Placement Podcasts
The Employer’s Perspective

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Overview

• Why Podcasts?
• Phase One – Last Year’s Work
• Phase Two – Current Work
• Employer’s View
• Films A and B
• Conclusions and Findings
Why Podcasts?
Strategic Aim A7

‘To produce employable and enterprising graduates’
Placement Take Up Trends

• UK wide trend for decrease in sandwich placement take up since 1990s

• Why?
  – The research base is inconclusive
  – More students living at home?
  – Greater financial pressure?
  – Peer Pressure?
Previous Research

In our 2005 survey students who did placements tended to get:

– Better degrees
– Better jobs
– Better salaries

But we cannot link this directly and say this is solely because of placements.
Previous Research

Placement tutors often say that students come back:

- More mature
- Ready to learn
- Improved context for academic learning
- More determined to do well and get a good job
Phase One
Last Year’s Work
Phase One Podcasts – Student Selection

• Selected enthusiastic students via Jobshop
• Broad cross section
  – Disciplines
  – Ages
  – Genders
  – Ethnicity
  – International
• Included sandwich, professional and short term placements.
Phase One Podcasts - Outcomes

- 15 minute interview per student
- Edited into short individual film
- Composite of placements and learning experiences
- DVD produced
- Used at University Open Days
- Available via website: [www.hud.ac.uk/tqef/placementvideo.html](http://www.hud.ac.uk/tqef/placementvideo.html)
Placement Podcasts: Website

Student Placements at the University of Huddersfield

A short film & 12 individual student profiles produced and funded by TQEF Project 'Student Employability and Good Practice in Placement Provision'

Click on Video to Activate Control - Please Click on Play Button

Individual Experiences:

- Lee tranquil
  - BSc (Hons) Product Design

- Nicola Gater
  - BSc (Hons) Molecular and Cellular Biology

- Hannah Barwell
  - BSc (Honours) Veterinary

- Aled Griffiths
  - BSc (Hons) Medical Biology

- Alex Jeffs
  - BSc Music Technology with Popular Music

- Jennifer Beattie
  - Business

- pots
  - BSc (Hons) Fashion & Textile Design, Management & Marketing

- Andrei Ilozard
  - Community Outreach Worker

- Manos Psaltis
  - LUB (Hons) Law

- James Brown
  - Postgraduate Diploma in Guidance

- Helen James
  - Higher Diploma in Mental Health Nursing

- Helen Aston
  - BSc (Hons) Transport and Logistics
Phase One - Review

- Feedback from internal focus groups
  - Concentrate on sandwich students
  - Tutors to select

- Format
  - Three interviews per student
  - Interview with employer
  - Interview with tutor

- Student’s professional development and growth
Phase Two
This Year’s Work
Why Bother?

- Placement lifecycle
- Generic resources
- Convenient
- Triangular partnership
- Student awareness of employer needs
- Better placement preparation
- Web resource for second phase
Phase Two – What’s Different?

- Three triangular viewpoints: student, employer, university
- Getting employers and students involved
- Placement units input
- Nine employers, 14 students
- Filmed students in autumn term, 2007
- Employers and students - summer, 2008
- Focus on employer’s views
Phase Two – The Employer’s View

• Several employers were placement student’s themselves
• Support ethos
• Commonalities of successful students:
  – Interest in the job
  – Enthusiasm
  – Quick to adapt and become part of the team
Employers

• Don’t expect ‘finished product’
• Develop and train professionals
• Placement Students and graduates – difference?
• Liked real examples at interview
Film A

What Employer’s Want
Benefits to Employers

• Desire to learn, enquire and challenge
• Recent academic knowledge – plus market place developments
• Challenge existing processes and procedures
• Keen to volunteer
• Research projects
• Quick to acquire skills - flexible
Start off by helping at functions
• work independently supported by the team
• supervise agency staff
• independently manage their own small dinner function
• manage bigger numbers – e.g. a conference
• culminating with large events such as weddings.
Team Working

• Quick to become key members
• Hard to replace at end of year

Student Vs Admin Assistant

Student
Genuine interest in company
Initial output levels good
More flexible, happy to move, extra experience

Admin Assistant
Just want a job
Initial output levels good
Covering jobs = more work

3-6 months later a huge difference
Findings - Employer

- Regard students as their workers for a year
- Skills built over year
- Deeper projects
- Shy - > confident
- Working within ‘real’ teams
- Specialist equipment in ‘real-life’
- Widen social circles – e.g. mature colleagues
- Time management
- Career ‘try outs’
Findings - University

• Triangle: student, employer, university
• Long term relationships with university - service to future generations
• Knowledge back to University re business practice
• Linking employers to university for potential
  – Consultancy
  – Knowledge transfer
  – Partnerships
Film B
Skills and Employers
Conclusions and Findings
Conclusions – Phase Two

- Highlight employers perspective
- Students broader appreciation of world of work
- Insights into interviews
- Enthusiasm, positive attitude and desire to learn
- Work skills can be taught
- Genuine interest in job role and company
- Students treated ‘similarly’ to graduates
- Triangle supports all three
Learning Points

• More complicated to set up
• Chose on the basis of companies
  – Local
  – Blue chip
  – Highly specialised
• Impact on students
• Time consuming
• Transcripts typed up to assist editing
• Web resources – ‘access details cards’
Future Work to Complete

- Finals edits of all films so far
- Final interviews with students
- Interviews with tutors
- Loading materials onto web
- Consultation with staff for dissemination and embedding into curriculum
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Web Resources

TQEF Homepage
www.hud.ac.uk/tqef

Placement Podcasts – Phase One
www.hud.ac.uk/tqef/placementvideo.html

Placement Podcasts – Phase two
(Coming soon)