

Centre for Excellence

in Teaching and Learning for Employability (e3i)

Report to HEFCE: Interim Evaluation

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**Appendix 2: Report on the Employability aspects of SHU Faculty Validation Documents 2005-6,
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Assessing Engagement with the Employability Agenda: Documentary Analysis of Sheffield Hallam University Course Submission Documents

1. Background

The E3i CETL aims to promote awareness of, and engagement with, the employability agenda, and enhance the University's commitment to employability. In order to achieve these aims, a number of core evaluation questions are being addressed. As part of this process, the E3i CETL research team undertook a documentary analysis of course proposals recently submitted to the University. The analysis focused upon the presence, absence and definition of employability features and pedagogic practices to develop student employability. Course documents submitted for the purposes of validation were obtained from all four of the University's faculties; Arts, Computing, Engineering and Sciences; Health and Wellbeing, 'Development and Society' and 'Organisation and Management'. This report presents the findings from course submission documents from the Faculty of Development and Society.

1.1. Method

Sheffield Hallam University academic programmes are revalidated every six years in order to maintain standards and gauge compatibility with the institutions core values. In order to meet University requirements, course planning teams are required to submit programme proposals using a standardised template, which are then assessed by University Standing Panels. The template includes a new section which invites the applicant to explain how the course addresses the development of student employability. Other sections of the template also present opportunities to evidence this, by specifically addressing areas included within the University's Employability Framework (for example, personal development planning).

Submitted course proposals were for current levels of engagement with employability, as defined by the University's *Employability Framework*. The framework outlines features of a course which enhance student employability. These are: *the progressive development of autonomy, the development of skills; personal development planning (PDP); the inclusion of activities which are similar to those required in external environments; students' explicit reflection on their use of knowledge and skills; the encouragement of career management skills; and engagement with work-related learning*. Other features include *preparation for specific professional areas and engagement with activities with a specific enterprise focus*.

Members of the research team analysed a sub-sample of documents on two separate occasions in order to establish a consistent approach and increase reliability. A standardised template was used to assist the analysis. Course submission documents were appraised in terms of their reference and address of specific employability features and classified as follows: 'No content' (no address of the area) 'minimal content' (reference to the attribute, with no, or very nominal examples of how this is developed) 'medium content' (reference to the feature with limited examples of how this is developed) or 'high content' (references to the feature, with clear and detailed examples of how this is developed). The mode of these component scores was then calculated to obtain an overall score for each course.

It should be noted that it is common for faculties to submit the same document to cover several different courses. These courses have been analysed as one and scored identically. In total, thirty-two course submission documents were analysed across the four faculties. These represented a total of eighty-four courses. Definitions of employability within course documents were also given a score. However, these do not contribute to the *overall* scores attributed to each course. Scores have been obtained by analysing the *employability* sections of course submission documents only. Time restrictions prevented a more

thorough analysis of the entire body of these documents. Consequently, good examples of employability practice that appear elsewhere within these texts might not be recognised by the analysis.

1.2 Context

When reading course submission documents it is useful to consider the context in which these evolve. The field of these texts (i.e. their ideational content) is tightly restricted by the mandatory requirement to evidence engagement with employability; a practice which privileges the concept and minimises any opportunity to critique its central values. Seen in this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that none of the texts contain an *overt* rejection of employability. It is also noteworthy that none of the texts acknowledge the need for any improvement.

The highly subjective nature of the analysis also needs to be considered. The negotiable character of employability and the potential fracture between authorial intent (see Ricoeur 1981, referenced in Prior 2003) and the reader's interpretation of the texts is recognised. Consequently, the analysis is *highly* interpretive and contains many caveats.

Faculty of Development and Society

2. *The Progressive Development of Autonomy*

The development of autonomous learning is addressed inconsistently within the faculty's course submission documents. Several documents refer to autonomous learning or a related phrase. However, the use of verbs and adjectives to inform the reader of the curricula practices to support this is limited. Where reference is made to the student autonomy, students are largely depicted as *active* subjects, who contribute to their own development by participating in various activities. For example, students keep portfolios where they "*reflect on their performance and plan to improve*"; participate in reflective learning groups and complete assignments which "*ensure reflection*".

*A number of modules develop autonomous learning, which is a **key element** of employability. Students engage in a number of activities such as student-led seminars; group work; peer assessment; personal development planning; reflection and action planning.*

The contrast between the special status (i.e. "*key element*") granted to autonomous learning in the above paragraph and its non-appearance (either in name or recognisable attributes) in two of the faculty's documents is interesting, as it illustrates the negotiable nature of the construct. It is noteworthy that large sections of this paragraph appear word-for-word in two separate course submission documents. However, other than this, there is no obvious evidence of a 'copy and paste approach' to the evidencing of autonomous learning.

Teaching staff are also depicted as active in the development of student autonomy; academic tutorials, professional modules and induction are all used to support student development. Formative and summative feedback is also cited as facilitative.

Generally, where autonomous learning is referenced directly, or a similar name is used to denote its presence, there is significant evidence of a positive approach to its progressive development. However, four documents which made reference to autonomous learning contained little evidence of curricula practices to support this, and three documents made no discernible reference to the attribute.

Interesting relationships can be observed between the progressive development of autonomy and other employability features (see Table 1). Three of the five course submission documents which give clear detailed examples of curricula practices to facilitate the 'progressive development of autonomous learning' do so for 'career management'. Three of the five documents make clear detailed references to 'work-based learning'. Three of the five documents provide clear and detailed examples of 'engagement with activities with a specific enterprise focus'.

2.1 *Students' Explicit Reflection on Their Use of Knowledge and Skills*

Evidence of pedagogic practices to support the development of reflective thinking was inconsistent within the faculty's course submission documents. The terms 'reflect' or 'reflection' appears in all but three of the sixteen documents submitted, and useful examples of supportive curricula practice are presented within seven of these. Amongst these are support from tutors to help students reflect on their experiences of work; assignments which are designed to support reflective practice; the completion of progress files and PDP packs where students reflect on their work skills and deliver an appropriate project; and the use of formative and summative feedback to support reflection on learning. The following excerpt

provides an informative example of practices to support the development of reflective thinking:

Progress files will form an integral aspect of the course. The development of the file will be embedded in the virtual learning environment which will acts as a record of the discussions, development and reflections of the learning process. Feedback, responses to feedback and action plans based upon feedback will also form a part of the file. This will include responses to formative feedback as well as summative feedback. The combination of the two will ensure students are give a constant opportunity to reflect on learning and enhance learning between summative assessment points as well as post summative assessment.

Conversely, the term reflection is regularly presented as an abstract entity. Here, the character of reflective thinking is assumed to be self-evident, and little information is presented to the reader regarding practices to support its development. Five documents address this area nominally, and three don't contain any reference.

There is *limited* evidence of a copy and paste approach to the evidencing of reflective learning. The excerpt presented above, features word-for-word in two separate course submission documents, and affects their evaluative status.

Six of the seven documents which give clear detailed examples of curricula practices to support 'students' explicit reflection on their use of knowledge and skills' do so for 'PDP'. This is perhaps unsurprising given the close relationship of these employability attributes. Three of the seven documents contain clear examples of opportunities to engage 'with activities with a specific enterprise focus'.

2.2 Personal Development Planning

There are a number of similarities between the faculty's address of 'students' explicit reflection on their use of knowledge and skills', and 'personal development planning' (PDP). Approximately half of the Faculty's course submission documents provide good examples of practices that support the development of PDP. Elsewhere, the processes that underpin this remain abstract. Only three of the documents (see 'reflection') make no reference to the attribute in any capacity.

Common approaches to support the development of PDP are cited within the Faculty's submission documents. These include the completion of PDP packs, PDP portfolios and progress files, where students are encouraged to reflect on their progress and develop plans to improve.

The active role granted to students is supported by tutor engagement in a smaller number of cases. Integrated feedback, the provision of online skills resources, and opportunities to discuss progress with personal tutors, all support students to develop the attribute. The following excerpt exemplifies these types of approach:

A main vehicle for supporting you will be through your personal development portfolio and its associated progress file. You will store evidence of your progress and development in all modules and to reflect on your programmes and plans to improve. There will be support for your PDP via online skills resources, as well as from your personal tutor.

PDP is defined narrowly within these texts. Few references are made to career management, time management and organisational skills. However, examples of the interplay between the concepts attributes are contained within a limited number of texts:

The PDP process also provides encouragement for career management skills which further contributes to the 'employability' of students. The Developing Professional Practice module is specifically geared to prepare students for their paid professional work placement and covers such issues as identifying their employment skills, qualities and knowledge developing CVs and application forms.

As with learner autonomy and 'students explicit reflection on their use of knowledge and skills' there is evidence of a copy-and-paste approach to the evidencing of PDP within a *small* number of the faculty's course submission documents.

2.3 The Encouragement of Career Management Skills

Little reference is made to career management skills within the faculty's course submission documents. However, there are notable exceptions; academic Tutoring, staged opportunities for goal setting, professional placement modules which focus on writing CV's, application forms and interview preparation, are all cited as facilitators. Specialist support is provided by the University's Careers Service:

Strong links are maintained with the SHU careers service. The Law Group is adopting an increasingly structured approach to careers education. The Law Programme has a careers tutor who works closely with the careers service, career talks and visits are regularly arranged for students, and a legal careers Blackboard site is soon to be in operation. It is planned that timetabled sessions will take place for students to develop career skills, for example CV writing and interviewing skills.

The above extract provides a good example of the positive contribution which staff and students can make to the development of student career-management. However, this type of engagement is rarely cited. Little reference is made to opportunity awareness, decision making, and transition skills. In total, only four course submission documents contained detailed examples of curricula practices to develop career management skills. However, three contained limited detail. Four documents contained minimal reference, and five contained no reference to this area.

2.4 Work-Related Learning

There is little reference in the faculty's course submission documents to activities which are similar to those found in external environments. Where work-related learning (distinguished here from work-based learning) features as a course component, the process of development regularly begins with the student drawing on their experiences from an external work-based environment and bringing these to the classroom. For example:

Students will be required to bring psychological, legal and health theory to bear on managerial conflicts and problems. Students will be encouraged to draw on personal experience in the workplace to inform debate and discussion

Occasionally students are encouraged to draw on work-based experience. However, work placement *opportunities* to support this are limited.

In some cases, activities which develop externally applicable skills are referenced in name, with little supporting information to inform the reader of the processes inherent to their development. These include Group and peer activities, resource management and deployment, and modules which focus on the transfer of University-based learning to placement situations. However, engagement with work-related activity is explicit within a small number of documents:

Students engage in a number of activities such as student-led seminars; group work; peer assessment; personal development planning; reflection and action planning. Many assessment activities simulate those skills and qualities required in external employment environments. Examples here include the planning and enactment of group oral presentations and field reports linked to assessed field visits.

An interesting example of work-related activity is contained within one course submission document. Here, students are required to arrange their own work placement and undertake a related risk-assessment.

Only three of the faculty's sixteen documents contained clear and detailed examples of work-related curricula activities. Each of these also contained clear and detailed examples of curricula practices to support work-based learning.

2.5 Work-Based Learning

Several good examples of engagement with work-based learning are contained within the faculty's course submission documents. Work based modules; regular sessions with clients, visits, and year long placements, where students "*strengthen their awareness of current policy developments*" all feature. In some cases work placement is integrated throughout the course, in others this is presented as an option:

The work based module (elective) will provide the opportunity for a student who is formally employed in the place where the project is to be carried out to work and reflect on the experience by delivering an appropriate project. The student should be supported with the employer in the project, but they have no say in the designing of the project. A brief will be negotiated between the University supervisor and the student.

Faculty staff-members take an active role in securing work-based learning opportunities:

Visits are arranged for some students to solicitors' practices, barristers' chambers, Magistrates and County Courts. These links are soon to be extended as negotiations are taking place with the local Law Society, Magistrates Court and Crown Prosecution service.

Enterprising activities from students are also encouraged to support work-placement. In some cases students are active in finding and securing these. In one course, students are supported to consider the type of organisation they might be suited to, before arranging the work placement themselves. The following extract provides a good example of the interplay between enterprise and work-based learning, and students' role in supporting this:

Networking with potential employers is widely promoted. There are some well established links with legal firms and institutions who contribute to the law programme in a number of ways, for example by giving 'talks', judging moots and giving work placements to students.

However, it is questionable whether engagement with work-based learning is viewed by some course leaders as negating the need for work-related activities. Moreover, in one example, the absence of work-based learning is expressed in positive terms:

You will not be required to undertake work experience whilst enrolled on the [course].

Generally, course submission documents that contain references to work-based learning, address this area well. In total eleven of the sixteen course submission documents make reference to work-based learning. Five of these contained clear detailed examples and three contained limited examples.

Three of the five documents which contain clear and detailed references to 'work-based learning' contain clear and detailed references to 'work-related learning'. Three of the five documents contain clear and detailed examples of 'engagement with activities with a specific enterprise focus'. Three of the five documents contain clear and detailed examples of practices that support 'the progressive development of autonomy'.

2.6 Relation to a Specific Professional Area

Generally, it is possible to deduce the professional areas that graduates might work in, from the programme title of their course. However, it is extremely unusual for courses to refer to a specific job-type-only three course documents give clear detailed examples of possible careers that students who successfully complete the course might pursue.

Recent interviews with University Standing Panel Chairs (who have the role of ratifying the University's course programmes) revealed the increasing role played by professional bodies in driving the employability agenda. Interestingly, only one course submission document from the Faculty of D&S made direct reference to a professional body. This was in terms of the "Supervision support provided by a [name of professional body] qualified supervisor".

2.7 Engagement with Activities with a Specific Enterprise Focus

Several enterprising teaching and learning activities are cited within the faculty's course submission documents. These included student-led seminars; group work; peer assessment; personal development planning; reflection and action planning. Further examples of these are referenced elsewhere within the report (see 'the progressive development of autonomy', 'students' explicit reflection on their use of knowledge and skills', 'personal development planning', and 'work-based learning'),

A further example of innovative practice encouraged students with learning difficulties to use their experiences as a resource:

Students will be encouraged to share their learning difficulties with their named support tutor and where appropriate use this to inform the personal development portfolios.

Furthermore, several documents refer to profile and learning contracts which are drawn up with students who have been assessed as having disabilities/learning difficulties. With the student's consent these are circulated to relevant staff on the programme to ensure that support recommendations are implemented.

Other enterprising features are contained within the Faculty's course submission documents. In one example, flexible active learning, is supported through the provision of "online learning resources", including 'Blackboard'; e-mail, telephone and peer-support are also cited as facilitative. Unfortunately, little supplementary information is provided to inform the reader of how these resources are used, for example, whether students use Blackboard to communicate with each other, and whether teaching staff use this resource to make learning materials available etc. In other cases, descriptive terms are vague and reduce the texts' accessibility.

The role of enterprise in facilitating work-based learning opportunity has already been noted (see 'work-based' learning). Further opportunities to support work-based learning are evident:

The consultancy project (elective) will provide the student with the opportunity to engage with a client and negotiate a brief between the client and student.

Additional enterprising activities, including volunteering, and career transfer are cited in name only.

In summary, several of the faculty's documents contain evidence of enterprising activities. However, further information regarding the processes that underpin these developments would be useful in a number of cases.

Three of the five documents which contain clear detailed references of 'engagement with activities with a specific enterprise focus' also contain clear references to 'PDP', and 'students' explicit reflection on their use of knowledge and skills'. Three of the five documents contain clear detailed examples of practices that support 'the progressive development of autonomy'.

2.9 The Development of Skills

Course submission documents from the Faculty of D&S; contain several references to the development of core skills. These include core academic skills-cognitive, intellectual and subject-specific; and softer more vocational skills. Action planning, interviewing, group work, oral presentations, reflection, peer assessment, information literacy, presentation, and communication skills all feature. Other skills include resource management and deployment, and information technology skills.

In a small number of cases students are required to develop profession-specific skills. These include advanced digital media, technical design, environmental design, clinical practice and an appreciation of the impact of environments on professionals and consumers. Students may also be required to undertake specific tasks such as risk-assessments, and keep abreast of policy developments within their specialist field.

It is common for course submission documents to articulate a specific approach to skills development; via identification of the task itself i.e. the task is mentioned in name only (for example students give oral presentations). Some courses contain 'bolt-on' modules dedicated specifically to the personal and professional learning needs of students; in other cases a more integrative approach is implied.

Three of the five documents which contain clear detailed reference to 'The Development of Skills ' do so for 'the encouragement of career management skills', three of the five documents which contain clear detailed examples of curricula practices to support the development of skills ' do so for 'relation to a specific professional area'.

3. Employability Definition

Contrasting definitions of employability are evident within the faculty's course submission documents. Sometimes the concept is defined narrowly; in terms of students obtaining employment, in other others cases definitions are more extensive, and focus on the development of core attributes. However unravelling the meaning of these texts (or perhaps rather, interpreting them) can prove complex:

Courses have always had a clear employment and thus employability focus

The statement could be read as viewing employment and employability as one and the same. Alternatively, it could be inferred that a focus on employment fosters the development of employability. Further insight can be gleaned from elsewhere within the passage:

The employment record across the Programme is amongst the highest in the University and this coupled with both the successes of past graduates and the demand from key industry

organisations demonstrates clearly that the programme has an excellent employability track record.

Here, it appears that the terms employment and employability are used interchangeably.

Some texts refer to directly to the employability framework, although this is unusual. In other texts the definition of employability is implicit rather than stated overtly; these texts usually refer to core employability attributes, but make no reference to the term itself.

Table 1: Employability Content for Courses within the Faculty of D&S

Key:

No content	Minimal Content	Moderate Content	High Content
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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Total Minimal Content	Total Medium Content	Total High Content	Total No Content
Student Autonomy	High	Minimal	High			High	Moderate		High	High	Moderate	Minimal	Minimal	Moderate	Minimal	Moderate	4	4	5	3
Key/Core Skills	High	Minimal	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate		High	Moderate	Minimal	High	High	Minimal	Minimal		Moderate	4	5	5	2
PDP	Minimal	Minimal	High			Minimal	High		High	High	High	Minimal	High	High	Moderate	Minimal	5	1	7	3
Reflection	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal			Minimal	High		High	High	High	Minimal	High	High	Moderate	High	5	1	7	3
Career Management Skills	High		High	Moderate	Minimal	High		High		Moderate	Minimal		Minimal	Minimal		Moderate	4	3	4	5
Work Related Learning	Minimal	Minimal	High	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Moderate	Minimal	Moderate	High	Minimal	Moderate				High	6	4	3	3
Work Based Learning	Moderate	Minimal	High			High	Minimal		Minimal	High	High	Moderate		Moderate		High	3	3	5	5
Relation to Professional Area	High	Minimal		Minimal		Minimal		High	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	High	Minimal			Moderate	7	1	3	5
Enterprise Activities	High	Minimal	Minimal			High	High	Minimal		High	High		Moderate	Minimal	Minimal		5	1	5	5
Employability Definition	High	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	High	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	High	8	2	6	0
Total score (excluding employability definition)	High	Minimal	High			High	High		High	High	High	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal		Moderate	43	23	44	34

Faculty of Arts, Computing, Engineering and Sciences (ACES)

2. *The Progressive Development of Autonomy*

The expression 'autonomous learning' appears infrequently within the Faculty of ACES course submission documents. However, other related terms and curricula practices to support this are evident. Students keep progress files and learning journals which encourage reflection and self-assessment:

Through journals, log books, sketch pads and digital files, employed in the context of tutorials and critical groups, students develop a self reflective consciousness that is the bedrock of all artistic practice. The students' approach to PPD naturally reflects the aesthetic and intellectual choices they make in their individual work.

Attributes and traits which facilitate the development of learner autonomy are also identified- Self-directed projects demonstrate the benefits of *personal responsibility*, and students work in flexible, creative and independent ways, showing *self-discipline, self-direction, and reflexivity*. "*Mutual respect and honesty*" also feature.

A sequential approach to the development of student autonomy is contained within a small number of these texts:

An elective module is available in Level 5 for those who wish to continue their study at a higher level, specifically entry onto the third year (Level 6) of the BA (Hons) Graphic Design course at Sheffield Hallam University. This module effectively prepares you for the programme of study and the demands at this level, where you will be expected to help determine the direction and focus of your own study programme and work more independently, to achieve a synthesis of critical, practical and presentational skills within a body of self-directed work.

Large sections of the above extract are also contained within one other course submission document from The Faculty of ACES. Generally however, there was little evidence of a copy and paste approach to the evidencing of student autonomy.

From Table 2 it can be observed that only two of the Faculty's course submission documents contain clear detailed references to 'the progressive development of autonomy'. However, it is noteworthy that five other documents contain descriptive terms and limited examples of curricula practice to support this area.

Occasionally the reader is left to imagine the processes that engender the progressive development of learner autonomy. Seven documents address this area nominally. Here, learner autonomy is presented as an abstract entity, and texts contain little reference to the processes underpinning its development. However, this should not detract from the more positive examples that can be found within the faculty's documents.

2.1 *Students' Explicit Reflection on Their Use of Knowledge and Skills*

Evidence of curricula practice to support the development of reflective thinking is spread unevenly amongst the faculty's course submission documents. The term reflection or a related phrase features in all but one of these documents. The use of verbs and adjectives to inform the reader of the attributes, character, and processes that facilitate its development is limited at times. However, nearly half of the faculty's submission documents contain informative examples of learning and teaching exercises that foster reflective thinking. Students complete reflective journals and diaries of engagement; produce personal CD's;

participate in tutorials and critical groups; and complete self-directed critiques, in order to develop their capacities for reflective thinking. Teaching staff play an important role in supporting students to develop their reflective capacity, by giving written feedback to progress files, and helping students to plan their future development. Student supervisor meetings and specific modules which address reflection also feature. The following extract provides an informative example of practices which facilitate reflective thinking:

Progress files will largely comprise assessments performed throughout course, together with written feedback. Students will be given proformas with which to record their reflections on their efforts in the light of this feedback (e.g. highlighting what they feel is strong or weak about what they have done). This will hopefully encourage self-assessment as a route to highlighting professional development needs.

All six of the course submission documents which contained clear detailed examples of curricula practices to foster reflective thinking, also contained clear detailed examples of curricula practices to support PDP.

2.2 Personal Development Planning

Several good examples of learning and teaching exercises to support personal development planning (PDP) are contained within the faculty's course submission documents. Eight documents contained clear and detailed examples of facilitative curricula practices.

Teaching staff play an active role in supporting students to plan their personal development by allocating specific time to support this. Extended induction periods and specified modules all present opportunities for students to address their personal development. Regular meetings between students and tutors are used to provide a periodical review of progress files. Senior Personal Tutors also *support students in the planning and management of (their) identified career direction and future development*. The complementary character of employability attributes is recognised elsewhere within the faculty's course submission documents:

*A strong emphasis on Personal Development Planning (PDP) linked strongly to learning from work, **career management** and the provision of opportunities.*

Students undertake several tasks to augment their development. Reflective diaries give students the opportunity to comment on their development of skills and knowledge. Sketch books and digital media files are also cited as facilitative.

External mechanisms support students to plan their professional development. These operate both during the course-for example in the form of feedback from work placement supervisors, and following graduation:

*Registration links a professional [job type] into a professional....institution, one which has been assessed by the [professional body] as capable of providing comprehensive **professional development guidance** and opportunities, with regular publications and web access to assist in this, and many opportunities to network with colleagues with similar professional interests.*

A structured approach to supporting student development is cited in one document; students complete progress files which *make use of the Training Needs Analysis approach developed for students on research degrees*. A proforma is used, to help students to reflect on the actions they have made, in response to performance assessments. Interestingly:

This [self-assessment] is something that most students do informally anyway, but the progress files will simply formalise it and hopefully encourage self-assessment as a route to highlighting professional development needs

Generally, there was strong evidence and very good description of curricula practices to support PDP within the faculty's course submission documents. More reference to the development of time management and organisational skills would complement this.

2.3 The Encouragement of Career Management Skills

An inconsistent approach to the *encouragement of career management skills* was evident with the faculty's documents. *Limited reference* is made to opportunity awareness, decision making and transition skills. However, approximately half of the documents contain good examples of curricula activities to support the development of career management. Students create CV's, participate in mock applications and interviews, and are given advice on career routes. Interview skills are seen as facilitative in helping students to "*deal with a variety of work and social situations*". The following excerpt provides a good example of activities that foster career-management skills:

Professional Studies at Level 5, covers issues of financial and business practice including: developing CV's, preparing job applications, investigating job roles and descriptions, identifying relevant professional organisations and design bodies. Additionally, other areas of professional design practice and career management include learning how to work with clients and service agencies, how to plan, organise and manage work

This passage features in three of the faculty's course submission documents. However, two of these are closely related and it is plausible that students from these courses learn in tandem. Other than this there is only limited evidence of a copy and paste approach to the evidencing of career management skills.

Specialist Careers staff also support the development of career management skills. One set of closely-related courses boast *a strategic and collaborative approach to curriculum design and course management building on excellent relationships with the Careers and Employment Service*. Students are also made aware of specialist resources to support career management skills such as career planning packages.

As with PDP, opportunities for career management accompany the professional registration that follows graduation. Students are made aware of job opportunities and presented with opportunities to network via regular publications and web access.

In total, four of the faculty's course submission documents contain clear and detailed examples of curricula practices to support the development of career management skills. Three of these also contained clear examples of curricula practices to support 'work-related learning', 'work-based learning' and 'the development of skills'. Three documents contained limited examples of curricula practices to support the development of career management skills and there was much to be positive about the faculty's address of this area.

2.4 Work-related learning

There was an inconsistent address of work-related learning within the faculty's course submission documents. The vast majority claim to develop skills which are relevant to the workplace and only one document contained no reference to the concept in any capacity. However, within at least half of the faculty's documents, the processes to support the development are not made explicit. In some cases the 'what' is presented to the reader, for example, visual, spoken and written communication, but there is limited information

regarding the 'how'-the action by which this is accomplished, for example we are only informed that these are developed through a series of *projects and assignments*.

Curricula practices and activities to support the development of work skills are evident within a limited number of the faculty's documents. Industrial visits, role play, and visits from external professionals all support students to develop the skills needed for employment. *Extensive live projects, work-based and work-focussed projects* also feature.

Several externally applicable skills are referred to within these texts. These include broader skills for example, Information Technology, time management, communication, organisational, networking, presentation, and promotional skills; and profession-specific skills, for example how to work with clients and agencies, and determine fees and costs. Students also develop career skills, including interview and CV writing skills and learn how to *"organise and deploy ideas and information in order to formulate arguments cogently, and express them effectively and appropriately"*.

Four courses contained clear and detailed examples of work-related curricula activities and three contained limited examples. Three of the four courses which contained clear and detailed examples of work-related curricula activities also contained clear examples of curricula practices to support 'work-based learning', 'the encouragement of career management skills', and 'the development of skills'. Three of the four courses contained clear examples of activities with a specific enterprise focus'. Three of the four course contained clear examples of activities to support the development of PDP.

2.5 Work-Based Learning

Opportunities for work-based learning were distributed sporadically across the faculty's courses. Seven of the faculty's documents contained no reference to this. One other course was aimed at people already employed in their professional field. However, eight of these documents contain passages relating to work-based learning. The unique opportunities provided by this type of learning are highlighted within these texts; students undertake sandwich placements, and work placements where they *experience processes and systems which can only be described in principle in class*. Visits to industry are also arranged. Work placements are frequently presented as an *option* to students; however, engagement is viewed positively. A small number of documents refer to the active role played by teaching staff in supporting students throughout the various stages of their work placement. This includes support in identifying a placement; making applications and entering the workplace. Employers also provide feedback that can be integrated into classroom discussion:

Work placement is encouraged and desirable but not compulsory. Help and support is provided with the identification of suitable potential work placement and also with eventual job application/entry into the workplace. If a placement is undertaken, your supervisor at the placement would provide a written feedback report on your performance, strengths and weaknesses, which is used for discussion in tutorials and professional development.

The faculty's strength in supporting work-based learning is recognised explicitly within one document. Nominal reference is also made to the supportive role of the Placement Experience and Employability Unit. The document also identifies work-based learning opportunity as a main ingredient in developing student employability.

A key factor influencing the employability of the students in the programme is the placement year where the Faculty is one of the leading providers of a placement education in the HE sector.

In summary, several documents refer to work based learning. However, the types of role that students might undertake are not made explicit. There is also little reference to the form of support provided to students to facilitate this.

2.6 Relation to a Specific Professional Area

Generally, it is possible to deduce the broad professional areas that graduates might work in, from the programme title of their course. Only two courses named broad job types within the main body of the text. None of the courses named specific professional roles.

Only two course documents named a professional body. One of these did so in relation to the professional body's delivery of course modules and the other referred to the registration with a professional body that accompanies successful course completion.

Ten of the faculties fifteen documents addressed this area nominally, and three contained no reference to this.

2.7 Engagement with Activities with a Specific Enterprise Focus

Teaching and learning activities with a specific enterprise focus are evident in more than half of the faculty's course submission documents. Examples of enterprising activities include; the completion of an employability portfolio where students produce a personal CD to support personal development planning, and the completion of progress files, which encourage self assessment. *Real life and simulated exercises* are referenced (by name only) in one of the faculty's documents. Work-placement feedback can also be integrated into classroom discussion and tutorials (see work-based learning. Examples of enterprising learning and teaching activities are also referenced elsewhere within the report. These include, students undertaking self-directed projects (see 'the progressive development of autonomy'), and networking *with colleagues with similar professional interests* (see 'personal development planning').

Several innovative approaches to curriculum *design* are cited. These include the tailoring of specific modules to the specific aspirations of a student; and a collaborative approach to curriculum design which draws on the knowledge of specialist departments within the University (Careers and Employment Service, Learning and Teaching Institute) and external bodies (employers and advisers).

However, it is not always explained how approaches which support student enterprise function in practice:

Through the development of professional and networking skills informed by the lectures and seminars of the Contemporary Art, Advanced Practice module and through the encouragement and support of a mature professional practice by a staff body, whose primary practice is within the context of a national and international art world, students will develop the ability to interface with any professional context.*

In summary, several of the faculty's documents contain evidence of enterprising learning activities. However, information regarding the teaching practices that support this is narrow at times. Three of the four courses which contain clear and detailed examples of 'engagement with activities with a specific enterprise focus' also contain clear and detailed examples of practices to support 'PDP'. Three of the four courses also contain clear and detailed examples of curricula practices to develop core skills.

2.8 The Development of Skills

Several references to core skills and approaches that facilitate their development are contained within the faculty's course submission documents. Teaching staff actively support students to develop academic skill-including the ability to gather and deploy ideas and formulate arguments, by setting clear expectations and providing timely feedback. Several learning activities facilitate the acquisition of skills. These include project presentations, real and *simulated* exercises (no specifics given), self-directed critiques, and assignments.

'Softer' more vocational skills are also developed. Theoretical and practical modules help students to develop interpersonal, time-management, visual and self-promotion skills. Role-play is used to develop interview skills. Other skills which are developed include communication, planning, organisation, numerical, and IT skills.

Approaches to developing profession-specific skills are also evident. Students learn how to work with clients, determine fees and costs, and develop safe and healthy workplace procedures, via a professional practice module. Critical discourse skills are developed through the completion of assignments and participation in critical discourse groups. Regular input with industry professionals and industrial visits give students first-hand experience and help to support the development of professional skills. The following extract evidences an appreciation of the type of skills, required by specific professions:

Students are expected to be able to communicate the 'why' of their work as well as the 'what'. In the context of career development in the art world this is an important skill, one that enables gallerists, curators and others to understand, and perhaps more readily support, what an artist is attempting to achieve through their work.

Generally, the development of skills was addressed very well within the faculty's course submission documents. Seven course documents contained clear and detailed examples of curricula practices to support this area. Seven contained limited examples.

2.9 Definition

Variable definitions of employability are contained within the faculty's course submission documents. Generally, the concept is defined broadly in terms of the skills and attributes that enhance a student's employment prospects. Elsewhere, courses focus on providing profession-specific skills. Four documents make direct-reference to the University's Employability Framework. Generally however, employability attributes are referred to simply as 'skills' within these documents. Six further documents contain the term employability but make no reference to the University's employability framework. Interestingly, the majority of these list the specific skills which have high-currency within the labour market. These include interpersonal, time management, analytical and communication skills. However, there is some evidence of a copy and paste approach in this area. Occasionally, texts align themselves with the reader, by claiming congruence with the University's core values:

The integrated embedding of employability is integral to the design of the programme and this view of employability mirrors that of the University, focusing on the enhancement of lifelong employability, reflecting research on the graduate attributes sought by employers: intelligent, flexible, self-aware lifelong learners with communication, interactive and team working skills, who add value to and transform organisations.

Five documents contain no direct reference to 'employability' or the University's Employability Framework.

Table 2
Employability Content for Courses within the Faculty of ACES

Key:

No content	Minimal Content	Moderate Content	High Content
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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	Total Minimal Content	Total Medium Content	Total High Content	Total No Content
Student Autonomy																7	5	2	1
Key/Core Skills																0	7	7	1
PDP																4	3	8	0
Reflection																5	2	6	2
Career Management Skills																5	4	4	2
Work Related Learning																6	3	4	2
Work Based Learning																0	5	3	7
Relation to Professional Area																10	0	2	3
Enterprise Activities																3	3	4	5
Employability Definition																7	2	6	0
Total Score (excluding employability definition)																40	32	40	23

Faculty of Health and Wellbeing

A particular issue relating to the documentation for this faculty is that eight of the eleven course documents are structured around a table. This table indicates the aspects of the learning, teaching and assessment (LTA) strategy, which dovetail with the nine elements of the employability framework. By using the table, the course planning team are therefore seeking to illustrate how the Programme Specification for each course, both fits with the university employability agenda and addresses and integrates each of its components. This is a useful tool, however, in many cases, whilst reference to relevant sections of the Programme Specification is made clear, further detail is not provided. In these instances, it has therefore not been possible to assess the level of employability content fully. The scores given simply reflect the content in the extracts reviewed and make no comment on any other documentation. It is accepted that analysis of the Programme Specification document may have provided further insight; however, as the purpose of this exercise was to consider the level of engagement shown within the course validation document, other documentation was not examined.

2. *The progressive development of student autonomy*

The progressive development of student autonomy refers to the development of self-directed learning, and in undertaking this review, evidence indicating elements of a course that enable students to take responsibility for their learning were sought. The development of student autonomy is addressed (both directly and indirectly) within all the submission documents to varying degrees. Indirect reference involves the use of phrases such as *"personal/professional development process"*, or statements indicating that students are required *"to reflect on and plan their own development"*. One of the submission documents states that the course aims to facilitate development of *"independent thinking and personal development"*.

It is important to note that a total of eight of the eleven submission documents are based around a table (mentioned previously), which refers to the aspects of the LTA strategy that dovetail with the autonomy element of the Employability Framework. In these cases scores of minimal content have been given, unless additional information (above and beyond referencing the programme specification) has been included. One other general point is that several documents appear to have sections of very similar or in some cases exactly the same, content.

Support for the development of student autonomy lies in the learning and teaching strategies used in module delivery. One document refers to the use of an *"incremental LTA approach"* which explicitly develops autonomous learners. Indeed, the language of an *"LTA approach"* or *"learning and teaching strategy"* in the development of autonomous learning is apparent in many of the submission documents.

Engagement with the principle of learner autonomy is articulated in one of the submission documents as a *"key aspiration"*, for which specific action is taken to enable students to acquire the skills to learn and practice autonomously, reflectively and critically. Autonomy and reflexivity are principles which appear to be linked together in some of the submission documents. Learner autonomy is also discussed within the context of PDP, which for example, *"is designed to allow students to monitor their progress towards autonomous learning and practice"*, and enables students to *"improve learning by a process of review, reflection and action planning"*.

Across courses it is evident that at all levels, a number of approaches and strategies are employed in modules (both optional and mandatory modules), in order to facilitate the development of self-directed learning skills. Such strategies include:

- *The embedding of key skills where required.*
- *A focus on tutor-directed and student-directed learning.*
- *Minimal use of passive learning.*

Other examples cited include the inclusion of modules requiring students to reflect on and plan their development (an act which is seen to enhance Continuing Professional Development (CPD)).

2.1 The development of key/core skills

The development of key/core skills usually involves the development of a range of skills including writing and numeracy skills; problem solving skill; team working skills; oral and visual communication skills; and information technology. The development of skills was addressed, to varying degrees, in ten out of the eleven documents, and of these, two contained good levels of detail.

For some of the courses, the development of key skills, as with learner autonomy, is addressed within core modules. This is evidenced in the following statement:

“Key skills are embedded in the component modules of the programme and are progressively developed through the levels of study”.

In the course submission documents a number of skills which will be developed are identified. These include scientific communication skills (in terms of both written and oral skills); group work; practical skills; and time management skills. One submission document notes that the development of such skills will “*compliment*” the more subject specific skills developed on a course. Whilst reference is made to the type of skills a course aims to develop, details of the pedagogic practice applied in developing these skills are minimal.

One of the submission documents indicates that by developing skills in a progressive and embedded manner throughout the course, students will be provided with an advanced “*tool kit*” for employability. Additional details on what constitutes an employability toolkit were unfortunately not provided. Similarly, another document indicates that the course facilitates skills development in the form of a “*Skills Passport*”, and in also in the attainment of the widely regarded “*European Computer Driving Licence*” (ECDL). No further details are provided, and it is felt that further expansion of these points would have been useful.

Reference to skills development also comes in the guise of discussion relating to CPD, however as in previous examples, further expansion on this point is not given. Many of the submission documents indicate that skills development is addressed, but refer to the programme specification document and therefore further insights could perhaps be gleaned from a review of this additional documentation.

2.2 Personal Development Planning (PDP)

PDP involves students undertaking reflective practices and action planning their work, and is an element that is embedded in many university courses. All of the course submission documents contained some evidence of engagement with PDP, and whilst variations in the level of content are evident, overall this element was addressed well; indeed greater detail was provided for PDP than any of the other attributes.

The documentation reveals that PDP is integrated within course structures in terms of both core and elective modules; in some courses it is embedded throughout the entire programme, with specific modules at each level. PDP is clearly a valued element of some courses. For example, within one text, PDP is noted to be a *"key component"* of a Level Four module. This valued status is also echoed at a wider level as the documentation shows that PDP is considered to be a key element of the learning and teaching strategy adopted by two of the courses.

Details are provided within some of the submission documents of the ways in which students are expected to engage with PDP. These details highlight how PDP links in with other elements of the employability framework. Modules, for example, include *"reflective exercises and CV preparation (linked to placement preparation workshops for all students)"*. Thus, the wider attributes of self-reflection, work-based learning and career management can be seen to have links with PDP. Similarly, one submission document shows that through the processes of reflection and planning on development, PDP is designed *"to allow students to monitor their progress towards autonomous learning and practice"*.

The submission documents show that students are supported in the process of PDP by tutors, by placement administrators, and also by online PDP material which is integrated into the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) site. Evidence of PDP will be collected through written feedback on assessment activities; through action plans; and through peer feedback for example.

2.3 Students' Explicit Reflection on Their Use of Knowledge and Skills

Only one course did not refer to this element, and generally this attribute was fairly well addressed within the documentation. Reflection is encouraged in varying ways across the courses in both core modules, and in optional modules which enable students to *"tailor"* their development in light of reflection. In addition, one document indicates that the principle of reflective practitioner is incorporated into the learning and teaching strategy, suggesting a wider teaching approach.

Evidence is presented therefore, which indicates that the principle of self-reflection is embedded at both the module level, and more widely at the overall course level. Some details are provided regarding the ways in which students are expected to engage as reflective practitioners. One submission document indicates that students are asked to reflect on a range of different contexts: these include reflection on operating within different groups, and reflection on applying subject knowledge in work tasks. In undertaking this process, students are therefore encouraged to see how their skills and knowledge might be transferred into a work situation.

Unsurprisingly, reflection is frequently referred to within sections of the documents which address PDP. One such example indicates that the university employability framework requirements of self-reflection and career management skills are

"addressed by activities related to PPD, placement preparation, placement, business modules, and a specific module for non-placement students which directly places the students skills in a work-place context. Students who have carried out a placement have direct experience of using these skills in the work environment".

Reflection is also addressed in references to the process of CPD, which is of particular importance where evidence of CPD is required for professional registration. Thus

"some of the modules will enhance this process by directly requiring students to reflect on and plan their own development".

As with previous sections, a number of the documents indicate relevant sections within their Programme Specification documents, but provide minimal, if any, additional detail.

2.4. The Encouragement of Career Management Skills

Ten of the eleven course submission documents address this element; however, overall, levels of content on career management skills are minimal. Nevertheless, it is possible to glean that in a number of courses, career management skills development is embedded through the curriculum in a variety of forms. One way in which career management skills are encouraged is through the production of PDP. Specific activities, such as placement preparation and the actual placement itself, are also cited as facilitators.

Core and optional modules are used to address career management skills and in one of the texts it is noted that

"many of the constituent modules have relevance to employability and career progression, whether this is in the direction of becoming a more specialised practitioner or in the areas of management or education"

Several documents also note that engagement with career management skills is addressed in the LTA strategy. One of the submission documents identifies a range of career management skills which it addresses. These are:

Self-awareness; Opportunity awareness; Decision making; Transition skills; and Job Application skills.

By addressing these skills the course will,

"enable students to pull together and make sense of their experiences in order to identify and attain future goals".

Arguably this perspective is holistic in its approach, drawing together a range of employability attributes, which it is believed will enable students to apply a reflective and autonomous approach to their future career planning.

2.5 Work-Related Learning

Some level of address regarding work-related learning was evident in ten of the eleven course submission documents. Whilst overall levels of detail are minimal, it is possible to gain some insights into the ways in which work-related learning is addressed. Certainly in one of the submission documents, the value of work-related learning is emphasised as being *"integral to employment situation"*.

From the documentation it is apparent that work related learning activities are addressed in specific course modules, and as part of the process of PDP. There is an indication that work-related learning is also addressed within the wider LTA Strategy. One submission document defines work related learning as:

"learning activities at all levels (which) provide experience of real-life scenarios, often practical in nature, e.g. scenario based practicals and bioethics debates".

Engagement with real-life scenarios has a clear relevance to part-time students who are already employed within their chosen field. In such cases, it is expected that

"as qualified practitioners you will bring your experience into the learning environment".

thereby demonstrating the process of fusing real-world experience and educational development.

2.6 Work-Based Learning

Whilst most of the submission documents contained references to work-based learning, overall levels of detail were minimal. This was particularly the case in documents which referred to relevant sections of the programme specifications and did not provide further detail.

Nevertheless some examples of work-based learning are given. In several cases, engagement, as could be anticipated, takes the form of placements. References to practice learning and experience of real life scenarios can also be found but these are not expanded on further. Another way in which students are engaged with work-based learning is through specific modules; these include modules preparing students for placement, but also modules for non-placement students.

2.7 Relation to a Specific Professional Area

Given the type of courses that are encompassed within the Faculty, it could be anticipated that clear and strong links with professional bodies would be evident within the documentation, and that this element would be well addressed. Whilst obvious variations in the level of content exist between the course documents, nine of the eleven courses made references to professional areas or bodies. Varying levels of detail are given, however, but across the documentation, a variety of examples of engagement with professional areas/bodies are detailed. Requirements in terms of CPD illustrate this point well. Such examples include a requirement of students to maintain evidence of CPD for professional registration; obligations to fulfil regulatory and professional body requirements for CPD and lifelong learning; and professional body requirements incorporated into courses to enable students to qualify.

Amongst the documentation references to specific modules with a professional focus are made, for example professional practice modules and references to potential job roles and areas are evident. Within one of the course documents it states that though the course incorporates professional body requirements to allow successful students to become qualified practitioners, *"it was considered appropriate to ensure that it was consistent with the employability framework"*. This may perhaps raise a question regarding the "fit" between the University's framework and professional body requirements.

2.8 Engagement with Activities with a Specific Enterprise Focus

Reference to the inclusion of enterprising activities is made within eight of the course submission documents, although overall levels of detail are minimal. This reflects the fact that in most cases, the attribute is referenced within a table but no actual details have been provided.

The few examples which have been provided involve the inclusion of modules which have an enterprise focus, particularly in modules within the strand of business. Enterprising approaches to course administration can be gleaned in terms of online services (enabling students to access online timetables and room information), and the use of the Universities' virtual learning environment which is facilitated by a course e-learning coordinator.

2.9 Definition of Employability

A definition of employability is evident across all the course validation documents; however, there is variation in terms of how employability is defined. The term "*employability*" is present in all of the course submission documents, and in nine of the eleven documents, this is in terms of a direct reference to the University Employability Framework. Where the University Employability Framework is referenced, a number, and in some cases all, of the components of this framework are addressed. One of the submission documents states that

"this programme was designed with employability in mind, complies with the University's employability framework and is designed to give students the skills to succeed in diverse work environments".

The document provides a clear outline of how it addresses the components of the university's employability framework and in doing so demonstrates a wider, inclusive definition of employability.

The nature of the courses reviewed means that in a number of cases, employability is often defined in terms of career progression, as students are already working as health practitioners. For example, in one document, employability is defined in terms of CPD, and the enhancement of existing skills and experience. The document states that

"many of the constituent modules have relevance to employability and career progression, whether this is in the direction of becoming a more specialised practitioner or in the areas of management or education".

Table 3
Employability Content for Courses within the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing

Key:

No content	Minimal Content	Moderate Content	High Content
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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Total Minimal Content	Total Moderate Content	Total High Content	Total No Content
Student Autonomy	High	Moderate	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	8	0	3	0
Key/Core Skills	No content	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	6	2	2	1
PDP	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Moderate	4	3	4	0
Reflection	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	No content	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	4	5	1	1
Career Management Skills	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	No content	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	8	1	1	1
Work Related Learning	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No content	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	9	1	0	1
Work Based Learning	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	No content	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	8	0	1	2
Relation to Professional Area	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No content	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	5	3	1	2
Enterprise Activities	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No content	Moderate	No content	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	8	0	0	3
Employability Definition	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	High	Moderate	3	7	1	0
Total Score (excluding employability definition)	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	No content	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	60	15	13	12

Faculty of Organisation and Management

2. The progressive development of student autonomy

The progressive development of student autonomy refers to the development of self-directed learning. Thus in undertaking this review, evidence indicating the elements of a course that enable students to take responsibility for their learning was sought. The development of autonomous learning is addressed (to varying levels) in three of the five course submission documents. In two of the submission documents, moderate levels of evidence are provided, and one document contains a minimal level of address. Whilst reference, either directly or indirectly, is made to the progressive development of student autonomy, it is felt that additional evidence and detail could be provided to further illustrate engagement.

The term “*student autonomy*” is never directly referred in any of the extracts. Instead, references to the element include statements emphasising student engagement and outcome. Examples of such comments include:

“reflection on personal and professional development will be embedded into the entire programme ”

and

“increased appreciation of the learning arising from involvement in project work”.

Interestingly, the content of the three course submission documents in which student autonomy is addressed contain virtually the same information; however, this perhaps reflects the similarities in the nature of the courses reviewed.

It is also important to note that any reference to the development of self-directed learning is made solely within sections addressing PDP. The expected learning outcomes gained from the process of developing a progress file are not formally assessed; nevertheless, the development of student autonomy is a clearly one of the anticipated outcomes of PDP and this is illustrated in the following quote:

“improved learning across the full range of the course through taking greater responsibility for their learning and through broadening their repertoire of learning styles”.

Further references to the progressive development of student autonomy can be gleaned from other submission documents. For example, one of the extracts states that the Faculty has an explicit aim (as expressed in the LTA Strategy) “*to enable students to reflect on their learning and personal development*”. Thus the development of student autonomy is fundamental at the Faculty level.

Whilst it can be seen that there is an aim to progressively develop student autonomy, three points need to be considered. Firstly, the manner in which this aim is to be achieved is not articulated in any of the documentation. Secondly, details of the actual activities through which student autonomy will be developed, or the role of teaching staff in this process is not evidenced. Thirdly, as mentioned previously, reference is only made within sections relating to PDP. Overall, whilst there is evidence of engagement with the development of student autonomy, levels of detail are limited, with content focusing on the overall aim of achievement rather than providing details of the process. However, the documentation suggests that the element is embedded at the Programme level, and is a specific Faculty wide aim.

2.1 The development of key/core skills

Skills development is evidenced in three of the five course submission documents. The terms “key skills” or “core skills” are not used in any of the extracts; rather all three make reference to “*employability skills*”. Unfortunately, as a definition of what is meant by “*employability skills*” is not provided, it is not possible to have an understanding of what skills and/or knowledge the courses are “*enhancing*”. The documentation indicates that modules and activities have been incorporated into the courses in order to enhance a student’s employability skills. However, it is difficult to comment further on this, as again, no additional details are provided, and therefore it is unclear what activities will be undertaken to enable this development.

Reference is also made to the opportunity presented to many students to further develop these employability skills through curricular and extra-curricular part-time and voluntary work experience. Similarly, access to central services such as the Careers and Employment Services, is also cited as a facilitator in the development of employability skills but again, further details are not provided.

One of the extracts, which relates to a part time course, indicates that its focus lies in

“enhancing existing skills and professional development rather than on entry to the labour market”.

The same document notes that

“assignments will relate to the student’s experience of management within the context of their current work and organisation”.

Thus it can be seen then that in articulating the development of skills, the course document considers the employment experience of students, and aims to enhance and development appropriate level skills, rather than applying a “one style fits all” approach. However, no further details of the type of skills to be enhanced, or an articulation of the approach taken to this enhancement is provided and therefore it is not possible to comment further.

2.2 Personal Development Planning (PDP)

PDP involves students undertaking reflective practices and action planning their work, and is an element that is embedded in many university courses. PDP should be supported by tutors and within the curriculum, and this type of information was sought when reviewing the documentation. PDP is evidenced well in the three documents that address it. Where PDP is addressed, it makes up at least half of the employability extract provided for each course. Interestingly, the content of each of these documents shows little variation, however, the similarity in the nature of the courses may explain this. The size and detail presented in terms of PDP would suggest that the role of PDP is a central one. This is perhaps explained for one of the courses which states that the nature of the cohort (i.e. students are predominantly from outside of the UK, and come with differing educational experiences, and different “*cultural expectations about teaching and learning*”), means that analysis and self-reflection on both the process of learning, and on recognising the benefits of diversity are “*essential*” aspects of the course.

The approach to PDP articulated in the documentation is the development of personal progress files. Given that progress files are personal to individual students, this process is not formally assessed, but nevertheless has a number of intended outcomes. These outcomes feed into the development of other elements of employability. These include (and are the same for all courses) the

- *Development of skills in reflection and analysis*
- *Increased self-awareness and recognition of the learning arising from sharing ideas with others*
- *Improved learning across the full range of the course through increased responsibility and a broadening of learning styles*
- *Development of personal and career action plans*
- *Increased appreciation of the learning gained from involvement in project work*

Thus students are encouraged to actively reflect on their learning, and (it is anticipated) will learn valuable employability attributes such as teamwork, career management skills and increased autonomy for example.

Linkage with the element of self-reflection is demonstrated, by one of the courses, through a specific module which requires self-reflection as part of the formal assessment in the development of a portfolio, which, it states will provide a good basis for the development of the personal progress file.

2.3 Students' Explicit Reflection On Their Use Of Knowledge And Skills

Three of the five documents make direct references to the process of reflection, and the terms "*self-reflection*", and "*skills in reflection and analysis*" are specifically used. These documents contain very similar text, indeed within two of the documents, large sections are word-for-word the same. However, as previously indicated, similarities in courses may account for an overlap in the embedding of employability elements, rather than simply a "cut and paste" approach. In the documents where reflection is addressed, it is contained within the section on PDP, which perhaps reflects the overlapping nature of these two attributes. It is also evident that the process is both formally assessed through specific modules, and is an intended outcome of PDP. In one of the documents it is noted that,

"reflection on personal and professional development will be embedded into the entire programme and developed through all elements of a student's work".

In terms of formal assessment, self-reflection is an explicit requirement of certain modules of some courses. In one module, assessment involves the development of a portfolio, which, as previously mentioned in the prior section on PDP, is considered to provide a good basis for the development of a personal progress file. Overall however, the details provided within the documentation, on pedagogic practices to support students in the process of reflection are limited.

Self-reflection is also central to the wider LTA approach. This is demonstrated within two documents which both state that an explicit aim of the Faculty, as expressed in the LTA strategy, is

'to enable students to reflect on their learning and personal development particularly within an outcome-based framework for learning'.

Linkages between PDP and the wider University are also indicated through reference to the University's framework for progress files, which is available electronically, and will make the

development of a progress file relatively straightforward *"and will focus students on the links between reflection and progress"*.

2.4. The Encouragement of Career Management Skills

Little reference is made within the course submission documents to career management skills. Whilst the attribute was referenced in three of the five submission documents, details of how career management skills will be developed are limited. Specific reference to the development of career management skills is made (in all three documents), within a section headed *"employability"*. Whilst the documentation states that career management will be addressed from a number of perspectives, details on how this will be achieved, and what these perspectives are, is not provided. PDP is cited as a facilitator in developing career management skills and this is evidenced in the following quote:

"Development of realistic personal and career action plans" is an intended outcome of PDP.

A generic statement applicable to all courses, which is present at the end of the documents, also indicates that students will be made aware of the career services available at the university.

2.5 Work-Related Learning

In reviewing this element, interest lay in considering what activities were undertaken which are similar to those found in external environments. None of the faculty's course submission documents contained any direct reference to the term "work-related learning". Further, little reference is made to any activities that could be classified as having a work-related learning basis.

Within one of the course submission documents it is indicated that

"assignments will relate to the student's experience of management within the context of their current work and organisation".

Arguably such a statement can be seen to address work-related learning, in that the learning engendered is a fusion of academic learning and work experience through a process of critical reflection.

Three of the course submission documents have a generic section at the end that refers to points applicable to each of the three courses. Within this section it states that

"Employment based assignments have been designed to draw on practical experience"

However, it is felt that it is unclear as to whether this statement is referring to work-related or work-based learning. The ambiguity of this statement, plus the lack of any further evidence, has resulted in a no content score being given to these courses.

2.6 Work-Based Learning

Overall there is very little reference to work-based learning within the course submission documents, indeed, the attribute was only addressed by one of the five courses, and the term "work-based learning" was specifically used. Work-based learning is defined as work experience, and the course requires students to undertake continuous work-experience in the sector; that is to actually work for at least one half day per week. The decision to take such an approach is justified in the text, noting that this approach is considered to be more

“beneficial” to students than the traditional bolt-on placement of four to five weeks duration. The rationale behind this continuous approach is that students can apply the

“theory they have learnt to real world situations as they progress through the course”

thereby enabling them to make valid and immediate contributions to the workplace on leaving the course.

The benefit of work-based learning is articulated within two of the course submission documents, where reference is made to the opportunity for students to develop employability skills through both curricular opportunities and extra-curricular involvement in part-time and voluntary work. However, it is unclear as to whether the curricular opportunities are in terms of actual work-based opportunities.

It is important to bear in mind two points. Firstly, one of the courses reviewed is part time and given that students are already in employment, work-based learning may not be applicable to this course. Secondly, a lack of reference to work-based learning may simply be an omission by the course teams.

2.7 Relation to a Specific Professional Area

Generally, address and content regarding this attribute was minimal, and no professional bodies were referenced in any of the documents. Whilst the titles of the courses make it possible to deduce the likely professional areas which each course is related to, no details were provided on potential careers for students or relevant professional bodies. One extract commented that *“employability is reinforced by a strong sector focus”*, but details on the specific sector were not provided. In other submission documents, limited references are made to learning from students workplaces and enhancing their existing skills and professional development.

2.8 Engagement with Activities with a Specific Enterprise Focus

There was no reference to this element within any of the employability extracts reviewed.

2.9 Definition of Employability

Variations in definitions of employability are evident within the Faculty’s course submission documents. None of the documents referred specifically to the university’s employability framework but definitions of employability tend to be explicitly stated within the text. Student employability is often seen as being intertwined with work-based learning. For example, in one of the course submission documents, it states *“student employability at the end of the programme is vital”*. This opinion is expanded upon further when it is noted that many employers have expressed the view that graduates

“Are not being prepared for what employers need (Leisure Manager, 2001)”

Unsurprisingly then, the course submission document pays particular attention to work-based learning, noting that regular work experience within the sector is perceived as being particularly beneficial to students. This can lead the reader to infer that work-based learning is considered to be a critical factor in student employability.

Within two of the submission documents, employability is stated to be a *“core concept”* that runs through all courses within the Faculty. The concept is also defined broadly in terms of the skills and attributes that enhance a students employment prospects, and in terms of profession-specific skills. For example, courses have *“been designed with employability in*

mind", and to this end, specific modules and activities have been incorporated which enhance *"employability skills"*. The importance of skills development to employability is also addressed within another of the submission documents where it states that

"the focus on employability is directed at enhancing existing skills and professional development".

Table 4. Employability Content for Courses within the Faculty of O&M

Key:

No content	Minimal Content	Moderate Content	High Content
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	A	B	C	D	E	Total No Content	Total Minimal Content	Total Moderate Content	Total High Content
Student Autonomy						2	1	2	0
Key/Core Skills						2	1	2	0
PDP						2	0	0	3
Reflection						2	0	3	0
Career Management Skills						2	3	0	0
Work Related Learning						4	1	0	0
Work Based Learning						4	0	1	0
Relation to Professional Area						3	2	0	0
Enterprise Activities						5	0	0	0
Employability Definition						1	1	3	0
Total Score (excluding employability definition)						26	8	8	3

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