

Case Study 4: Student engagement in skills development

1.1 Increased Participation by 3rd & 4th Year GEP Students in Personal and Professional Development

There has been a significant increase (66%) in 3rd and 4th Year Scottish domiciled undergraduate students participating in Confident Futures personal and professional development workshops in 2013/14 compared to 2012/13. Feedback on the programme is highly positive. For example, staff feedback (via regular trimester surveys) confirms the quality and relevance of both design and delivery of interventions and student feedback indicated a range of benefits to participants including increased confidence, improved communication skills and greater self-awareness.

The increased staffing capacity through GEP has facilitated a much enhanced internal consultancy role within each School and has led to increased numbers of workshops (from 179 in 2012/13 to 239 in 2013/14) as well as more customisation. Two new workshops have been developed (Negotiating Skills and Building Resilience) and increasingly, new delivery models including online/blended delivery are being trialled.

1.2 Integration of Recruitment Assessment Centre Experiences

There has been a successful integration of assessment centre activities into Careers team and faculty portfolios of activity (via faculty-specific employability development programmes) and a broadening of the offering around preparation for employment to incorporate recruitment assessment centre processes.

An evaluation of the Recruitment Assessment Centre experience carried out in early 2014 has indicated the benefits to students of such an approach. In addition, the inception of assessment centres in internal recruitment has helped raise awareness of the issues faced by job-seeking graduates. Levels of staff engagement with the service have been high and it has become the standard for much internal recruitment, including to the Student Ambassador programme, Bright Red Triangle Junior Consultancy posts, and the Edinburgh Napier University Graduate Trainee Scheme.

Feedback provided to successful and unsuccessful candidates, post assessment centre, has proved effective and there has been an increased use of related careers services such as mock interviews and help with placement applications (+370%).

1.3 Significant Increase in Student Participation in Careers Advice

There has been a significant increase in students attending careers advice one-to-ones and attending integrated careers workshops resulting from the enhanced capacity, resources and delivery methods associated with the GEP. For example, the data indicates an increase of 1549 (+159%) Scottish domiciled students accessing careers advice in 2013/14 in comparison with the baseline year (977 in 2012/13 up to 2526 in 2013/14). There is an associated 123% increase in MD40 students accessing careers advice, including 43% increase in MD20 students.

Careers Officers report that signposting in integrated workshops is a major motivator for subsequent one-to-one activity. Extra one-to-one sessions have been organised for particular groups (for example bespoke CV Doctor sessions and specific appointments have been offered). This is successful from a service perspective as it allows resources to be maximised by delivering generic content in group situations and encourages students

to reflect on their personal situations and seek personal advice if they wish. This success has been evaluated by both feedback collected in workshop sessions and by the online one-to-one service evaluation survey.

Over 40 workshops, lectures and seminars related to job applications have been integrated by Careers Officers into programmes in the reporting period, equating to 1361 individual attendances, and in addition 64 open access workshops have been attended by 610 students.

Some of this success is linked to the emergence of a modified 'Hub & Spoke' model for the delivery of Careers services which brings together the benefits of a traditional Hub & Spoke model with a centralised team approach. It has facilitated closer working relationships between the team and Faculty and become more associated to the 'rhythms' therein, whilst at the same time allowing the Team to operate equitably across the University. The modified model provides multiple points of contact between the team and students and staff in each area thus providing continuity of cover and a spread of expertise.