

First Annual Physiotherapy Graduate / Student Conference 2007



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The first annual conference for graduate physiotherapists and current students was held at the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing on 14th September 2007. It was attended by a mixture of graduates, second and third year students, staff and experienced clinicians.

Purpose

The remit of the conference was:

- to allow new graduates to showcase their work of producing a research dissertation to a selected audience
- to provide an opportunity for current students and staff, both internal and external, to learn about the work done by these graduates in their final year
- to give graduates the opportunity to manage a different yet applicable work situation and use their entrepreneurial skills in planning, organising and participating in an event that simulates the professional environment of an academic conference
- to provide a legacy for future students to inherit, develop and sustain over future years
- to give graduates a different aspect to their CV that may offer an "edge" when applying for future jobs

Format

The conference was organised by the 2007 graduates taking the format of a recognised conference. Graduates were offered the opportunity during their last year of study to form a committee, organise a programme, select speakers, manage the day and provide a suitable method of evaluation.

In total two keynote speakers were secured: one to open the conference and one to close the conference. As with the best laid plans the first speaker had to withdraw due to personal reasons, and a replacement needed to be found. The resourcefulness of the committee has to be commended in securing the services of a second speaker at short notice.

This information can be made available in other formats.
Please contact us for details.

Publicity

With the help of the Marketing Services at SHU the event will be given a degree of publicity within the physiotherapy world, the SHU community and the wider environment. Frontline (the official magazine of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy) has agreed to offer space regarding this event. SHU marketing is involved in raising the profile of the event within the university and the wider Sheffield area.

Evaluation

An evaluation was completed by the attendees to assess the conference and the future. Feedback was positive and current students felt they had learnt from the presentations of the graduates. The external speakers were commended and considered to be excellent and informative.

It appears that work needs to be done to clarify the purpose of the event in being a showcase for the research of the graduates and not an opportunity to replace formal teaching sessions. In future wider publicity amongst the student group will help to ensure that this happens. However this cohort of graduates is to be congratulated for their achievements in producing a professional event that was stimulating and enjoyable.

The Future

It is hoped that this will be the first of many conferences to be held by this group. Work is already underway to prepare for next year's conference and there is enthusiastic support from the current students.

There is a suggestion that the event becomes more inter-professional in its format. If this is accepted as a way forwards then the other subject groups within the faculty will be approached to consider a joint effort. As the faculty regards inter-professional learning highly, this may be a positive method that further promotes this crucial method of working.

Conclusion

The aim of the conference was to offer graduates the chance to showcase their work and to allow them to demonstrate presentation skills, organisational skills and management skills on their CV. Some graduates are now hoping to present at the CSP Congress next year and will have SHU support behind them.

Contact

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