

# Policy on employability, work-related learning and careers

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. We believe in the potential of our students. As a University, we want all our students and alumni to succeed, whatever their ambitions, after their degree has ended.
- 1.2. We seek to inspire in students a curiosity about their options, and a deeper understanding of their own strengths, values, motivations and attitudes. Our aim is to empower them to take proactive actions to progress to the success they are looking for.
- 1.3. This policy sets out how the whole University helps students to build the foundation for their success and transition from the University of Reading to their next stage in life. This is a University-wide responsibility, as all aspects of student experience contribute to a student's success, as articulated in the [Curriculum Framework](#).

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy covers all Foundation, Undergraduate, Pre-Experience Taught Post-Graduate and PhD students studying at the University of Reading in the UK, including Henley Business School. This policy does not cover apprenticeship programmes.

## 3. Policy

- 3.1 All programmes must contain the following elements, embedded across the curriculum, available and accessible for all students, and clearly signposted in programme-related documentation:

- 3.1.1 Exposure to job roles, career paths and areas of work related to the programme of study, in a way that stimulates curiosity about the world of work and the full range of future possibilities;
- 3.1.2 Opportunities to develop a broad range of employability skills, and to understand and articulate what these are and how they are supported within programmes;
- 3.1.3 Opportunities to engage with real-life work problems or work scenarios in contexts relevant to the programme.

## 4. Definitions and descriptions

- 4.2 **Employability skills** are skills, sometimes also known as transferable skills, that enable an individual to succeed in their working lives and are broader than subject-specific technical skills.
  - 4.2.1 A number of these are included in the [Graduate Attributes](#), such as self-awareness and reflection, self-efficacy, intellectual curiosity, adaptability, resilience and commitment to lifelong learning;
  - 4.2.2 Whilst the Graduate Attributes are applicable institution-wide, the Curriculum Framework suggests Programme Directors, in conjunction with programme teams and Boards of Studies and Student Experience (BoSSE), should determine which, and how many, employability skills to embed. These should be skills that are most relevant to the industries/sectors/professions that their programme is related to, and/or their students aspire to go into;
  - 4.2.3 Knowing and learning about, practising and reflecting on these skills via a facilitated process will increase students' employability and their self-awareness;
  - 4.2.4 The revisiting of these skills can either recap on previous learning, or cover more advanced concepts, to allow scaffolding of learning.
- 4.3 **Technical skills**, such as laboratory techniques, mathematical methods, and ability to use specialist software, are delivered within relevant programmes, but these are just a sub-set of employability skills.
- 4.4 **Recruitability skills**, such as writing effective applications, or interview techniques, are not employability skills. While these are important skills, they form a sub-set of communication skills and are related to confidence and resilience.
- 4.5 **Embedded employability** occurs when programmes, and their component modules and assessments, ensure that exploring career options and skills to enhance employability are incorporated within learning objectives and outcomes.

This is typically achieved through authentic modes of teaching and assessment that cover subject-related material.

**4.5.1** Through this our graduates will be able to make successful transitions and contributions, benefitting them, the economy and their communities, and enable the university to achieve its' institutional strategic goals in relation to graduate outcomes.

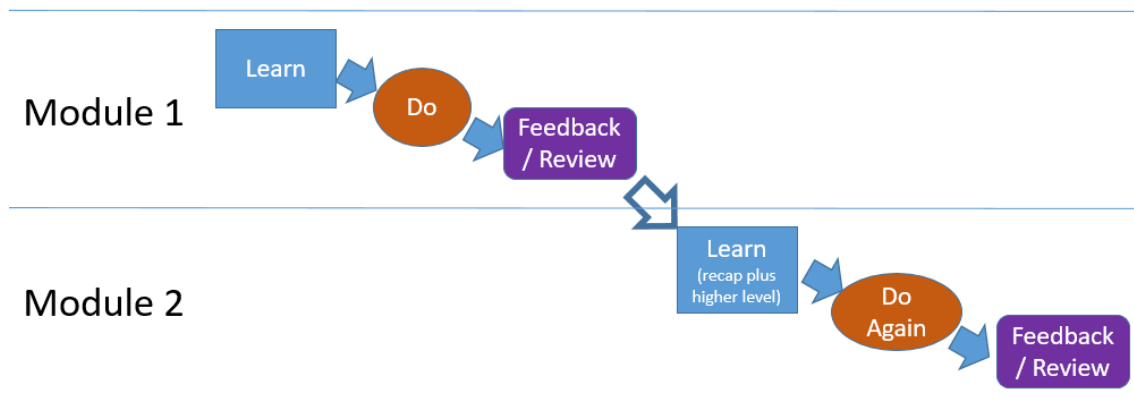
**4.5.2** Embedding employability is the way forward because it is both efficient and effective. There are already many of these skills used in programmes, the development of these skills is aligned to programme needs, and it maximises participation by the students, as they are attending the modules. This means that it is accessible to all students, which is particularly important for students from under-represented groups as they are often less able to take part in extra/co-curricular activities.

**4.6** **Work-related learning** describes opportunities that use real-world context to develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding, including learning through the experience of work e.g., placements and internships. Other examples include input from professionals such as guest lectures, case studies and live briefs. [The University code of practice on work-based and placement learning](#) provides further guidance.

## 5. Requirements for effective Embedded Employability

**Employability skills covered are:**

- 5.1.1. Available and accessible to all students undertaking the programme;
- 5.1.2. Constructively aligned and clearly communicated at both Programme and Module levels;
- 5.1.3. Within a programme, students learn about the skill, practice the skill and reflect on their performance of the skill;



- 5.1.4. Accumulative, with skills revisited, giving students the opportunity to improve during the programme, as illustrated above;
- 5.1.5. Informed, designed and delivered by a range of stakeholders, including academic colleagues, the careers and placements team, employers, alumni and students;
- 5.1.6. Led/accountable at School or Department level by a named person (e.g. a School or Department Employability Lead);
- 5.1.7. Incorporate work-related learning that provides students with an appreciation of the applicability of their knowledge in real-world contexts;
- 5.1.8. Activities and interventions are evaluated for impact alongside subject-related learning.

## 6. Careers Education, Information, Advice, Guidance and Coaching

The Careers and Henley Careers teams will undertake to:

- 6.1. Offer an inclusive service that provides information, via online, 1-2-1 and group delivery methods, that students and recent alumni can access in order to determine their own appropriate actions, develop recruitability skills and self-efficacy.
- 6.2. Present information in a way that motivates the individual students or alumni to take things forwards themselves.
- 6.3. Further detail is provided in the Careers and Placements Team [Statement of Service](#).

## 7. Roles, Accountabilities and Responsibilities

### 7.1. Programme Directors (in conjunction with Boards of Studies and Student Experience)

- 7.1.1. Determine the employability skills that will be covered in the programme, in consultation with the programme team;
- 7.1.2. Design a structure that allows students to build those skills in modules over the programme;
- 7.1.3. Ensure that relevant employability skills are appropriately embedded in their programme and reflected in programme-level learning outcomes;

## UoR Report – Careers and Employability

- 7.1.4. Seek support from their Careers Consultant to aid understanding of: job markets; identifying relevant employability skills; how to embed career curiosity, employability and work-related learning, and how to design sessions that incorporate these, reflections and learnings, as documented in the [Careers Statement of Service](#);
- 7.1.5. Quality assure the development of employability skills;
- 7.1.6. Highlight employability skills to students at appropriate points during the programme, explaining why they are being developed.

### 7.2. Employability Leads

- 7.2.1. Heads of School/Department should allocate a designated employability lead, which could be a standalone role, or in combination with other roles;
- 7.2.2. This role should raise the profile of employability matters throughout the school or department, and build the infrastructure to support embedded employability;
- 7.2.3. This role should facilitate a strong working relationship with the central Careers and Placements team, to ensure a coherent approach.

### 7.3. School Leadership

Heads of School are accountable for the three points below, though responsibility may be delegated to a School Director for Teaching and Learning and School Director of Postgraduate Research Studies:

- 7.3.1. Provide an ongoing focus on employability at School level;
- 7.3.2. Prioritise and actively promote attainment of employability skills on a par with attainment of subject matter knowledge;
- 7.3.3. Provide an ongoing commitment to support structures that ensure that Employability is appropriately embedded in all programmes.

### 7.4. University Teaching and Learning Leadership

- 7.4.1. Ensure employability considerations are appropriately represented in School Teaching Enhancement Action Plans, and that employability interventions are evaluated and the impact measured.
- 7.4.2. Escalate significant concerns with a School's lack of engagement with this policy to the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education and Student Experience.

### **7.5. Module Convenors**

- 7.5.1. Design modules that support the development of employability, in alignment with the programme design;
- 7.5.2. Seek support from their designated Careers Consultant and Placement Coordinator if there is a placement element to the module;
- 7.5.3. Ensure that employability skills identified for inclusion in their module are taught, practiced and reflected upon;
- 7.5.4. Work with other module convenors who are designing the development of the same skills, to ensure a cohesive, complementary and cumulative approach as part of the overall programme's employability strategy .

### **7.6. Academic Tutors**

- 7.6.1. Engage their tutees in discussions about their future, both short and long term;
- 7.6.2. Encourage exploration of ideas and proactive action;
- 7.6.3. Refer to Careers and Placements team colleagues as appropriate.

### **7.7. Careers and Henley Careers**

The central Careers team will undertake to provide the following support to Schools, with the exception of Henley Business School, for which this support will be provided by the Henley Careers team:

- 7.7.1. Programme and module support (provided to academic colleagues):
  - a) Advice on matters relating to employability, careers support and work-related learning, due to expertise related to trends in the area and jobs markets;
  - b) Advice on embedding graduate attributes, and other employability skills development, careers curiosity and work-related learning within programmes, and how to evaluate their effectiveness;
  - c) Co-design of programmes, modules and sessions to develop students' employability;
  - d) Provision of data on student employability needs, recruitment trends and graduate destinations;
  - e) Support setting up and delivering placement modules, in conjunction with the Placements Team;
  - f) Advice on, and brokering of conversations and round tables with industry professionals;

## UoR Report – Careers and Employability

- g) Signposting of student-facing support and resources;
- h) Identification of where new support /resources would benefit multiple programmes.

### 7.7.2. Support provided directly to students:

- a) Inspiring career curiosity, career action planning, and developing recruitability skills through a variety of in-, co- & extra-curricular mechanisms;
- b) Further detail is provided in the Careers and Placements Team [Statement of Service](#).

## 7.8. CQSD

Colleagues in Academic Development and Enhancement (ADE) will:

- 7.8.1. Share good practice for Embedding Employability for learning design, and quality assurance
- 7.8.2. Communicate, and advise on, the processes to follow, and the requirements to meet, with respect to embedding and evaluating employability in the curriculum.

## 7.9. Placement Tutors

- 7.9.1. Ensure that placement programmes and modules are promoted, provide space within the curriculum for preparatory support and ensure learning outcomes are being met whilst students are on placement.

## 7.10. Support Centre staff

- 7.10.1. Signpost students to appropriate sources of information, advice and guidance regarding employability and careers.

# 8. Governance

- 8.1. Careers and employability is covered by existing quality assurance mechanisms and overseen through Boards of Studies and Student Experience (at subject level), by DELT (Sub-Committee on Delivery and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching), CoSED (Committee on Student Experience and Development) and ultimately UBTLSE (the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience) at University level.
- 8.2. Details of the extant mechanisms can be found on the [CQSD webpages](#).

## 9. Related Policies and Documents

- 9.1. [Careers and Placements Team Statement of Service](#)
- 9.2. [University code of practice on work-based and placement learning](#) (currently under review)
- 9.3. [Curriculum Framework](#) – including Graduate Attributes and Programme Principles.
- 9.4. Employability, Careers and Work-based Learning [Toolkit](#)

## 10. Version control

Version	Section	Keeper	Reviewed	Approving authority	Approval date	Start date	Next review
1.0	Careers	A.Delazun	4 years	UBTLSE	2/11/22	Nov 2023	Autumn 2026