Embedding Employability in SSSP - Resource Guide (October 2022)

The Careers Education Framework

Understanding how employability can be successfully and consistently embedded in learning and teaching environments is an important consideration within Higher Education (H.E.) delivery. London Met has produced a dedicated Careers Education Framework (CEF) as a flexible approach to employability based upon an ethos of social justice to improve graduate outcomes for all students. The CEF contains defined aims to support our students to (1) develop personal awareness and self-reflection; (2) to receive timely careers and employability information; (3) to acquire practise in recruitment processes and (4) to gain exposure to relevant external organisations. Autumn 2022 welcome week responses underscored how much progressing students would value learning sessions focused on preparing for future careers, gaining employability confidence, having opportunities to meet employers and gaining industry insight.

What colleagues are being asked to do

Information in this guide contains colleague responses to a survey from Spring 2022 about where/how employability is embedded in our courses, modules and learning materials. This guide contains course, module and subject level guidance for staff to now embed employability more fully and successfully across our curriculum. Many of these changes should give us 'quick wins' in terms of embedding employability in our courses. Other changes (e.g., relating to assessment) may occur more appropriately for courses undergoing periodic review. Student feedback to the employability parts of our curriculum will be gauged in July, feeding cycles of employability-related curriculum revisions in subsequent academic years. Please use content in this resource to revisit course materials (handbooks, slides, learning materials) and develop these to expand and develop employability as a focus of course and module materials.

1. Embedding employability – Module Level Changes

● **Including a clear definition of employability.** In addition to any Subject/Profession related definition of employability, please add the following AdvanceHE definition of embedding employability to module handbooks and to Weblearn: *"Providing the opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, experiences, behaviours, attributes, achievements and attitudes to enable graduates to make successful transitions and contributions, benefitting them, the economy and their communities."*

● *Including dedicated employability focused sessions* which should include

  o Delivery from the Careers & Employability Team into your provision at each level

  o Sessions involving student groupwork concerning workplace experiences. Including activities involving role play and reflection on group tasks. For example, one session involved discussion of microaggressions at work and activities designed to promote reflection on the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in workplace settings.

  o Sessions involving student groupwork drawing on relevant past/current experience. Try and include some module learning activities relating to past experiences were embedded in class discussions, group work and tutorials.

  o Sessions on interview preparation and roleplay- seminars used to brainstorm how to approach potential interviews. Questions and answers with students leading up to a practice interview at the end of a module.
  o Preparing students for any upcoming core or optional Work Placement modules in the following semester/academic year and directing them to the Work Based Learning Team.
  o Spotlight on your own employability/career experiences. Consider how you can incorporate a detailed account of your own career route – perhaps highlighting different pathways, achievements, obstacles, and processes to learners.

  o Highlighting the transferable skills that students are gaining that can be used in different career pathways

● **Including employability sessions which dovetail with a social justice agenda.** Include at least one employability focused session containing an activity involving student groupwork that links employability meaningfully to social justice. This could include sessions which focus on:

o **Under-representation in workplaces.** For example, a session to address prejudice/under-representation in work settings as experienced by varied social categories by highlighting that some (students) are unable to complete the course because of personal life situations (and acknowledged the) lack of additional support (for) students who are bi/multilingual. Another approach could be to hold a specific session on neurodiversity in the workplace.

o **Historical context linked to employability.** For example, a session focussing on "the history of racism in the police in England and how there are now policies in place to promote positive action".

o **De-colonising traditional learning and teaching approaches.** Consider inventive/atypical ways of incorporating coverage of diversity and cultural awareness into teaching sessions. For example, one module leader described a session involving cultural artefacts to understanding issues around diversity and cultural awareness linked to employability: "we have different sessions- story time, exploring artefacts from our culture including music, songs etc".

o **Resisting and overcoming obstructions to gaining employability/employment skills and experiences.** Consider sessions which first identify potential obstacles to gaining experience/skills linked to social identifying characteristics (e.g., being Black, being gay) and then focus on skills and resources linked to overcoming these.

● **Nominating a dedicated liaison contact** for the Careers &Employability Team (and Work Based Learning Team, as appropriate for placement modules) in each course (who can be on a Careers & Employability Team circular) who takes responsibility for:

a) Arranging your link Careers Consultant to deliver at least one session at each level of each course on topics such as career planning for specific subject disciplines and transferable skills, job search and recruitment, CVs, applications, interviews, assessment centres etc

b) Publicising Career and Employability events on the Course Weblearn site (e.g., relevant conferences, Spring Graduate Jobs event, Career and Employability fair).

c) Signposting/arranging information/talks from the Accelerator service (offers students/graduates a range of help, support, advice and events for those interested in going into business for themselves) via Weblearn organisation, and course handbooks.

● **Tying-in employability with issues around attendance and punctuality**. Activities promoted skills relevant to employability. For example, module leaders could flag up reminders of attendance and punctuality and engagement as session components relevant to thinking about employability.

● **Creating an online employability presence**. Schedule a session on networking where students set up a Linkedin profile. Include follow-up prompts for students to revisits and update profiles.

● **Signposting students to relevant initiatives** including MyCareer appointments and Jobs Board and the Careers Portal (available online 24 x 7 where students can get immediate feedback on CV support, application help, interview practice tools, employer and career coaching insights, and employment opportunities in different national/international locations.). Include signposts to these via Course/module handbook and Weblearn announcements.

2. Embedding employability – Course Level Changes

o**Include sessions to showcase careers/roles.** Consider including a session (potentially as part of a seminar series) using videos and case studies designed to prompt career discussions and encourage students to investigate a range of different routes to career goals.

o**Include dedicated skill sessions.** Ensure that each course contains a time-tabled session in one or more modules that contains activities geared toward concrete skills including C.V. writing, developing employability presence online, job searching websites/ search engines, writing and reviewing job applications, and developing interviews skills. These can be delivered by the Careers and Employability Team

o *Signpost students to schedule careers/employability drop-in sessions with the Careers team.* These should be threaded into specific modules (e.g., as standalone seminar sessions) or included during lunch break periods.

o *Communication linked to Work Placement Modules (except PSRB courses).* Course Leaders inform all module leaders as to where there are Work Placement Modules (core or optional) within a course programme. Activities are put in place to ensure students are prepared in advance of the module (year or semester prior) and academics and students are signposted to the Work Based Learning Team to find suitable placements in good time.

o *Provide mentoring opportunities linked to employability.* These could be student/peer led following an initial session. Alternatively, course team staff could mentor students by discussing employment/employability plans. The Careers and Employability Team run formal Careers Mentoring Schemes that can be advertised. Ensure that all mentoring initiatives are advertised via Weblearn. Aim to include offers of mentorship from relevant individuals external to London Met – e.g., a management consultant from a big organisation willing to mentor students who successfully applied for a mentorship scheme.

o *Arrange relevant outside speakers.* Arrange speakers to suit the Subject area and focus of course delivery. Aim to include external speakers where possible who can give our students a sense of what working roles are like, career possibilities, networking opportunities and opportunities for placements and formally advertised positions. This could include, for example, employers and alumni.

o *Prompt students to formally maintain a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and employability-related reflections.* Making sure that our students formally record ongoing reflections linked to the previous and current acquisition of employability related experience and skills is key. Consider using a Weblearn-hosted Journal to record these reflections. This might involve different things including: (1) recording formal professional development activities and job/placement applications; and (2) logging relevant life experience that may not be formally recognised as employability-related experience by the learner (e.g., providing support for a family member with disabilities)

o *Revise assessment to ensure several components link to employability.* Please make sure that most modules contain one assessment component addresses employability in some way. This might involve something relatively straight forward – e.g. watching a video relating to clinical/professional practice, including a reflection on placement/work related experience or something combining employability with social justice (e.g. discussion of obstacles faced in employment areas and how these are successfully overcome).

3. Embedding employability – Subject/Profession Level Changes

o **Draw on Subject topic areas to focus on inclusive workplaces.** Design sessions that explicitly address diversity and social/cultural awareness in a way that ties-in with Subject topic area content. For example, PY7176 ('Working with Difference and Diversity') contains content designed to "raise awareness of one's own stereotypes and assumptions and the effect that institutions have on shaping our beliefs (and explore how) institutional racism, classism, sexism, disabilities" are apparent in society and in social discourse.

o **Subject-related recorded reflections.** Consider how employability might be addressed explicitly within particular topic areas sitting within our Subject areas. For example, a session concerning perception, language, thinking and reasoning were all discussed (in how these things can be thoughts of in terms of) barriers to non-WEIRD (white, educated, industrialised, religious, democratic) populations generally. Another session approach might be to highlight the role of 'Subject Knowledge Audits' to prompt/facilitate such reflections.

o **Logging Subject-related placement experiences.** For our professional degrees, consider learning activities where students are required to discuss issues around engaging with staff, and how to address concerns arising from professional practice. For example, consider including a Weblearn hosted reflective journal linked to placement experiences. Consider whether feedback to learners on journal entries (via Weblearn, email or in-person) could be provided by members of the module/course team. For example, one module leader used Pebblepad (an online space to maintain professional learning/skills portfolios) to record such feedback.