Board of Studies Network: Embedding Employability

Meeting held on Monday 6 May 2019 at 1pm in Room 1.17, Dugald Stewart Building, Central Area

Notes

The meeting focused on Embedding Employability, with four 10 minute presentations/talks each followed by 10 minutes of Q&A/discussions. The following was noted:

1. Employability Practice - Helen Stringer, Assistant Director, Careers Service

   - **Intrinsic** – employability should not be a bolt-on (as student engagement will be poor) but rather an enhancement of what is already in the curriculum (make explicit and re-emphasise skills & attributes).
   - **Collective Responsibility** – utility beyond the classroom adding value in relation to student satisfaction (NSS metric) and reputation of institution (employable graduates).
   - **Current Practice** – a number of examples of good practice were cited including 'Historian's Toolkit' (HCA) and Chemistry: from Concept to Consumer (see slides).
   - **Careers Service** – currently primarily undergraduate focused but looking for ways to enhance provision for postgraduate population.

2. Employability-enhancing activities going on across the institution - Dr Gavin McCabe Employability Consultant, Careers Service

   - **Curriculum Mapping** – nine key elements of curriculum design were discussed with examples of good practice for each (see slides).
   - **Curriculum Design** – employability is intrinsic to the study of a given subject as an understanding of the application of learning helps to clarify and develop a greater understanding of the subject.
   - **Reflection Toolkit** - new online resource for students and staff providing key principles, supporting resources and guidance for building students' employability.
   - **Teaching Matters** – another repository of downloadable blogs with plenty of examples of good practice regarding employability.

3. Embedding employability into the curriculum: Early lessons and things to consider - Dr Esther Mijers, Senior Lecturer, School of History, Classics and Archaeology

   - **Challenges** – mind-sets (intellectual pursuit is a good in itself) and lack of time.
   - **Tips** – take a holistic approach (whole curriculum/programme), enlist the help of like-minded colleagues (both staff and students), and make things as easy and straightforward as possible (look for the slipstream of other existing processes or requirements).
• **Outputs** – guidance form for course design/changes and greater employability scrutiny at Board of Studies meetings (e.g. Learning Outcomes, Assessments, Graduate Attributes).

4. **Curriculum Design – focus on skills development** - Dr Patrick Walsh, Director of Teaching, School of Biological Sciences

• **Driver** – undergraduate teaching review but has provided an opportunity to redesign the Biological Sciences curriculum to focus on skills development (both direct scientific, biological skills and generic skills).