

**Student Employability Supporting Statement  
for the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy**

**1 Preamble**

1.1 The Student Employability Supporting Statement relates directly to the University strategic objective of providing (1) an outstanding student experience. It also relates to the other key strategic objectives: (2) generating knowledge and promoting enterprise; (3) ensuring a first class University for the region.

1.2 The Statement also relates to the key institutional risks of: (2) failure to provide an outstanding experience, leading to decline in levels of recruitment, retention and achievement, and student satisfaction; (3) failure to achieve (and meet the needs of) a diverse student population; (9) failure to be a well-led and high-achieving University to which good staff are recruited and retained; (10) failure of the University to make a full contribution to its community.

1.3 The intended audience for the Statement is all University staff (full and part-time) employed by the University who are engaged in supporting students learning, and also staff of partner organisations involved in teaching and supporting University approved programmes of study. It also includes all students registered for University awards, and external agencies and organisations concerned with our approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

**2 Introduction**

2.1 The Student Employability Supporting Statement relates to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy which has identified the aim to develop 'students that are equipped to be high achieving citizens throughout their lives' in accordance with the University's strategic objectives of providing an 'outstanding student experience' and 'promoting enterprise', with the ambition to produce 'highly employable, innovative, professional and entrepreneurial alumni'.

2.2 The University has adopted the following definition of employability as:

*a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke, 2006).*

2.3 This assumes that employability is not the same as 'job-getting' but is more about the capacity of the graduate to function effectively in work or alternative occupations, with an emphasis on the self-fulfilment of the individual and well as the needs of the employer or the economy. In the context of this document the term 'graduate' refers to any student who has successfully completed an award through the University, either at undergraduate or postgraduate levels.

2.4 The University has adopted the following definitions of enterprise and entrepreneurship as:

*Enterprise is about spotting opportunities, creating new ideas and having the confidence and capabilities to turn these ideas into working realities.*

*Enterprise is about creating new business new business and 'can do' organisations and services (Nixon, 2004)*

2.5 The University sees enterprise and entrepreneurship as closely aligned to employability, since they share many of the same skills and attributes. In addition, the University places significant value on social entrepreneurship involving *the use of entrepreneurial skills for the public good rather than for private profit, that is using imagination to identify new opportunities and determination to bring them to fruition* (School for Social Entrepreneurs). In this context, student involvement in community activities, including volunteering and work-based learning, is something that the University seeks to encourage and facilitate.

2.6 The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2010/11–2015/16) has identified five goals which reflect its vision to 'produce students that are equipped to be high achieving citizens throughout their lives':

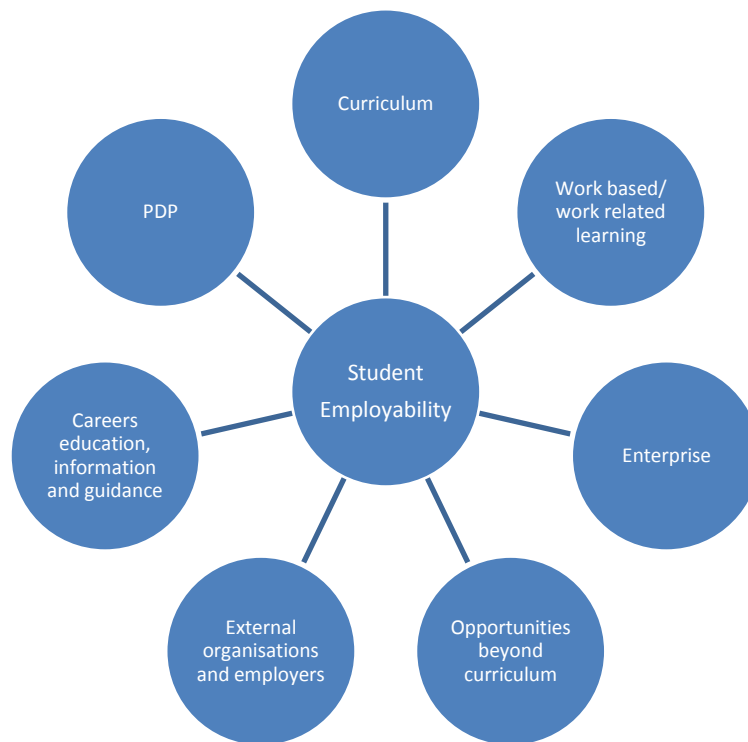
- Engaged, resilient and lifelong learners
- Critically aware, problem solving, enquirers and researchers
- Highly employable, enterprising, creative and professional
- Global citizens who are inclusive in their actions, valuing diversity
- Graduates who are ethically and environmentally responsible.

2.7 This Supporting Statement builds upon the 'Highly employable, enterprising, adaptable and professional' strand, outlining ambitions and strategies in relation to this. The aim of this supporting statement is to outline the University's approach to employability, and identify key areas in which we will support our students in this respect.

### **3 Aims**

3.1 University of Worcester students will be equipped with the skills, attributes and knowledge to be able to manage and be effective within their own career and make a significant contribution to society. They will be innovative and enterprising: able to see, create, and manage opportunities in varied settings, with the capability to adapt to changes and to engage in a challenging and changing world, and have the potential to be future leaders in their field. These graduates will be self-aware, self-reliant, resilient, and be able to take responsibility for their own learning and development, plan and make critically informed decisions.'

3.2 The University recognises that a broad range of factors can impact a student's future employability. The chart below demonstrates some of the main ways in which the University will develop students' employability and the commentary below indicates how the University will support students further in these respects.



3.3 **Curriculum:** Professional, employability and career management skills will be embedded in the curricula such that students can engage in autonomous personal and professional development, including the construction and evaluation of provisional plans for their future career and learning development. We will ensure that our curricula support the development of the students' ability to take initiative and personal responsibility, to explore their own strengths and weaknesses and to adapt to rapidly changing environments.

3.4 **Work-based learning/work-related learning:** We will encourage the further development of University accredited learning in the workplace. In addition all students will have the opportunity through the curriculum to experience accredited work-based learning or learning from work.

3.5 **Enterprise:** We will increase the opportunity for students to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Through both formal and informal learning environments students will be encouraged to think creatively and innovatively, take initiative, and identify and maximise their opportunities.

3.6 **Opportunities beyond the curriculum:** By recognising and valuing opportunities beyond the curriculum, the University will encourage further engagement in community activities, volunteering, clubs and societies, to recognise the value these may have on a student's employability, and to the benefit of the community.

3.7 **External organisations and employers:** Through contacts with external organisations and employers we will raise awareness among students and staff of the policies and opportunities relating to skills development and employability, including an understanding of the culture, expectations and requirements of working life. We will, where appropriate, promote opportunities for our students to learn from engagement with local communities, issues and projects.

3.8 **Careers education, information and guidance:** The University will provide opportunities for students to access information about their progression routes, and develop the skills and abilities to make and enact future plans. High quality advice and guidance in accordance with the QAA precepts in careers education, information and guidance, will be

available for students to support their progression into, throughout, and beyond higher education.

**3.9 Personal Development Planning:** Students will be encouraged to engage meaningfully with personal development planning (PDP) through the curriculum, to enable them to reflect on, plan and review their own personal and academic skills. PDP will enable students to develop well supported claims to achievements and be able to articulate these to others and the University will enable students to recognise and record their achievements.

#### **4 Strategies for the development of Employability**

4.1 The University will adopt the following approaches to enable further progression related to the above areas.

**4.2 Employable Worcester (post)Graduate:** a framework outlining employability related learning outcomes for inclusion in all programmes at levels 4-8. Through the normal curriculum in their subject of study, students will be introduced to and encouraged to reflect on employability, personal development and the process of learning itself. This framework will focus on raising awareness of students' career aspirations, employability and enterprising attributes, and individual approaches to learning, and the ways in which they can develop these to achieve their individual goals.

**4.3 Work-based/work-related learning:** we will promote the use of the University's newly accredited work-based learning framework, and build upon its existing placement and work-based learning opportunities. All undergraduate courses will include either a mandatory work-based learning module or have learning from work as part of their programmes. Learning from work modules may be adopted, or elements of learning from work incorporated, into programmes. These could include experience in work, volunteering or enterprise activity.

**4.4 Employability statements:** will be provided by Institutes, outlining recognised employability elements, with supporting evidence demonstrated in programme specifications.

**4.5 The Worcester Award:** this employability award will encourage participation in a range of activities to enable students to develop, recognise, and be able to articulate employability enhancing experiences from the wider higher education experience.

**4.6 Careers education, information, and guidance:** we will build upon the existing relationship between the Careers Service and Institutes to deliver effective careers education across the curriculum. The Careers Service will continue to work with other University services providing information, advice and guidance to ensure the offering of high quality, seamless advice.

**4.7 Salaried Graduate Internship Scheme:** will provide local jobs and training opportunities for recent graduates.

**4.8 The Enterprise Calendar:** will be continuously developed and enhanced to provide students with opportunities to equip themselves with transferable skills to enhance their offer to any sector and future choices. Entrepreneurial behaviour will continue to be strongly encouraged and supported across the University, for skills base, business start-ups and graduate employability.

## **5 Measures of success**

5.1 The principal measure of success will lie in the students' and graduates' confidence in their employability, i.e. whether they believe that they have the skills, abilities and attributes to progress in their chosen direction beyond university. The Student Learning Activity and Engagement Survey will include elements referring to employability, measuring the perceptions of current students.

5.2 A second, but less reliable measure of success, lies in the Destination of Leavers survey. This can measure the number of students who are working, and the percentage of those in graduate level jobs six months after graduation. However, it has limitations in that many graduates have not settled into career paths in such a short period after graduation, and does not recognise the variation in graduates' career focus and ambitions, nor the opportunities presented by labour market conditions.

Version reference: 1.0

Document approved by: Academic Board, January 2011 (with minor amendments)

Date document comes into effect: immediate

Author of the document: Rose Watson, Employability Development Officer

Date document is due for review: 2014/15

# Student Employability Supporting Statement for the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

## Annexe 1: Areas of responsibility

This document indicates the key areas of responsibility for University Institutes, support departments and other agencies, in implementing the strategy for developing student employability, as at January 2011. It will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to reflect any changes in organisational structures and priorities.

1. **Institutes** are responsible for encouraging, supporting and monitoring the development of student employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship in course curricula and encouraging students to take up opportunities to develop these further within the wider community.

This will involve:

- the development of Employability statements, outlining recognised employability elements, with supporting evidence demonstrated in programme specifications
- implementation of the Employable Worcester (post)Graduate framework to embed learning outcomes at all levels of study
- development of the curricula to include either a mandatory work-based learning module or have learning from work as part of their programmes, ensuring that the key commitments are incorporated within the Institutes' Learning and Teaching Action Plans
- liaising and working with other parts of the University (e.g. the Careers Service, the Business Development Office and the Academic Development and Practice Unit) to promote staff engagement with the student employability agenda
- maintaining an overview of progress and effectiveness within the Institute and reporting on this in the Institutes' Learning and Teaching Reports.

2. **Course teams** are responsible for developing their curricula to support the development of student employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship and embedding and delivering the Employable Worcester Graduate learning outcomes.

This will involve:

- developing the curricula to include either a mandatory work-based learning module or have learning from work as part of their programmes
- embedding of Employable (post)Worcester Graduate learning outcomes to relevant modules and programmes developing links with graduates, employers, voluntary agencies, and other graduate recruiters to inform the development of the curriculum
- developing links with employers, other external bodies and internal services such as the Careers Service and Business Development Office to inform and support the delivery of programmes
- strengthening PDP process links with employability
- reporting annually on progress in the annual evaluation report.

3. **Academic Quality Unit** is responsible, through Course Approval and Periodic Review panels, for managing the process of the development of student employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship and the promotion of community engagement is taken up by course teams and service departments, being:

- appropriately reflected in programme specifications
- articulated in the subject/programme development plans emerging from periodic review.

4. **The Careers Service** is responsible for supporting students individually, in groups and through academic programmes to develop their career management and employability skills.

This will involve:

- provision of information, advice and guidance
- liaison with Institutes and course teams to develop and deliver careers and employability related sessions within academic programmes
- co-ordination of cross-college activities such as employer events, careers sessions etc
- organisation and development of appropriate careers fairs
- liaison with local and national employers
- collection and dissemination of graduate level vacancies
- collection and dissemination of graduate destination data
- advice and support for Institutes and other University colleagues in developing employability materials, activities and practice
- contribution to the development and delivery of the Worcester Award.

5. **The Business Development Office** is responsible for leading and supporting the sustainable development of knowledge transfer, innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship amongst staff, students and partners.

This will involve:

- developing links with employers and promoting the profile of the University with businesses and the community
- encouraging and supporting departmental knowledge transfer processes for third stream activity
- developing access to entrepreneurship in curriculum and non-curriculum areas
- providing opportunities for knowledge transfer through the enterprise calendar activities and awareness of innovation and enterprise schemes, and collaborative and partner projects
- providing opportunities and support for student and staff start-up businesses
- encouraging and supporting other forms of enterprise development, eg social and women's enterprise
- providing staff development, advice and support for working with commercial partners
- contribution to the development and delivery of the Worcester Award.

6. **The Academic Development and Practice Unit** is responsible for promoting and supporting the development of appropriate curricula, learning, teaching and assessment strategies and activities which develop student employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

This will involve:

- development and promotion of the Worcester Award
- promotion of the University's accredited work-based learning framework
- developing and maintaining a wide ranging employability website for staff
- dissemination of employability resources and exemplars of good practice
- providing and promoting staff development opportunities
- supporting Institutes, subject and course teams in implementation.

7. **The Students' Union** has a role in enabling and encouraging students to develop personal and employability skills through volunteering, clubs and activities, community involvement and other extra-curricular activities.

This will involve:

- promotion and extension of volunteering opportunities
  - encouraging involvement by running annual elections for Executive Officer positions and supporting the elected representatives
  - support and training for sports clubs and student societies
  - opportunities for paid and voluntary positions within the Students' Union
  - co-ordination of, and support for, Student Academic Representatives
  - promotion of paid part-time work opportunities, both on campus and those in the local community
  - contribution to the development and delivery of the Worcester Award.
8. Services such as **Widening Participation, Communications and Development** and **Registry Services** have important contributions to make to the careers education, information, advice and guidance offered to students. This may include pre-entry information, advice and guidance to prospective students outlining the likely outcomes of their course, and the skills and attributes they can expect to develop through their programme of study, or modular choice for existing students.

There will be an expectation that all areas of the University will address these areas as part of their Learning and Teaching or annual plans.

Rose Watson  
Employability Development Officer

January 2011

## Student Employability Supporting Statement for the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

### Annexe 2

#### The Employable Worcester (Post)Graduate

1 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century graduate or postgraduate will be entering a rapidly changing world requiring a constantly evolving set of skills, attributes and knowledge. They must learn to take personal responsibility for managing their own career and professional development throughout life, and will need the ability to reflect and review, to plan and make decisions, to use information resources effectively, to create and take opportunities and to make provision for lifelong learning. In this global environment they must demonstrate that they have drive, resilience, and inter-cultural sensitivities, as well as the ability to identify and create opportunities for themselves, either within or outside organisations. As future professionals they must develop personal and professional values which will help them to make contributions to, and become leaders in, their chosen field.

2 Good employability skills can be developed through good learning skills. Independence in learning is one of the most significant features of Higher Education, and students who are self-aware, resilient, self-reliant, analytical, innovative, able to use and critically evaluate information sources, who can take responsibility for their own learning and development, and plan and review their progress, will enhance their employability.

3 The University of Worcester is aiming to develop students into graduates who are:

- **Independent learners:** engaged learners able to manage their own learning and future development
- **Critically aware, problem solving, researchers and discoverers:** critical, rational, innovative thinkers, who are confident, adaptable and capable of independent enquiry
- **Employable, professional and enterprising:** equipped with the skills, attributes and knowledge to manage and be effective within their career and make a contribution to society
- **Inclusive in their actions, valuing diversity:** having an awareness of self and others, able to think across contexts of diverse national and global cultures
- **Ethically and environmentally responsible:** aware of ethical issues surrounding their activities and how their actions influence the people and environment around them.

4 The Employable Worcester (Post)Graduate Framework draws from the above aims to help its graduates and postgraduates to become effective learners and to enhance their employability within a complex global world. Relating to the FHEQ level descriptors and Vitae's *Researcher Development Framework* (RDF), it provides a framework by which students are introduced to and encouraged to reflect on employability, personal development and the process of learning itself throughout the normal curriculum in their subject of study.

5 Existing mandatory modules or the dissertation/thesis may form a basis for these developments and subject areas may adopt an approach which is most appropriate to their aims and objectives. The focus in all cases is on using aspects of personal development planning to support ongoing learning, employability and professional development at UW.

## **6 The Employable Worcester Graduate at Level 4**

6.1 By incorporating learning outcomes based on the points below into programmes of study the opportunity will be given to all students to manage their learning, career and professional development. Thus students will be able to:

- assess their strengths, weaknesses and values, and identify broad areas for personal growth and development
- identify their approaches to learning, critically evaluate their own effectiveness in learning situations, and formulate effective strategies for higher education study
- demonstrate an understanding of future possible career paths and the opportunities provided through subject study and extra-curricular activities
- explore different social and cultural perspectives and explain the contribution their discipline makes to human tolerance, understanding and sustainability.

## **7 The Employable Worcester Graduate at Level 5**

7.1 By incorporating learning outcomes based on the points below into programmes of study, the opportunity will be given to all students to reflect on their development as learners, receive support in preparing for the Independent Study if appropriate, and reflect upon their employability skills and values. Thus students will be able to:

- articulate the skills, qualities and attributes developed through their higher education experience to date
- relate their qualities to their intended future plans, make informed decisions about their choices of further study and identify specific skills, qualifications and experience requiring further development
- learn from the workplace, including drawing upon concepts which apply to both learning and work environments, coping effectively with a range of unfamiliar situations
- reflect upon their developing approaches to learning and preparations for independent research and problem solving
- outline and appreciate different cultural perspectives in their subject area
- identify issues of ethical practice in their discipline and set out their values in relation to these.

## **8 The Employable Worcester Graduate at Level 6**

8.1 By incorporating learning outcomes based on the points below into programmes of study, including the Independent Study, students will be able to:

- engage in autonomous personal and professional development, including the construction and evaluation of provisional plans for their future career and further learning or development
- demonstrate resilience and independence in learning through, for example, the design and conduct of an independent research, practical or performance project
- persuasively articulate the skills and experiences they have gained whilst in HE to future employers and other key stakeholders
- apply initiative and personal responsibility to problem solving, make decisions, and formulate future plans in complex and unpredictable contexts, deploying innovative and creative approaches
- engage in ethical practice in their discipline
- apply and critique different cultural perspectives to their subject.

## **9 The Employable Worcester Postgraduate at Level 7**

9.1 By incorporating learning outcomes based on the points below, students will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, attributes and behaviours applicable to a wide range of professional contexts. Thus students will be able to:

- act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems
- apply initiative and personal responsibility to decision making
- formulate plans in complex and unpredictable contexts, deploying innovative and creative approaches
- communicate decisions made and conclusions reached effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- articulate the skills and experiences developed throughout the course of study to future employers and other key stakeholders
- critically reflect on ethical criteria and standards of judgement and critique different cultural perspectives in their field.

## **10 The Employable Worcester Postgraduate at level 8**

10.1 By incorporating learning outcomes based on the points below, students will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, attributes and behaviours applicable to a wide range of professional contexts. Thus students will be able to:

- devise, develop, undertake, manage and successfully complete multi-phase, long-term projects independently
- assume responsibility, act autonomously and make informed decisions in complex and unpredictable situations
- recognise and acknowledge the strengths of team members and work effectively to achieve mutual goals
- communicate and justify decisions clearly, in a variety of formats, to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- build collaborative relationships with a range of colleagues
- develop and maintain networks for professional and career purposes
- apply a conceptual understanding of ethical practice in their discipline and critique different cultural perspectives in their field.

## **References**

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2008): *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland*

Vitae (2010) *Researcher developer framework*

Rose Watson  
Employability Development Officer

January 2011