

Title - Where would we be without the Careers Service? Knowledge Sharing in the Teaching of Personal Development Planning

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Institution - University of Luton

Group - Immediate recipients: Departmental staff in the Field of Tourism and Leisure. Indirect recipients: Level 1 students doing the Personal, Professional and Academic Development (PPAD) module and Level 2 students doing the Personal Development Planning (PDP module (both are core, accredited and assessed modules for all Tourism and Leisure students).

Activity - Sharing learning and teaching practice amongst the departmental and Careers Service staff

Aim - This case is a good example of exchange of expertise and an indirect training process to enhance the delivery of PDP. Academic staff are responsible for the development and delivery of the module but are highly reliant on the expertise of colleagues from the Careers Service.

Context / Background - In 2001 the University of Luton revised its curriculum to address the linked issues of student access, achievement and progression beyond graduation. Nearly all of our students are 'non-traditional' in one sense or another, so there is a great need to empower all of them with skills and experience that they can transfer to their future careers. We have responded to the QAA's Progress File recommendations, and built on our own prior initiatives and experience, by adopting a curriculum model that integrates PDP with career management skills at all levels of the undergraduate portfolio.

PDP has been introduced relatively recently into the Tourism and Leisure degree programme as a subject specific module at Level 2. It has been designed to follow on from the Level 1 module, PPAD, which concentrates on the development of academic skills by new students. At Level 2 the students are asked to take their development a step further, to enhance their career-related and employability skills, through interactive exercises, group activities and individual reflection. Although it may seem simple, these processes often pose problems for students. Initially they also created problems for staff required to teach this new subject. This case shows how the problem has been overcome through an efficient exchange of expertise with the Careers Service (CS) professionals.

Example - PDP processes used in the Department of Tourism, Leisure and Human Resource Management are based on the Career Development Module initially designed and delivered by CS staff. The Departmental staff were lucky that the CS staff had designed the general module, and we needed only to modify its structure and content to suit the field requirements. Together we have participated in the development of PDP for Tourism since the beginning of its delivery for both Levels 1 and 2 of the undergraduate programme. The pivotal part in the process has been co-operation with the CS staff who organised the 'PDP club'. The Club explores PDP/Career Management Skills relationships and the best ways to engage students with the process across the University.

CS staff have also gathered and analysed information on career-related elements of the Tourism and Leisure curriculum, these have been used extensively and recommended to the students. For example, CS staff have detailed knowledge of psychometric self-assessment software, and have tried out some of the exercises with students during workshops, and also guided students on reflective practice. These processes have been supported by very detailed briefs for students to aid their understanding during assessments, not only for PDP, but also other modules.

Career Management Skills (CMS) Online, also developed by the CS team, is a pioneering web-based tutorial system for students to carry out reflective activities in their own time. It has proved to be a good self-learning tool for the students. The team-teaching of tourism PDP, where lecturers from the Department are supported by CS staff, has been a steep learning curve for all parties involved.

The individual supervision and support of smaller groups of students who want to take advantage of additional guidance is of great benefit in helping the students to discover what they are seeking in their careers. There are indications, both in the literature and anecdotal evidence, that current graduates face particular industry-based challenges when looking for employment in tourism. So far, general support has been available at the Careers Service, but the comprehensive subject-specific support is currently not easily accessible, so we are planning to develop this type of assistance.

To enable this process Tourism and Leisure PDP co-ordinators explored links with other modules within the curriculum, particularly where there is an emphasis on the development of practical skills and reflection. These modules start with Tourism PPAD, followed by Airport Services Management, modules on mentoring and finally work placement modules for students on International Tourism Management. We try to combine a number of approaches, for example volunteering and mentoring, and experiences from practical modules and work placements to supplement the PDP content.

Results / Feedback - Initially, it has been difficult to get some students to understand how helpful the PDP module could be. However, when they get going they find the activities interesting and relevant to their job search. Students who have not done subject-specific PDP are increasingly asking for

help / advice on employability-related aspects, which supports the relevance of the module. Students value modules which have a hands-on approach provided through our links with industry professionals. We are now seeking out the opinions of employers regarding our skills development programme.

Other comments - A range of career development and employability skills are identified and enhanced by students during the learning processes they engage in through the PPAD and PDP modules. They personalise these by undertaking honest skills, interests and values audits to discover their individual strengths, limitations, and priorities. We also raise awareness of the options and opportunities realistically available to them, and they investigate a chosen job using a range of information sources – paper and computer-based, but also by interviewing a person doing that job. Their assignment requires them to write an analytical, reflective report assessing the extent of fit between their profile and the requirements of the job. They are then required to present their personal information in the form of a CV, covering letter, and a standard application form targeted to their chosen job. At the end, they review their progress and plan action for further development in order to achieve their goals.

Further Information - If anyone wishes to discuss any of these details further then please contact: [Dr. Dorota Ujma](#) or [Arti Kumar](#)