

Caledonian Academy



Learning for the Workplace: Embedding Employability in the Academic Curriculum

A one day employability event for academic staff

13th May 2011

Programme

The **Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum (SHEEF)** is pleased to announce the first in a series of regional workshops for academic staff aimed at showcasing examples of innovative and effective ways of embedding employability in the academic curriculum at subject level.

This one-day event at Glasgow Caledonian University is specifically aimed at practising academics from all subject disciplines who are interested in finding out more about what their colleagues in the sector do to address their students' employability skills within the taught curriculum. The day has been designed to allow participants to both discuss new ideas and share good practice.

Keynote speakers will include Professor Ian Hughes from the University of Leeds, Professor Bruce Wood from the School of Engineering and Computing at Glasgow Caledonian University and Sabine McKinnon, Lecturer in Employability, who manages the Real WoRLD Project.

The day will offer a mixture of keynote presentations during the morning session, and a variety of parallel, interactive workshops in the afternoon.

The call for workshop proposals is now closed and the event is full. See below for the programme of keynotes and workshops. Feedback and results of the event will be published on the Real WoRLD website.

Programme

10.00	Coffee and registration
10.30	Welcome by Professor Mike Mannion, Pro-Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching, Glasgow Caledonian University
10.40 – 11.00	Closing the gap – the Real WoRLD project at Glasgow Caledonian University Sabine McKinnon, Lecturer in Employability, Real WoRLD Project Manager, Caledonian Academy
11.00 – 11.10	Questions and answers
11.10 – 11.30	Implementing employability in the curriculum Professor Ian Hughes, UK Centre for Bioscience, the Higher Education Academy, University of Leeds
11.30 – 11.40	Questions and answers
11.40 – 12 noon	Education and industry: a case of real collaboration Professor Bruce Wood, Professor of Design Innovation, Director, Centre for Creative Industries, Glasgow Caledonian University
12 noon – 12.10	Questions and answers
12.30 - 1.45	Lunch
1.45 - 2.45	Parallel workshops
2.45 – 3.15	Coffee/ Tea
3.15 – 4.00	Plenary

Plenary session speakers (in the order of appearance on the programme)

Mrs. Sabine McKinnon

Sabine McKinnon is responsible for the management and implementation of the Real WoRLD project which is Glasgow Caledonian University's strategic employability initiative. Before that, she worked as a researcher in work-related learning at the University of Glasgow. A graduate of the University of Hamburg her background is in modern languages. She has had a long career as a lecturer in British higher education. She has taught German, European Studies and Intercultural Communication at the Universities of Leicester, Edinburgh, Heriot Watt and Queen Margaret. As Subject Leader for Languages and ERASMUS Co-ordinator at Queen Margaret University she was responsible for the university's language and culture programme as well as European student and staff exchanges.

Professor Ian Hughes

Ian Hughes originally trained as a pharmacist but then discovered pharmacology and has worked as an academic pharmacologist in the UK, Australia and Guyana ever since. Now retired he holds a visiting professor post at the University of Leeds. He was Director or Co-Director of the UK Centre for Bioscience from its inception in 2002 until 2008. Ian has been involved with employability issues through being a student placement co-ordinator for biomedical sciences from 1986, through Enterprise in Higher Education work in the 1990's and involvement with the Higher Education Academy at York. Currently he also works for the Judicial Appointments Commission, the General Osteopathic Council, the General Social Care Council, the Bar Standards Board, the London Deanery, the Richmond Fellowship, Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust and the UK Biobank Ethics and Governance Council.

Professor Bruce Wood

Bruce Wood is a qualified designer with 17 years experience in industry on a national and international scale. Founder of the Centre for Creative Industries at GCU in 2002, he has created Masters programmes in Product Design and Development, Digital Media and more recently, Design Practice and Management. He has supervised numerous Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) projects and his present research activities include economic development through the use of creative industries as a driver for new products and services. Prior to joining GCU he directed a number of large-scale design-led economic development projects resulting in the development of over 200 new products and over 50 new companies. He has won over 30 international design awards and has acted as a jury member for the Design Management Europe 2010 awards.

List of workshops

Workshop 1

Workshop title: **Commercial Projects: Sending Bioscientists into the workplace**

Presenter: Anne Tierney & Mary Tatner (University of Glasgow)

Discipline: Biology

Summary of workshop

This workshop will look at the Commercial Projects scheme within the School of Life Sciences at the University of Glasgow. The scheme has been running since 2006, in its present form. Final year students have the option of taking a Commercial Project as their Honours Project. If they do, they also have to complete a compulsory two-week introduction to business, called "Business & Bioscience".

The workshop will explore the nature of the Commercial Projects, how students cope with the tasks set them, and the issues that exist in setting up such a scheme.

Workshop 2

Workshop title: **'Fit for Work' – two years on**

Presenter: David Quain (Heriot- Watt University)

Discipline: Brewing and Distilling

Summary of workshop

The 'Fit for Work' employability programme focuses on three key elements of employability (i) the 'basics', (ii) skills and tools and (iii) placements.

Presently extra-curricular, 'Fit for Work' is open to all the International Centre for Brewing and Distilling 'community' and is delivered through evening sessions and the VLE. The initial focus of sessions is on the basics of employability with subsequent sessions ranging from placement pitches to insight on industry trends and issues.

Placements are strongly encouraged for undergraduates (years 1 to 3) with new graduates (both BSc and MSc) having the flexibility to embark on 6 or 12 month placements.

Workshop 3

Workshop Title: **Embedding graduate attributes in a first year course**

Presenter: Dr Jessie Paterson (University of Edinburgh)

Discipline: Theology and Religious Studies

Summary of workshop

The University of Edinburgh has developed a Graduate Attributes Framework. Within the School of Divinity, a compulsory first year academic skill course is being re-designed for AY11/12, retaining primary function of basic skill development but within a framework of graduate attributes. In addition, students will be introduced to graduate attributes in their wider sense and how they fit into the university experience and encouraged to take responsibility for recognising and reflecting on their graduate attributes development for the remainder of their academic career. The workshop will describe the proposed approach and provide an opportunity for discussion and feedback.

Workshop 4

Workshop title: **Employability and Modern Languages**

Presenter: Dr Gundula Sharman (University of Aberdeen)

Discipline: German

Summary of workshop

“If I’m selling to you, I speak your language. If I’m buying, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen.”

Willi Brandt, former Chancellor of Germany.

To date the carrot and stick approach to promoting modern languages has been of limited success. But sooner or later the situation in the UK will have to change, even if that means that the new languages promoted will be Chinese and Arabic, rather than French and German. This workshop will focus on the following points :

- Language skills directly benefit our economy, and we in the UK are not fulfilling our potential when it comes to acquiring language skills.
- Businesses that proactively use language skills achieve on average 45% more export sales and it has been estimated that improving language skills could add up to £21 billion per year to the UK economy
- Young Britons are less likely to take advantage of opportunities to gain international experience
- A large proportion of employers place a premium on graduates with at least conversational fluency in another language. It is a concern to companies that these skills are increasingly rare.
- Few posts in the commercial sector are advertised with a foreign language as an essential requirement, but it will often be regarded as an asset.

Workshop 5

Workshop title: **Personal Development Planning for International Postgraduate Students (PIPS)**

Presenter: Dr Kate Baker (University of Aberdeen)

Discipline: Educational Development

Summary of workshop

The Learning to Work 1 project, **Personal development planning for International Postgraduate Students (PIPS)**, led by the University of Aberdeen, was commissioned by SHEEF to develop, pilot and evaluate PDP resources specifically designed to support the growing numbers of taught postgraduates. Although aimed primarily towards international students, all taught postgraduates can benefit from this initiative.

The workshop aims to present the learning from this cross-institutional project and to showcase the developed taught postgraduate PDP resources. This interactive session will also offer opportunities to discuss a number of key issues arising from this project.

Workshop 6

Workshop title: **Using case-studies to develop key transferable skills for management and languages students**

Presenter: Fanny Chouc (Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh)

Discipline: Languages

Summary of workshop

The International Management and Languages course at Heriot-Watt University has been designed around transferable, professional skills : the language side of course is therefore geared towards the use of the foreign language in a business setting. To demonstrate how a course can be designed with employability in mind, while ensuring that students still focus on core language skills (written and spoken skills, analysis and translation), we will look at how the final-year “case-studies” module works, analysing the way in which the transferable skills have been built into the programme and how this programme prepares students for the job market.

Workshop 7

Workshop title: **e-Placement Scotland: using employers to help embed employability**

Presenter: Sally Smith (Edinburgh Napier University)

Discipline: Computing

Summary of workshop

The e-Placement Scotland project is funded by the Scottish Funding Council through the Learning to Work 2 Fund. It aims to create 750 new placements for Scottish computing students over three years.

Alongside this project, at Edinburgh Napier University we have been developing complementary models to embed employability including

- Professional practice modules to reward students for relevant work experience
- Work-based learning modules for Masters courses

The aim of the workshop is to encourage participants to identify strategies for employer engagement. What can we do to work more closely with employers to achieve good outcomes for students and employers? Can we work towards business having an expectation of working closely with students? Are there any specific barriers for small companies? How do we reduce barriers for course leaders and placement tutors?

The discussions in the workshop will inform future directions of the e-Placement Scotland project.

Workshop 8

Workshop title: **Embedding Employability – A Holistic Perspective**

Presenter: Professor Sabine Hotho and Ms Helen Smith (University of Abertay, Dundee)

Discipline: Business Management and Accounting

Summary of workshop

For universities, embedding employability into curricula is no longer a matter of choice but an imperative. Employability now features in strategic plans, and teaching and learning strategies, and the view is held that bespoke modules an explicit commitment to *skills development* can address this matter. But this approach remains deficient: it may reduce employability to the margin of the curriculum, reduce it to an array of 'practical skills', and keep the concept in the realm of implicit assumptions. Embedding employability requires a strategic approach and a systematic implementation plan – which recognises the incremental nature of strategy implementation.

This workshop will outline the approach we are taking in the Dundee Business School towards making employability explicit. Our approach is incremental, holistic and embraces curriculum and co-curriculum. Following from a brief presentation, the workshop part of the session will address how non-business subjects can develop an approach to 'embedding employability' that makes the agenda explicit and relevant.

Workshop 9

Workshop title: **Volunteer Placements in a History Department**

Presenter: Dr Steve Marritt (University of Glasgow)

Discipline: History

Summary of workshop

Establishing, running and sustaining placements with museums, libraries and other institutions with no budget, no time, REF on the way, a department to convince, and busy students. No answers, just questions.

Workshop 10

Workshop title: **Embedding essential elements of employability into careers guidance**

Presenter: Professor Mike Danson (University of West of Scotland)

Discipline: Economics

Summary of workshop

This workshop explores how the employability of students undertaking the MSc in Careers Guidance is enhanced by providing learning on labour market information and intelligence dedicated to Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the dominant employer. This is achieved by a close working relationship between the academics delivering the specific modules and staff from SDS. A key element in employability as a concept, strategy area and research topic concerns the articulation of the individual's own skills, human capital etc. to the market place, and in having the best information on that market place with regard to wages, job offers, progression opportunities, etc. that is the essence of Labour Market Information (LMI) and is especially apposite here.

Workshop 11

Workshop title: **Meeting the challenge of losing a traditional route for graduate employment in Healthcare.**

Presenter: Jane Finlay (School of Health, Glasgow Caledonian University)

Discipline: Physiotherapy

Summary of workshop

The National Health Service (NHS) has long been the recipient of graduates from the healthcare professions. Physiotherapy and other healthcare programmes are commonly considered “profession specific” and allow the graduate a *specialist* degree with associated registration to practice. Proposed cuts in Health Board spending are likely to impact this traditional route for graduate employment even further, making this particular marketplace more competitive. This workshop will consider methods of developing a transitional programme for students becoming registered

physiotherapists. It will highlight the transferable skills involved within this example of a *specialist* degree and raise awareness of emerging workplace environments and opportunities for graduates.

Workshop 12

Workshop title: **Students as real-life researchers: the 'Community Links' module for social sciences and criminology students**

Presenter: Dr Liz Frondigoun (School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University)

Discipline: Sociology

Summary of workshop

This module provides the opportunity for students to apply skills and knowledge acquired through their studies in a research environment. It is offered in place of a conventional taught course. The major emphasis is placed on independent study. Based on established contacts with statutory and community voluntary organisations, individual student research projects are negotiated to meet the needs of an external agency. Students are allocated to supervisors in the university and in the organisation and spend 9-12 weeks undertaking independent, client-based research. They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a topical social issue, reflect on the experience of working within an outside agency and draw conclusions about the role and process of social science research.

Workshop 13

Workshop title: **Embedding employability in the curriculum for Psychology**

Presenter: Bridget Hanna and Rachel Mulholland (School of Life Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University)

Discipline: Psychology

Summary of workshop

This case based session focuses upon experiences and development of the 'L1: Employability and Career Development for Psychology' (ECDP) module in the Psychology Programme at GCU. Its development arose from Aiming University Learning @ Work research.

ECDP will help facilitate discussions about:

- Differences between discipline Vs generic employability options.

- When and where could employability be embedded - module, programme or university? What stage? Pros and cons?
- Impact of employability options for students and academics? Satisfaction? Involvement?

The issues will be addressed in small group discussion, facilitated by the workshop leaders who will report back as required.

Workshop 14

Workshop title: **How are graduate attributes acquired during the long journey to graduation?**

Presenter: Dr Martin Barker (University of Aberdeen)

Discipline: Biological Science

Summary of workshop

How are graduate attributes acquired during the long journey to graduation?

The workshop will focus, in groups, on four sets of graduate attributes (GAs):

- ▶ Academic excellence (including knowledge, understanding and intellectual curiosity)
- ▶ Critical thinking and effective communication (including independent study and team work)
- ▶ Learning and personal development (including personal attributes, reflection and self-awareness)
- ▶ Active citizenship (including enterprise and leadership)

We will consider when and how such GAs can/should be acquired. Is the development of GAs a passive or active process? How can differences in learning among students be incorporated? How should the development of GAs be embedded in the curriculum?