The Role of Institutions in Graduate Employability

Eluned Jones

Director of Student Employability, University of Birmingham
Hello from Birmingham (the UK one)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birmingham Contributions</th>
<th>Apart from The Industrial Revolution?</th>
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<td>X-ray</td>
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<td>Steam engine</td>
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<td>Lawn tennis</td>
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<td>Smoke detector</td>
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<td>Hand grenade</td>
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<td>Pacemaker</td>
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<td>Microphone</td>
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<td>Gas lighting</td>
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<td>The Mini Car</td>
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<td>Cluedo</td>
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<td>Whistle</td>
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<td>The Hobbit</td>
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British but mostly.....
A national context
VfM, QA, DLHE, TEF and LEO
UK employability landscape 2006 – 2016

- 2006 - first tuition fees of £3,000pa introduced - now £9,250pa

- National University League Tables become ever more influential
  - Employability contributes up to 15% of an institution’s national ranking and up to 25% of subject rankings

- Introduction of Key Information Sets to provide applicants with comparative ‘performance’ data at institutional and programme level

- Government sets annual institutional Employability Performance Indicators

- ‘Getting a good job’ becomes the 2nd most important factor for applicants
UK employability landscape since 2016

- Introduction of national Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)
  - Universities ranked as Gold, Silver or Bronze
  - First iteration only ranked institutions, next iteration will rank at Institutional and Subject level
  - Graduate employability weighting moving to approximately 50%
- Development of Longitudinal Educational Outcome (LEO) data, providing graduate salary data at 1, 3 and 5 years post graduation via HMRC
- Move from Graduate Destination survey (DLHE) at 6 months post graduation to Graduate Outcomes (GO) at 15 months

Despite inherent challenges, these developments have created an environment in which the HE employability/skills agenda is flourishing
(Surprisingly?) Positive Outcomes

- Creation of Institution-wide Employability Strategies

- Skills requirements built into programme approval / amendment processes

- Employability-related outcomes of degree programmes made transparent to current and prospective students
As an Ancient and Medieval History student you will have an excellent opportunity to develop skills that are attractive to employers, including:

- Strong communication skills
- A deep understanding of the past
- The ability to research, analyse and interpret complex information
- Leadership and teamwork
- Handling complex information
- The ability to form concise and articulate arguments
- Managing your time and prioritising your workload

These are key skills that will enable you to pursue either further study in History disciplines or move into employment in a wide range of other careers. Our graduates have gone on to careers in:

- Accountancy
- Charity work
- Housing
- Human Resources
The Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey 2015/16 shows that 94% of our graduates are in employment or further study six months after graduation.

Preparation for your career is one of the first things you should be considering when you start university. When you graduate from one of our mathematics programmes, you can expect to be able to pursue careers in any one of the major blue chip companies in sectors as diverse as finance and computing or in government, teaching or the NHS. Many of our students continue their studies to graduate level, taking masters programmes or PhDs. Wherever the application of logical thinking and statistical or strategic knowledge is called for, being one of our graduates will give you a head start.

Our degrees will help you to develop key skills such as analytic thinking, problem solving, independent research, report writing and the use of technical language. These skills are all highly sought after by employers.

You will have access to a wealth of professional careers advice. Our unique careers guidance service is tailored to your academic subject area, offering specialised expert advice and mentoring, as well as guidance to help you to secure exclusive work-experience opportunities and global internships, all of which will help you to stand out from the competition. And once you have a career in your sights, one-to-one support with CVs, interview practice and job applications will further help to give you the edge. In addition, our employer-endorsed, award-winning Personal Skills Award (PSA) recognises you extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.
(Surprisingly?) Positive Outcomes

- Increased opportunities for employers and professional bodies to become involved in programme design and development

- Industry / Employer Liaison Boards at Programme, School and Faculty level

- Introduction of Degree Apprenticeships - formal academic partnerships between universities and employers
(Surprisingly?) Positive Outcomes

- Increased emphasis on careers services / related employability services across campuses with associated investments
Drivers for enhancing student employability / transferable skills are however global and include:

- **4th Industrial Revolution discourse:**

  Earlier Industrial Revolutions were based on advances in steam-powered transportation and mechanical production (late 18th century), standardized electrically powered mass production (late 19th century), and the computer revolution (late 20th century).

  The 4th Industrial Revolution, according to Schwab, is the integration of digital, physical, and biological systems.

- **Future of Work** – variously McKinsey, Deloitte, PwC have all recently published on the skills debate

- 35% of the skills demanded for jobs across industries will change by 2020, but 25% of workers in OECD countries are already reporting a skills mismatch with their current jobs.
Future skills

- All of this is generating significant debate about the skills needed for the future.
- The following list of Top 10 Skills is from the 2016 Future of Jobs Report, WEF and is already dated.

<table>
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<th>in 2020</th>
<th>in 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Complex Problem Solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
<td>2. Coordinating with Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Creativity</td>
<td>3. People Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. People Management</td>
<td>4. Critical Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Coordinating with Others</td>
<td>5. Negotiation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>6. Quality Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Judgment and Decision Making</td>
<td>7. Service Orientation</td>
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Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

- To this list we are adding (re-adding) the skills /qualities of: risk management, digital, humility, valuing others, entrepreneurialism, leadership........
Fundamental shifts

- These lists will inevitably keep changing so our key task is to help our students navigate this demanding yet uncertain future.

- This requires both the enhancement of skill development opportunities but also, most importantly, students’ recognition and understanding of this skills development.

- As employability skills are developed throughout the whole student experience this means we need to address the extra-curricular, co-curricular, and intra-curricular.

- So, how to do this.....
Start at the very beginning (🎵 a very good place to start🎵)

1. What is it that we are trying to identify?

2. What does employability / transferable skills mean to our institution?

3. What already exists?

4. Who is already working in this area – academics, careers services, employer partners?

5. Start small if the task seems overwhelming
A good starting point can be creating your own definition of what you mean by employability / transferable skills:

A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. Yorke (2004)

or

Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful. Dacre Pool & Sewell (2007)

and now...

The progressive ability to make well informed realistic plans for the future and to be ready, willing and able to implement these in a changing world. Wright, Jones, Thambar, Wilson (2018) (adapted from Gilworth, 2017)
This framework acts as a reminder that transferable skills don’t exist within a vacuum – they are a sum of the parts of a student’s university experience.
The UK’s Advance HE unit has developed a 4 Stage Employability Framework and toolkit that may be of help in getting a process started within an institution.
Extra-curricular

- UK universities have Employability Awards which:
  - ‘Accredit’ extra-curricular employability activities
  - Take students through the self reflection that is needed for recognition of associated employability skills

- University of Birmingham Personal Skills Award (PSA) now incorporates over 240 on and off-campus extra-curricular activities

- Over 2000 students participate every year

- Graduate destination outcomes higher than institution level - critically so with Arts & Humanities students
Intra-curricular

- Gains in the extra/co-curricular areas are now being matched by gains within the curriculum

- This is being achieved through:
  - Making transparent to university applicants the employability outcomes of academic programmes
  - Identifying employability within academic programmes through:
    - an audit of employability skills within all academic programmes
    - building in a requirement for employability skills into module and programme approval processes
In summary.....

1. What are we trying to achieve?
2. Contextualise to institution
3. Audit what already exists and who is doing it
4. Collaborate - academics, careers services, employer partners
5. Start small if the task seems overwhelming

“The highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it.”

John Ruskin (1819 – 1900)
Of possible interest...


Higher Education Academy, Defining and developing your approach to employability; A framework for Higher Education. www.heaacademy.ac.uk


Students’ perceptions of employability within their degree programme: highlighting the disparity between what academics believe is included and the student experience.
C. Yvette Wharton, Janet Horrocks. http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/docs/


Of possible interest...

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FOJ_Executive_Summary_Jobs.pdf

Advance HE (formerly Higher Education Academy) Employability Framework
Contact at Advance HE is: Doug Cole, Head of Student Success, doug.cole@advance-he.ac.uk

McKinsey & Company: Global Themes

PwC Workforce of the Future

UK Quality Assurance Agency and Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services paper on employability Awards
Thank you

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