

Fortnightly newsletter | 26th August | Humanities

# Mission Employable

Knowing, growing and showing the skills for career success.

After much work over the past few weeks, the team's various employability initiatives are now truly beginning to take shape. As the Humanities Employability Module nears the end of its design phase and starts to be finalised and presented on Blackboard, the Humanities Peer Mentoring Scheme is also entering an advanced stage of planning and refinement.

The team has also increased its involvement in the Southampton Opportunity Project in order to further contribute to employability activity beyond the Faculty on a University-wide level.

Feature Item: The External Advisory Board | page 2

Module Progress: Lecture Content and Blackboard Site | page 3

The Mission Employable 'Reflective Tool' | page 4

Peer Mentoring Scheme Update | page 5

# Feature Item: The External Advisory Board

**James Tribe:** [J.Tribe@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.Tribe@soton.ac.uk)

One key branch of our 'Mission Employable' initiative is the formation of an External Advisory Board (EAB) for the Faculty of Humanities, which I have been working hard to develop over the past week or so, alongside the ongoing development of the Humanities Employability Module.

The EAB will serve as one of the key initiatives we intend to establish alongside the module in order to improve the employability of our students here in the Faculty. The board will:

- be formed of employers who will act as external partners offering advice and guidance to the Faculty on: our current offer to students; our image among employers; the standing of our graduates among employers; our place in the community; how we might improve our industrial relations; and anything else we may wish to consult them on;
- allow the Faculty and its external partners to build a mutually beneficial relationship that leads not only to the Faculty being able to make more informed decisions on its practice and better develop its students, but also allows external partners to have an input on how Humanities develop students that best suit their needs as employers;
- host a 'launch event' to which 20-30 employers will be invited. Some EAB members will ultimately form part of a core board while others will go on to constitute a broader pool of partners acting in a more peripheral advisory role.

Core members will attend an annual meeting and be more directly involved in on-campus events, presentations, workshops etc. as well as, hopefully, being able to work with the module coordinator to provide a range of hugely beneficial employability-related opportunities for our students.

With this plan established, I have been faced with the challenging task of creating the relevant documentation to send to our desired invitees in addition to actually deciding on, and compiling a list of who we may wish to invite!

Thus far I have drafted the board's terms of reference as part of the invitation package we wish to send to our desired invitees. Also in the coming week, we will be putting together a handbook of a slightly more promotional nature, that outlines how the Faculty is set up, its various lines of activity and research, as well as the aims and methods of our 'Mission Employable' initiative.

I have also started contacting members of the Faculty that I feel may have contacts with representatives from external organisations that may be great candidates for involvement in the Advisory Board. The list of potential invitees is growing by the day, however, we continue to encourage more suggestions for employers that may benefit the Faculty through their membership in the board, and indeed may wish to benefit from the recruitment and networking opportunity that the board will provide them.

Any suggestions for potential board members would be much appreciated, especially those who may have collaborated with or been associated with our Faculty previously, and these can be sent to [J.Tribe@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.Tribe@soton.ac.uk).

## Student Consultancy News:

### Funding Success


The University's Education Enhancement Fund (EEF) has agreed to continue its funding of the Student Consultancy project during 2014/15.

The EEF has also granted the project team, Dr Eleanor Quince (Humanities) and Tim Hicks (Career Destinations), an additional £25,000 to enable them to expand the number of opportunities on offer over the funded period, providing places for a further 100 students to participate in the project.

Student Consultancy opportunities will be open to Humanities students only during semester one of 2014/15. The team have had over a thousand expressions of interest from our students and have a wide range of exciting opportunities on offer, including the chance to curate an exhibition at the City Art Gallery.



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>

## Southampton Opportunity Project

### Creation of opportunity profiles:

Since Eleanor took a 3 week period of annual leave on August 11<sup>th</sup>, the pressure has no doubt been on for all members of the Mission Employable team to achieve as much as possible and meet the range of respective goals that we each set for Eleanor's return at the start of September.

However, alongside this work we have also been compiling opportunity profiles for the Southampton Opportunity Project. These detail all of the opportunities available for Humanities students here at the University.

The profiles will ultimately be incorporated into a Southampton Opportunity website, serving as a comprehensive database of student opportunities offered across the University. Given the importance of this task, and our role as part of such a large, university-wide project, we have shared out the task of creating profiles so that we can provide the Project with as much information as possible.

The process of profiling involves completing Excel spreadsheet entries for each individual opportunity and then contacting the relevant individual to amend, review, and add to our profiles as they see fit. We also need to obtain their approval before placing the data on the website that will hopefully go live at the beginning of Semester 2 - a process which can be either very simple or quite tricky depending on how many of the contacts are checking their emails over the summer holidays!

Naturally the profiles are a significant task in their own right, and consequently we have all had to be on top form in order to successfully incorporate this task whilst striving to complete our own personal and extensive lists of objectives!

Engaging with such large projects with the potential to influence employability across the University and being able to represent the Faculty and its interests continues to be a very exciting role that we will no doubt enjoy and take very seriously throughout the rest of our project.



## Humanities Employability Module Progress:

### Lecture Content and Blackboard Site

**Amber Dudley:** [A.Dudley@soton.ac.uk](mailto:A.Dudley@soton.ac.uk)

Over the past few weeks, James and I have spent the vast majority of our time working on the module's Blackboard site. At first, designing an entire Blackboard site that will be used by hundreds of first-years over the course of the next academic year seemed like a daunting task, as neither James nor I had ever used Blackboard as instructors, only as students, but in actual fact it was pretty straightforward. Although we haven't had the opportunity to upload absolutely everything to the Blackboard site and it's not yet finished, it's great to see the module finally taking shape!

On Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> August, we had the opportunity to meet with Career Destinations to discuss how the lecture content was developing. Although Career Destinations' initial progress was great, James and I were really keen to implement several of the customisation options bought up during our meetings with the Employability tutors. Following on from the meeting, James and I decided to brainstorm several ideas of ways in which the module could focus on the student experience and emphasise why students should start thinking about developing their employability skills sooner rather than later. We were initially a bit apprehensive about presenting our proposals for the new lecture content to Career Destinations as we were unsure about how they would receive our ideas. Fortunately, they were extremely enthusiastic about what we presented to them and couldn't agree more with what we had to say. Based on our feedback, Career Destinations are looking to incorporate our proposed customisation options whilst keeping our students' needs at the heart of the module.

Next Friday, I will be spending the day at the Office of Development & Alumni Relations (ODAR) to find out more about what they do and hopefully search their databases for alumni who would be suitable candidates for the VIP Alumni scheme. Although several members of staff have already given us some excellent recommendations, we would still appreciate further suggestions as ideally we would like to have 20-25 alumni per department.

On a final note, if you have any alumni recommendations for the VIP Alumni scheme or have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch!

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Southampton**

Mission Employable – 'Knowing, growing and showing the skills for career success'

# The Mission Employable 'Reflective Tool'

**Charlotte Medland:** [C.J.Medland@soton.ac.uk](mailto:C.J.Medland@soton.ac.uk)

As you know, the Mission Employable Team are working hard to give our Humanities students the best possible opportunities to develop their employability skills. One of the main components of our initiatives is raising students' awareness of the need to develop their key employability skills throughout their time at Southampton. To facilitate this process, I have been tasked with creating a reflective 'tool' for students to complete after they have taken part in university activities. The aim of the tool is to provide students with a way of articulating their transferable skills that will prepare them for the processes that come with entering the graduate job market.

My biggest challenge is finding a way of incentivising students to complete a reflective tool that does not currently contribute to their final degree mark. The tool must also clearly lead students to self-evaluate and analyse their employability skills, and then set objectives for how they can continue to improve these over the remainder of their time at Southampton.

The following questions also need to be addressed as I create something that will work for all Humanities students:

- Do I create a fun, interactive online tool to encourage participation?
- Do we run a competition for the best reflective report?
- Do we offer certificates to those who have completed a certain amount of reflective work, as it evidences their learning outcomes?
- On the other hand, should the tool be purely for personal use i.e. the student has access to it, can print and keep it, but does not need to share it with the Faculty?

So far I have researched several 'advantage' awards at the universities of Nottingham, Birmingham, Warwick, and Exeter that have both similarities and differences with our own Graduate Passport scheme. I have also discovered that several University of Southampton departments offer rewards or extra credit for student participation in co-curricular activities. All these options offer a variety of incentives for student engagement outside of their compulsory degree hours – but to what extent do the students recognise their own personal and professional growth as a result?

I will keep you updated on my progress, but in the meantime if you have any ideas to contribute or questions to ask please do not hesitate to get in touch via email [C.J.Medland@soton.ac.uk](mailto:C.J.Medland@soton.ac.uk).

**Enactus: Featured Opportunity**  
The following entry outlines an opportunity that is often overlooked by Humanities students. Enactus serves as an opportunity for our students to develop crucial commercial awareness and enterprise skills, whilst using their unique skillsets to contribute to large, wide-reaching projects .

There are billions of people in the world who struggle day to day with often largely misinterpreted problems. In developed countries such as the UK, social exclusion and stigma create cycles of isolation. In developing countries the problems and needs can seem so large that people would rather turn a blind eye than attempt to shift the seemingly insurmountable mountain.

Enactus, a global organisation of 1600+ universities based in 36 countries, uses the passion and drive of students, supported by academics, university staff and business leaders to empower those around them through entrepreneurial action, innovation, and perseverance.

Enactus Southampton epitomises the capabilities of students, with 7 social projects operating in 4 countries, 4 profit making businesses, and a Research and Development team, providing a platform for students to begin impacting lives before they have even decided on their future paths. The combination of access to exclusive personal development opportunities and practical implementation means that Enactus students become some of the most employable students leaving university, with sponsor companies such as KPMG, Mott Macdonald, and Unilever including an "Are you a part of Enactus?" check box on their applications.

Providing chances to develop fundamental business knowledge and commercial awareness, Enactus Southampton allows students to forge their own solutions to global needs, develop areas of interest, and create tangible impact off the back of lunchtime conversation- whether it be through the creation of fertiliser producing toilets in Kenya or helping local and migrant youths to believe in their abilities and aspire to more than society has so far allotted them.

To find out more, visit: <http://enactus.org/>



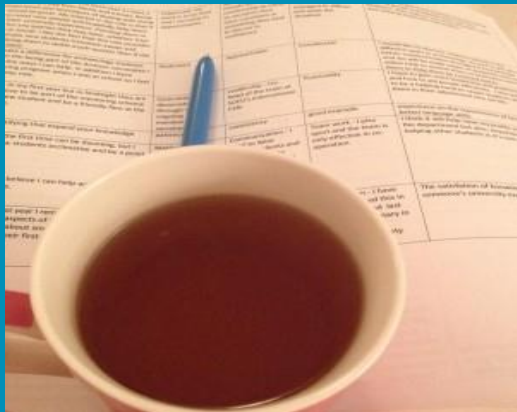
The Mission Employable team continues to explore an array of online resources in order to further spread the word of the importance of employability. Follow Charlotte's most recent activity curating several interesting topics on Scoop.it: <http://www.scoop.it/u/charlotte-medland>



## Undergraduate Peer Mentoring Handbook

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to the planning of a mentor training day and the formation of a plan for the sustainability of the scheme, a full draft of the Peer Mentoring Handbook, to be given to the selected mentors, has been developed. The full draft is in an ongoing process of review and finalisation.



Reading through applications with a cup of herbal tea- the applications have certainly highlighted how engaged many second and final year Humanities students are in their professional development and employability.

# Peer Mentoring Scheme Update

Verity Smith: [V.Smith@soton.ac.uk](mailto:V.Smith@soton.ac.uk)

In the last newsletter, the format of Humanities Peer Mentoring was discussed in more detail with regards to: incentives, allocations and training.

The application form for students to be mentors closed on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup>, and there were an incredible 168 applicants from across all seven departments of Humanities. Reading through the applications is one of the highlights of this role because it is a great privilege to read students' reasons and motives for joining the scheme. What's more, it confirms that such a scheme is greatly needed and more importantly *welcomed* by students.

One of the questions the students were asked in the application was: "What would you like to gain from being a mentor?" There were a range of answers to this question. However, a running theme throughout was that students wanted to improve their transferable skills to increase their employability. This shows how aware second and final year Humanities students are of the skills they are developing through their degree, and what skills they need to build upon in order to enhance their employability once they have graduated.

***"Being a mentor I'll be able to extend my communications skills which will help me in my future career."***

***"I would like to improve my leadership skills... the chance to make decisions such as organising group meetings, will really help me develop that skill."***

***"I would also like to gain an opportunity to develop my skills, such as communication, leadership and motivation."***

***"I would like to gain valuable leadership skills that would help me for my future career as I want to go into Business Management."***

These are just a few examples of students already taking the initiative to get involved in activities which will increase their employability, showing that team Mission Employable's aims and actions are on the right path!

In the next newsletter, Peer Mentoring shall be summarised, and the review process and sustainability of the scheme shall be discussed.

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](mailto:J.Tribe@soton.ac.uk) and [A.Dudley@soton.ac.uk](mailto:A.Dudley@soton.ac.uk)

Group Activity research: [C.J.Medland@soton.ac.uk](mailto:C.J.Medland@soton.ac.uk)

Peer Mentoring Scheme: [V.Smith@soton.ac.uk](mailto:V.Smith@soton.ac.uk)

Project director: Dr Eleanor Quince: [E.M.Quince@soton.ac.uk](mailto:E.M.Quince@soton.ac.uk)

