Career Skills in the Curriculum booklet: guidance for academic staff on integrating self-evaluation, presentation skills, group work, critical evaluation and negotiation into teaching
- Newsletter and briefing sessions for academic staff
- Involvement of employers on Steering Group and in sessions for staff and students
- Preparation for implementation of UoE policy – the Career Skills programme to be extended across the new College of Humanities and Social Science (and Progress Files across an increasing range of degree programmes across the University)
- Link with University of Queensland



Some final thoughts...

- What brings change in HE?
- Recognise pressures against change
- Is career planning a threat to/contamination of curriculum or a positive development?
- Importance of aligning CEIG development both with institutional mission and objectives and aims of course
- Need to demonstrate value of CEIG and the benefits vs costs
- Real problem of making links between employers and HE – especially for “non-relevant” subjects
- Need to understand the employment market for each HEI’s students (and each course’s) and what employers value about its graduates – and not to be seduced by an over vocational approach
- Essential to base the development of CEIG on the needs of students in context of employer requirements but also recognise the needs of academic departments



Some final thoughts...

- Need to develop a common language and understanding

Arts Project foundation:

