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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
Placement Podcasts: Website

Student Placements at the University of Huddersfield

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

Click on video to activate control - then click on play button

Individual Students:

- Luke Jackson
  - BA (Hons) Fashion and Textile Design
  - Management & Marketing

- Nicola Galbraith
  - BA (Hons) Molecular and Cellular Biology

- Hannah Pennell
  - BA (Hons) Veterinary

- Alix Geldart
  - Medical Biology

- Helen Armit
  - BA (Hons) Technology with Popular Music

- Jennifer Mouat
  - European Business

- Helen Brown
  - BA (Hons) Business Studies

- Helen signal
  - Higher Education: Mental Health Nursing

- Helen Edwards
  - Higher Education: Mental Health Nursing
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**

- 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)