

**TOWARDS FLEXIBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**Title and Presenter:**

**Cut out for work? Is improving student awareness of employability issues through embedded course content sacrificing learning for earning?**

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**Sub Theme & Paper Type:**

Flexible Curriculum – Workshop

**Abstract:**

The Council for Industry in Higher Education (2008) series of reports on international competitiveness have all stressed that our economic future rests on innovation and delivering high value added goods and services. Universities lie at the heart of our knowledge intensive future through their development of knowledge, graduates, senior management talent and through helping to develop the nation's workforce. Graduates will play a vital role in creating wealth and underpinning the UK's international competitiveness.

Students of all disciplines can develop highly marketable, work related skills during their higher education, skills of tangible and immediate value to employers.

This interactive workshop will ask participants to discuss and debate how the university should adapt to the Leitch (2006) agenda in order to answer the question, What is a business-facing university?

Business leaders have told universities that they should begin teaching soft skills, such as communication and teamwork, which can boost a graduate's employability. How far does this impact on the classic academic view of the role of higher education: "The purpose of higher education is the education and empowerment of the individual...The course and the job a student goes on to do, is secondary to that".

It will also look at the need for HEIs to address the issues around providing students with the opportunities to develop these skills.