

**Edge Hill
University**



Strategic enhancement programme

Exploring the role & perceptions of academic staff in employability initiatives

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Executive Summary

This research was conducted by a working group at Edge Hill University as part of the HEA's Strategic Enhancement Programme (SEP) – *Embedding Employability into the Curriculum 2014-15*. The project complements concurrent research conducted at Edge Hill as part of the SEP, and known as SEP1: *Embedding Employability into the Curriculum: An Evaluation of Practice in 3 Departments at Edge Hill University*. That research explored the experiences of students and alumni of employability initiatives and their perceptions. This project (SEP2) has explored the role and perceptions **of academic staff** in employability initiatives, auditing and seeking to identify existing good practice.

The aims of SEP2 were:

1. To explore levels of staff confidence in their role of promoting employability.
2. To establish awareness, beliefs, attitude and depth of understanding of academic staff of: The University and Departmental Employability strategy; Good practice as exemplified in the HEA publications; Their role in relation to the development of student employability and the role of the Careers Centre and the Centre for Learning & Teaching in developing student employability.
3. To establish the actions taken by academics to embed employability in courses/modules
4. To raise awareness & identify good practice.

Data was collected by an e-questionnaire distributed to all academic staff in the Faculty of Arts & Sciences and focus groups were used to explore the questions in greater depth from a purposive sample of departments (Computing, Sport and Physical Activity and Geosciences). Results were analysed thematically and using descriptive statistics.

Results show that whilst academic staff in this survey supported the need for student employability, and over 60% stated that they were confident to *promote* employability, there was considerable diversity about what constitutes employability, and the nature of subject-specific skills. Consequently it is probably unsurprising that awareness of the HEA publications and University / Departmental strategies was low and that there were strong requests for staff development. Lack of clarity here is likely to be passed on to students.

The majority of respondents (82%) felt that employability should be embedded in the curriculum. Other significant methods of developing employability included extra-curricular development (65%) and co-curricular (57%). These findings indicate a willingness to accept the importance of employability alongside academic work, and reflect understanding of the importance of the need for a variety of approaches. This aligns with HEA (2013) and QAA (2013) guidance.

Pleasingly, employability is considered to be a shared responsibility. Respondents allocated almost equal responsibility to two main players: the Careers Centre (88%) and individual lecturers (80%). However, responsibility is not restricted to these two parties, almost 70% of respondents felt that both personal tutors and programme leaders also had a part to play. This is in line with both QAA and HEA guidance. However, a number of qualitative responses indicated that there are still some staff who “do not consider it their responsibility”.

Despite the lack the lack of clarity regarding employability attributes, examples of good practice in employability development are evident, and there are truly embedded approaches, where employability attributes are mapped to modules, employers, alumni and the Careers Centre are involved on a regular (and sustainable) basis.

However, there was a concern that students are not taking part in these activities unless they are compulsory or for assessment purposes. In particular, the lack of uptake for opportunities offered for sandwich, summer and work placements was identified as a cause for concern.

It was a widely held view that the majority of students arrive at University with weak Self-Regulated Learning skills and several participants suggested that there should be more focus on helping students become independent / Self-Regulated learners before expecting them to fully engage and interact with all the opportunities that are provided with regard to employability. However, participants still identified the first undergraduate year as the ideal place for employability to be introduced with some participants suggesting the first week of semester 1.

This is a small scale study, with 73 academic staff in the Faculty responding to the questionnaire and 17 taking part in 4 focus groups. Generalisation is therefore inappropriate. The results do however, identify themes that suggest further consideration by the Faculty.

Recommendations

Developing a Culture of Employability

There was no general consensus amongst academic staff as to what constituted employability attributes. Some participants discussed employability in terms of transferable skills and affect, such as motivation, whilst others felt employability skills were more specific to their subject area. Lack of consistency amongst staff has the potential to pass on a confusing message to students. Therefore it is recommended that:

1. An agreed set of generic employability attributes should be identified to ensure consistency.
2. Any subject specific employability attributes should be identified at department level.

The embedding of employability skills in teaching, is not always recognised as such. Therefore it is recommended that:

3. Employability attributes should be mapped to modules. This mapping should be available to students and discussed within the module. If the attributes are assessed this should be indicated.

Over half of all participants indicated a need for staff training, but could not give a precise indication in what area. Evidence also suggests training should also be used to assist those that do not have experience beyond academia, to see employability as a core function and to provide a holistic view of the employability skills required by employers. Therefore it is recommended that:

4. Staff Development opportunities be developed for:
 - HEA publications 'Pedagogy for Employability' and 'Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability
 - University Employability Strategy
 - Department Employability Strategy
 - Embedding skills/attributes into the curriculum
 - Developing industrial links and digital footprints
 - Making employability more explicit for students
5. Within Edge Hill, the Centre for Learning & Teaching should continue to encourage staff to share current good practice and promote employability within the Fellowship scheme. Other universities will need to consider appropriate implementation methods.
6. To address employability development with qualifying staff, the Centre for Learning & Teaching may wish to review how is addressed in the Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education. Other universities would need to consider how they may address this point.

Introduction

This research was conducted by a working group at Edge Hill University as part of the HEA's Strategic Enhancement Programme (SEP) – *Embedding Employability into the Curriculum 2014-15*. The project complements concurrent research conducted at Edge Hill as part of the SEP, and known as SEP1: *Embedding Employability into the Curriculum: An Evaluation of Practice in 3 Departments at Edge Hill University*. That research explored the experiences of **students and alumni** of employability initiatives and their perceptions. This project (SEP2) has explored the role and perceptions **of academic staff** in employability initiatives, auditing and seeking to identify existing good practice.

Rationale

Edge Hill University places a high emphasis on employability and is committed to implementing initiatives that have a good evidence base to ensure maximum benefit and impact for its students.

There is a wealth of literature exploring employability strategies to help students recognise and develop relevant attributes. Essential aspects are frequently expressed as 'embedding employability in the curriculum' and establishing an institutional culture, exemplified by the need for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) "to create an environment in which employability is central to what they do and is perceived as relevant by students and staff." (Tibby, 2014:19).

Cultural change is a long term process. Furthermore, attitudes, values, skills, knowledge and self-efficacy that contribute to employability take significant time to develop. Greenbank's (2014) longitudinal study showed that many students do not progress in these respects over the period of a degree and the whole process of developing employability is seen to be problematic (UKCES 2009), with more than half of major employers say the graduates they hire are not 'work ready' (Hurst, 2013).

It is important therefore for departments to establish a culture that makes the development of student employability an integral part of the curriculum. This will be reflected in *course content* and the type of *approaches to teaching and assessment* adopted. There will also be an expectation from departments that their students will be engaging in extra-curricular activities (ECA), such as volunteering and work placements. For a 'culture of employability' to develop in a department it is essential that improving the students' employability is given high priority by all staff. The problem, as Greenbank (2014) has highlighted, is that responsibility for employability is often devolved to a few 'enthusiasts' within a department and to the University's careers advisers. Moreover, rather than making employability a substantial and integral part of the curriculum it often becomes an add-on with little time allocated to it.

Edge Hill University's strategic plan identifies a focussed approach to employability with a key element of its strategy based on enhancing the student experience. This institutional approach was selected by OFFA in the report: 'Access Agreements for 2015-16: Key Statistics and Analysis' (July 2014) as one of only three case studies illustrating how a University can improve student success through an employability strategy. Edge Hill produced a University Employability Strategy in October 2013 which seeks to embed employability into the University curriculum and develop a whole-institution approach. As part of the strategy, all University departments have developed their own employability plan to help students improve their employability in terms of knowledge, skills, behaviours, attributes and attitudes.

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However, research into staff attitudes and the extent of alignment between modules, courses and employability outcomes is limited, yet academic staff could have one of the most profound impacts on students' attitudes, values and participation in ECA. This research is therefore distinct as it aims to fill this gap by exploring the perceptions & understanding of academic staff with regard to their role in the process and development of student employability.

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) is large and diverse, encompassing eleven departments, recruiting over 2500 undergraduates annually. An employability audit, conducted in 2013 indicated there was an assortment of approaches, to employability, implemented with some examples of transferable good practice and others that were subject specific. However, it was evident that the Faculty had not yet been able to disseminate and embed this good practice in a consistent and systemic way.

The HEA SEP programme has presented an excellent opportunity to align University strategy with current practice by auditing, evaluating, sharing, embedding and disseminating good practice. In particular the University was keen to explore the role and perceptions of academic staff in Employability initiatives. The research complements and extends the project recently completed at Edge Hill as part of the Strategic Enhancement programme (SEP1). SEP1 evaluates the impact of the institutional and departmental-wide employability strategies on students. A staff perspective closes the loop between espoused strategy, staff beliefs and impact on students. This project is known as SEP2.

SEP2 addresses two of the elements in the evidence and impact strand. Primarily, it investigated the way the HEA framework is being interpreted and used by academic staff across the institution to embed employability into the curriculum. It also provided evaluative research to provide evidence of the outcomes and impact of embedding employability into the curriculum for staff. Three departments, Computing, the Department of Sport and Physical Activity and Geosciences were identified as examples of good practice. Therefore, these departments were selected as the focal point for this project.

The project aims were:

1. To explore levels of staff confidence in their role of promoting employability.
2. To establish awareness, beliefs, attitude and depth of understanding of academic staff of:
 - a. The University and Departmental Employability strategy.
 - b. Good practice as exemplified in the HEA publications '*Pedagogy for Employability*' and '*Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability*'.
 - c. Their role in relation to development of student employability.
 - d. The role of Careers and the Centre for Learning & Teaching in developing student employability.
3. To establish the actions taken by academics to embed employability in courses/modules through:
 - a. Module design/ pedagogy used.
 - b. Other approaches to promoting students to develop personal capital/ employability/ ECA.
 - c. Links to entrepreneurial attributes/skill development as a method of employability through enterprise.
4. To raise awareness & identify good practice.

Methodology

A working group was set up (Appendix 1) and Ethics Committee approval for the research was obtained from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee, prior to the start of the project.

To gather the views of academics across the University, two methods of data collection were employed. The first method was an e-questionnaire (Appendix 2), distributed to all academic staff within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Focus groups were used as the second method, as the qualitative data collected would be a useful supplement, providing a richer source of data and extending the answers received to the questionnaire. In addition to this they would add more context with regards to how the HEA framework was being interpreted and used by academic staff, across the institution, to embed employability into the curriculum.

a) E-questionnaire

The e-questionnaire's initial free text question, asked participants to identify what they understood by the term employability. This was to gain a qualitative perspective of their understanding. Participants were also asked to identify whether employability was part of their current role and if not, did they think it should be, quantifying this with reasons. Following on from this participants were asked who they think is responsible for the delivery of employability skills. Further on in the e-questionnaire, a four part Likert scale was used, with a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree to establish whether participants thought employability should be embedded within the curriculum. Ranking questions were also used throughout the e-questionnaire.

Seventy four completed responses were received. Quantitative data was also gathered to supplement and illustrate some of the data gathered from the e-questionnaire and a thematic analysis was conducted. Data was analysed based on the repetition of phrases, ideas and words that were identified from the responses and any emerging themes or patterns identified, using both inductive and deductive reasoning.

The themes that appeared frequently were used for further analysis and non-frequent themes grouped under miscellaneous. Once the themes were identified, participant responses were further reviewed and a set of discussion topics determined, to implement within the focus groups.

b) Focus Groups

Four focus groups took place, two with academic staff from the Computing department, one with the Department of Sport and Physical Activity and one with Geosciences. Overall between the departments, there was a total of seventeen participants, with an equal gender split.

At the start of each focus group, an information sheet was distributed to all participants and written participant consent was obtained. Data obtained from the focus groups was transcribed and analysed using a thematic approach, in the same way that data was analysed for the qualitative data obtained from the e-questionnaire. Repetition of phrases, ideas and words were identified from the responses and any emerging themes or patterns identified, using both inductive and deductive reasoning.

To further evaluate the impact of the institutional and departmental-wide employability strategies on students, the themes identified in both set of data were then merged to give to allow for the generation of rich, complex and detailed description.

Analysis of Findings

The following section review the data gathered from both the e-questionnaire and the focus groups and analyse the findings in relation to the project aims.

Staff Confidence and Employability

Overall, participants felt confident in promoting employability within their current role, with 34.7% saying they were very confident and 32% stating they were confident in delivering employability skills.

Generally, most responses gave a good indication that participant's understood what the term employability, in relation to students, meant. Many (61%) consider the delivery of employability skills should be part of their role, interestingly though 50% stated employability is not currently their responsibility.

However, on further exploration, there was no general consensus as to what employability attributes actually are. Some participants considered them to be transferable skills, such as communication, seeing them as being interlinked closely with academic skills. Other participants felt employability skills were more specific to their subject area and there should be a

“priority list of employability skills that tutors should be teaching” (FG1)

and

“a different level of skill needs to be taught” (FG2)

Especially as

“technical skills are so vital ...” (FG1)

Generally, it was felt there also seemed to be some

“Discrepancy in skills that not only employers and academics have but employers have with each other” (FG2)

Considering this lack of general consensus, 42.5% of participants demonstrated an awareness of the activities available at the university to support student's personal development beyond the curriculum. In addition to this 61.6% of participants acknowledged they had an awareness of the support available from industry or professional organisations, in either terms of advice, training or additional resources.

Actions taken by academics to embed employability

There were several specific examples of activities *within the curriculum* in order to develop employability:

- External speakers from industry to speak to students about potential employment prospects
- Alumni to speak to students about the experiences and skills that have helped them in the workplace and the varied career paths available to students on graduation.
- Mapping of employability attributes to modules and posting on module Blackboard sites.
- Mock assessment centres (involving external participants).
- Industry standard CPD courses within the curriculum.
- Live projects provided by industry.
- Employer advisory panels to ensure content is relevant.
- Employability focussed events such as specific careers fairs, employability conferences are organised by some departments as part of the course, though outside of modules.

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In one subject area, students in third year are motivated by:

“matching [them] with a tutor and companies who have experience in the dissertation topic chosen” (FG4)

A number of subjects embed employability skills within their modules and it is considered a

“major strand throughout ... forthcoming revalidation[s]” (eQ)

Whilst a small amount of subjects have links to entrepreneurial and enterprise activities and work on

“live projects” (eQ)

Which encourages

“plenty of discussion and interaction with clients” (eQ)

Others

“Invite professionals to EHU” (eQ)

Which helps

“Students develop confidence and business initiative to start their own companies” (eQ)

The Careers Centre

The Careers Centre has a strong association with departments and meet with staff regularly to discuss development of employability within the subject area, identify assistance needed and help organise events. Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, Careers were identified by 88% of participants as playing a key role in delivering employability. Participants highlighted their direct role in relation to students:

“talking about career aspirations and reinforce [the importance of] developing skills and volunteering” (eQ)

“working early on with first years in PDP, organising input from voluntary organisations and helping deliver the final year careers module” (FG4).

The role of careers was also valued very highly by participants in terms of their contacts and expertise:

“employer liaison staff coordinating the range and scope of opportunities” (FG3)

However, it seems that

“Different tutors want different services from Careers, such as more specific allocation towards students” (FG1)

Participants also queried the university’s decision to remove the extra-curricular Careers module since they had positive feedback from their peers and students.¹

¹ *The Careers module was considered unsustainable from a resource perspective, and the university policy was to embed its contents within the departmental curricula to establish this as the primary responsible actor for Employability development.*

Centre for Learning & Teaching

When asked what role the Centre for Learning & Teaching should have in the development of employability skills, questionnaire responses showed almost 60% considered that they had a role to play, though this was lower than all other specific categories except the Students' Union. Focus groups yielded some surprising comments:

“do not use centre for teaching and learning as there is not really a specific role for them to play with employability” (FG4)

“if a student wanted to become a teacher, it is important” (FG3)

“teaching and learning department do not have a role in employability” (eQ)

How Should Employability be addressed?

Whilst exploring how employability should be addressed, four key delivery vehicles were defined. These were: embedded within the curriculum; extra-curricular; within specific modules, or a combination of both within and outside (co-curricular).

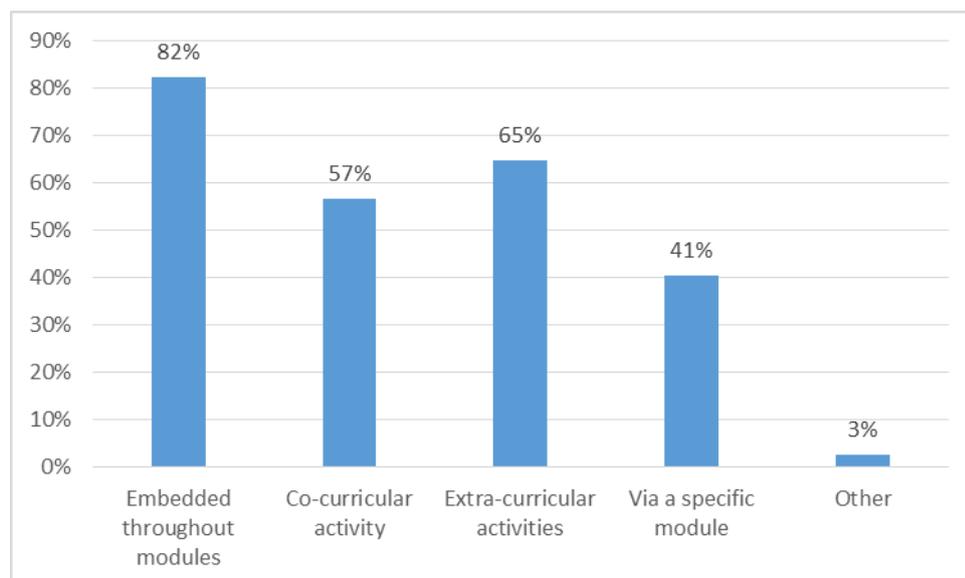


Figure 1: Where should employability be addressed?

As can be seen above, the largest proportion of survey participants felt that employability skills should be embedded throughout modules.

Examples of this included:

“Weaving it into modules via discussion with employers” (FG4)

“Basic presentation skills, getting students to communicate, things like that, they’re all embedded and mapped so we can highlight where exactly they are” (FG1)

One interesting finding was that embedding employability skills in teaching is not always recognised as such.

“The modules I deliver are underpinned by skills that are required in the workplace, however this is not an explicit criteria of my role nor does it need to be recognised as such” (eQ)

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"I see my role as principally philosophical in terms of changing the way students think. These are conceptual and analytical skills which do not lend themselves to answering a more descriptive approach of "doing" employability" (eQ)

In the survey, 65% of participants indicated employability skills should be delivered via extra-curricular activities. When this was explored further, some staff identified extra-curricular activity as an opportunity for students to enhance employability beyond "classroom" activity:

"Specific personality traits, which could be developed through extra-curricular activities" (FG3)

"In extracurricular time, students should have the opportunity to gain more skills" (FG2)

"Encourage students to recognise the importance of employability skills and motivate them to engage in additional learning and activities" (eQ)

Survey participants were also asked to indicate who they feel is responsible for employability development (Figure 2). Whilst allocating prime responsibility to the Careers Centre (88%), respondents indicated almost as much responsibility to individual lecturers (80%). 69% of respondents felt that both personal tutors and programme leaders also had a part to play.

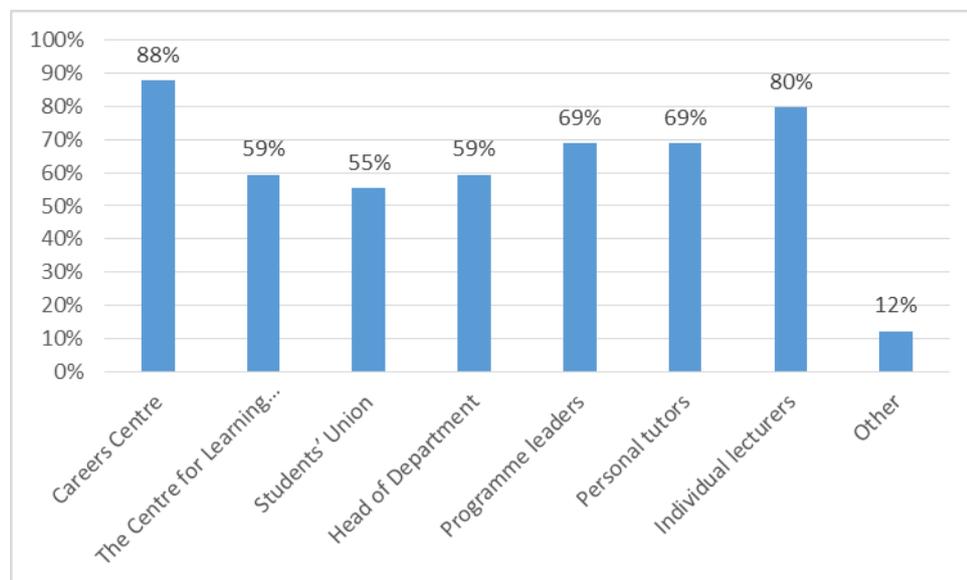


Figure 2: Who is responsible for delivering employability skills?

The participants indicated why and in some cases, where the delivery of employability skills should be a joint responsibility:

"Extracurricular via careers modules and events" (FG2)

"Think it's a role which needs to be shared and embedded. (eQ)

"Combination of curricular and extracurricular is needed" (FG3)

However, number of qualitative responses indicated that there are still some staff who

"do not consider it their responsibility"

"I don't think primary responsibility for it at a department level sits with an individual"

This may be because:

"Teaching "employability" is a specialist skill set similar to teaching [my subject] many feel they often give poor guidance to students" (e-Q)

“I think that’s extra-curricular and nothing to do with us” (FG2)

“We have no up to date knowledge of current practices we are here for subject knowledge” (eQ)

Participants were clear that employability should be developed in all three years of the university experience.

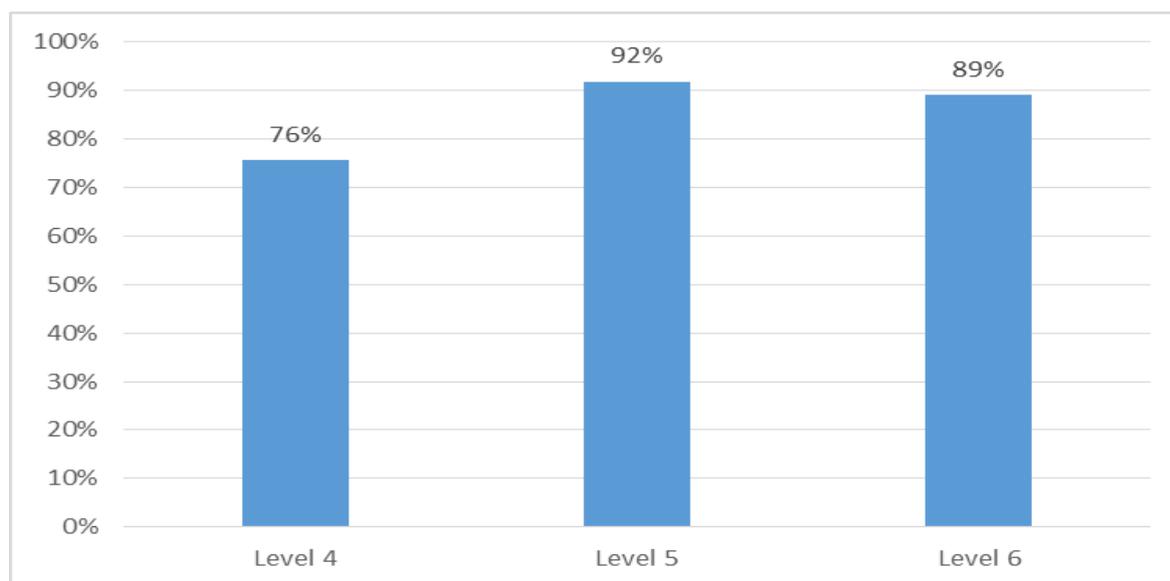


Figure 3: When do you think students need to focus on employability?

Overall, participants considered that employability should be addressed

“As early as possible (FG2)”

“Be intensive from first year” (FG3)

“At an early stage in their degree, such as semester one, year one (FG1)”

Sandwich, summer and work placements emerged as a powerful theme and numerous participants thought that they play a fundamental role in the development of employability skills. Despite this, staff emphasised that is difficult to get students to take the opportunities offered. Some reasons cited for the lack of take-up of industrial sandwich placements included logistical problems (accommodation contracts before confirmed placement); peer pressure and the expectation of a three year degree, versus the opportunity of being part of a four year degree with a placement and the

“Lack of understanding of the importance” (FG2)

Alongside the difficulties getting

“students placements in [job sector]- an issue that the university should develop” (FG4)

Employability and Pedagogy

The data collected has identified a strong relationship between employability and pedagogy, where the importance of independence was highlighted. It was generally thought that students come to university with poor Self-Regulated Learning abilities making the learning and development of employability more difficult.

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“if you give nothing in university we can’t give anything back, you get out much more if you give a lot (FG1)”

Therefore primarily there needs to be a

“focusing on making students independent learners”(FG2)

and developing them

“to be holistic individuals” (FG2)

together with the

“importance of the student’s affinity to learn”(FG2)

in respect of this, it was felt

“individual [Self-Regulated] learning needs to be sorted more than training lecturers” (FG2)

Despite this finding, over half of all participants indicated a need for staff training, however, they could not give a precise indication in what area. The results of the e-questionnaire show a need for training with regard to the University Employability Strategy - only 22.6% of respondents indicated an awareness of it. Similarly, a small number of respondents (20%) stated an awareness of departmental employability plans. This is therefore an area for development. A further area for potential staff development would be with regards to the good practice as exemplified in the HEA publications ‘Pedagogy for Employability’ and ‘Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability, as 42.5% of respondents indicated no understanding of this.

Focus group discussions suggested that training should also be used to assist those that do not have experience beyond academia, to see employability as a central function and to provide a holistic view of the employability skills required by employers. Alongside this, suggestions for training included:

- Embedding skills/attributes into the curriculum
- Developing industrial links and digital footprints
- Making employability more explicit for students.
- How to inculcate employability awareness in module material

This is a further indication that staff training is required, but suggests that the areas for development are varied and dependent upon the needs of individual staff.

Overall Conclusions

This research provides a snapshot of the perceptions of academic staff in relation to their role to enhance students' employability. It is a small case study of one Faculty in a modern university, and focusses on three departments previously identified as exhibiting 'good practice'. A total of 73 academics were involved across the faculty and 17 staff were involved in 4 focus groups. Obtaining a mix of both quantitative and qualitative data added reliability to the research findings. Given the nature of this research, generalisations are dangerous, but it is illuminative and raises a number of issues that the authors consider need addressing. Readers can therefore use this report to inform exploration of their own institutions.

Key points

1. Whilst academic staff in this survey supported the need for student employability, and over 60% stated that they were confident to *promote* employability, there was considerable diversity about what constitutes employability, and the nature of subject-specific skills. Consequently it is probably unsurprising that awareness of the HEA publications and University / Departmental strategies was low and that there were strong requests for staff development. Lack of clarity here is likely to be passed on to students.
2. The majority of staff (82%) considered embedding within the curriculum should be the primary vehicle for employability development. This complements recognition by 65% of respondents of the need for extra-curricular activities and 59% of respondents for co-curricular delivery. Less than half of participants felt that specific 'employability modules' were an effective way of enabling employability development.
3. Furthermore, the responses indicated that participants believed that responsibility should be shared, with the highest level of responsibility for developing employability in the Careers Centre (88%) followed by 80% of academics who viewed it as primarily their responsibility. Qualitative responses showed that there are still staff who 'do not consider it their responsibility'.
4. Despite the lack of clarity of the nature of employability attributes, examples of good practice with regards to employability development have been identified, and it is pleasing to see some truly embedded approaches, where employability attributes are mapped to modules, employers, alumni and Careers are involved on a regular (and sustainable) basis.

This project focussed on the role and perceptions of academic staff in regard to employability initiatives. The SEP1 project focused on student perceptions and there are interesting differences between the two groups. There is therefore a need to analyse results from both projects to provide a holistic picture and close the loop between espoused strategy, staff beliefs and student perceptions.

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Appendix 1 Membership of Working Group

Institutional role	Name	Email
Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations)	Mark Allanson	mark.allanson@edgehill.ac.uk
Senior Lecturer	Shirley Hunter-Barnett	Barnetts@edgehill.ac.uk
Senior Careers Adviser	Sue Hepworth	Sue.C.Taylor@edgehill.ac.uk
Commercial Development Coordinator – (Industrial Placements and Employability)	Damien Halligan	Damien.Halligan@edgehill.ac.uk
Senior L&T Fellow, HoD Computing	Dr Chris Beaumont	Chris.Beaumont@edgehill.ac.uk

Appendix 2 Questionnaire

Exploring the role & perceptions of academic staff in employability initiatives

This survey is a tool to help us primarily investigate the way the HEA framework 'Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability' is being interpreted and used by academic staff across the institution to embed employability into the curriculum. By exploring the role & perceptions of academic staff in employability initiatives, it will also provide evaluative research to provide evidence of the outcomes and impact of embedding employability into the curriculum for staff.

The University has emphasised the employability agenda for several years, and is committed to implementing initiatives that have a good evidence base. The Careers Centre, Centre for Learning and Teaching have been in the forefront of both research and as catalysts for leading strategy and embedding employability in the curriculum.

The research complements former research by auditing and evaluating staff views & understanding of employability, and the framework.

Your taking part is a valuable contribution to the study and we would appreciate you completing this questionnaire. All replies will be kept in confidence and not used for any purpose other than for this study.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore levels of staff confidence in their role of promoting employability.
 2. To establish awareness, beliefs, attitude and depth of understanding of academic staff of:
 - a. The University and Departmental Employability strategy.
 - b. Good practice as exemplified in the HEA publications '*Pedagogy for Employability*' and '*Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability*'.
 - c. Their role in relation to development of student employability.
 - d. The role of Careers and the Centre for Learning & Teaching in developing student employability.
 3. To establish the actions taken by academics to embed employability in courses/modules through:
 - a. Module design/ pedagogy used.
 - b. Other approaches to promoting students to develop personal capital/ employability/extra-curricular activities.
 - c. Links to entrepreneurial attributes/skill development as a method of employability through enterprise.
 - d. To raise awareness & identify good practice.
-

1. Please indicate your job role (select one answer only)

Head of Department

Associate Head of Department

Programme Leader

Senior Lecturer

Lecturer

Other (please state)

.....

2. What do you understand by the term 'employability' in relation to students?

3. Is employability part of your current academic role?

Yes No

4. Do you think employability should be a part of your current academic role?

Yes No

Please give your reasons for this answer.

5. Who do you think is responsible for delivering employability skills? Please tick all that apply.

- a. Careers Centre
- b. The Centre for Learning & Teaching
- c. Students' Union
- d. Head of Department
- e. Programme leaders
- f. Personal tutors
- g. Individual lecturers
- h. Other (please state)

.....

6. Should employability be embedded in the curriculum? Please select one answer only.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly
disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. How should employability be addressed?

Please rank each point in order of 1 to 5. 1 being most preferred and 5 being least preferred	
a) embedded throughout modules	
b) via a specific module	
c) co-curricular activity	
d) extra-curricular activities	
e) other (please state)	

8. Please explain your reasons for this answer.

9. When do you think students need to focus on employability? Please tick **all that apply**.

Level 4 Level 5 Level 6

10. What elements of employability could you support and develop in your programme or at department level? Please explain.

11. Which of the following are you aware of?

- a. The University Employability strategy
- b. The Departmental Employability strategy for your department
- c. Good practice as exemplified in the HEA publications ‘Pedagogy for Employability’ and ‘Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability’
- d. The expectations of employers/professional bodies as regards your graduates’ employability
- e. The expectations of students in terms of your role in supporting and enhancing their employability

12. What depth of understanding do you have in relation to each of the above points?

Please rank each point in order of 1 to 5. 5 being an excellent understanding and 1 being no understanding	
a. The University and Departmental Employability strategy	
b. The Departmental Employability strategy for your department	
c. Good practice as exemplified in the HEA publications ' <i>Pedagogy for Employability</i> ' and ' <i>Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability</i> '	
d. The expectations of employers/professional bodies as regards your graduates' employability	
e. The expectations of students in terms of your role in supporting and enhancing their employability	

13. Please explain why you have placed the above in this order.

14. How confident are you in promoting employability within your current academic role. Please select one answer only.

- Not at all confident Fairly confident Confident Very confident Extremely confident

15. Which of the following are you aware of?

Please indicate your strength of awareness using numbers 1 to 4. 4 being an excellent awareness and 1 being no awareness	
a) activities available at the University which support students' personal development beyond the curriculum	
b) support from industry or professional organisations practice, either in terms of advice, training or additional resources	
c) colleagues/departments within the University.	

16. Which of the above have you used? Please give a brief indication of your involvement.

17. Please explain what actions have you taken, if any, to embed employability in courses/modules through:

- a. Module design/ pedagogy used
- b. Approaches to promoting students to develop personal capital/ employability/ extra-curricular activities
- c. Links to entrepreneurial attributes/skill development as a method of employability through enterprise.
- d. To raise awareness & identify good practice

18. Would you like training on employability aspects of curricula?

Yes

No

19. If yes, please indicate any areas of employability you would like training on. If no, please go to Q20

20. Please explain why you do not require any training on employability

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any questions about the study, please contact either Sue Taylor, 01695 584866 Sue.C.Taylor@edgehill.ac.uk or Shirley Hunter-Barnett, 01695 657632 barnetts@edgehill.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Focus Group Topics for Exploration

Areas for further exploration in FG's

- 1. Where do you think employability should be addressed?**

- 2. What depth of understanding do you have in relation to each of these points?**
 - Good practice as exemplified in the HEA publications 'Pedagogy for Employability' and 'Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability'
 - Most in questionnaire (42.5%) opted for '1' (no) for depth of understanding

- 3. Give examples of some of the following which have been used**
 - Activities available at the University which support students' personal development beyond the curriculum

 - Support from industry or professional organisations practice, either in terms of advice, training or additional resources

 - Colleagues/departments within the university

- 4. 58% participants said they would like more training, but it is not really clear overall in what areas - discuss**

- 5. The survey results said, suggests that careers should be mainly responsible for developing student employability, with individual lecturers being 2nd and the T & L department lower. How do you think these three should be involved?**