

Title: Embedding a Holistic Employability Model in the Curriculum

Abstract: Graduate employability has been one of the fundamental foci of universities in the 21st century. HEFCE (2011) state that 'embedding employability... will continue to be a key priority of universities... and employers'. Employability can be defined as 'a set of soft skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure and be successful in their chosen occupation to the benefit of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy' (Moreland, 2006). Many academics have taken this definition, or variation thereof, and discussed and debated what employability should look like in the curriculum or outside the curriculum (Rae, 2007). However, there is limited work focused on joining up an employability approach across the undergraduate curriculum and the designing of simulations and assessments in none profession-based subjects such as business studies. Hence the aim of this research is to propose and explore the embedding of a holistic employability model across an entire degree programme using existing and novel techniques. This is achieved by proposing a new employability model that combines reflective practices, simulation of graduate scheme selection and recruitment processes and VLE technologies alongside existing enterprise training and work related learning; the two dominant discourses for employability skills development in HE. Thus far the research has begun to examine the literature and begun to build the holistic employability model. We have observational and evaluative evidence to support our model up until now. Going forward the research will examine the experiences and reflections as an output of this new model from the perspectives of students, lecturers and external observers who took part in simulations and employer engagement forums. The research will use a mixed method approach utilising questionnaires, interviews and reflective statements generated from students learning, and interviews with lectures and external observers.

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