

Fortnightly newsletter | 12th August | Humanities

Mission Employable

Knowing, growing and showing the skills for career success.

As the project reaches its midpoint and the team prepares to meet, review and plan its next steps, the true potential of the incentives being implemented is becoming ever more apparent.

Through the involvement of not only teaching staff and students but also alumni, employers and academic presidents from across the Faculty, the opportunity is certainly there to establish a comprehensive initiative that turns employability into a truly visible and widely supported point of emphasis for our students.

Feature Item: VIP Alumni Scheme | page 2

Module Progress: Working with Career Destinations | page 3

Introduction to the Mission Employable Working Group | page 4

Peer Mentoring Scheme Update | page 5

Feature Item: VIP Alumni Scheme



Amber Dudley: A.Dudley@soton.ac.uk

Interested in improving the career prospects of your students? Keen to get back in touch with former students? If so, are you a member of your department's LinkedIn group?

As part of our latest endeavour to radically reform the Faculty of Humanities' Employability agenda, the Mission Employable team is currently establishing a VIP Alumni scheme. So I guess you're probably wondering: what is the VIP Alumni scheme and how does it affect me? Well, one of the overarching aims of Mission Employable is to increase students' awareness of the importance of Employability from day one of their University experience.

One of the ways we can raise students' awareness of this is by increasing Alumni's involvement in University life since alumni, who have undergone very similar experiences to our current students, can provide advice from a relatable perspective. Alumni can also offer students the opportunity to explore various career paths; provide students with valuable networking opportunities and motivate current students to start thinking about their careers sooner rather than later. As a University, we are extremely fortunate to have an abundance of high-achieving alumni who have gone out into the working world and have established extremely successful careers.

What we need to do now is invite our Alumni back with open arms and remind them that even though they are no longer on campus, they are still very much a member of the University! Ideally we would like to invite alumni who graduated between 5 to 10 years ago and have already established a relatively successful career.

One of the ways you can help Mission Employable with this latest initiative is by simply joining our departmental groups on LinkedIn. Many alumni get back in touch with their alma mater just to see how their favourite lecturer is doing.

If you do already have a LinkedIn profile and would be willing to add your connections to the LinkedIn groups, please do get in touch and Amber from Mission Employable will be able to show you how to do it!

Alternatively if you know of any alumni who you think have the potential to motivate, encourage and inspire our students, we would absolutely love to hear from you!

Departmental LinkedIn Groups:

ML: [ML Career Connections](#)

Archaeology: [Southampton Archaeology Alumni Community](#)

English: [Southampton English Alumni Community](#)

Film: [Southampton Film Alumni Community](#)

History: [Southampton History Alumni Community](#)

Music: [Southampton Music Alumni Community](#)

Philosophy: [Southampton Philosophy Alumni Community](#)

Other News

Academic Skills: Online resource project.

During 2014/15 the University is creating a demo Academic Online Resources Portal. The Portal will link to resources from within and outside of the University, providing students with guidance on their academic skills development.

It will be feedback-led, so students will be directed to use it when they have had feedback on their work which tells them that they need to improve their skills in a certain area.

The aim is to include resources pitched at different levels, so that the site can work for PG as well as UG students. The demo version of the site will centre on Critical Thinking and Understanding and will be populated with resources picked by the Project Board before being tested by students and staff.



While the development of employability skills is an issue of great and ever-increasing importance, students' academic growth and eventual development of outstanding disciplinary expertise remains at the top of the University's agenda.

Southampton Opportunity Project Increased Involvement of Mission Employable Team:

In the last few weeks the team has continued to represent the Faculty of Humanities within the Southampton Opportunity Project. This University-wide initiative aims to collate the wide variety of opportunities available to students at the University on a dedicated site named OPUS (The Opportunity Profile of the University of Southampton) that will serve as a comprehensive database of opportunities.

The team, in addition to attending the project group's fortnightly meetings and contributing profiles containing a selection of opportunities available within Humanities, recently attended an away day at the Winchester School of Art. The day was attended by Opportunity Project interns from faculties across the University and included team building activities, a profile review session, a skills audit and talks from guest speakers.

More information about the Southampton Opportunity Project can be found in the article below, recently made available on SUSSED: [Article available here](#)



The Southampton Opportunity Project interns from across all faculties, including the Mission Employable team, standing in height order as part of a team building activity.

Module Progress: Working with Career Destinations

James Tribe: J.Tribe@soton.ac.uk

In the past week, we have made great progress in developing the structure and content of the HUMA1036: Humanities Employability Module. This progress is in part due to the fact that Amber and I had the opportunity to sit down with our colleagues in Career Destinations to work through all our ideas. As a result, we were able to:

- pitch to them our wide range of ideas concerning our module's Blackboard site, including its potential structure and the resources we may wish to include;
- receive feedback from Career Destinations on these ideas;
- view draft versions of the proposed lecture slides drawn up by Career Destinations and give our feedback on this potential lecture content;
- go through a range of online resources that we may wish to include;
- create a plan of action for moving forward together.

We are now working in conjunction with Career Destinations, who were extremely helpful, enthusiastic and genuinely interested in all of our suggestions. Simply being able to view their proposed lecture content has enabled us to give them feedback on how to best engage students, implement innovative and interactive methods of teaching and focus the lecture content to suit the module's aims of raising students' self-awareness, participation in university life and overall motivation to actively become more employable.

We wish in particular to incorporate a means of tailoring aspects of the module to each of the seven disciplines within Humanities both through structure and customised content. This too has been discussed with Career Destinations and will be further explored, incorporating their suggestions.

In the next few weeks, we intend to use the increased clarity and focus that we have gained from these meetings in order to:

- go through the lecture slides and meticulously select the resources at our disposal that best serve to supplement what the students are taught in-class;
- draw up a revised proposal of the Blackboard module structure which highlights not only the desired layout of the site, but also the discipline-specific, customised resources we would want to incorporate as the most relevant materials linked to each individual lecture;
- continue to work through these ideas with Career Destinations.

Coming Soon:

I am also working currently on establishing an External Advisory Board of employers to work with our students, alongside the module and our other related incentives, in order to improve their employability as well as to provide advice and assistance to the Faculty as a whole. This will be discussed at length in the following newsletter.

To stay updated on our progress:

Follow the Mission Employable team on twitter: [@HumsEmployable](https://twitter.com/HumsEmployable)

Follow our team blog containing regular updates from all members of the team: <http://blog.soton.ac.uk/missionemployable/>

Introduction to the Mission Employable Working Group

Charlotte Medland: C.J.Medland@soton.ac.uk

In the last newsletter I promised you more information on how we already embrace Group Activity within the Faculty of Humanities, and how the value of these activities for future careers can be made more visible to our students. So much of Humanities students' extra-curricular activity already adds to their transferable skills, and we are looking at ways to increase student awareness of these non-academic forms of development from the moment they arrive at Southampton.

One of the ways that we plan to achieve this is through the Mission Employable Working Group, which will be comprised of:

- Humanities academic societies Peer Mentoring/Employability representatives;
- Humanities Academic Presidents;
- First-Year Humanities Course Representatives (to contribute remotely through feedback to their corresponding Academic President in advance of each meeting);
- SUSU Humanities Faculty Officer;
- Dr Eleanor Quince, Director of Employability, Faculty of Humanities (Chair);
- Representative from Career Destinations;
- Charlotte Medland (me!), Research Assistant to Dr Eleanor Quince.

The logistics of this group, particularly regarding the involvement of SUSU representatives, are still in discussion with Sophia D'Angelico, VP Education, and the team, but the main aims are now set. These are:

- To encourage student engagement in the new Employability initiatives;
- To work in partnership with our students to raise the visibility and availability of Employability development opportunities throughout the university to Humanities students, and to identify gaps and create new activities to fill them;
- To monitor student feedback on the Employability initiatives, and amend future planning accordingly;
- To review the success of the initiatives and create a plan for continuing success and/or improvement during the 2015-16 academic year.

Our hope is to work in partnership with Humanities students to develop new and engaging employability-related activities for all levels of study. We have already had an enthusiastic response from the Humanities academic societies and SUSU, and I am confident that the students will embrace this opportunity to collaborate in creating employability activities that will be beneficial to their peers.

In the next newsletter I will share my progress on creating a reflective tool for Humanities students. The tool will raise their awareness of the professional skills they are developing as they experience everything that life at Southampton has to offer.

Other News

University Working Group on Placements

The University's Employability Strategy Network (ESN), working in partnership with Student Services, is exploring ways in which we can increase the number of placements available to our students in line with university strategy.

A Working Group, reporting to the ESN, will:

- create a Work Placement Policy to make it as easy as possible for students to undertake placements;
- develop an implementation plan to ensure that the key objective of increasing our placement offer is met;
- provide strategic direction to faculties on achieving and delivering placements at local level.

We'll keep you updated on the progress of the Working Group's activities during 2014/15.



Work placements are an essential opportunity to gain hands on experience in the working world. We need to provide students with the self awareness, motivation and, ultimately, the relevant resources to actively research, self-source and take advantage of such opportunities from the start of their degree.



Peer Mentoring Scheme Update

Verity Smith: V.Smith@soton.ac.uk

The Humanities Peer Mentoring scheme is coming along in leaps and bounds! As I promised in the previous edition that I would provide some more information on the scheme, here it is!

Incentives

- Students who become mentors will receive comprehensive training and gain valuable skills such as: communication, team work, organisation, time management, listening, motivation, and leadership. This allows students to use Peer Mentoring as an example at interviews to showcase their employability skills.
- In addition to being great CV experience, at the end of the scheme mentors will receive a certificate and 15 Graduate Passport points.

Allocations

- Two mentors will be paired together and allocated to a group of 10-30 mentees. I will not know about the numbers of incoming students until the end of August/beginning of September, after A-level results day and clearing week.
- Groups will be primarily created within departments. For example, all language students will fall under Modern Languages. Joint Honour students shall primarily be Mentors to the department they are part of, however the mentors will be in touch with each other across the departments.

Training

- Mentors shall attend a training session on Monday 22/09/2014, Week 0. This will involve ice breakers, team building activities, scenario workshops, information about all the support networks available (e.g. SUSU, Student Services, the Faculty senior tutor).
- They will also be told more about what the role IS and IS NOT, and what will be expected of them in their role as a mentor, and questions they have will also be raised and answered.

Applications are still coming in, and it has been a pleasure to read the students' enthusiasm for the scheme and their motives for wanting to take part. If you can think of a student who would suit this role then please get in touch with them and direct them to the application form! There is still time to apply: <https://www.isurvey.soton.ac.uk/12341> application closes on Sunday 17th of August!

Keep your eyes peeled for the next newsletter where the following topics concerning the scheme will be discussed:

- The role Peer Mentoring Officers/Peer Mentoring coordinator
- Mentor Guidebook
- Reviews

“Through the instigation of peer mentoring programmes, Higher Education Institutions have the opportunity to create a true ‘win-win-win’ situation in which new students belong, existing students develop new skills, and HEIs experience minimal student attrition”

– HEA 2011

If you would like to comment on, contribute to or simply find out more about our work, please contact us at the relevant address:

Humanities Employability Module: J.Tribe@soton.ac.uk and A.Dudley@soton.ac.uk

Group Activity research: C.J.Medland@soton.ac.uk

Peer Mentoring Scheme: V.Smith@soton.ac.uk

Project director: Dr Eleanor Quince: E.M.Quince@soton.ac.uk

