



Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

Title: Principal's Award for Employability

Transition(s) the practice supports: the aim of this is to identify where this would sit on the planned transitions map.

The aim of the Principal's Award is to support students in identifying their strengths and areas for development, to help them understand what employers are looking for during the recruitment process, and ultimately to support the students' successful transition from University into the labour market

Abstract: a brief outline of the practice – this will allow all your institutional examples to appear on the one page of the website, linking to further information. This should be no longer than 120 words.

The Principal's Award is the University of Abertay's employability programme and its aim is to give students recognition for the skills they are developing through work, studying, volunteering and extra-curricular activities. The Award also aims to provide students with the opportunity to develop and showcase the skills and experiences highly valued by employers. The structure of the Award includes Core Elements (work experience, personality profile, skills workshops) and Elective Elements (two extra-curricular activities). Assessment is by reflective log, submission of a CV and an interview.

Description: (this is the information to which the abstract would link) a more detailed description of the practice with an indication of what led to its development, how long it has been in place, and why it benefits students

The Principal's Award was developed as part of the University's Employability Strategy, whose aim is to enhance the employability of its graduates. There is no single definition of employability, but Yorke (2006)¹ defined Employability in the context of Higher Education as:

“a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations”.

¹ Yorke, M (2006) Employability in Higher Education: what it is – what it is not. Learning and Employability Series. ESECT: LTSN Generic Centre



In addition, the University views employability as embracing the concept of students developing skills of self-reflection about their learning and the ability to communicate their portfolio of acquired skills with confidence and assurance.

A further aim of the employability programme is to give students recognition for the skills they are developing through work, studying, volunteering and extra-curricular activities.

The Principal's Award was piloted in 2011/12 with 8 students from the Business School, then rolled out across the University the following year. In 2012/13, 35 students signed up and 26 completed, and in 2013/14, 55 signed up and 46 completed. In 2014/2015, 102 students are currently enrolled on the programme.

The Principal's Award supports the Employability Strategy of the University of Abertay by helping students to:

- meet current challenges of graduate employment and to adapt to future changes in employment opportunities
- promote themselves to prospective employers and to enter the labour market at a level appropriate to their qualifications
- develop a range of skills that will help students to continue with their personal development after graduation, whether this be in further study, research or employment
- develop the confidence to make effective use of their education and training

Building on from that, the Award works on the premise that Career Management is a process which requires active engagement and participation by students at all times. Equally important, is the ability to critically reflect on one's own progress as an essential skill to facilitate the possibility of lifelong learning and a fulfilling career path.

Contact details: name and email address of key person who can discuss the case study in more detail. (with their permission agreed before submission)

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