1D Developing graduate attributes and improving student employability through work-based learning: Opportunities, successes and challenges

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In the changing environment of learning and teaching, work-based learning (WBL) can be a great opportunity for students to develop graduate attributes and enhance their student experience. At the same time, our national student surveys indicate that career development and opportunities for WBL are increasingly key factors in student motivation for undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate taught study. In recognition of this, the University has recently developed a Work-based and Placement Learning Code of Practice, and projects aiming to improve these sorts of opportunities are currently underway across all four colleges. Although the specific goals of each project differ, we have found that we face similar challenges. This workshop will provide participants with information about approaches and available resources as well as a forum to discuss best practice and challenges in work-related learning provision, including the following issues:

1. The variety of types of opportunities included in WBL, including placements, consultation projects, collaborative dissertations, and more.
2. Experiences in creating new placements for schools and/or employers that have not previously offered them and barriers to doing so, including legal issues.
3. Sustainability of programmes as student demand increases, ensuring a good balance between student and placement numbers and variety.
4. How best to assess learning during placements, including development of graduate attributes.
5. Sharing of existing expertise, including from Club 21 and the WBL Code of Practice.
6. Support for placement students, including supporting the development of skills that will enhance their experience in the workplace, and peer groups for sharing experience.
7. Cost-effective administrative support for staff to manage WBL programmes and to maintain communications with external partners.

In this workshop, we will briefly discuss the range of projects we are currently working on and the successes and challenges we have encountered, followed by a structured discussion.

References


International Student Barometer Summer 2012, International Graduate Insight Group Ltd