

Embedding employability through a cross-university academic, professional and personal development module in undergraduate degree programmes

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Overview

- Embedding employability in HE
- Overview of ASPIRE at UWS
- The opportunities and challenges of ASPIRE
- Next steps



Employability in HE – why does it matter?

To the institute – Graduate Outcomes: performance, reputation, recruitment...

External – employers, local and national economy

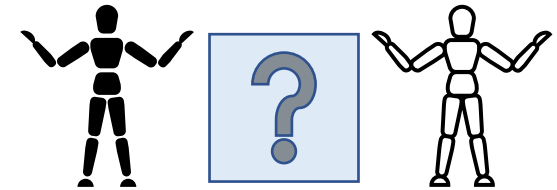
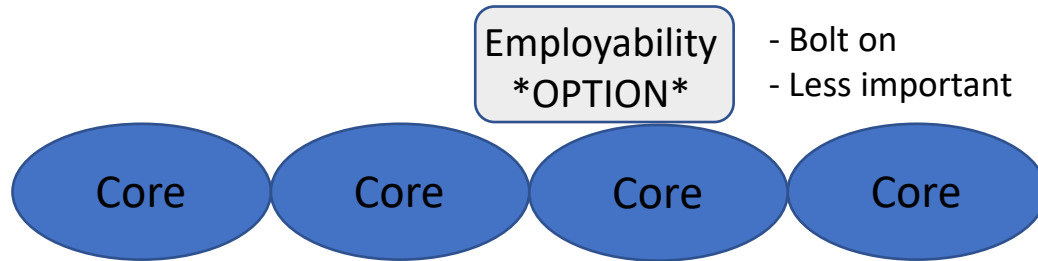
Student success!

But there are concerns....

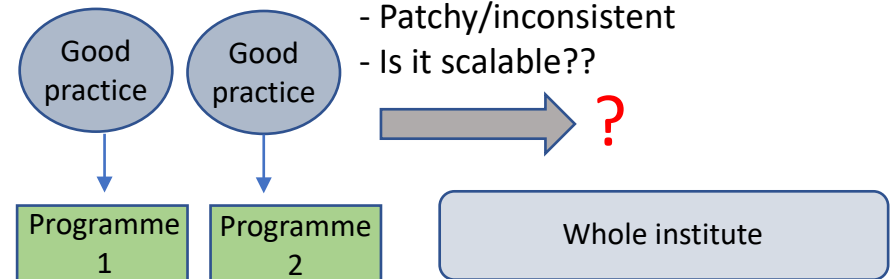
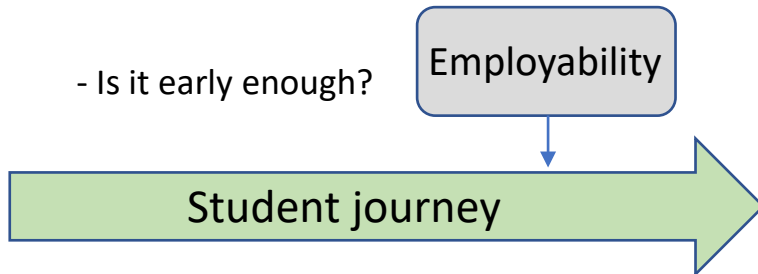
- Low confidence in skills needed for career, understanding employer expectations, evidencing skills (QAA, Focus On Graduate Skills 2019)
- Low confidence in skill articulation and preparedness for graduate work (Careers 2032, Handshake, ISE, AGCAS, WonkHE)



Embedding employability

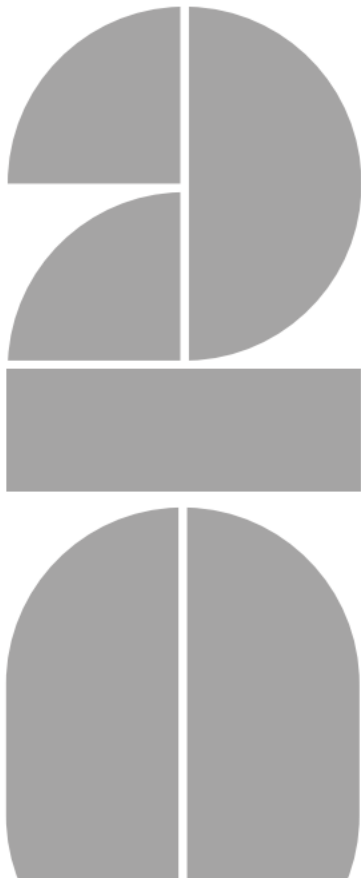


Who is responsible?



Employability, at least, ain't viral

Professor Mark Peace, MMU



strategy
2025
dream. believe. achieve.

We will develop a suite of core and common modules ("Academic, Professional and Personal Development modules") across all programmes..... These modules should be central to supporting student success, wellbeing and employability through the development of 21st-century meta-skills and attributes

"develop UWS graduates as the leaders of tomorrow. All students will be supported to gain world-ready meta-skills..."



**Curriculum
Framework
2022**

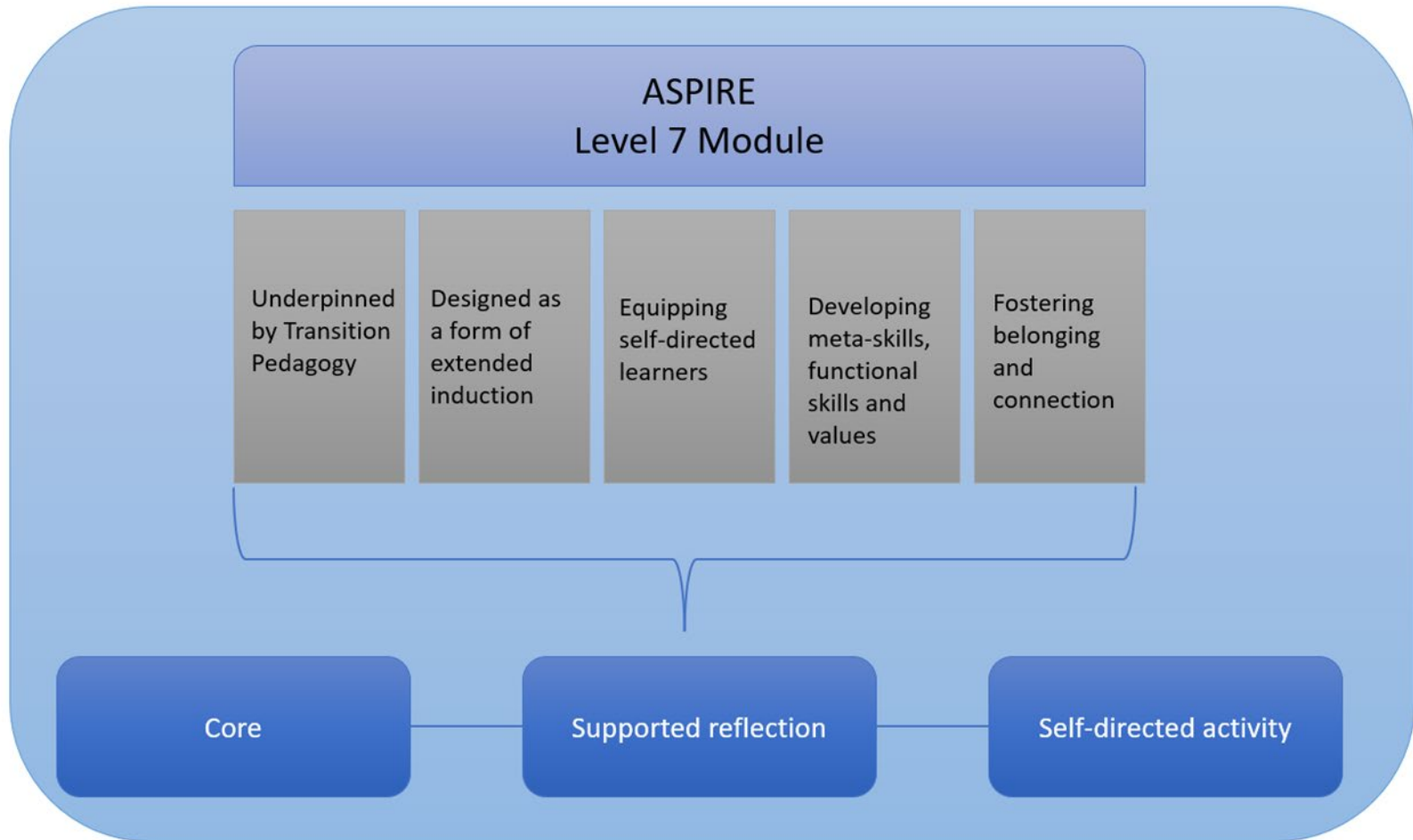
UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST of SCOTLAND
UWS

ASPIRE

- Suite of core academic, personal and professional modules across SCQF levels 7-9
- Each module 20 credits and runs through terms 1 and 2
- Level 7 module piloted in September 2022
- Cross-institutional module design and delivery – including Learning Transformation, Professional Services and academic schools
- Assessed by reflective e-portfolio



Module underpinnings



ASPIRE - Core

Week	Topic
1	Introduction to ASPIRE
2	Getting to Know Yourself
3	Exploring Your Values
4	Your Learning at University
5	Building Your Digital Confidence
6	Understanding Your Professional Self
7	Exploring Your Career Possibilities
8	Reflecting Effectively

Content created by:
Academic Skills
Counselling & Wellbeing
Careers Service

ASPIRE Module (Business) 2022/23 T2

Community **Journey**

Materials Assignments Engagement Educator area

Materials

- Introduction to the ASPIRE ...
- Week 1 - Launch ...
- Week 2 - Getting to...
- Week 3 - Exploring...
- Week 4 - Your Lear...
- Week 5 - Building...
- Week 6 - Understand...
- Introduction to Understand...
- 1. Using the UWS Career...
- 2. Your Future Career
- 3. Career Planning
- 4. Employability
- 5. Self-awareness
- 6. Your Career Personality
- 7. Week 6 quiz
- References
- Summary of Week 6 - U...
- Now page
- Week 7 - Exploring...
- Week 8 - Reflecting...
- Strand 3 - Support...
- Assessment
- Supported Reflection Slides
- META-SKILLS - INTRO
- Communication
- Leadership
- Culture and Identity
- Digital Skills
- Project Management
- Innovation
- Collaboration
- Your Career
- Academic and Stud...
- Wellbeing
- Research Skills
- Thinking about Th...

Page name: Bg Week 1 - Th... IQ

4. Employability

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What is employability?

Have you heard the term 'employability' before?

Employability is a term used a lot within education and by employers.

It has different definitions, and it can be used in different contexts, which can be confusing. The most common misconception is that employability is only about getting a job. However, this is 'employment' - employability is really much wider than that.

Employability is a lifelong process and applies to everyone. It is also not just about your skills and abilities (though they play a part).

But what is it then?

Well, one definition with relevance to higher education states that employability is "a set of achievements - skills, understandings and personal attributes - that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves

A simple model that provides a framework for graduate employability development is the CareerEDGE model (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007).

In the CareerEDGE model there are 5 key components that determine our employability:

Career Development Learning - focuses on developing your skills and attributes in career planning and in preparation for finding and securing job opportunities. Essentially what we are doing here in ASPIRE!

Experience - focuses on both our work and life experience, and the skills, attributes and knowledge we gain from these. This will form a key part of your ASPIRE journey.

Degree Subject - the knowledge, understanding and skills gained from your studies in your subject area.

Generic Skills - the transferable skills you gain from all aspects of your life and which are vital to employers. You will get to focus on these 'meta skills' throughout ASPIRE!

Emotional Intelligence - a key concept in the modern workplace but also in life, it is based around our ability to perceive, understand and manage emotions. A key ability for developing relationships in work and in life. There is potential to learn more about this later in ASPIRE.

Watch this short [CareerEDGE video](#) for a simple explanation of employability and how the model can help you develop it - the video is 12 min 12 sec

ASPIRE – Supported reflection

- Introduction of an advising curriculum (supported reflection and personal tutoring)
- Regular group reflection sessions – dialogic teaching facilitated by ASPIRE advisers
- 1-1 sessions with ASPIRE adviser
- Group project in term 2



ASPIRE – Self-directed activity (meta-skills)

META-SKILLS - INTRO

- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Culture and Identity
- ▶ Digital Skills
- ▶ Project Management
- ▶ Innovation
- ▶ Collaboration
- ▶ Your Career
- ▶ Academic and Study ...
- ▶ Wellbeing
- ▶ Research Skills
- ▶ Thinking about Think...

META-SKILLS - INTRO

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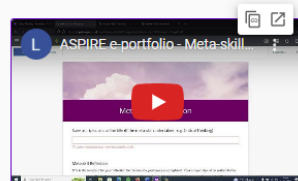
Meta-skills Session Information

This section of the ASPIRE module contains the meta-skills sessions. Each session should take roughly one hour to complete. These sessions are all intended to be stand alone, asynchronous sessions that you can complete on your own, without tutor input. You can complete the session at your own pace and have the option to work through it in one sitting or split it into smaller chunks.

Each session should follow a similar pattern with the following sections:

- 🎯 Summary - contains an overview of the session and the learning outcomes. There will be a short introduction video and document outlining the key concepts.
- 📋 Activities - these will be the activities that you need to complete in the session
- 🔄 Round-up - a quick overview of what you should have learned
- 🧐 Quiz Activity - a short quiz to check your understanding of what you learned in the session
- 📝 Reflection Activity - a short reflection of the session in PebblePad

There are 50 sessions in total and you should pick 12 sessions to complete and reflect on. These reflections will form part of the evidence in your eportfolio for the final summative assessment for this module, so it is important you complete one for each session you complete. If you would like to work through more than 12 sessions, you're free to pick as many as you want, but you will only have to provide evidence for 12 as part of the final assessment.



- SDS Skills 4.0 (meta-skills) used as guiding framework
- Each theme comprises 4/5 individual sessions
- Students select 12 sessions in term 2

https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/44684/skills-40_a-skills-model.pdf

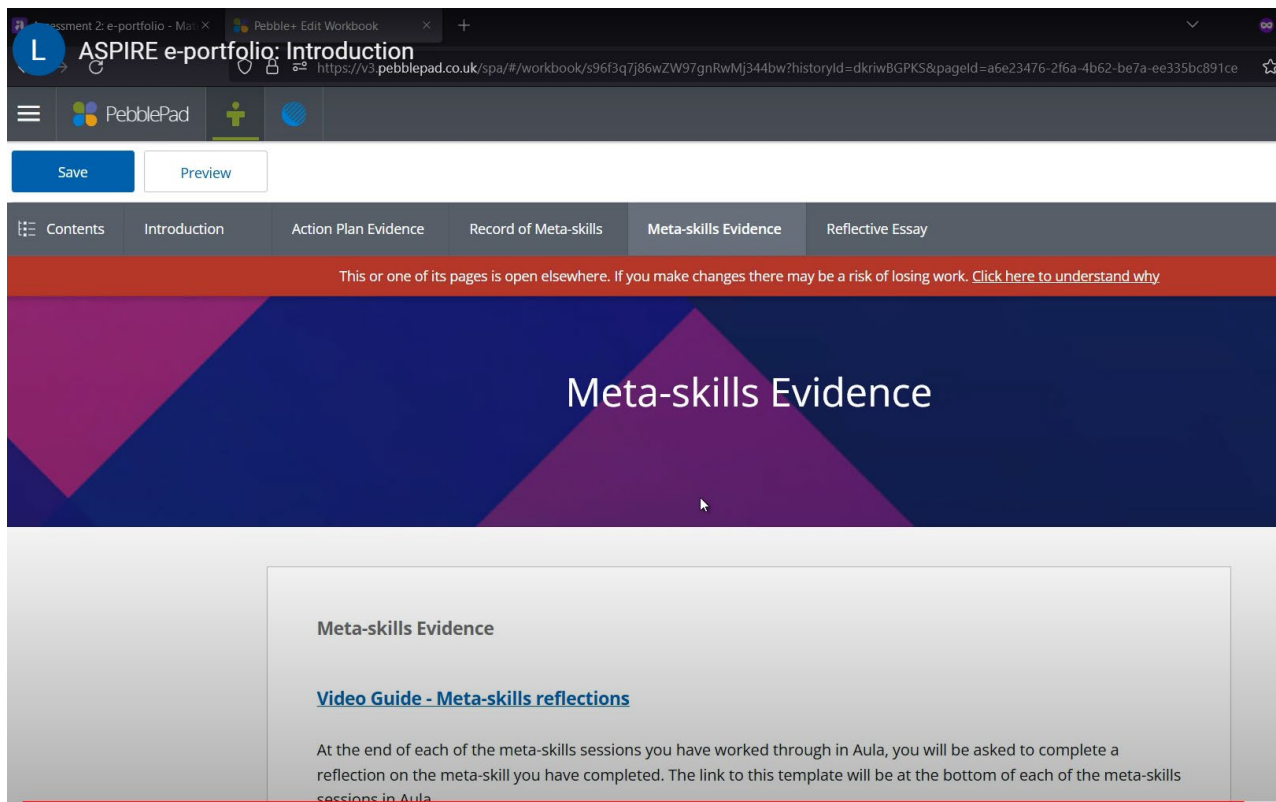
Assessment

Formative Assessment – Action Plan

- Submitted in term 1 - formative
- Reflection and goal setting
- Choose meta-skills sessions based on goals and ambitions
- Completed in PebblePad

Summative Assessment – Reflective e-portfolio

- Submitted end of term 2 (PebblePad)
- Includes evidence from group project and reflections from module work
- Pass/Fail



Key benefits

- Enabled embedding of employability at scale and early in the student journey



Alignment with the Advance HE framework for embedding employability



Key benefits

- Enables embedding of employability at scale and early in the student journey
- Supporting student transition into, through and beyond university
- Enhances signposting and raising awareness of student support services
- Encourages deeper reflection enhancing life-long and life-wide learning
- Embedding employability into the culture of the curriculum



The Challenges

- Implementing large changes institutionally
- Organisational issues for implementing a new university-wide module across multiple academic schools
- Engagement – achieving student buy-in to a module that is a bit 'different'!
- Disconnect between online and in-class learning – need to achieve greater connection between different areas of the module



Next Steps

- Core ASPIRE team recruited to manage module implementation and continuous improvement
- Post-module evaluation drawing on experiences and expertise of all stakeholders – commitment to understand and address key challenges such as engagement
- Increased collaboration from academic colleagues to contextualise module content
- Further embedding of level 7 module in further programmes in 2023/24
- Plans for Level 8 module



Thank you

