

2011 UNIVERSITY ANNUAL LEARNING & TEACHING CONFERENCE

Changing Times: Refreshing the Learning & Teaching Strategy

Theme: A university for graduate employability

13:25 - 14:05

The Careers free elective: helping to create more employable graduates

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“We think the Learning & Teaching Strategy should incorporate compulsory elements within all programmes to enhance student employability.”

Abstract:

This session will focus on how *important and vital the employability agenda has become, to us all and why this topic should refresh the Learning and Teaching Strategy by becoming one of its five Aims.*

The Career Management Skills (CMS) module has been running as a 20 credit free elective for 9 years, delivered using *2 different Virtual Learning Environments (VLE).* *It improves “student’s employability, key skills and employer engagement” (current government priorities).*

This very popular module (maximum 50) offers both challenges and personal progression. It addresses part of the Learning and Teaching Strategic objective (6.1.3) by delivering an “employment skills development programme” but only to a small minority.

In a fast changing world with a volatile graduate labour market, key skills and experience are vital to all students if they are to succeed. The CMS module provides a platform for students to enhance and develop these key skills which are consistently demanded by employers.

The CMS module is delivered online with no scheduled lectures, giving students the sole responsibility of managing their own time and resources. In response to the employability agenda and the needs of students through various feedback methods, it was deemed necessary to review the modules’ structure and content. Due to the ever growing value and emphasis on graduates being “prepared for the world of work” we took on the challenge of involving employers in this assessment process, to give students a more realistic and practical experience of the job selection methods.

Feedback has been very positive for these new practical elements. The Careers Service’s overall aim is to improve the employability of all students, by providing them with practical experience complimented by research based pathways. In developing the Career Management Skills free elective, we have been able to incorporate aspects of the Learning and Teaching Strategy to create a module that aims to enhance the employability of this small minority of students, whilst continually looking at ways to improve and augment the module content for the future.