Enhancing Employability for Chemists through Personal Marketing and the Language of Industry

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Outline of Presentation

- Previous work
- Proposal
- Review
- Activities
- Pilot
- Evaluation
- Dissemination
- Acknowledgements
Previous Work

*Chemistry Skills *Transferable Skills *Personal Development

????

EMPLOYABLE GRADUATES
The Project

*Chemistry Skills* *Transferable Skills* *Personal Development*

CAREERS SKILLS

MORE EMPLOYABLE GRADUATES

- Instruction, Activities, Professional input
- Higher Education Academy, University of Strathclyde, January 2012
Review & Research

• Students

• Staff / IP Team

• Industrial Partners
Feedback from partners: 1

- ‘Students would benefit from some practice of ‘thinking outside the box’ exercises that would hopefully increase confidence in recruitment activities.’
- ‘To achieve high class graduates, it is no longer enough to be “subject experts”.’
- ‘Graduates require to have necessary subject skills, but also need to be able to identify how, when and where they developed their transferable skills.’
PILOT SCHEME
Feedback from partners: 2

• ‘The technical training that Strathclyde University provides for the undergraduate chemists, along with the development of transferable skills, set a very strong foundation for a successful transition to industry.’

• ‘The students were more prepared with an array of examples and great improvement in how well structured these answers were.’

Activities:
5 skills areas*

1. Employability skills
2. Organisations, business and ethics
3. Marketing (and self-marketing) skills
4. IT skills
5. Job seeking, personal, communication and interview skills

*With overlap between the 5 areas
Activities:

1. Employability skills

- Student Ambassador skills (University of Strathclyde)
  - identifying baseline skills
- Self marketing / skills recognition instruction
  - interview activity, CV building
- Recruitment specialist
  - CV instruction
- Team building skills
  - assessment centre activity
Activities:
2. Organisations, business and ethics

• Organisational structures
  – International environments
  – Corporate structures
  – Team work

• Ethics
  – Business ethics
  – Personal ethics
Activities:
3. Marketing skills

• Introduction to marketing concepts

• Professional PR presentation
  – student presentation

• Personal profile raising
  – application forms
Activities:
4. IT skills

• Social marketing
  – For businesses
  – Personal perspective

• Creation of personal webpage / wiki

• Activity: review of personal social marketing pages
Activities:

5. Job seeking, personal, communication and interview skills

• Interview practice (video)

• Rating competencies

• Psychometric testing
Pilot

• Delivery: October / November 2012

• Audience: ~40 final year honours students

• Format: Careers Skills Class (20 credits)
Benefits to Students

• Increased confidence
• Increased awareness of business processes
• Increased recognition of their personal skills
• Better communication of their personal skills
• Easier transition to the workplace
• Benefits to employers!
Next steps

• Evaluation

• Students
  – Immediately
  – In the future

• Industrial partners

• HESA statistics (within time)
Dissemination

• Widely within our institution
• Conferences
• HEA website
• HEA workshop
• Publication
• Direct contact
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Finally

‘We must produce graduates who can think critically, have an analytical approach, can interpret data and information, tackle unfamiliar and open-ended problems and apply all the chemical knowledge that they have acquired.’

‘In addition, the modern graduate must master a range of ‘professional’ or key skills. These include communication, team working skills, time management, information management, independent learning.’

TL Overton (2001) Teaching Chemists to Think: From Parrots to Professionals, University Chemistry Education, 5, 62-68.
Any questions?

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