

## Dr Dickon Copsey – Social Sciences

### GAs Case Study Video Script

YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/UyEnK3ggy9A>

#### Who are you?

I'm Dickon Copsey and I'm the Employability Officer in the College of Social Sciences. Along with my colleague, Gail McGuigan, the Careers Manager for Adam Smith Business School, I have been delivering a 4-week employability programme which supports students' development of employability skills and graduate attributes.

#### What was the activity and who were the participants?

Our 4-week employability programme for level 2 Accounting and Finance students was designed to increase students' awareness of their strengths, their skills and their attributes at a key stage of their employability and to articulate these skills to prospective employers.

#### Why the chosen activity?

The aim of the programme was to help students to:

- develop self-awareness;
- start to understand the opportunities that are available to them and how to research these;
- how to make career decisions;
- and how to promote themselves through LinkedIn and network effectively.

After each of our sessions, a follow up e-mail was sent to students with additional resources relating to the session, with additional tasks they could undertake and a reminder of what we would cover the following week.

In the final session, we asked students to write 'a postcard to their future selves' with 3 key pledges on how they would further improve their employability during their 3<sup>rd</sup> year. This will be sent to them at the end of summer.

## What worked well?

Overall, the 4-week employability programme worked well. The model has been refined over the past 4 years. In a relatively short space of time (8 hours), students move to a place where they are much better at analysing and identifying their own strengths and skill sets. They can articulate these skills in a format suitable for prospective employers, and have started to expand their professional networks and future career plans through direct contact with alumni.

Key successes were the mix of interactive and teacher-led activities, the combination of group and individual learning, the complementary learning that was required in between classes and the general positive student's responses to the level and format of the content delivered.

## What were the challenges?

Areas for future consideration could include:

- How to retain students across all 4 sessions;
- How to ensure learning continues beyond the 4- week block;
- A more robust evaluation of the impact of the classes on confidence and knowledge acquisition;
- How to roll out the materials and classroom sessions designed for 40 students to the whole Level 2 Accounting and Finance cohort.

## Would you recommend this to the other academics?

Over a period of 8 hours we can take students to a place where they are much better able to reflect on their strengths, skills and graduate attributes related to their ongoing employability. This can help to engage and re-engage students with their academic studies and to understand the longer-term benefits of their degree programme.

This programme can work well with both smaller groups in a seminar type environment but also could be adapted to large lectures with the addition of complimentary online learning tasks.