



University of
St Andrews

Employability

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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

EMPLOYABILITY STRATEGY

This strategy is designed to affirm the importance of the employability agenda for the University and to identify how student employability can best be enhanced in a St Andrews context. As outlined in the University strategy¹, the University is committed “to continue to expand internship opportunities within our Degree programmes, to embed employability skills in the curriculum wherever possible without compromising academic ambition, and to offer extra-curricular avenues for the development of high-level professional skills.” The University will develop best practice in supporting all students' employability and will actively monitor the success of this strategy through internal review and survey data.

1. Introduction

Lifelong graduate employability in the twenty-first century will depend on continuing mastery of a number of inter-related attributes. University students expect their university education and experiences to provide them with the foundations for either further study and research, or immediate and continuing graduate employment, or self-employment. Study at St Andrews provides a broad and deep education which equips our graduates well to adapt to a constantly changing world of work. The University of St Andrews is committed to delivering the education, resources and environment which will enable students to become highly employable in the present and the future. Both immediate and subsequent successful outcomes will depend, however, on the commitment and capabilities of the student or graduate as well as the contingencies of the labour market. Many St Andrews graduates are likely to become leaders in a wide range of fields, including academia, or successful entrepreneurs; that is, to be among the job creators of the future.

Graduates are employable when they have the skills, knowledge and personal attributes which enable them to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful. The University of St Andrews recognises students' desires and needs to develop their employability while studying at the University and seeks to provide the most conducive environment possible for students to become highly employable. The University recognises that success in this endeavour is a shared responsibility, demanding the committed engagement of students themselves as well as significant contributions from academic schools and a range of professional service units. The Careers Centre and Centre for Academic, Professional & Organisational Development (CAPOD) have particular and clearly identified roles to play in respect to employability. These are outlined in section 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7.

The remainder of this document details where and how responsibilities are shared to deliver this strategy, how good practices are identified, established and shared, and how success will be measured. An operational plan is appended.

2. Engagement with stakeholders

2.1 Student commitment and engagement

Students are expected to understand the importance of taking responsibility for their employability development and to engage with careers resources and support early in their university careers. Thereafter they will be encouraged to prioritise their employability development through active engagement with the resources and experiences made available to them.

¹ University Strategy 2015-2025 <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/governance/universitystrategy/>

They will be encouraged to approach their University experience with a growth mindset (a self-developmental disposition to feedback and support) and engage in personal development planning each year to strengthen their employability skills.

2.2 Academic Schools

Academic Schools will actively engage with developing student employability.

All rigorous academic activity, pursued for academic reasons, may enhance students' employability. In addition, academic modules can potentially contribute to students' ability to develop a range of specific employability skills. For this reason, academic staff will, where appropriate, create and develop modules with specific employability outcomes in mind; make linkages between academic content and workplace skills; and incorporate assessment methods that mirror workplace outputs (e.g. writing reports, policy briefings and group presentations). Finally, Schools will provide an academic endorsement of the employability support available to students and communicate the importance of planning their future careers through engagement with the Careers Centre and CAPOD.

2.3 Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Students are encouraged to engage with the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available while still pursuing academic excellence and carefully managing their time. Such activities are an important part of the student experience and can also foster employability skills.

2.4 Careers Centre and CAPOD

Students will be encouraged to develop an additional range of employability and career management skills and attitudes, principally through the resources and guidance of the Careers Centre and CAPOD, that are complementary to the skills developed in their academic studies.

In addition to workshops, events and careers fairs, the Careers Centre will provide individual guidance and coaching for students which encompasses career choice, resource and opportunity identification, networking and application support. The Careers Centre will also provide a wide range of further study and employment resources, with global scope, mainly through its website.

CAPOD, through its Professional Skills Programme and GRADskills, will raise students' awareness of the range of professional skills which employers value. Their development will be facilitated via workshops, online learning, and training for voluntary student roles.

2.5 Work Experience

The Careers Centre will work to help each student identify areas of work experience suitable for their career aspirations, and support them in their applications. The University, through Schools and the Careers Centre, will provide an extensive range of exclusive undergraduate internship opportunities in research and professional areas. Academic Schools and the Careers Centre will continue to address the needs of the postgraduate community to explore the range of employment options available to them through work shadowing and other opportunities. The Careers Centre will continue to gather and promote local part-time job opportunities.

2.6 Employer Engagement

The University will actively engage with graduate employers to better understand their needs, to promote to them the quality of St Andrews graduates and to maximise the number and range of internship and graduate opportunities. The Careers Centre will maintain a dialogue with graduate employers to remain informed about recruitment trends.

2.7 Alumni Support

The University, through the Careers Centre and CAPOD, will support recent alumni in the early stages of their career, and seek to draw on the experience of experienced alumni to strengthen the employability skills of future graduates.

3. Establishing and sharing good practices

The University will commit to the regular review and sharing of good employability practice in a number of ways, including through: the internal quality monitoring process; the Employability Working Group; the Careers Link network in Schools; and regular update meetings between the Careers Centre and CAPOD. A clear reporting line between these groups and the Proctor will be established to facilitate good communication and identification of priorities.

4. Monitoring Outcomes

The success of this strategy will be reported in the following ways:

Internal review: The Employability Working Group will commission an annual report, combining the Careers Centre Annual Report and CAPOD Professional Skills Curriculum data, to be tabled subsequently at the Learning and Teaching Committee and Service Directors' Student Experience Group, reviewing the effectiveness of the Institution's holistic approach to employability, and drawing conclusions from the data on usage of resources, student satisfaction, and comparative performance (e.g. HESA employability indicator). The Working Group will table recommendations for future improvements.

Survey data: Each year the DLHE survey data will continue to be analysed and shared institutionally as part of the Careers Centre's Annual Report. In addition, an internal 2017 student pre-arrival and graduation employability survey will be introduced to establish benchmarks and to allow for improvement and maintenance targets to be set.

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