



## Building Resilient Learning Communities: Using Evidence to Support Student Success

#ETConf20



# Beat the Bot: curriculum interventions and the journey to graduate employment

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## Context

Longitudinal education outcomes (LEOs) and destination of leavers from higher education (DLHE) are graduate employment metrics by which universities are judged. However, not all students have the same social capital when it comes to navigating this landscape – therefore embedding employability interventions within the curriculum could be viewed as key to good graduate outcomes (Cameron, Wharton & Scally, 2018).

## Intervention

A core second year sport placement module engages students in learning how to navigate social media, dealing with behavioural challenges, entrepreneurship, inclusion, unconscious bias and becoming the reflective practitioner in preparation for graduate employment. The students submit a 'LinkedIn style' webfolio and a placement presentation as the units of assessment. However, qualitative data gathered from employers reported poorly written non-specific applications which were not passing the initial phase of screening. This, coupled with the advance of artificial intelligence in recruitment, resulted in some adjustments to content ('Beat the Bot') with the presentation assessment replaced by a short placement-focussed interview (jointly conducted by placement and module teams).

## Evidence of impact

Third year sports' degree students have the opportunity to apply for highly-prized internships with a number of elite sports clubs. The most recent round of applications and interviews for these positions resulted in extremely positive feedback from both the candidates and the recruiters in respect of preparedness and conduct within the interview (in contrast with previous experience). Students relayed that the second year module had stood them in good stead for the recruitment exercise. It is hoped that continued evaluation of the impact of curriculum employability interventions will enhance graduate employment.

## **Session Aims**

This session aims to provide:

1. Context in respect of graduate employability within a widening participation landscape
2. Overview of some curriculum-embedded interventions and evidence of impact
3. Insight from employers and students
4. A case for continued evaluation of employability interventions

The presentation covers the evolution and impact of a core second year sport placement module where content includes navigating social media, dealing with behavioural challenges, entrepreneurship, inclusion, unconscious bias, reflective practice and 'Beat the Bot'. Students are assessed via 'LinkedIn' style webfolios and placement-focussed interviews. Two employers will discuss their involvement and recruitment experiences.

## **Key Learning Points**

- Institutional/discipline responses to the graduate employability agenda
- The story of graduate employability beyond LEO and DLHE
- Partnership working with employers to create and assess curriculum-embedded content which is sensitive to the advance of artificial intelligence

While this case study uses sports degree curricula to showcase employability initiatives and their impact, many of the examples/insights are transferable to a number of profession-oriented, people-facing graduate destinations.

## **Key words**

Graduate recruitment, artificial intelligence, employability

## **Key messages**

Not all students have the same social capital when it comes to navigating the job market – therefore embedded curriculum interventions could be key to graduate employment.

Gaining employer feedback regarding graduate applications, interview performance, workforce capability is important evidence in relation to the evolution of any employment-focussed curricular initiatives.

Placement is valuable but the capacity to articulate the experience is vital.