

# UK universities growing global graduates



**University Alliance brings together 24 of the UK's most innovative and enterprising universities that are leading the way in preparing students for work. New research shows Alliance universities are the destination of choice for international students whose top priority is getting a good job. With outstanding graduate employment rates and over a quarter of all students in the UK, they are having a big impact on the economy at home and abroad.**

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**Graduate careers are under the spotlight.**

**Students want to ensure their degree and time at university will help set them up for a rewarding and fulfilling career in a rapidly changing world. 'Growing global graduates' highlights the importance international students place on employability. It explores how Alliance universities are equipping graduates to succeed through university-wide initiatives, in-work opportunities, in-course opportunities and personal support.**

International students are attracted to study in the United Kingdom (UK) because of the reputation of the higher education available and the belief that it will increase their employability.<sup>(1)(2)</sup> In the International Graduate Insight Group (i-graduate) International Student Barometer (ISB), employability – as perceived by the student – is identified as a major contributing factor affecting student satisfaction. We have analysed ISB data exploring the motivations, expectations and satisfaction of international students studying in institutions globally, in the UK and in Alliance universities across measures relating to 'employability'.

UK universities perform well against institutions globally across all satisfaction measures. Within the UK, Alliance universities perform particularly well, especially in measures relating to placements and experience of work as part of their studies. This research suggests that students are highly motivated and career focused and that Alliance universities are exceeding their students' high expectations with the employability support and opportunities available to them during their studies.

***Employability: a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations which benefit themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.***<sup>(3)</sup>

At Alliance universities 60,000 students from across the world are studying alongside 450,000 students from the UK. Seven out of ten international students are from outside the European Union with the majority coming from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The diverse student body and workforce creates a more internationalised learning experience for all, essential for growing global graduates equipped for an ever more connected world.

**We have broken down employability support and initiatives into four areas. In each section, alongside the data, the initiatives and opportunities described give a glimpse of why students choose to study at Alliance universities and graduate more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen careers.**

## University-wide initiatives

## In-course opportunities

## In-work opportunities

## Personal support

## Why employability matters

Employability matters for individuals, the economy and society. Globalisation, technological advances, shifts in consumer demand and demographic changes are having a major impact on global labour markets. The proportion of the working population at graduate-level influences a nation's productivity, pattern of economic growth and ability to meet the needs of business, individuals and society. Jobs in many industries are changing rapidly, affecting countries in different ways across the world. In the past twenty years, many countries have seen some industries disappear altogether and in their place new professions and sectors are now creating large numbers of jobs. This trend is forecast to continue.<sup>(4)</sup> <sup>(5)</sup> Graduates need to be able to continually adapt and build on their skills and knowledge to be effective and prosper in a rapidly changing world.

To this end, Alliance universities focus not only on equipping students for immediate employment but for long-term employability. Within and alongside their studies, students have access to opportunities designed to enhance their personal development and growth. They are leading the way in integrating a rewarding academic experience alongside experience of work, placements, international experience, 'live' projects with business, professional one-to-one careers support and innovative, employer-engaged course design.

## Motivations

Individuals choose to study different courses at different institutions for a variety of reasons. The research shows that 87% of international students studying at Alliance universities are studying because they want to get a good job. Students recognise the value of higher education in improving their employability and the data suggest that Alliance universities attract students particularly focused on their future careers.

Our analysis found interesting variation by nationality, subject level of study and gender. Across the UK, female students were more driven to study to get a good job than their male counterparts. Female Alliance students were particularly career-focused with 91% studying to get a good job compared with 84% of female students across UK universities. Responses for European students were higher than other students. Irish students at Alliance universities were particularly driven with 96% motivated to study to get a good job.

Those at Alliance universities studying subjects not linked to a particular vocation were more likely to report that they studied to get a good job compared to others studying in the same subject area at other universities.

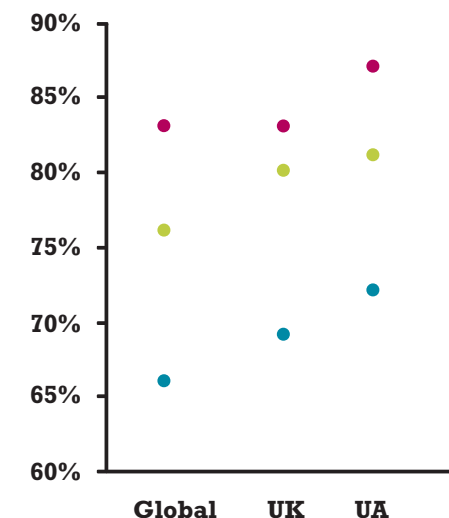
The difference is most noticeable in languages, literature, linguistics and classics, between 12 and 17 percentage points higher at Alliance universities. This could indicate that the focus on employability across all subject areas at Alliance universities has been recognised by students.

We also looked at whether students wanted to make a lot of money. Students were not as motivated by high earnings as they were to get a good job, but this was still a motivation to study for 76% of Alliance students and 71% globally. A third of Alliance international students agreed that work was more important to them than personal life, slightly higher than the global figure of 29%. Responses to these two personal drivers greatly varied across nationalities, mode of study and subject area.

## Highly motivated and highly satisfied students

**International students choosing to study at Alliance universities were strongly motivated to do so to get a good job. The data suggests students are highly satisfied with the in-course learning and in-work opportunities available to them at universities across the UK, and at Alliance universities in particular.**

- I study so that I can get a good job  
% agree
- Learning that will help me to get a good job  
% satisfied
- Opportunities for work experience/work placements as part of my studies  
% satisfied



## Expectations

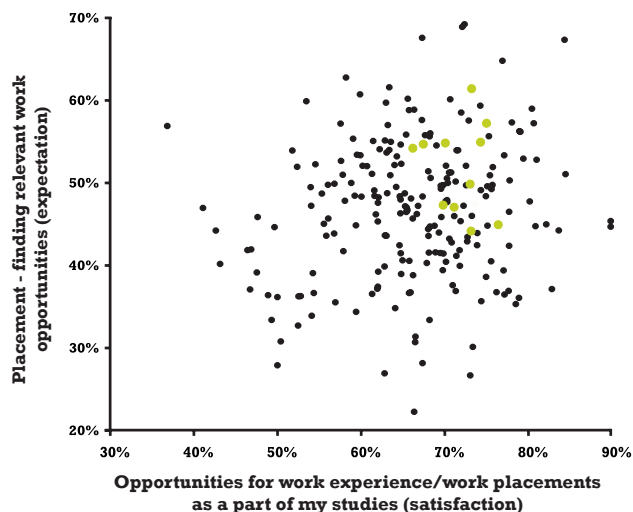
International students come to the UK with expectations that their course and wider university experience will improve their career prospects and that they will receive targeted careers advice. Of the students surveyed, more than five in six expect careers support. For Nigerian and Indian students this is as high as 19 in 20. Nearly two thirds of students expect to receive guidance on career paths and choices, this varies across different nationalities, levels of study, gender and study area. Half of students expect information on career options and practical support including CV writing, interview training and skills workshops. Over a third have expectations of their university securing a job for them, but this varies greatly between students of different nationalities – 56% of Malaysian students but only 9% of German students.

## Student expectation and satisfaction of in-work opportunities

### Data note:

Each scatter graph shows data from the ISB at an institutional level for universities globally. Alliance universities are denoted in a highlight colour and other institutions are denoted in black.

The survey data includes responses from over 200,000 international students at institutions globally, over 65,000 at UK institutions and 10,000 at Alliance universities that take part in the i-graduate ISB.



## Satisfaction

We examined satisfaction in areas relating to employability. Measures include advice and guidance on long-term career opportunities from academic staff, opportunities for work experience or placements as part of their course and whether their course equipped them with learning that will help them get a good job.

One particular area of teaching and research strength for Alliance universities is Art and Design. Over a quarter of those studying in this subject area in the UK are at an Alliance university. This expertise was reflected in the satisfaction data with responses for Alliance universities being between four and eight percentage points higher for each employability-related measure compared with other UK universities. A testament to the great breadth of excellence across disciplines, Alliance students studying Physical Sciences reported the highest levels of overall satisfaction (96%) with History, Philosophy and Engineering close behind.

# University-wide initiatives

**Employability has always been a focus at Alliance universities. These institutions have a rich heritage of working with business and industry. Many were formed in the 19th Century to create a workforce equipped for the challenges of a changing and growing industrial economy. They continue to pioneer new approaches and forms of collaboration today, but unlike in the 19th Century, our universities and graduates are part of a global economy and workforce.**

Going to university is about more than just a degree. It has the potential to be life changing. Alliance universities create an environment that is rich and diverse so that students can choose their own path. Students, therefore, leave with a unique set of experiences enabling them to access the career they want.

Across Alliance institutions there is a culture of developing graduate attributes to enable individuals to thrive in a global knowledge economy. 'Employability' isn't simply an added extra, thought about by students as they near the end of their time at university – it runs throughout the university experience. This section looks at institution-wide programmes and initiatives symptomatic of a university culture that values and nurtures student employability.

## Liverpool John Moores University

### A whole university approach to employability



**The World of Work Certificate is not a typical university employability award. The programme is not “bolted on” or peripheral. It is an employer-informed model connecting both students and staff at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) more closely to the World of Work.**

LJMU consulted widely to identify exactly what is required from a university and its graduates in the 21st Century. The World of Work programme is co-designed, co-developed and co-delivered with many employer partners, who systematically help to define and verify World of Work skills.

As part of the initiative, the University's degree portfolio has explicit work related learning and the development of eight key graduate competencies embedded within all academic programmes. Employers regularly provide student placements and internships, guest lectures, “live” student projects, World of Work “In Conversation” sessions on campus and host World of Work “Uncovered” visits to employer premises.

Students identify, develop and seek verification for these key competencies through three written statements assessed against criteria developed with employer partners. Volunteers from employer partners conduct a final interview and award the World of Work Skills Certificate to successful students meeting the criteria.

Students recognise the value of the programme. In 2011/12, 96% of students would recommend World of Work sessions to a friend; 98% agreed World of Work sessions were relevant and well delivered; and 89% were more confident about managing their future and moving their career forward as a result.

*“The experience of nursing students can be enhanced by completing the World of Work Skills Certificate and will really improve their chances of securing a job.”*

**Dr Peter Carter, Chief Executive and General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing**

*“We are looking for knowledge of business skills, business planning and project and event management. They are vital in the world of arts and culture. The World of Work Skills Certificate gives LJMU students the competitive advantage that no other university will give them.”*

**Lyndsey Fryer, Head of Learning at The Tate**

To find out more, visit [www.ljmu.ac.uk](http://www.ljmu.ac.uk)

## Glasgow Caledonian University

### Real World approach



**Employability cuts across all that Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) does, with the Real World Project, the Careers Service and the Students' Association working closely together to benefit GCU Students.**

GCU is committed to working in partnership with staff, students and employers to develop graduates with the appropriate attributes to meet the complex demands of the modern workplace.

The Real World Project is the central forum for co-ordinating, promoting and supporting the University's approach to employability. The project team undertake research on work related learning and act as a central hub and source of advice.

The project also funds the Real World Employability competition where students from across the university get the chance to work on a short real-life task set by a graduate employer based in the region, such as BarclaysWealth, Santander or Enterprise Rent-A-Car. Three prizes are awarded based on employer feedback and the winners receive a cash prize and a short internship with the employer. The projects and internships are an excellent way of improving students' employability and adding value to their CV.

With support from the project team, academic staff develop innovative ways of embedding employability in the taught curriculum across all years and all three academic schools;

Business and Society, Health and Life Sciences, and Engineering and Built Environment. In one example, fourth year International Business students write an international business development plan for senior management of a European company wishing to expand their international business activities. Following research on international markets, students are required to recommend a realistic strategy to support internationalisation of the firm in a 30 minute group presentation to representatives of the company.

The Careers Service helps individuals with career planning, produces tailored advice for specific groups of students and organises networking and employer events. The Students' Association also provides students with opportunities to volunteer and build on their leadership skills through their Student Leaders Programme.

To find out more, visit [www.gcu.ac.uk](http://www.gcu.ac.uk)



**Coventry University's Add+vantage Scheme is one of the most innovative and comprehensive employability programmes in the UK with more than 12,000 undergraduates taking accredited Add+vantage modules each year.**

Add+vantage modules are designed to enhance employability and support the growing number of students who want to set up their own business after graduation. The extensive range of modules help students to gain work-related knowledge, develop skills, competencies, professional qualifications and experience, and stand out in the graduate marketplace.

To achieve this, modules are designed to meet the requirements of employers. Students study one Add+vantage module in each year of their degree course and they are mandatory and credit bearing. There are over 200 modules from English for overseas students or Islamic Law, to data analysis or a Global Experience Field Trip. Students can opt for work experience modules such as volunteering in schools or coaching practice. There is also the opportunity to gain professional qualifications such as ECDL and CISCO, to build and demonstrate computer literacy and IT skills, or gain accreditation from the Chartered Management Institute. Modules within the Global Languages theme include Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, Japanese, and Russian. The common thread is that the modules facilitate the transition from university to work and help students develop and expand the skills employers are looking for.

Two modules have been developed in association with IBM and Jaguar Land Rover and give students unique industry insights and experiences as well as gaining guidance for graduate recruitment. Representatives from the companies, alongside Lecturers and Careers Advisers from the University, are involved in the training and assessment of students on these modules.

Students also benefit from personal mentors and workplace visits to help them make the transition from university to the graduate working environment. Students gain understanding of how large organisations work, what different roles entail and how they might start building their own careers. The 10 week course provides realistic insights into what is needed to secure a graduate role in these types of organisations.

To find out more, visit [www.coventry.ac.uk](http://www.coventry.ac.uk)

**The award winning Venture Matrix is a unique work-based learning scheme that develops students' employability and enterprise skills through real life work-related projects accredited as part of their degree at Sheffield Hallam University.**

The Venture Matrix brings students together with external organisations for opportunities to tackle real life challenges and gain practical work experience in a safe and secure environment. Projects range from web design, events and marketing to finance, legal and research.

As they apply the skills and knowledge gained through their course to real-life situations, students develop different attributes including communication, time-management, project management, relationship-building, confidence and professionalism. The Venture Matrix team organises trade fairs throughout the year enabling students to promote their venture, share ideas and best practice and meet employers and develop business contacts.

The scheme is having widespread success with around 1,800 students from 50 different academic modules and over 60 organisations involved in 2012-13. Participating in Venture Matrix has helped students secure work placements, demonstrate practical work experience in job interviews, find employment and set up their own businesses.

*"I got a graduate job with TeachFirst and used examples of the work I did in the Venture Matrix for my application form and interview. The interviewers were really impressed and said it made my application stand out from the crowd, which is what you need in a busy job market. The Venture Matrix is a brilliant opportunity."*

**Rachel Arthur, student**

*"Since working within the Venture Matrix on an external opportunity with the national organisation Skills for Justice, I have set up my own business focusing on film and media advertising. The skills learnt and the experience gathered has been a real help when starting up, not only did it allow me to stand against real trading companies but it also opened doors for me through the relationships I'd developed networking in the Venture Matrix."*

**Tom Purnford,**  
**Graduate and Founder of Buttercup**

To find out more, visit [www.shu.ac.uk](http://www.shu.ac.uk)

**The Open University (OU) is a world leader in modern distance learning, the pioneer of teaching and learning methods which enable people to achieve their career and life goals studying at times and in places to suit them.**

Since 1969, the OU has taught more than 1.7 million students and currently has almost 250,000 students across the world.

Many choose to study at the OU to develop their skills and knowledge, or to change career entirely. Over 70% of students work during their studies, with 62% studying vocational or professional courses and 89% of part-time students studying to further their career aims. The OU's innovative distance learning model and their partnerships with businesses and employers opens up opportunities for students from across the world to experience the life transforming effects of a degree.

*"When I was made redundant, my studies in Law helped me find employment so that I wasn't out of work for long. Through my OU study I was able to illustrate my good time management and organisational skills, as well as my academic abilities."*

**Donna Nicholls, working towards a career in Law**

*"I worked shifts in a factory for 14 years and didn't want to do it anymore. I knew I had to find a way to change my life and that studying for a degree would be a good way of achieving that. For starters, a degree shows that you're willing to learn. To manage the*

*volume of study I broke it down into little pieces and dealt with it a bit at a time, making it less overwhelming. My company supported me financially and two years in I was offered a secondment in the offices. Later I became an assistant buyer then, after I got my degree, was promoted to the buyer position."*

**BSc (Honours) Psychology student Julia Rogers, Buyer**

*"The reputation of the OU meant that my employers were supportive and understood the benefit of studying, paying for my courses and giving me study time. The skills I gained from the course really helped me develop in my role and led to a promotion. It also helped me identify a future career path and gain recognition for my skills and knowledge at work."*

**BA Open student Jake Smith, Senior Marketing Manager**

To find out more, visit [www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)

**The University of Wales, Newport aims to enable all students during their studies to develop entrepreneurial capacity to deal with the uncertainty and complexity in both their work and personal lives.**

The environment that students are graduating into is subject to increasing change. Current students are likely to change their jobs several times, to have to retrain and to travel and work abroad. It is likely they will be self-employed at some point during their careers and will have to learn to use technologies that are currently beyond our imagination in jobs that have not yet been invented. In light of this environment, Newport recognises that students need to be equipped with different types of 'life skills', the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and acquire new skills and new learning to thrive in this environment.

Newport has a long tradition of providing high quality undergraduate, postgraduate and professional courses. Even if students don't choose to set up their own business, entrepreneurial skills and capabilities - an 'entrepreneurial mindset' - are equally important in the management and leadership of public bodies and social, or charitable, organisations. This wider perspective on entrepreneurship places emphasis on entrepreneurial learning across the university. Support structures and teaching programmes are developed to support entrepreneurial competency and attributes across a range of multi-disciplinary subject contexts on degree and diploma programmes.

There is an obvious link between the work of a university developing students with entrepreneurial mindsets and the university itself as an 'entrepreneurial organisation'. Newport is also committed to developing a vibrant City-Region in South Wales and works closely with businesses and the community to promote entrepreneurship, including access to incubator centres to help students start up their own business.

Newport continues to develop the idea of the Entrepreneurial University as it moves into a new partnership with the University of Glamorgan this year.

*"I think any employer would be happy to have a graduate from the University of Wales, Newport as the courses are designed and focused on their needs and the needs of the ever changing economy."*

**Althea Cyrille,  
Marketing student from St Lucia**

To find out more, visit [www.newport.ac.uk](http://www.newport.ac.uk)

# In-work opportunities

In a highly competitive labour market where work experience is often expected, a placement gives students a head start in finding graduate employment. A high quality short term placement or a year-long placement integrated into a degree helps students develop transferable skills, build industry contacts, improve degree outcomes and clarify their career goals. <sup>(6)</sup>

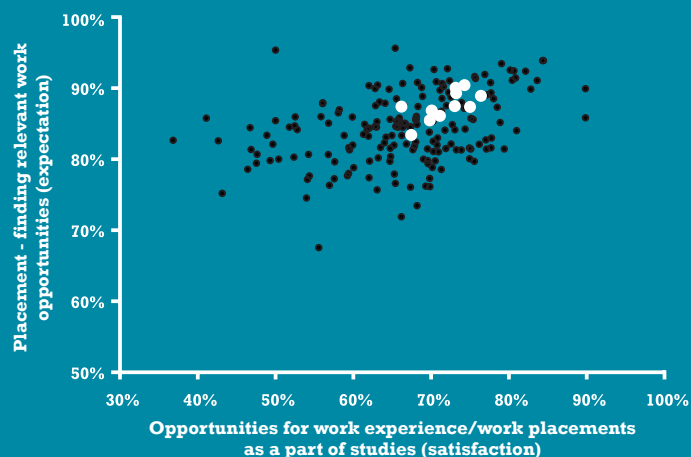
More than a third of students who take a placement year with large, graduate employers go on to secure employment with the company. <sup>(7)</sup> Furthermore, by choosing an international placement, students acquire invaluable cultural and global understanding – an impressive addition to any CV.

Alliance universities are delivering on their students' high expectations for in-work opportunities during their studies. Alliance students benefit from their university's

excellent links with business and the professions, graduating with a good degree and relevant experience that employers look for. Recognising the advantages to students' employability, our universities provide more than half of the year-long in-course placements in the UK. This section gives some examples of how Alliance universities are giving their students a distinct advantage in the graduate labour market through in-work opportunities.

## Student expectation and satisfaction of in-work opportunities

Alliance students had higher than average expectations of participating in a placement and were highly satisfied with the opportunity to do so as part of their course (72% compared with 66% globally).



## Bournemouth University Placement opportunities



**Bournemouth University (BU) has always focused on blending vocational with academic learning. The opportunity to go on placement as part of the course is a key aspect of studying at BU.**

Placements give students a head start when it comes to planning their future career. The duration depends on the student and the course but BU uses 'my career hub' to advertise hundreds of placements each year.

Central to the success of such a large placements programme is the structure in place to support students and employers throughout the process. A team of employability coordinators, based within each school, have access to placement opportunities and conduct seminars, workshops and one-to-one sessions with students. Placement development advisors support students while they are out on long placements and also support managers to ensure they are able to structure the placement and support the student appropriately.

Both employers and students benefit from the placement year being the third of a four year degree course. The university and other students also benefit from the employer relationships built up through placements with employers giving talks, presenting at jobs fairs and taking part in mock assessment days open to all BU students. Each of these affords a valuable opportunity for students to build contacts and to get a taste of the different career opportunities available to them.

*"The most important aspect of my four years at Bournemouth University was getting my placement year because it definitely gives you a head start already having a year's experience on your CV."*

**Jo Routledge, Events Management**

*"I was able to integrate myself with a fantastic group of colleagues who took it upon themselves to really show me the best, not only of their work, but of their culture and their country. I have broadened the scope of my career-based network and, hopefully, given myself a better chance at the career I want."*

**Thomas Ryan, BSc Forensic Science, international placement with the Royal Bahamas Police Force**

*"The extra year of experience and learning about events really stands students in much better stead to come into the work place and have a real understanding of what they are going to be doing. For us it's great because they only go back to uni for one year and potentially they could come back and work for us."*

**Simon Mitchell, Managing Director, Impulse Events**

To find out more, visit [www.bournemouth.ac.uk](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk)



**Universities are in a unique position to facilitate relationships between employers and students. As such, the University of the West of England (UWE) is home to one of the largest undergraduate internship schemes in the UK, funding and supporting over 120 students in 2012.**

UWE internships improve graduate employment prospects through the development of relevant knowledge, experience and contacts. Internships enable businesses to develop relationships with future graduate talent and increase the capacity of local businesses which in turn benefits future graduates and the wider economy.

The university sources businesses to take part in the scheme and advertises internship vacancies to students. The internships run for a minimum of eight weeks and UWE subsidise the cost of each intern, with employers matching the funding. This has two main benefits; all students can afford to participate in the placement scheme and it enables small employers to participate who wouldn't otherwise have the capacity to take on an intern. These internships are a cost-effective way for businesses to benefit from an excellent skills resource and for students to gain employment in a role linked to key graduate professions.

Internships can be the first interaction a business has with the university and with students or recent graduates. UWE provides support and advice for employers to structure each internship so that it is either project based or adds value to the intern's CV and incorporates training and mentoring. Internships can lead to part time employment for the student while they finish their studies and a job once they graduate.

*"The internships have been of great benefit to our company, which is still in its early days. Both interns were a perfect fit for the company and we've been so impressed that they have both been offered (and accepted) part-time positions going forwards."*

**Rob Colbourn, Consult Believe**

*"I have taken on a graduate full-time when an opportunity arose, partly due to the positive experiences with UWE interns. I have noticed that recent graduates don't see something as a problem, but as an interesting challenge."*

**Rob Sowden, Aspire Europe**

To find out more, visit [www.uwe.ac.uk](http://www.uwe.ac.uk)

**Frontrunners is De Montfort University's (DMU) internal placement scheme. DMU students can put what they've learnt in their academic course into practice in the workplace through paid placements working for DMU.**

Frontrunner roles range from office-based opportunities through to lab-based, research-focused roles. Placements are either three, six or nine months in length and for up to 12 hours per week during term time and 20 hours per week over the summer. Placement proposals from staff across the university are assessed by the central Frontrunners team to ensure that projects provide graduate track employment experiences complementing students' academic qualifications.

The application process is a great learning opportunity. It is designed to mirror what students might encounter when applying for a graduate job; from the application form through to the panel interview and presentation.

All students gain interview practice and are given feedback. Students who fail to get a placement are targeted for job application, interview and CV training and other support from the Careers and Employability team to ensure that when they are applying for an external role they are better prepared.

Elle Hall was a Programming Frontrunner with the university radio station, Demon FM. She worked with the programme teams to develop their presentation skills and programme content, whilst ensuring that the broadcast material complied with the Broadcasting Code of the national communications regulator,

Ofcom. Using the experience and skills that she developed while at Demon FM Elle started a graduate role at Ofcom in October.

*"Can I take this opportunity to tell you that Frontrunners has been a brilliant experience for me and something I'm very grateful for, and I wholly believe that it was a big factor in me getting a job at Ofcom."*

**Elle Hall, Programming Frontrunner**

*"I have gained hands-on marketing experience and that means that I am in a better position to give real-life examples and demonstrate my skills in a professional work environment in job interviews. In addition, my confidence has really increased and that in itself is a bonus!"*

**Priya Mahida, Business Studies student and Marketing Assistant Frontrunner**

To find out more, visit [www.dmu.ac.uk](http://www.dmu.ac.uk)

**All students at the University of Bradford have exposure to the world of work as part of their course. Students benefit directly from their own experiences and indirectly as the University uses the advice and input offered by employers to design their courses.**

A focus on experience of the world of work alongside their course ensures all students graduate with the practical tools and real-world experience to match the very latest industry developments. This approach gives them an edge in a competitive graduate job market.

Professional bodies accredit 70% of Bradford's courses giving graduates a mark of quality that employers understand and value. Many employers are also looking for global graduates who can work anywhere in the world, aware of their social and civic responsibilities and who are culturally aware. Alongside accreditation, the University collaborates with local, regional, national and multinational businesses. The University is increasingly encouraging students to take up international placement opportunities or to study internationally at a partner institution – with current partners based in Europe, Asia, America and Australia.

Students have a range of in-work opportunities including flexible placements (four to 12 weeks, six months or 12 months), internships, work-based learning projects, business improvement projects and summer placements. Businesses benefit from having the students working with them, while students gain invaluable experience working for firms such as Microsoft, Nissan, the NHS, Game Republic, Jaguar Land Rover and Johnson & Johnson. This combination of professional accreditation, an international

experience and exposure to the world of work contributes to the great success the University has in seeing its graduates go on to employment in their chosen professions.

*“I was given projects with real timeframes and expected to deliver the same level of results as everyone else. I learnt a lot about communication in a global environment and it gave me an insight into how engineering works in industry. I organised the testing of a parking assist system and saw it through to production. Now around 300 cars roll off the production line each day with this system.”*

**Sarah-Jane Tonks, Mechanical Engineering student, industrial placement as Project Management Engineer with Nissan Qashqai at the Nissan Technical Centre Europe**

To find out more, visit [www.bradford.ac.uk](http://www.bradford.ac.uk)

# In-course opportunities

The complexity of employability and the variety in higher education courses mean that there is no single, prescriptive way of embedding employability. The examples in this section show why 81% of Alliance international students were highly satisfied that their learning and academic experience would help them to get a good job, compared with 76% of students globally.

Embedding employability is not at the expense of good, subject-specific learning. The most effective approaches develop graduate attributes in tandem with discipline-specific knowledge and skills throughout the course rather than relying on a standalone ‘employability module’<sup>(8)</sup>. This is potentially more natural within professionally-facing courses, however, with creative course design it can also be achieved in courses without a specifically vocational focus.

95% of Alliance History and Philosophy students were satisfied that their learning would help them get a good job, compared with 75% of equivalent UK students.

In-course opportunities can ensure that every student, not only proactive students, can begin developing graduate attributes, skills and attitudes from the beginning of their time at university. Making the connections between study and work explicit can help students form a clearer idea of future career possibilities and to better articulate their knowledge, experience and attributes - of particular value in job applications and interviews. This section gives examples of some of the creative in-course opportunities developed at Alliance universities.

## In-course learning contributing to increased employability

Students motivated to study at Alliance universities to get a good job are satisfied that their in-course learning will help them to do so.



**This Business Leadership and Corporate Management degree at Northumbria University takes a fresh approach to business education by combining study with salaried employment. This enables students to graduate with two years invaluable 'hands-on' business experience.**

This programme is specifically designed to enhance career prospects by developing appropriate skills, competencies and knowledge in the context of a responsible role in a business organisation. Student development is accelerated, equipping graduates for early career progression in business management.

The degree is delivered over three years. Students learn the core disciplines of business in their first year whilst engaging in consultancy projects, working in teams with employers such as P&G, Nissan, Newcastle Airport and John Lewis. Students are then recruited and employed by a company, spending their second and third years working full-time in a salaried role, with intensive blocks of study at the University. All assessments are work-based and students are supported by an academic tutor and their line manager. Individual student profiling helps identify particular development needs, providing a focus for personal development.

The University has developed very strong relationships with employers and participating companies including Ernst & Young, Barclays Bank, Nissan, and SCM Pharma, as well as smaller regional businesses. The programme provides an innovative approach to talent recruitment. Three quarters of graduates are in management roles six months after graduating with many students continuing employment with their placement organisation. Through challenging university and work based

learning, this programme promotes academic, personal and professional development to equip students for their future careers.

*"I am working in logistics at Nissan. I've learnt so much within my first year of placement and my biggest achievement to date is being offered and accepting a full time position. It's great to know that my talent and hard work have been recognised and I have a future with an organisation I already feel part of."*

**Sarah Noble, on Work Based Learning Partnership with Nissan**

*"The advantages of this programme are that students are given a strong grounding in business in their first year and join us hungry to put this knowledge into a practical context."*

**Dianne Sharp, Managing Director, SCM Pharma**

*"The degree offered me the opportunity to do more than just study – I could get a career out of it too!"*

**Natalie French, Senior Project Manager, Roundhouse**

To find out more, visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

**A key factor in the employability success of Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is the large number of students who take an industrial placement or gain experience of work as part of their course.**

The University has worked hard to build influential links with over 6,000 companies bringing many benefits for students, including in-course opportunities. Representative of the opportunities available, Planning and Development students can take advantage of a one year work placement, an industry mentor, site visits, accreditation by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and work on 'live' projects as part of their course. These opportunities develop rounded experience and knowledge to succeed in the profession.

Recent final year students took on a 'live' development consultancy project working with Rolls-Royce including design, financial appraisal and producing development and planning proposals. Mirroring the interdisciplinary nature of the working environment, students worked with interior designers, lawyers and urban designers during the project. Students' final presentations, seeking approval to act on behalf of a 'client', were to a board consisting of industry and university representatives from Rolls-Royce and Muse Developments alongside academics and staff from NTU's business incubation unit, The HIVE.

The skills and attributes enhanced at each stage directly translate into preparation for professional practice. Students gain confidence, experience presenting in a board setting, and experience of development consultancy work. Learning in this setting, students graduate with

knowledge, skills, contacts and experience useful for their future careers. With the Institute of Directors' (IoD) regional hub based at the University, students also have the opportunity to become student members of the leading worldwide network for senior business leaders. In doing so, they are opening a door to high-level business expertise and opportunities benefitting their studies and future careers.

*"You're able to build up essential market knowledge from an early stage which is invaluable in setting you apart in the hunt for placement and graduate opportunities."*

**Andrew Laing, BSc (Hons) Planning and Development**

*"I have thoroughly enjoyed this module. It has been challenging and the broad and dynamic nature of the programme has enabled me to expand my knowledge and skills on a practical level, a key strength when in an interview environment."*

**Planning and Development student, course feedback**

To find out more, visit [www.ntu.ac.uk](http://www.ntu.ac.uk)

## University of Huddersfield

### Blurring the lines between industry and university



**The University of Huddersfield has a long history of working with partners across many industries including engineering, computing and technology sectors. Employer engagement is essential in informing the design and delivery of its courses.**

As the creative industry continues to grow, internationally renowned games companies including GameRepublic, were important partners in the early development of degree programmes in Computer Games. The University and its students continue to benefit from their support and involvement.

Recognising an opportunity to further equip students for working in the games industry, staff at Huddersfield set up an in-house computer games company, Canalside Studios. One of the first contracts was to develop for Microsoft Xbox LIVE Arcade providing the student and staff team with the skills and experience to develop the studio into a sustainable enterprise.

The studio provides work placement opportunities for up to eight students a year on the BA Computer Games Design degree and BSc and Computer Games Programming degree. With a greater understanding of the industry and employer needs, lessons learnt from the studio have been fed back into the course ensuring that Huddersfield students are better prepared for work. Testament to the valuable experience and skills gained through these opportunities, students have gone on to secure jobs in this very competitive industry after graduation.

Going through the full games development cycle from design concept, development, quality assurance, localisation into several languages and distribution to market has enabled the student and staff team to gain a better understanding of the complexities of the industry. It also helped them to develop greater awareness of the diversity of work within the games industry and of employer needs. This approach has been extremely successful and has resulted in Huddersfield games graduates being represented in many of the major games companies across the UK and internationally.

*“As a student, I’m working at near-professional level and producing content for real-world clients and the wealth of practical skills that I’ve gained is phenomenal. I’m able to go to an employer with real-world experience, rather than just being another graduate that needs experience.”*

**Wesley, final year Computer Games Design student**

To find out more, visit [www.hud.ac.uk](http://www.hud.ac.uk)

## University of Salford

### MediaCityUK



**Over 1,500 students from 30 courses in media and digital technologies at the University of Salford are located at MediaCityUK alongside six national BBC departments, ITV, the largest HD studio block in Europe and many independent creative, digital and media organisations.**

The location, facilities and partnerships of MediaCityUK place Salford students in prime position for digital and media careers.

Educational partnerships and collaboration between academics, students, professionals and industry are central. They inform the development of courses and keep content and research up-to-date, preparing graduates for work outside university. By blurring boundaries between learning and work, students acquire expertise through access to industry-leading technology and develop important capabilities such as business and client management. Recognised by partnerships with Adobe, BT, the BBC, ITV, HP and others, the University is a key provider of education in media and digital technology equipping students to be the next generation of talent.

Students develop their professional reputation through displaying their work and networking with industry partners who visit the new campus. There is an emphasis on live briefs – projects designed in collaboration with industry that challenge students to develop solutions to real world problems. Mirroring the workplace, students from different disciplines and levels of study – such as journalism, broadcast, post-production, scriptwriting and often subjects outside the digital and media sphere – work together to produce portfolios. This cross-disciplinary working is essential in preparing students to be professionals. Specialist advisers and Salford’s Student Life

team also provide students with support, career development resources and expert one-to-one advice to ensure that they leave university prepared for their future careers.

*“Studying at MediaCityUK is great. The facilities are brilliant and used by professionals too, including the BBC. I work on a range of live projects and alongside students from different courses which makes the atmosphere vibrant and professional. It’s given me the confidence to use technology that I’ll be working with when I graduate.”*

**Jemima Pollitt, BA Media and Performance student**

*“The University of Salford’s partnership with global, creative software company Adobe provides huge mutual benefits, giving students and researchers the opportunity to work with Adobe’s software development team while offering the company access to undergraduate, postgraduate and academic staff talent, knowledge and expertise.”*

**Simon Williams, Director, Strategic Relations, Adobe Video Solutions**

To find out more, visit [www.salford.ac.uk](http://www.salford.ac.uk)



## University of Lincoln 'Industry ready' through partnership



**Siemens have co-located with Lincoln's engineering department creating the UK's first purpose built engineering school for more than 20 years. Opened in 2009, it provides specialist courses designed to meet the future needs of engineering enterprise and innovation.**

By giving students a fantastic environment in which to study, up-to-the-minute knowledge and skills training, and insight from industry collaborators, University of Lincoln Engineering graduates have a head start in their engineering careers.

Recognising the importance of engineers to the future of the economy, Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery Limited and the University formed a collaboration to produce graduates who were not only academically excellent, but 'industry ready'. Siemens has made a multi-million pound commitment to the school and engages in teaching students and provides scholarships, internships and consultancy projects.

The Siemens technology needs are reflected in Lincoln's engineering undergraduate programmes and the partners have co-designed an MSc in Energy Renewables and Power. Part-time provision has also been developed, in partnership, meaning that members of Siemens staff now study part-time alongside full-time undergraduates. Upon graduation, students who have performed well academically and demonstrated the ability to apply this in the workplace, are offered graduate entry jobs at Siemens. To enhance this, the Siemens' product training team

provide 300 hours a year of training in Siemens product technology to students, offering real experience of engineering products and an introduction to Siemens' production and field engineering services.

Whether learning theory or in practical sessions students use facilities that are fully equipped and designed for industrial engagement, and are taught by both academics and engineers currently working in industry. As described by Andrew Stevenson, this partnership approach is seeing great results already.

*"The success of this scheme can be measured in two ways – every undergraduate on these degrees secured a work placement for the summer vacation, and the majority of them worked in roles that are normally reserved for final year students or new graduates."*

**Andrew Stevenson, Director of Research and Enterprise, University of Lincoln**

To find out more, visit [www.lincoln.ac.uk](http://www.lincoln.ac.uk)

## Oxford Brookes University Developing long term careers through mentoring



**Mentoring is an effective way to facilitate students' transitions into work after university and to build social capital. The Bacchus Mentoring Programme was developed by Oxford Brookes University to help students build long term careers in the hospitality industry.**

The main benefits reported by students of mentoring are greater industry knowledge, better understanding of industry opportunities, an enhanced professional network and external support for their career.

The management and clear structure of the programme is central to its success with over 100 mentors, including many alumni, each mentoring one student during their final year of study. The programme has four stages, matching, preparation and training, interaction and evaluation.

Training sessions and support materials are provided covering all aspects from setting expectations and outlining roles, to giving feedback, asking good questions and personal reflection. This enables mentors and mentees to make the most of the opportunity. There is an initial meeting and networking event, after which contact is recommended at least once a month. As a basic programme structure it is suggested that four key activities are covered; CV discussion and feedback, interview experience and feedback, a workplace visit or attendance at a networking event together and discussion and feedback of the mentees career plan.

*"I have had a great experience through the Bacchus mentoring programme. Being an international student, being able to ask, discuss and learn openly about cultural differences and conventions has been important."*

**Linda, BSc International Hospitality Management**

*"Completely invaluable experience"*

*"Great networking and contacts"*

*"I believe that having mentors is crucial to anyone's success in an industry"*

**Students' feedback on the programme**

Our research shows that Alliance Tourism and Hospitality students had higher expectations of careers advice and support, placement opportunities and opportunities to meet employers than students on the same course. Less than 1 in 20 had no expectation of support compared with 1 in 10 across the UK. Two thirds expected placement opportunities as part of their Alliance course compared with a global average of less than half.

To find out more, visit [www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)



**British Airways and the University of Glamorgan have signed a landmark agreement to combine technical training for one of the world's leading airlines with the enhanced career prospects of a university degree.**

Engineers will graduate from Glamorgan with a BSc (Hons) degree in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering and accredited industry-standard EASA training. Engineering staff at British Airways will also have the opportunity to study academic modules from the University at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

The University of Glamorgan is one of the world's few institutions to have a purpose built Aerospace Centre, with its own airliner and flight simulator. Glamorgan's provision and facilities are designed to give individuals considering a career in this field the best possible start.

The University of Glamorgan was founded by industry, for industry, as a specialist college of engineering, and it carries that forward today. Aerospace students get both the technical skills to work on some of the world's leading aircraft, and the enhanced career prospects of a degree. The University is well recognised for being home to first-class facilities, and for producing graduates of an exceptional standard. Its partnership with British Airways is one example of how the University is giving graduates a head start in their careers.

*"As the largest airline in the UK and a global player in the aviation market, British Airways takes its relationship with education seriously. It's a win-win for British Airways, the University, and the graduates. This partnership is the only one of its kind in the UK, and is a testament to Glamorgan's reputation for excellence in the aviation industry."*

**Professor Julie Lydon, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan**

*"We are delighted to be forming this relationship with the University of Glamorgan. British Airways employs over 1,400 people in the region, and this partnership will ensure that we continue to produce world-class engineers. Partnering with the University of Glamorgan will allow us to develop the skills necessary to take our business forward."*

**Bill Kelly, General Manager Heavy Maintenance at British Airways**

To find out more, visit [www.glam.ac.uk](http://www.glam.ac.uk)

# Personal support

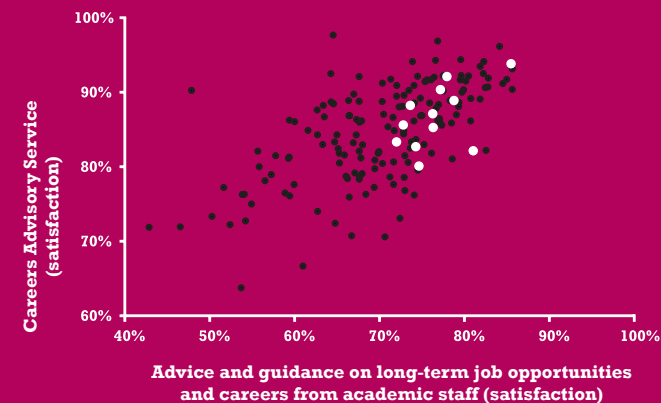
Every student has a unique set of experiences and their own career aspirations. This section describes some of the innovative personal support designed to meet students' individual needs. Building on in course opportunities, careers, employability and enterprise support can be effectively delivered through co-curricular activities, events and professional, one-to-one advice and guidance.

ISB data suggest relatively low usage of careers advisory services by international students (26% in the UK) but that those using the service found it helpful (88% satisfied in the UK). Students on taught postgraduate courses were the most likely to have used the Careers Advisory service and undergraduates were least likely. Looking at undergraduates, first year students reported the lowest usage (13%) of all study levels. This corresponds with the findings of prior research showing that many students, particularly in their earlier years of study, do not make full use of the co-curricular career and employability support available.<sup>(10)</sup>

University departments overseeing careers support are continuing to develop sophisticated methods of bridging that gap to ensure the widest number of students make use of the support, expertise and services available as early in their university experience as possible. Professionals working in this area have four overlapping roles: to work with students who come to them for advice and support; to work alongside academics shaping course programmes and delivering in-course support; to develop new ways of reaching students who otherwise would not seek out careers support; and employer liaison to build good relationships with business to benefit students learning and future careers.

## Satisfaction with careers advice and guidance

Universities that scored highly for advice and guidance on long term job opportunities from academic staff, tended to perform well in terms of Careers Advisory Service satisfaction.



**The University of Hertfordshire places employability at the heart of all they do. This vital area is an integral part of their Strategic Plan and one way of supporting this vision and mission is to embrace innovation and enterprise.**

The University provides intra and extra curricula education and support for enterprise activities that students and graduates can pick up as part of a 'journey'.

The first phase of the journey 'Creative Mind-sets' centres around inspiring creativity and promoting self-development and supports graduate attributes; generating ideas, problem-solving and team working. The skills involved in this phase can be used either to promote employability in making students and graduates more employable, or as the first step in start-up activity.

The second phase 'Innovation and Enterprise' aims to turn creativity into a fully-formed concept; an idea almost ready to launch but additional skills and business knowledge are required such as proof of concept, proof of market and business planning.

The final phase 'Entrepreneurship – Supporting Start-ups' supports students with fully-formed ideas looking to develop their business further. Examples of support include workshops, investment (both in-kind and monetary), research support and use of incubation facilities. The University is also part of the Graduate Entrepreneur Visa Scheme meaning that entrepreneurial international graduates can benefit from this support after graduation too.

Extra curricular activities support this journey including Flare – an annual start-up competition open to students at partner institutions around the world – where winners gain publicity, support and funding towards their business. Students can also join Herts Entrepreneurs, the University's student entrepreneurs society which has a range of activities. To remain innovative the University continually reviews activities looking to improve and expand the student offer, driven by demand and linking closely with the University's cutting-edge research areas to anticipate future trends. As a result, new initiatives include a structured Business Start-Up programme and an Enterprise Fund, linking closely with alumni for funding and mentoring.

*“The prize will really help to further the business... There will be lots of exciting changes coming and it's all thanks to flare and the University.”*

**Lucy, Flare competition winner**

To find out more, visit [www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)

**Teesside University invests in 'wrap-around' career support for students. The 'Get Ahead' initiative begins in week one with an overview of the help and opportunities available at the University and support continues, if needed, after students graduate.**

As part of the 'Get Ahead' initiative students receive advice, guidance and support helping them to; build an awareness of what attributes and experience could be looked for by employers, think through their career options, self-assess their strengths and weaknesses, and to decide what next steps they can take to secure employment or further study. There are also more than 60 summer placements available each year and an online portal highlighting all the opportunities available from jobs and careers to skills development and volunteering.

One very popular initiative is a unique three-day course where students visit organisations and meet business leaders with the chance to ask questions, broaden their industry knowledge and begin to develop their leadership skills.

A flagship three-month paid graduate internship scheme, combined with a university-led training and development programme, runs annually with placement opportunities within the University and with external employers. This invaluable work experience led to 70% of the first cohort gaining substantive full-time employment within two months.

Support is also available to students to start their own business. Graduates with a business idea in the digital and creative industries can access the Digital City Fellowship offering

business support and funding and has created 130 new companies and 200 new jobs in the last three years.

In an exciting initiative, the University is working with the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC), representing over 4,000 businesses in the region, to build an endorsed programme allowing employers to 'fast track' graduates straight to interview in their selection processes.

*“I am delighted to support this excellent programme. Teesside University provides students with an excellent academic experience, and with this initiative they're helping young graduates make that sometimes difficult step between education and employment.”*

**James Ramsbotham,  
NECC Chief Executive**

To find out more, visit [www.tees.ac.uk](http://www.tees.ac.uk)

**Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) dedicated team of careers professionals offer help, support and advice to students and recent graduates, from writing a CV and interview techniques to advice on searching for jobs or how to set up a business.**

In partnership, the Careers and Employability team is pioneering new ways of easing the transition between study and employment and building relationships between students and employers.

"Work Ready" is an opportunity for students to explore how they will take on the challenge of starting a new job. It is a short course based around four themes: Team Working, Communicating and Influencing, Project Management and Leadership. Each theme is explored in terms of how it is applied in the early stages of a graduate level job or placement. For example looking at the stages of project management and then putting theory into practice scoping real life projects or introducing the concepts of influencing clients and "managing your manager". The course has been a great success particularly when used as part of the training for the graduate interns working at MMU.

Another initiative, the Employer Café, aims to bring together students and employers with the opportunity to network, ask questions and discuss industry specific issues and graduate opportunities. Beginning with a networking workshop and information for students, the main 'speed networking' session then enables students to put theory into practice with groups of six to eight students getting ten minutes around a table with each employer. At a recent

café the format helped to facilitate discussions, with many continuing on after the formal end to the event. With many students unaware of the benefits of effective networking, providing networking training beforehand helps students to build on a skill many find difficult, particularly early in their careers.

*"Sessions are enjoyable and thorough. The course helped me recognise my strengths and weaknesses and how to identify and apply my skills."*

**Student feedback from Work Ready**

*"The evening was a real success. We had the opportunity to meet with some great MMU students and feel confident we'll recruit from the university this year."*

**The Co-operative Group**

To find out more, visit [www.mmu.ac.uk](http://www.mmu.ac.uk)

**Kingston University is working with businesses from a broad range of sectors and in different innovative ways to help bridge the gap for students between university study and the world of work.**

Recognising the value of work experience and early contact with employers, and to increase the number of job offers for Kingston students, the University is partnering with Enterprise Rent-A-Car (ERAC), one of the largest graduate recruiters in the UK. Rather than completing an online application form for placement and graduate opportunities, students have an initial interview with the Careers & Employability team. Successful students then go on to interview with ERAC. Applicants found it easier to demonstrate their suitability for the roles in this context rather than on an application form.

The initiative does not only focus on final year students. With summer internships for first year and placement years for second years, this creates a pipeline to ERAC graduate roles and is beneficial as a management training platform regardless of the industry students decide to go into. Kingston is extending the initiative within ERACs European offices giving students the opportunity to gain exposure of international markets and raising student aspirations and confidence. After a successful first year of the programme it is being expanded across the university and with other prestigious graduate employers.

One factor that can limit students' career choices is a lack of awareness and knowledge of the variety of opportunities available. Kingston is tackling this with "Careers Uncovered", a series of events focusing on

specific sectors such as Public Sector & Charity, Energy & Environment and Engineering. Business representatives discuss job opportunities and roles within the sector and how students can stand out in the recruitment process. These presentations are followed by networking. "Retail Careers Uncovered" saw 12 major retailers (including Tesco, HSBC, Arcadia, Apple and John Lewis) promoting graduate scheme, placement and internship opportunities helping to broaden students' views on opportunities in the sector.

*Vicki, Graduate Resourcing Manager from Tesco, described the breadth of programmes in retail including merchandising, property management, logistics, personnel, technology and marketing.*

*Kier from Arcadia group, which owns major high street brands such as Topshop and Dorothy Perkins, gave an insight into merchandising, explained the core element of analysing why products sell, customer demographics and predicting trends.*

To find out more, visit [www.kingston.ac.uk](http://www.kingston.ac.uk)

**Your Career e-Module is an employability awareness and career development skills learning tool created by the Career Development Services team at Cardiff Metropolitan University.**

The e-module takes students through 14 interactive exercises. Lessons take students from self-analysis through to identifying potential career options. Students can manage their learning on a self-directed basis as well as in a variety of blended-learning approaches, including group learning or as part of an individual coaching process.

The e-lessons contain subject-specific examples and materials and are attuned to Cardiff Metropolitan students' needs and vocational areas. They cover: planning your career, job search, using social media for job search and self-promotion, work experience, skills and self-assessment, CV writing, application forms, interview skills, assessment centres and self-employment.

Recognising the different career opportunities available to students from different disciplines, specific e-lessons have been customised and integrated into Personal and Professional Development modules within the Schools of Sport, Management, Education and Health Sciences. Elements of the modules are assessed and link in to students' broader personal development planning and e-portfolios. Academic staff value the blended approach and found the in-depth modules a valuable addition to the curriculum. 2,500 students currently undertake these modules within their programmes of study, and due to their success this is planned to increase.

*"This e-lesson helped with where I can improve or need more practice in areas such as communication, team working, planning and organisation as well as how to go about improving these."*

*"I had to undertake research in my suitable field of employment and this furthered my knowledge immensely. This will have an impact on my future because when I do go to apply for... posts now, I will have a good understanding and solid base to work from."*

*"The lesson made me sit back and think: What is it I actually want from a job? What things are most important to me and why?"*

**Student feedback on Career e-modules**

To find out more, visit [www.cardiffmet.ac.uk](http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk)

**Courses at the University of Portsmouth have employability skills and work-related learning built in and assessed alongside academic studies. All courses approved or re-approved in future will need to demonstrate how they foster employability.**

The initiative includes posting a careers adviser to every department to teach alongside academics and help course leaders reshape the future curriculum. The aim is to embed employability in every course, including those subjects which traditionally have not had explicit, transferable skills for employment. It is part of a major drive by the university to encourage its 20,000 students to develop real-life skills and help them find jobs after their studies finish.

Central to the support available is 'Purple Door Careers and Recruitment' (PDCR) offering information, guidance, events, links to employers and enterprise opportunities.

PDCR works closely with departments around the University ensuring joined up employability support. Each adviser is linked to a faculty working with students – alongside academics – in lectures and group sessions to help in their decision making, the ability to self-reflect, and to assess their skills, competencies and experience. Activities include learning how to research resources, compile a CV, make effective job applications and succeed at interviews.

A key feature of the student offer is PDCR's excellent working relationship with employers from the region and internationally. They promote graduate opportunities, recruit students for volunteering and work experience roles and place graduates into full-time

employment, posting over 3,100 vacancies in the past 12 months.

This activity is strengthened by an events programme designed to help students meet employers, find out about different career sectors and learn how to make a successful application for a placement, job or course.

*"By building much stronger bridges between every academic department and our careers advisers we will ensure work – and life beyond university – is embedded into teaching, learning and assessment for every student no matter what they are studying."*

**Julia Hughes, Head of Employability,  
University of Portsmouth**

To find out more, visit [www.port.ac.uk](http://www.port.ac.uk)



**Plymouth University offers a range of opportunities, support and encouragement for students to consider self-employment and enterprise as a graduate career.**

The University runs enterprise competitions, events and workshops and provides professional advice for those developing business ideas and social enterprises. Plymouth has successfully used the FLUX business idea competition to increase interest in entrepreneurship and to develop students' skills and experience beneficial for long term employability. In the past six years over 2,000 Plymouth University students and 300 employers have participated and the University has hosted two, and won three, national finals. As well as participating in the events, students are trained to deliver them, adding to their experience and skills and giving them a different insight into business start-up.

FLUX events are an excellent platform for experiential learning, engaging students and staff in enterprise and providing a perfect vehicle for engaging employers in the student learning experience. The challenge can be quite general such as 'develop a business that would help Plymouth bite back from recession', discipline specific or based on real business challenges. Students then work in teams to develop a business idea, meet with business experts to develop and refine their ideas, and pitch their ideas to business experts.

The events are an excellent opportunity for students to make an impression on employers. To take advantage of this, Plymouth has combined a recruitment event alongside the

competition explicitly inviting employers to use these events to spot talent. This has greatly benefited students looking for graduate employment and has increased employer and student interest.

An additional benefit is that FLUX has helped to raise the profile of the Careers & Employability Service with students. This is prompting students to engage with many other activities provided by the team helping students make the most of the support available to them.

*"The calibre of the students was really strong and the organisation and commitment from the careers service demonstrate their dedication to raising the employability of their students and ensuring they have the best opportunity to move in to the world of work as smoothly as possible. I would definitely work with them again."*

**Rachel Rotherham, Co-operative Group**

To find out more, visit [www.plymouth.ac.uk](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk)



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**Graduate careers are under the spotlight.**

**Students want to ensure their degree and time at university will help set them up for a rewarding and fulfilling career in a rapidly changing world. 'Growing global graduates' highlights the importance international students place on employability. It explores how Alliance universities are equipping graduates to succeed through university-wide initiatives, in-work opportunities, in-course opportunities and personal support.**



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