Placement Podcasts
The Employer’s Perspective

Lisa Ward and Jane Gaffikin
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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?
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 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'

*Note Video*

Click on Video to Activate Control - then click on Play Button

Individual Profiles:

- Liza Masood
  - BSc (Hons) Product Design

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

- Hannah Speal
  - BSc (Hons) Veterinary

- Ali Anwar
  - Medical Biology

- Alex Jeffery
  - BSc Music Technology with Popular Music

- Jennifer Cowling
  - European Business

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

- Andrew Hilliard
  - Community Outreach Officer

- Hannah Smith
  - LLB (Hons) Law

- Helen Brown
  - Postgraduate Diploma in Guidance

- Helen Brown
  - Higher Diploma Mental Health Nursing

- Miles Atkinson
  - BSc (Hons) Transport and Logistics

Top of page
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
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Vs</th>
<th>Admin Assistant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genuine interest in company</td>
<td></td>
<td>Just want a job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial output levels good</td>
<td></td>
<td>Initial output levels good</td>
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<tr>
<td>More flexible, happy to move,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Covering jobs = more work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extra experience</td>
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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)