

# **GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY 2012**

## **Improving Understanding among Students, Institutions, Business: Avoiding “Generation Crunch”**

- > Wednesday, February 29, 2012
- > Graduate Employability: Developing the Right Skills
- > Paul M. Marshall
- > Chief Executive

# Summary

- > *Graduate Employment in statistics*
- > *Graduate Employment – the context*
- > *Beyond the Curriculum: Opportunities to enhance employability and future life choices,*  
1994 Group, November 2009

## Context: UK Graduate Employment in Statistics, HESA 2008/09

	<b>% Employed after 6 months (excludes further study)</b>	<b><i>Of those employed, % in Graduate level jobs</i></b>
<b>•1994 Group</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>•Russell Group</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>•University Alliance</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>•Million+</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>•Total UK</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>73</b>

# 1994 Group Report: *Graduate Employment and Earnings: Are Universities Meeting Student Expectations?*, November 2008

- > Using data extracted from Opinionpanel's *Higher Expectations Survey 2007/08* based on interviews with new full-time UGs in first few weeks of term and the DLHE *Longitudinal Survey* taken 3 ½ years after graduation.
- > 'Assess the relationship between students' expectations when they begin university, in terms of their perceptions of the benefits of HE on their levels of employment, earnings and career satisfaction with the reality of what is being achieved by graduates from the same universities.'

# Student Perceptions

To what extent was your future employability and earning potential a consideration when you were choosing which university to study at?			
	Research-intensive universities	Other Institutions	All Institutions
To a great extent	34%	25%	29%
To some extent	50%	52%	51%
Not a consideration at all	15%	21%	19%
Don't know	1%	2%	1%

# Student Perceptions

To what extent was your future employability and earning potential a consideration when you were choosing the course to study at university?			
	Research-intensive universities	Other Institutions	All Institutions
To a great extent	34%	43%	39%
To some extent	55%	47%	50%
Not a consideration at all	11%	8%	9%
Don't know	1%	2%	1%

# Destinations, Employment and Earnings

Proportion of respondent graduates reported to be earning over £20K and over £25K after 3½ years

Institutional group	Over £20K	Over £25K
Research intensive univs.	75%	49%
Other Institutions	59%	27%
All Institutions	65%	35%

# Environment: We Live in a VUCA World

Bob Johansen, *Get There Early: Sensing the Future to Compete in the Present* (2007)

- > Vulnerable
- > Uncertain
- > Chaotic
- > Ambiguous

# Environment: We Live in a VUCA World

- > **Dan Brown, *An Open Letter to Educators* (2010)**
- > “You need to understand the World is changing and if you won’t change with it, the World will decide it doesn’t need you any more.”
- > 228,000 hits on You Tube
- > <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-P2PGGeTOA4&feature=related>

# Leadership Challenges: Success in a VUCA world

Bob Johansen, *Get There Early: Sensing the Future to Compete in the Present* (2007)

- > Vision
- > Understanding
- > Clarity
- > Agility

# Leadership Challenges: Success in a VUCA world

- > ***Great By Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos and Luck – Why Some Thrive Despite them All***
- > Jim Collins and Morten T. Hansen, October 2011

# Great By Choice: Myths Undermined by the Research

- > **Myth:** Successful Leaders in a turbulent world are bold, risk seeking visionaries
- > **Finding:** The best leaders did not have a visionary ability to predict the future. They observed what worked, figured out *why* it worked, and built on proven foundations

# Great By Choice: Myths Undermined by the Research

- > **Myth:** Innovation distinguishes successful companies in a VUCA world
- > **Finding:** Innovation is not a trump card. More important is the ability to *scale* innovation, to blend creativity with discipline

# Great By Choice: Myths Undermined by the Research

- > **Myth:** The VUCA world favours the speedy
- > **Finding:** ‘Fast! Fast! Fast!’ is a good way to get killed. Successful leaders figure out *when* to go fast and when *not* to

# Great By Choice: Myths Undermined by the Research

- > **Myth:** Radical change on the outside requires radical change on the inside
- > **Finding:** Successful companies changed less in reaction to their changing world

# Great By Choice: Myths Undermined by the Research

- > **Myth:** Great enterprises have a lot more luck
- > **Finding:** The critical question is not whether you'll have luck, but what you *do* with the luck that you get

# Employer Needs

- > *“Employers greatly value the knowledge and skills that graduates develop whilst studying at university, along with the skills and experience they gain from undertaking activities beyond the curriculum.”*
- > *The most employable graduates are those who not only have this blend of skills, but who are able to demonstrate and articulate how they have developed their skills and why they are important.”*
- > *Miles Templeman, Former Director-General Institute of Directors*

# **1994 Group Report: *Beyond the Curriculum: Opportunities to Enhance Employability and Future Life Choices*, November 2009**

- > Gathered information on the co-curricular activity taking place or being developed at member institutions.
- > Considering 5 aspects to activity, the report presented a 'snapshot' that summarised and analysed current practice, highlighted examples through case studies and looked forward with recommendations for universities, business and the government.

# Key Findings: Nature of Activity

- > The majority of 1994 group institutions offer a formal co-curricular award, or had plans to do so.
- > The awards encompass a range of activities, including skills sessions, volunteering, work experience, sports and societies, and have a formal assessment process.
- > Other institutions have programmes that provide volunteering or work experience placements and career development modules, which may be on an assessed or more informal basis.
- > Employability is a key aim of co-curricular activity, as is enhancing the student experience

# Key Findings: Participation

- > Co-curricular awards are primarily aimed at undergraduates, although in some institutions postgraduates are eligible or will have another award developed for them.
- > Generally all undergraduates are eligible, although some newly-piloted awards have been restricted to particular year groups.
- > The more informal activities, such as volunteer placements, are available to all.

# Nature of Activity: Case Study

- > A student participating in the **Leicester Award for Employability** is required to:
  - > Attend three interactive workshops throughout the academic year
  - > Complete two pieces of reflective writing based on their work experience
  - > Participate in e-learning activities via Blackboard
  - > Give a short presentation at the end of the programme
- > There are several support sessions planned throughout the year to help students with all aspects of the programme. The Award is formally endorsed by the University of Leicester and will appear on a successful participant's academic transcript.

# Nature of Activity: Case Study

- > 'Sam', a chemistry undergraduate, received a York Award by demonstrating:
  - > **Academic study:** the employability skills developed by studying for his Chemistry degree
  - > **Work experience:** the transferable skills gained from his vacation job working in the DEFRA Central Science Laboratory, from his part-time job in a bar, and working at a children's summer camp
  - > **Personal interests:** the employability skills developed whilst being a Students' Union Events Rep and through his involvement in the University rugby club
  - > **Elective Courses:** from the broad range of extra-curricular courses available as part of the York Award, Sam completed the following:
    - > An Introduction to British Sign Language
    - > The York Enterprise Scheme
    - > Team Development

# Nature of Activity: Case Study

- > Each of these elements contributed a certain number of 'points'. Sam needed to achieve 100 points before applying for the York Award.
- > To apply for the York Award, Sam completed a substantial application form and was interviewed by a panel that consisted of an employer, an academic and a York Award representative.
- > Throughout the application process Sam needed to demonstrate, and evidence, an analytical and reflective approach to the development of a range of skills.

## Key Findings: Nature of Activity

- > There is no one 'right' model for co-curricular activity and the diversity of provision between institutions should be seen as a strength, ensuring it is tailored to individual circumstances.
- > Awards should aim to enhance both employability and the student experience.

# Key Findings: Employer Involvement

- > In order to meet the employability aims of co-curricular activity, employers – the ultimate arbiters of this quality – are heavily involved in awards.
- > This spans the development, delivery and assessment stages, in addition to sponsorship and endorsement.
- > For universities, employer involvement ensures that the schemes are meaningful and produce employable graduates. For employers, involvement ensures that the awards meet their needs in terms of skills development, and is an opportunity to raise their profile among students.

# Key Findings: Measuring Success

- > The success of co-curricular awards and activity is being measured by widely-sourced feedback covering students, alumni, staff and employers.
- > The feedback received thus far has been overwhelmingly positive and strongly endorses the introduction of co-curricular programmes from both a student experience and employability perspective.
- > Students report that they have gained immense personal benefit from their co-curricular activity, have a much clearer idea of what employers are looking for and believe it will help them in their careers.

# Recommendations

- The government should show its support for co-curricular activity by creating incentives for employers to become involved, such as a scheme in which government matches employers' contributions (whether these are cash or in kind).
- Institutions should consider developing different levels of activity; a general award or training to be undertaken by a significant proportion of students, and a 'high-flier' award for those students who are highly-motivated and committed.
- There must be a balance between demanding so great a commitment that only a few students complete an award, and requiring too little for the award to be meaningful.

# Conclusion

- Recognised 'co-curricular' activity, run in parallel to degree programmes, is a route through which to meet employers' demand for skills obtained outside the academic curriculum and develop the employability and career prospects of graduates.
- It is also, crucially, an extremely effective way of enhancing the experience of students in higher education, whether they are undergraduate or postgraduate, from the UK or abroad, studying full-time or part-time.

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