Embedding Employability in Online & Blending Teaching - A Guide for Staff

This guide has been designed by the SEED Employability and Professional Learning (E&PL) Working Group [1] to highlight how employability can be embedded in online and blended T&L in our curriculum.

Framing Employability in SEED

It helps to have a shared understanding of what we mean by "employability". For the purpose of this guide we frame employability broadly as the development of skills, knowledge and attributes to equip our diverse body of students to achieve their personal and professional goals and make a contribution to society in their chosen sphere. Our SEED portfolio includes UG, PGT and PGR programmes including some accredited by professional or occupational bodies. Consequently our activities and priorities are likely to vary with context but we see employability as a shared responsibility and already embedded within the curriculum. [For more on the meaning of employability see: Artess et al, 2017; Boden & Nedeva, 2010; Bridgestock and Jackson, 2019].

Embedding Employability Online: Sharing Practice

This section considers four ways in which employability can be embedded or enhanced in your teaching and learning at programme or course/session level this year. Section 5 offers suggestions, resources and tools to aid longer-term development. We hope these are helpful, practical and align well with the Faculty of Humanities *Teaching and Learning Principles (2020).* http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=49643

1.   How can I communicate the way my programme/course supports employability?

Our starting point is that the design of your academic programme already incorporates T&L activities related to employability. Course/module content and existing Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) embed subject knowledge, intellectual and practical skills as well as the development of personal qualities so lie at the heart of T&L pedagogy and practice. Academic and PSS staff can signpost to this embedded employability by adopting some of the practices suggested below:

- Show the extent to which employability skills are integral to your curriculum - express these when writing the *weekly* session level learning outcome descriptions.
- When writing or reviewing course assignment tasks - ensure that the practical/transferable skills and personal attribute ILO's are included in the assessment guidance.
- Point to the importance of personal and professional development in academic advisor meetings (as well as subject knowledge and academic skills).
- Include an online/virtual discussion about career aspirations with Academic Advisers/Programme Directors when selecting course choices/electives.
- Add 'Employability' as a regular agenda item at Departmental Teaching and Learning committee meetings - invite Departmental Employability Leads [2] to offer regular reports /consultations and include E&PL as part of staff-student liaison meetings and discussions.

2.   How can I include World of Work insights from Employers/Practitioners and Alumni?

This year our ability to provide work experience such as visits, placements and internships has been impacted by Covid 19. However, there is scope to engage virtually with a range of prospective employers, practitioners and professional bodies and to include their perspectives of the changing graduate employment context.

- Encourage all visiting lecturers, researchers and practitioners giving (online) talks explain their own career paths as part of what they say and/or emphasise the knowledge and skills they see as important in their context.
- Consider Inviting (where appropriate) external practitioners/professionals to offer feedback on curriculum ILOs, content or assessments.
- Invite UoM alumni to give a short presentation about their career path and application of learning following graduation from the programme. If you need alumni contacts please email Emma Routh – see *Key Contacts [2].
- Be active in obtaining and disseminating career development information from relevant professional bodies, employers or PGR/research partner organisations.
- Promote subject/discipline-level representation at employability events aimed at University staff.
- Apply insights from formal and informal sources of graduate outcomes and destinations data, NSS/PTES and PRES and associated learning into T&L activities/discussions.

3.   How can I encourage students to share prior experiences of employment /internships?

Encourage students to take ownership of their development and make full use of the opportunities provided by the University in order to develop their employability.

- Invite students to share prior experience of paid and unpaid employment, internships or volunteering and to create ways for them to share this with each other on a programme, or in T&L course activities. Past (2019) SEED level Employability Audit data provides insights to prior work experiences and aspirations of full-time Y1 UG and PGT across SEED- available from your Employability Lead and/or Shirley Jenner.
- Recruit programme/ discipline level student Employability Ambassadors for each level of study, or include Employability as part of the student representative role.
- Consult/research or run a World Café * to understand the barriers which limit some students from engaging with their employability and explore how these can be overcome. How can I encourage students to connect to Careers Service, Alumni and Support Services

4.   Frequently highlight the existing student support for navigating career choice, recruitment and selection including:

- Encourage all students to activate and use their personal careers account, follow up Induction week input in S1 and S2 and signpost students to use the range of newly developed online career development materials. https://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/
- Add employability-related information to the beginning or end of lecture slide decks, and onto Blackboard spaces. Invite students who attended an event to feedback online to the group.
- Make provision for short lecture 'shout-outs' to promote key events/initiatives including volunteering and other extra-curricular events/societies and the digital versions being made available. .
- Ensure Academic Advisers know how to refer a student to online support with regards to their academic progress, employability and/or wellbeing. http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/
- Include links to additional online support, for example My Learning Essentials, including the career related podcasts [My Future] https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/using-the-library/students/training-and-skills-support/my-learning-essentials/online-resources/

5.   Looking ahead- Programme/Course Development

Have any of the suggestions above encouraged you to consider making any programme adjustments related to E&PL for next year? If so, the Faculty of Humanities has created a webpage that can be used to guide future programme and/or course development plans. Found here: https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/humanities/teaching-support/quality/programme-development/employability/

You may find the Advance HE Embedding Employability Tool useful. This approach suggests a 4 stage step to define employability in your context, audit existing employability provision, identify good practice and note gaps, then implement any changes. https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/essential-frameworks-enhancing-student-success-embedding-employability

References and Resources

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* http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/

Notes

[1] **SEED E&PL Covid 19 Working Party 2020**

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[2] **Employability and Professional Learning (E&PL) Sub-Committee**

Employability and Professional Learning (E&PL) Sub-Committee information membership , SEAP and committee meeting minutes and can be found at the SEED Employability Page : http://man.ac.uk/Zf4WLc