

# What is Employability? Card Sort Instruction Sheet



The “**Employability is....**” card sort enables individuals to articulate their views on what “employability” might mean, discuss these views with colleagues and modify them if appropriate.

It can be usefully deployed in a number of contexts BUT it is especially effective as a starting point for discussions at an early stage in (re) validation. Its purpose is to share perspectives as to what employability is and is not and to lead to a shared understanding which should help to underpin positive embedding, enhancing and integration of employability within the curriculum.

## What to do?

1. If you have more than 4 people it is a good idea to create teams of say 4-6 people to undertake the activity and **ENSURE** that you have a set of cards for each team.
2. Invite participants in each team to lay out the 5 Header Cards (these cards have green text) in a horizontal row.
3. Ask participants to take one of the remaining cards (white text) and read out the statement.

For Example: “ *Employability is . . . getting work experience as part of the course.*”

*You might invite one team member to be the “spokesperson” and be allocated the task of reading out the text on the card.*

4. The group should then decide which of the Header Cards the statement most closely aligns to.

*There will inevitably be some discussion and even disagreement within the group—this is a good thing as it allows different views to be expressed and encourages deeper understanding and engagement.*

5. Once agreement has been made the card is placed under the relevant Header Card.
6. **REPEAT** this exercise until all the statement cards have been sorted.



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## Variations

The sorting exercise can be done individually, in pairs or small groups depending on the number of card sets and time available. If the initial sort has been undertaken on an individual basis ask participants to form pairs and discuss their views; if originally in pairs form into groups to exchange views. Collect back in a plenary discussion. Emphasise similarities and differences in views and discuss ways of encouraging dialogue between different views.

Invite individuals to amend their card sort in the light of the discussions and **make a note of the Strongly Agree and Agree cards**, including any personal additions, as a basis for their personal perspective on employability relevant to their own discipline, institution and perceptions of the relationship of these to the world of work.

The exercise may be repeated asking people to re-sort cards from the perspective of other stakeholders – students, parents, employers etc. used as a basis for planning further dialogue and future action.

## What to do next ?

The sorting exercise is an excellent way to start dialogue around employability. We strongly recommend it is followed up with the Employability Audit Instrument. This allows course teams to analyse where employability occurs in individual modules and across a whole programme. This in turn will disclose gaps and overlaps to help course teams plan new courses or revalidation of existing courses in a way which may more effectively embed, enhance and integrate all aspects of employability contained within the Universities Employability Framework.

This material has been adapted from material developed for ESECT by Rose Mortenson, AGCAS Training Manager and Val Butcher, Senior Adviser, LTSN Generic Centre.