



PTAS Project Report (for SMALL PROJECT GRANTS)

Project Title:

PTAS School of History, Classics and Archaeology Employability Project

Principal Investigator : Joseph Curran

School / Department : School of History, Classics and Archaeology.

Team members : Joseph Curran, Dr Esther Mijers, Craig Phillips

For further information, please contact: Craig Phillips or Dr Esther Mijers.

Grant recipients are expected to submit a brief report at the conclusion of their project which outlines briefly the following : nature of work completed; outcomes; benefits to student learning/student experience; dissemination activity (where relevant – actual and planned) and how the activity could inform future work or be transferred to other subject areas in the University. The brief report will be published on the IAD web pages.

Brief Report (maximum 500 words)

What did you do?

We employed a PhD student, Joe Curran, to undertake 75 hours of research working into the HCA employability landscape. This involved undertaking a formal recruitment process (creating a job description, advertising the post, shortlisting and interviewing). Joe then sought the opinions of HCA students and graduates, School staff, and potential employers to document the ways in which the School currently promotes the employability of current students and graduates, and to make recommendations for how this might be improved. For further details of the methods used to collect the data see the full report: 'PTAS School of History, Classics and Archaeology Employability Project Report' submitted to the Institute for Academic Development.

What did you find out?

We have found that this is an extremely relevant topic that without question merits further and deeper exploration. For the remainder of the academic year 2017/18. HCA will support further work based on the report's finds. With the full endorsement of HCA School Senior Management, it is our intention to propose a larger PTAS project based on our small grant project, in the academic year 2018/19.

We found that there are many examples of good practice with respect to employability exist but they are not widely known across the School. Information provision in relation to employability issues needs to be greatly improved and with this, better communication is required to make staff members aware of existing good practice within the School. For example, several, sometimes competing outreach organisations provide opportunities for HCA students to develop extra skills and attributes. It can however, be difficult to find out about their work and less engaged students might be unaware of it.



We established that students must be made aware of the amount of preparation necessary to compete for jobs in popular sectors such as academia and the heritage sector. They must also be informed about the limited opportunities available in these areas.

It was very illuminating to find that future career choice is rarely a motivation for choosing a HCA degree and as such, there needs to focus on careers-related issues from early in the degree programme. Showcasing the range of careers HCA graduates currently pursue will help with this.

Our research found that the School needs to engage with students' own self-image as practitioners of HCA subjects. Emphasising that a career in a different field is not a 'step down' would be a good start.

How did you disseminate your findings?

We have shared the learning within the context of our School. For example, our findings have been discussed within the HCA School Careers Board which comprises key school staff, including UG and PG Director as well as departmental representatives. This will have enhance the reach of the report to engage both the UG and PG students and staff across History, Classics and Archaeology. Moreover, having met with the HCA Head of School, Ewen Cameron to consider the findings, it is our intention to keep the project aligned to key school aims and strategy. Beyond this we have worked to learn from the experience of our Business School colleagues who undertook a similar research project.

What have been the benefits to student learning?

The report has helped us to identify challenges and opportunities in how we support the career development learning of our students.

How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university?

The report could be discussed with other departments and experiences/ideas could be shared with interested parties.

Who can be contacted for further details?

Craig Phillips or Dr Esther Mijers.

Financial statement (please delete as appropriate):

Either

This project has utilised the funding awarded to it by the PTAS adjudication committee and the Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.

The University of Edinburgh
Principal's Teaching Award Scheme



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