

## PDP Academy 11: INSTITUTIONAL CASE STUDY

<p><b>The title of your initiative: Embedding Graduate Skills and Attributes within Academic Programmes: Improving Staff and Student Commitment</b></p>
<p><b>Theme(s)</b> (NB Case Studies may straddle themes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing and implementing a resource.</li> <li>2. Influencing Institutional Policy/strategy</li> <li>3. Designing/implementing and experience or intervention.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Your Aims and Objectives:</b> To encourage and assist academic departments to explore opportunities, both within their programme of studies and through the promotion of extra- curricular activities, for students to fulfil their potential by understanding and gaining a range of Sheffield graduate attributes and skills within the context of a newly created Employability strategy.</p>
<p><b>Your Approaches and Activities:</b> (1) An analysis of responses from academic departments regarding their current employability practices, identifying common themes. This was used to inform the development of the employability strategy. (2) A workshop for student union counsellors, aimed at gaining their perceptions and understanding of the Sheffield graduate skills and attributes. Outcomes from this workshop have informed activities 3 and 4. (3) Developing approaches to populating section 6.1 for the proposed implementation of the HEAR for level 1 students in 2012. (4) Mapping of modules to develop a model whereby skills and attributes are made more explicit within programmes of study (5) Proposed opening of a student skills and development centre (301 centre), which aims to house, promote and encourage students to engage with additional activities to enhance their employability. (6) A proposed revision of the guidance for personal tutors (7) Extending the provision of pebble pad in a department, providing further support and customisation.</p>
<p><b>Outcomes so are</b> (What is the result of your actions so far – max 100 words)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Intended</b> To highlight the fact that academic staff and students have little knowledge and understanding of the Sheffield graduate attributes and skills. Despite some departments stating that they 'are doing everything they can' to promote skills, students are still unable to articulate relevant skills when required by employers as there appears to be a lack of process which enables articulation. To raise awareness of the SG importance within the context of departments developing their responses to the employability strategy and to help identify relevant interventions.</li> <li>• <b>Unintended</b> The 301 centre has the potential to re launch the Sheffield Graduate Development Programme (SGDP) and to promote PDP good practice when it opens in November 2012. The HEAR is currently viewed as the method by which students will record their university achievements, including curricular and non curricular.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Important moment(s) in the project</b> (Max. 200 words)</p> <p>The coinciding of this project with institutional and Students' Union work being undertaken on personal and academic support means that that there were many activities and discussions related to the project taking place. Publishing the Employability strategy and analysing the likely impact (or not) that the project will have on academic departments developing their own strategies, what they intend to do and how they will measure their proposed outcomes; identifying who will be responsible for this at both departmental and faculty level.</p>
<p><b>Impact</b> (including evidence of impact – max. 200 words, qualitative and quantitative indicators if possible, in respect of some or all of)</p> <p>One of the outcomes from the project has been raising awareness and bringing the issue of graduate attributes to the fore, particularly amongst professional service staff and within learning and teaching</p>

communities. In coinciding with other institutional work, this area is now part of the 'package of discussions', linking agendas for the university. As a result it is too early to tell, as most of the initiatives which are likely to have an influence on the stated outcomes are at an early stage of development. Much of this is work in progress and the project itself hasn't made much of an impact, other than to inform the work of other, more recognised initiatives currently on going within the university.

**Lessons learned** (including what you might do differently on a future occasion, max. 400 words)

This is a major undertaking and cannot be achieved with a small team of individuals with a personal interest in PDP. A larger working team would have been useful to try and encourage critical mass, particularly in academic departments. Institutional buy-in is needed, but there is recognition that there is a dearth of other current on-going initiatives, which means that timing is crucial. More detailed work with students would be beneficial, possibly using the Student Ambassador model for learning and teaching model.

The opening of the 301 centre will provide an excellent opportunity to revisit or relaunch the Sheffield Graduate Development Programme, with a primary focus on students' ability to articulate their skills and attributes.

**Your next steps** (max. 150 words)

- Identify a small, willing department to work with to produce an exemplar of how to make more explicit graduate attributes within a programme of study, possibly producing an illustration/model of how this can be achieved.
- Continue to make the case for students' ability to articulate their skills; employers recognise that the benefits of the HEAR for students is that they can act as an 'aide memoire' to help students more easily articulate their achievements.
- Rolling out of pebblepad developments in the pilot department and how this can be linked to the development of the HEAR.
- Skills development and recognition processes must be embedded within programmes of study
- Continue to offer support and feedback to developments with the Employability strategy, HEAR and 301 centre.

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