

Industrial Training in the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development

Context

Employers are increasingly demanding that graduates are fully equipped to have an almost immediate impact on their organisation with little further training, and that graduates have work experience in a relevant discipline either through summer placements or 12-months industrial placements.

Many competitor institutions now offer students a chance to undertake 12 months industrial experience as part of their degree programme, and students have become increasingly interested in this option as it enables them to acquire more of the skills and knowledge required for the workplace.

Aim

The aim of this project was to create Industrial Placements within the School, where placements had not previously existed, primarily through the creation of a 4-year degree programme with the option for students to undertake 12 months industrial training. Students will go on their year in industry at the end of Part 2.

Resources and Processes

The project was primarily managed by a Project Officer based within the School, and was part of a range of teaching enhancement projects. The key processes were:

- developing literature for students interested in undertaking an industrial placement;
- developing a method for monitoring students whilst on placement;
- developing a method of assessing potential placements;
- finding sufficient placements;
- embedding the scheme in to Programme specifications;
- encouraging students to undertake industrial placements; and
- ensuring the sustainability of the project.

Results

The scheme was set up during AY06/7 with only limited placements available for the summer, and only one student successfully obtained a placement. In AY08/9 16 students applied for at least one placement. In addition the School has been encouraging part 1 students to undertake summer placements as an introduction to industrial training, and has had some success with this.

Sustainability

The interest in placements from students is growing. The Project Officer has supported the development of placements, and supported students through the application and interview process, during the implementation of this project. Sustainability should be achieved through the generation of 0.5FTE with each placement, and the contribution this can make to the School in requesting additional academic posts in proportion to taught FTEs.

Further information

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