

Paper 121 – Workshop

Enhancing employability - an exploration of the potential of personal development planning (PDP) to support individual professional development and employers' workforce development requirements.

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Abstract

Ability to demonstrate how higher education enhances employability is of growing importance for universities. Increased fees will sharpen prospective students' focus on the value of any degree programme to employment prospects. Graduate employability has been identified as a priority by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and universities are now expected to provide an annual statement on how employability is being embedded in their provision (Hefce 2010).

This interactive workshop aims to engage participants in a discussion about how PDP and related curriculum activities could be developed to support the 'functioning knowledge' employers are seeking in graduates.

Participants through two fifteen minute group exercises plus follow up discussion will explore and discuss:

- the three different elements of such 'functioning knowledge' ;
- how PDP and related curriculum activities can be developed to enhance the ability of students to use functioning knowledge and what employers could offer as part of this process.

The workshop will allow further development of findings from a research project undertaken by the workshop facilitators at the University of Salford during 2009/10 which explored, through interviews and a focus group with sponsoring employers, how personal development planning (PDP) input can support the development of employability skills and workforce development requirements. An overarching conclusion was that providing opportunities for a joint dialogue between employers and HE providers is valuable in developing shared understandings of the outcomes sought from sponsored study; and in identifying opportunities for greater collaboration to ensure that the potential enhancement of 'functioning knowledge' to improve organisational performance can be achieved. The workshop will provide an opportunity for HE professionals from both vocational and non-vocational provision to discuss and identify curriculum development strategies which can provide a bridge between theory, understanding and skilful professional and workplace practice.

References

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