UEA EMPLOYABILITY IMPLEMENTATION   Update Nov 11   DRAFT

This document proposes a framework of activities to support the implementation of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy and Employability and Progression Strategy. It provides guidance and practical recommendations for Schools of Study and UEA departments to guide and focus their activities to enhance student employability.

While progress has been made in some areas of the University, there is a need to further stimulate effort to ensure students graduate with the skills, knowledge and understanding required for their swift progression into roles that do justice to their graduate status.

Suggestions for delivery and reporting are made with a view to coordinating activities across Faculties and Schools. This would accelerate progress made with the existing UEA strategy. Recommendations for action are listed for Faculties, Schools of Study, Careers & Employability (C&E) and other departments in relation to key elements of employability.

Aims and recommendations

The University to facilitate development of student employability at Faculty and School level

University/ Faculty
- Employability to be more explicitly incorporated within the role of Associate Dean for LTQ.
- Each Faculty to produce its own employability strategy with targets and measurable outcomes for its Schools. Included will be how Schools are marketing to prospective students in respect of employability.
- Associate Deans for LTQ to meet formally with Heads of School, Dean of Faculty and other key staff to monitor progress on employability development within Faculty.
- Templates for School Employability Reports submitted to LTC to be revised to allow a more nuanced and insightful record of activities.
- Ensure the programme review process incorporates employability as related to achievement of learning outcomes and overall student learning experience.
- Facilitate greater sharing of ideas and resources on employability between Schools.
- Close collaboration between C&E and Schools to ensure a joined-up approach.

Schools to incorporate employability into their own plans for learning, teaching and marketing

School
- Schools carry out their own audit of employability related activities at curriculum/ course/ module level to establish gaps in provision and areas for development. Aim to achieve appropriate balance of subject specific / technical skills and wider skills.
- Ensure employability is considered more centrally within relevant School strategies: Learning & Teaching, Admissions and Marketing.
- Appoint an academic member of staff internal to the School to act as a central coordinator and collaborator around employability issues. Such roles, referred to variously as 'Employability Champion' or 'Employability Fellow' have already been introduced by some institutions (See Appendix for draft role outline).

Enhancing knowledge and skills development in the curriculum

Incorporate employability into Learning and Teaching such that it enables these types of activities:

School
- Ensuring modules make learning outcomes and their particular sets of skills explicit and understandable to students from the outset.
- Bringing subjects and their learning outcomes to life through practical activities including projects, group work, student-led events, case studies, problem-based learning and work-based learning.
- Implementing New Academic Model to ensure increased formative assessment and feedback in year 1 and 2 (e.g. successive formative tasks leading to a primary summative task) allowing students to receive feedback and reflect as they progress.
- Building in elements of trial and error to skills-based activities. Use of repetition and practice to learn new skills i.e. not expecting students to get it right first time. An example is student presentations: give students training and feedback so they develop between successive presentations. Final presentations can be attended by external representatives or employers to add significance.
- Evaluation of student feedback related to employability skills and module learning outcomes.
- For subjects with direct relevance to commercial activities, considering practical issues applied in the workplace e.g. for science including laboratory management and quality systems in laboratory sessions.

C&E
- Provide guidance to inform development of Learning and Teaching strategy on key aspects of employability such as self-reflection, employer and sector views and career management. Attend LTC meetings as required.
- Input and delivery on skills related components of taught courses.

Instigating a culture of students reflecting on their academic and personal progress

A challenge is to find ways of ensuring students have opportunities for reflecting on their academic development, whilst recognising relatively few will do this voluntarily.

UEA
- Revised student charter to make it clear to new students what their responsibilities are for engagement with their own development. Ensure students paying higher fees clearly understand their responsibilities if they wish to get the best return on their Higher Education investment.
- Consider implementing Personal Development Planning resources available to all students.
- Investigate feasibility of UEA Skills Award as means of recording and accrediting extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure that the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) is successfully implemented and future graduates receive a report with module level information and a summary of additional activities relevant to potential employers.

School

- Incorporating a reflective component into taught modules allowing students to chart their journey through the course; in each semester and each academic year.
- Use of reflective aids including learning style questionnaires, psychometric tools and learning logs.
- Ensuring a variety of learning and assessment styles including peer-assisted learning, peer-assessment and self-assessment.
- Use of CV Builder to help students understand the link between what they are learning and how to present themselves to future employers.
- Improved support for academic advisers to help advisees reflect on their progress and a clearer role for monitoring advisee levels of engagement in wider activities.
- More routine signposting by advisers to UEA services and resources including Careers & Employability (C&E), Dean of Students and CV Builder online tool.
- Referral by advisers to C&E for guidance, particularly when an advisee is appearing unengaged or lacking in self-awareness.

C&E
- Publish guidance for academic advisers to help advisees reflect on their progress in developing employability skills. Deliver workshops through CSED and as part of MAHEP training.
- Develop CV Builder into a website with a stronger user interface and with more advanced facilities for recording achievement. Investigate possibility of different versions for each Faculty.
- Involvement in the implementation of HEAR (Higher Education Achievement Record) at UEA and ensure CV Builder complements this.
- Deliver formative or summative assessment of CVs/ application statements where required as part of course.

Greater involvement of employers and industry

This includes activities where employers and industry are involved either centrally or peripherally within the taught curriculum. For some subject areas this may not be obvious and will require imagination. Examples include:

School
- Students addressing a 'workplace' problem or project related to their area of study, when practical in collaboration with an external organisation.
- Representatives from external organisations/ business running simulated workplace sessions allowing students to encounter workplace related situations with consequences attached.
- External activities linked with course such as visits to outside organisations, field trips, placements or other activities.
- Visiting lecturers expanding beyond theory to incorporate elements of job role awareness – e.g. describing their own career path and structure/ opportunities in their organisation if non-academic.
- Alumni panels and events where students get exposed to a range of experiences and roles in relevant career areas. Representatives from 'industry' giving lunchtime talks describing sector trends.
- Mentoring programmes involving employers and other representatives who provide advice and insight to module participants. UEA Mentoring Scheme already established.

- Ensuring at least one module or programme element is centred on the needs of sectors linked with School research disciplines.
- Consulting with Careers and Employability, Alumni Office, Research & Enterprise Office and other external contacts as part of course design and review.
- Using GENE (Graduate Employment for Norfolk's Economy) employer forum in order to gain employer views on curriculum changes.

C&E
- Providing on request labour market information and sector developments.
- Act as a central point of contact for referral to employers, employer networks and sector groups.
- Provide insight and advice on what employers demand from graduates and bridging skills gaps. Provide insight into local employment markets and UEA graduate experiences working in the region.
- Advice on using models of graduate employability such as VIPER model developed at UEA.
- Further development of GENE to encompass a broader range of sectors and continued coordination of bi-monthly meetings to facilitate discussion amongst members.

UEA
- Development of an institutional employer engagement strategy. A coordinated approach to employer contact is vitally needed to maintain and develop trust with employers and to avoid the same employers being contacted by different agents within UEA.
- Corporate CRM (Client Relationship Management) systems need to be effectively resourced to facilitate the above.

Expanding work experience opportunities for UEA students

UEA
- Develop an institutional policy and guidance for short listing and recruitment of students to work placements, where UEA staff are directly involved, to ensure common standards are adhered to.

Faculty
- Establish meetings between staff from different Schools who have experience in convening modules involving work experience (e.g. Year in Industry) – ensuring knowledge and contacts are shared.
- Associate Deans for Enterprise and Engagement and LTQ become more involved in coordinating at Faculty level.

School
In addition to centrally managed internship and work experience schemes, there is scope in many Schools for creating experience linked with courses.

- Devising research projects with links to external organisations for data collection, information retrieval and fieldwork.
- Retaining existing year in industry programmes and consider developing variants such as semester in industry. Widen the chances of gaining a placement beyond elite students by providing more support in securing opportunities, in collaboration with C&E.
- Investigating potential of formal summer placements linked with course and accompanied by assessed work.

- Creating formal work experience or voluntary opportunities to work within School that are well advertised to students. This can include assisting research & data collection (e.g. assisting PhD students), assisting with school projects or helping out with events.
- Arrange for final year students who have already completed work experience to address students in earlier year groups on how they secured their jobs, what they feel they have gained and any tips or advice.
- Advisers signposting students to advertised work experience opportunities on campus e.g. EmployAbility Job Shop and website.

C&E
- Continue to provide support for all students wishing to secure placements. Increase collaboration with Schools to expand numbers of students accessing work experience.
- Improve visibility of job and placement opportunities advertised to students through UEA websites. Amalgamation of separate sites into EmployAbility website as one-stop shop for all advertised opportunities.
- Develop additional support for students who are unlikely to secure formal advertised placements to help them gain a breadth of experience.
- Develop better online resources to help demystify work experience and how to get it.
- Collaborate with Schools to ensure students understand realities of gaining work experience early in their course.
- Expand existing coaching workshops to assist students in gaining work experience.

Developing career management capabilities

Acquiring career management (articulating skills, researching options, finding opportunities, networking, self-marketing on paper and in person) takes time and should be developed from early in a student's degree.

School
- Ensuring that students have access to timetabled talks relating to writing CVs, finding jobs and work experience and career options, making use of lunchtime slots and free periods where necessary.
- Moving away from an emphasis in provision on students in their final year and instead place greater emphasis on year 1 and year 2 students developing career management skills as preparation for applications in final year.
- Encourage academic advisers to promote School-specific jobs and careers information on Blackboard to their advisees.
- Consider incorporating careers awareness into relevant modules. For instance, students in groups researching different occupational areas and giving presentations of their findings.
- Ensuring that employment opportunities generated by or notified to Schools are clearly and consistently advertised to students; for example summer placements, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and research opportunities.

C&E
- Delivering talks, workshops and bespoke courses on all aspects of career management including researching options, finding opportunities, networking, self-marketing on paper and in person.
- Adopt an emphasis on activities focused on year 2 students as described above.
- Improve visibility of job and placement opportunities advertised to students through UEA websites.
- Greater involvement in induction activities that extend through academic year.

- Further development of School-specific Jobs and Careers information on Blackboard.
- Improved collaboration and communication to ensure relevant students and staff are aware of relevant careers events such as careers fairs and employer talks.
- Prioritisation will be inevitable as C&E does not have resource to respond to requests from all Schools equally, for example when delivering career management events and courses.

Develop student extra-curricular engagement

This involves maintaining and expanding the UEA student experience to allow students to develop their confidence, self-awareness and value systems.

School
- Encourage students to engage in other activities and pursuits including societies, sports, Student Union activities, School related responsibilities (e.g. student rep) and wider UEA roles such as Nightline or senior resident.
- Through the advisory system identify students who are not engaging and signpost to suitable forms of support.
- Support C&E's work in helping students to articulate the value of their wider UEA activities.

C&E
- Through talks and one-to-one guidance continually encourage students to engage in other activities and pursuits including societies, sports, Student Union activities, School related responsibilities (e.g. student rep) and wider UEA roles such as Nightline or senior resident.
- Find effective ways for groups of students to reflect on their personal development from these activities.
- EmployAbility Student Job Shop: expand opportunities for volunteering and work experience in addition to existing advertising of part-time, graduate and seasonal jobs.

Student Union
- Wider and clearer advertisement of SU activities, involving outreach to traditionally non-engaging students.
- Continue development and promotion of reflective log for all students.
- Incorporate reflective component into SU training to help students appreciate importance of what they might gain from their activities.

Identify meaningful performance indicators relating to employability

Discussions need to take place on the suitability of these measures and whether there are additional ways of gauging progress with employability at UEA. The system of reporting on employability (currently to LTC) also needs examination to establish whether reporting is timely and includes meaningful information.

The following performance indicators are currently used by the University to measure progress of both Schools and Careers Centre in developing student employability (summarised from UEA Employability and Progression Strategy):

1. (KPI) 'Prospects' Employability Performance Indicator and graduate employment league table position for the subject area(s), based on annual HESA Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey.

2. Proportion of students gaining places on graduate level postgraduate courses including those gaining funded places, where such data are available.
3. National Student Survey results for the subject area(s), specifically for the academic support and personal development sections.
4. Proportion of each School's students who use the services offered by the Careers Centre (guidance, events, talks, coaching). Number and range of course/School specific activities and events provided by CCEN. Use of Careers Centre resources by UEA students, broken down by School and year of course.
5. Number of campus jobs and graduate jobs advertised to students.

There is also potential to give more insight into student engagement and whether their needs are being met through collection of the following data:

- Number of work experience, work placement and voluntary work opportunities offered to, and taken up by, UEA students by School.
- Number and quality (measured by career relevance and level of responsibility) of part-time work opportunities offered to UEA students.
- Usage of School Blackboard jobs and careers resources.
- Usage of CV Builder.
- Usage of Careers and EmployAbility websites.
- Student feedback forms from academic units relating to their self-development/ employability.
- Feedback from other UEA student surveys where relevant.
- Through Nominate referrals system: numbers of job and further study applications made.

C&E
- Careers and Employability seeks to make available data in a timely and clear manner. There is scope for improvement to ensure that academic staff have data for their Schools in time for preparation of reports.
- The current resource Destinations Explorer www.uea.ac.uk/employability will be expanded.
- C&E to produce an annual report.

Appendix

UEA School Employability Champion Role Description   **DRAFT**

Purpose of role

The purpose of the School Employability Champion (SEC) is to provide central coordination of employability related activities and resources within an academic School and to collaborate with wider UEA departments to achieve the aims of the University's Learning & Teaching and Employability Strategies.

The role requires frequent liaison with UEA Careers and Employability (C&E), recognising the collaborative role of both Schools and C&E in developing the employability of UEA graduates.

The role holder will have a demonstrable interest and a commitment to developing student employability and will hold sufficient credibility to drive change. Existing contacts within business and industry would be advantageous.

Role outline

Employability in the curriculum

- Contact with course organisers and module convenors regarding content relating to employability.
- Familiarity with UEA strategies related to employability and their relevance to taught curriculum.
- Representation on teaching committees, programme review meetings and other activities related to curriculum development.
- Familiarity with UEA tools for aiding student reflection and CV development such as CV Builder.
- To act as a source of contacts and information on potential external speakers/ contributors.

Career management

- Promoting student awareness of and access to career management resources. This includes School websites and events and services offered by C&E.
- Contact maintained with School-designated careers adviser from C&E.
- Negotiating suitable timetable slots for career management talks and events such as CVs, career options and work experience.
- Liaising with academic staff and C&E staff to ensure that provision is adequately spread across year groups.

Alumni, employers and opportunities

- Help to identify alumni from the school to function as contacts for students or to contribute to alumni events or web-based case studies. To liaise with Alumni Office staff for this purpose.
- To act as a School central point of contact for its involvement with external employers.
- To liaise with C&E and Research and Enterprise Office where relevant to identify employer contacts

- To access the University's CRM system where necessary to avoid repetitious employer contact within the School.
- To ensure that job, placement and PG study opportunities are clearly advertised to students on appropriate websites, notice boards etc.

Measuring and Communicating employability

- To act as a central point within the School for statistics and performance indicators relating to employability, including destinations, student survey and student engagement.
- Coordination and compilation of annual reports relating to employability to be submitted to LTC.
- To liaise with School admissions and marketing staff to ensure prospective students receive a realistic and positive impression of employability development within the UEA student experience.
- To help promote awareness amongst academic colleagues of employability related issues and events of benefit to students.

Graduate Employment for Norfolk's Economy (GENE)

The GENE Employer Forum addresses higher level skills and employability issues with particular emphasis on the local economy. It's a partnership with representatives from HE providers, support organisations and employers.

Led by UEA Careers and Employability, GENE (Graduate Employment for Norfolk's Economy) aims to:
- Create a forum in which employers can meet with academic and support staff from Higher Education to explore graduate employment and employability issues.
- Inform academic practise and improve dialogue between providers and employers.

Examples of discussions include: teaching and employability, the Creative Digital sector, graduate identity, higher skills and developing international markets, the role of HE in the economic recovery, and supporting graduate enterprise.

Since the first meeting in 2008 GENE has:
- Grown to 160+ members, made up of employers, business networks, local authority, academic and support staff.
- Provided a central point of access for employers wishing to engage in employability matters.
- Provided an opportunity to focus on sector needs and introduced academic staff to employers outwith their specialist area.
- Become the representative body for higher skills on the County Employment and Skills Board.
- Supported employability research that in turn was well-received by employers as a clear and persuasive framework.
- Facilitated discussion through which employer conceptions of academe (and vice versa) are explored and better understood.

GENE is continuing to grow in momentum and is:
- Committed to listening to the needs of both employers and HEI's.
- Helping employers better understand the HEI process and graduate skills and employability.
- Tackling the employability gap in the county.
- Seen as an impartial forum for academic and employer interaction to take place.
- Respectful of demands and constraints on its participants.