

Title - Career Management

Keywords - Employability, Professional Development Planning

Name – Helene Chambers

School / Dept - School of Sport and Leisure Management

Institution - Sheffield Hallam University

Activity - Developing students' preparedness for work and awareness of the job market.

Group - Level 5 Food and Leisure Management undergraduates.

Aim - To enhance student awareness of career opportunities and the skills required for successful employment through the provision of an embedded Career Management module.

Context / Background - It is critical that students enter the workforce with an awareness of their own skills, personal aspirations and the opportunities available in order to succeed in today's competitive marketplace. This module addresses these needs, exposing students to the process of recruitment and selection as well as a number of potential career opportunities and organisations.

Example - The module is delivered through core lectures, seminars and employer/student presentations. A Blackboard site and a web-based employer database support the module. Students are required to undertake directed and supplementary reading throughout and are expected to:

- Reflect upon and self-evaluate personal and professional skills
- Justify their preferred sector/organisation for future career
- Demonstrate awareness of the diverse nature of the workforce
- Demonstrate an understanding of the recruitment and selection process with practical evidence of a completed application, CV, covering letter and participation in assessment centre exercises

The module is assessed in two parts. Students are required to submit a CV and Covering Letter with a 30% weighting. Marks are awarded for content, relevance, clarity and presentation. In addition, students prepare a written report comprising a justification for an appropriate and informed career/placement choice and a written evaluation of the critical stages in the recruitment and selection process.

Other comments - Key effective aspects of the module include:

- Student access to a web-based employer database linked to the module Blackboard site for use in career research and planning,

enabling students to effectively engage with current career information and opportunities.

- Employer presentations are held throughout the semester and students are required to attend a minimum of three sessions. In order to focus student learning about the visiting organisations, students are required to complete a presentation sheet noting observations about opportunities the companies present, their personal perceptions as to whether the opportunities are potentially of interest to them as well as new information they have learned about the industry.
- The Career Management module allows students to engage with a case study role-play exercise outlining qualities required for specific posts within a fictitious organisation. This enables students to put theory from the lecture sessions to use in a practical situation.
- A recently launched initiative entitled the Alumni Mentoring Scheme links graduates with final year students who have just returned from placement. Communication is facilitated by email and telephone with the link culminating in the undergraduates spending a day shadowing their mentor.
- Students have an opportunity to be actively involved in an International Evening in which final year students returning from overseas placement host a table and second year students move from table to table, learning about the placement experiences of the senior students. In addition, a poster session put on by the final year students returning from work placement is also an effective means of facilitating student learning by their peers.

The module has proved very successful in raising student awareness of required career management skills, effectively preparing students not only for the transition to work but also the application and ensuing selection process. It is envisaged that the module will be redesigned into a block-teaching period rather than weekly sessions in order to maximise the impact of the course content.

Further information - a.h.chambers@shu.ac.uk