Placement Podcasts: The Employers' Perspective

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Placement Podcasts
The Employer’s Perspective

Lisa Ward and Jane Gaffikin
3rd September, 2008
ASET Annual Conference, Plymouth
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?
University of Huddersfield

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 can not 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
Student Placements at the University of Huddersfield

Placement Podcasts: Website

* a short film of 12 individual student profiles produced and funded by TQEF Project: 'Student Employability and Good Practice in Placement Provision'

Individual Extensions:

- Les Kwana
  - BSc (Hons) Product Design

- Moele Galioli
  - BSc (Hons) Molecular and Cellular Biology

- Hannah Hindley
  - BSc (Hons) Psychology

- Alex Jeffery
  - BSc Music Technology with Popular Music

- Jennifer Hudd__
  - European Business
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
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
Project Progressions – Hospitality Industry

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

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

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
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)