

Examples of transition work at Queen Margaret University

Title: *Professional Communication Placement*

Transition(s) the practice supports: The transition from study into employment

Abstract: This case study presents an example of facilitating the transition from full-time study to employment for PR students. The PR programmes (PR and Media and PR, Marketing and Events) takes a longitudinal approach to employability awareness, and in the fourth year supports students through a placement with sessions on portfolio development, reflection, and other skill refinements to enhance employability.

Description: This fourth year module builds on the employability ideas developed longitudinally through the first three years of the Public Relations programmes through things such as networking events, attendance at conferences, seeking professional membership, ePortfolio development and PR and marketing live-client projects.

The placement module is a core module carrying 40 credits. Students are required to undertake the equivalent of a month's employment – they can do this in any combination over the period October to March to equal 20 working days/150 working hours. Some students choose to do their placement during the summer break, others fit it around their taught modules in semester one or two. We work with Space Management to ensure students are free from scheduled classes at least one day a week to help facilitate this.

While students are required to find their own placement hosts, they are assisted in doing this by networking events with local companies. This includes an innovative 'speed-dating' type event to help match students with hosts. Twenty to thirty companies participate in the two-hour speed interview session during which students move from host to host. The event is followed by an informal, networking lunch.

Both students and employer placement hosts are provided with handbooks setting out the aims and expectations of the placement. In support of their placement, students have an initial introductory lecture, which is followed by nine preparation workshops covering areas such as: CV preparation, interview skills and techniques, writing for the media, budgeting and events scheduling, maintaining placement logs, writing reflective accounts and the use of PebblePad for ePortfolios. These sessions are delivered in conjunction with university services, such as Careers, the Effective Learning Service and the Centre for Academic Practice.

The module is assessed through production of an ePortfolio, and the submission of a reflective report. Hence, students are encouraged to review their learning across the degree in light of their work experience, reflect on current professional practice and identify lessons learned and their future development, but also develop useful resources to facilitate their transition into employment on leaving university.

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