

University Committee for Quality and Standards



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Paper for the meeting on: **26 September 2018**

From: Prof Robert Craik, Provost Emeritus

QSC Sponsor (if different) Mr Campbell Powrie, Deputy Registrar

Date: 3 September 2018

For Noting/Information



Title/Subject: **Review of the Careers Service**

Summary of key points to note:

During 2017/18, the Careers Services was due to undertake an Academic-Related Review. In preference to a standard review event, a more longitudinal review has been undertaken, as led by the former Provost of the University's Malaysia Campus, regarding the institution's requirements for careers provision. The timing for this more comprehensive review was opportune:

- the University embarked upon the development of its new Learning and Teaching Strategy 2025, the focus of which would be the HWU Graduate 2025, with *Employability* being a key strand within the HWU Curriculum 2025;
- discussions with a selection of employers as part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy consultation had highlighted their priorities in terms of key graduate attributes and qualities'
- the former Head of the Careers Service left the University in summer 2017, providing the Careers Services with the opportunity to review its approach to managing the service while taking the time to consider its future structure and provision;
- the Careers Services was due to move from its current location into a new, co-located student services area at the Edinburgh Campus.

The outcomes of the review are intended to support the transformation of the Careers Service into a modern, global service which is truly integrated across all campus locations. The Careers Centre, as it will be known, will have a much greater focus on internships, employability and supporting the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Actions:

The University Committee for Quality and Standards is invited to **NOTE:**

1. the report;
2. that the review is making significant progress and that an action plan will be developed for implementation during 2018/2019.

Actions following Committee consideration

1. An action plan will be developed and implemented. The action plan will be shared with the Committee.
2. The effectiveness of the plan's implementation and the quality of the overall provision will be assessed at a one-year follow-up review in 2019.

Review of the Careers Advisory Service – Scale and Scope

Professor R. Craik

Provost Emeritus

July 2018

Introduction

Over the past few years, there have been a number of changes across the university and it is timely to review the scope of Careers Advisory Service to ensure that it fully meets the changing needs of the University and its students.

The key changes within the university which have driven this review are

1. A growing number of students are transferring between campuses and need advice on employment in one country whilst studying in another. This requires better coordination across campuses and mechanisms for students in one country to engage with employers in another.
2. Several programmes in Malaysia (most notably Engineering Programmes) have a mandatory internship that students must complete to graduate. This requires a different focus for the careers service in Malaysia and has an implication for resources.
3. The physical location of the Careers Service in Edinburgh is moving to the main hub of the university. This location has a higher profile and there is an expectation of higher throughput of students and higher demand from students. New IT systems are being implemented that will provide better data for staff. Therefore, new working practices will be required.

At the same time, it is appropriate to review the quality of the service to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. In particular, it is 10 years since the long term strategy of having a partnership between Schools and Careers Staff to deliver support to all students was implemented and it is timely to review the effectiveness of that partnership and the extent to which the objectives have been achieved.

This report proposes a broadening of the scope of the Careers Service to include responsibility for some activities that are not currently undertaken. In some cases, this includes activities that are new to the University whilst, in other cases, there are existing activities that need to be reviewed and developed.

This interim report focuses on the scale and scope of the Careers Service. The next stage is to define the scope of the service and to develop a strategic and operational plan.

Methodology

The Careers Service in Edinburgh has not had a formal head for almost a year. This has not affected operations and support for students and was not a contributory factor in determining the need for a review. However, the consequence is that there is not a single person who can take responsibility for leading this review on behalf of the staff and so a more consensual approach has been taken. This has extended the time taken for the review process.

The review has been undertaken in several stages.

The first stage was to meet with all Edinburgh based staff to understand what they provide as a service and to receive some background information. This also identified what Careers Staff perceive as the key issues faced by them. This group of staff work closely with the Careers person at SBC and directly support students in Orkney and so have a detailed knowledge of the practice in the UK.

There were also discussions with some Schools to identify key areas for review. Schools did not identify any particular issues that needed to be addressed though differences in practice and level of support were identified.

The second stage was to meet with senior staff from Malaysia and Dubai to understand the service provided on their campuses and the gaps in service. Following these discussions, there was a formal visit to Malaysia and Dubai to meet with staff delivering careers advice, and in Dubai, to meet with the student president.

The visit to Malaysia included a visit to Taylors University. This is the top ranked university for Careers Advice in Malaysia and provided an excellent example of what is appropriate in Malaysia. There was also a visit to a 3rd party provider of Careers Support for students. Such a service could complement the University service as, for example, a university is not allowed to have representatives from Brewing companies (and some other companies) on campus in Malaysia.

The final stage was an extensive discussion with Careers staff based in Edinburgh to provide feedback on the findings to date, to sense check the issues that were arising and to discuss solutions.

Lessons from the visit to Taylors University

Taylors University in Malaysia has won the top awards for its Careers Service and so a visit was organised for staff from the Malaysia Campus.

Taylors has about 10,000 students (similar to HWU) and 13 staff and so is similar in size and scale. Taylors has more staff than HWU (HWU has about 9 staff across the group) but Taylors has 5 staff dedicated to finding mandatory internships for every student which is a service HWU does not provide.

The key lessons learned and areas of good practice that were identified are

1. Decision-making must be data driven. Taylors could track every student and identify every student who needed to be followed up. They were active in driving up employment rates. In contrast, HWU do not do any tracking and are more passive.
2. Staff development is important both for Careers Staff and for other staff who will be supporting students (academic and professional services). This ensures an integrated service. HWU has no such programme even though the HWU strategy is for the Careers Service and Schools to work in partnership to deliver employment skills to students.
3. Every student has a "Student Passport" (either on paper or a phone app) that sets out what the student should be doing in each year of study and what they have achieved. This puts the responsibility on the student for action. If a student does not achieve these expectations then there is staff intervention. The Edinburgh campus has a student charter but it does not set out expected student achievements nor is there any other record of what students achieve.
4. The university has a library of video clips (mainly publicly available YouTube videos) that provide much of the basic information required by students.

Scope of the Careers Service

The Careers Services describes its mission as "to equip students with the skills they will need to be able to choose and implement their career choice." This narrow mission is associated with a set of activities to support students into employment.

It is suggested that this mission should be extended with a more detailed Role Profile that sets out the role in more detail. A draft suggestion is

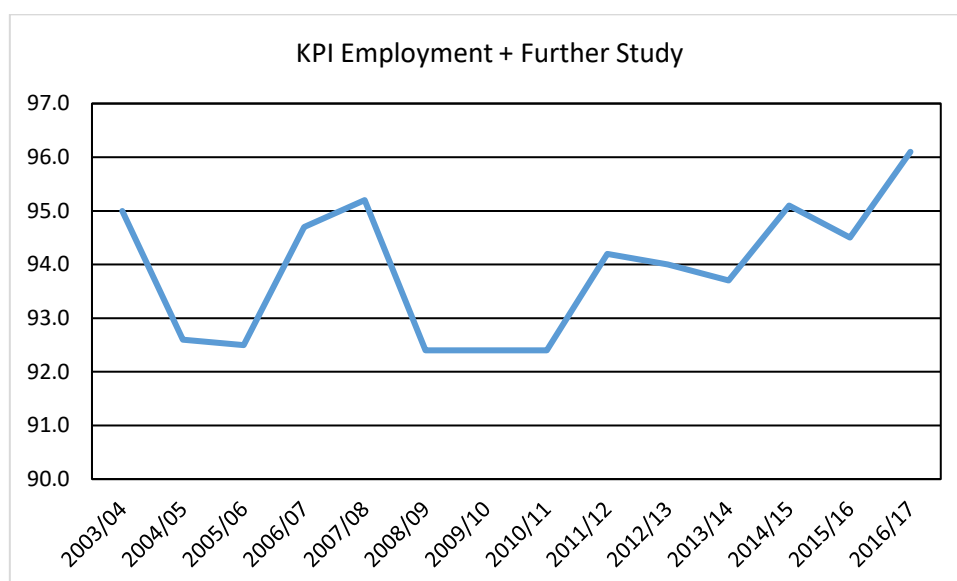
1. To provide, with Schools and through the curriculum, all students with the skills and knowledge to find appropriate employment and to make professional career choices.
2. To prepare students for employment through the provision of activities and events including CV review, practice interview, telephone interview, assessment centres. This should be provided for all students (UG, PGT, PGR) in all locations.
3. To support students to find internships during their studies and employment on the completion of their studies. Note there is an enhanced role where internships are a mandatory part of the programme.
4. To provide all international students and students who have transferred to another campus with an integrated service that will enable them to find employment in their home country
5. To manage a network of industry partners and employers, to provide them with the support and advice that they require and to manage systems and events to link employers and students
6. To collect and analyse data in order to identify the most effective way of delivering the service and to measure its effectiveness
7. To provide, either directly or in partnership with others, training and development for careers staff and other staff

The changes in the role of the Careers Service reflect a step along the way from a passive view, that the Careers Service provides advice to students who asked for it, to a more active role, where they share the responsibility for finding students placements, internships and employment.

This Role Profile is likely to be extended and refined following consultation with Careers staff, Schools and others.

Performance Indicators

Currently the Key Performance Indicators used to judge performance is “the number of undergraduate students in employment and further study after 6 months”. There is a second indicator of the percentage of undergraduate students in graduate level employment. The KISS data set also reports on starting salaries.



The results for 2016-7 looks good compared to previous years and is an indication that the basic Careers Service is providing a good service. However, there is no data available for Dubai or Malaysia campuses.

Other than this KPI, there was little evidence of any campus using data to inform decisions such as to identify programmes with poor employment rates, to review the impact of changes in delivery or even to assess the success of events and activities.

A new IT system is being implemented and the operational plans developed by Careers Staff should include information on how data will be used to inform decision making.

Points to be considered when developing a Strategic Plan and Action Plan

Skills development

In the early 2000's poor levels of graduate employment were identified by the Learning and Teaching Board as a strategic issue and a new strategy was developed (reported as a Case Study in ELIR in 2006). The focus was on preparation of students for employment and a professional career through activities that were embedded in the curriculum. Preparation for employment was embedded in the curriculum to ensure that every students received this support irrespective of discipline or location (including students studying with partners institutions). Delivery of these skills was by academic staff and Careers Staff working together in partnership.

The early discussions with Schools and UK Careers staff identified that different approaches are taken in different schools. The visit to Dubai and Malaysia highlighted that some academic staff were not aware or their role in supporting students for employment. The effectiveness of this partnership arrangement needs to be reviewed across schools and campuses to ensure that good practice is identified, gaps are filled and staff fully prepared.

There is currently no document setting out (either by programme, school or university) what the skills and level of attainment are expected for each level of study. Without such a document as a reference, and some method of measuring the performance of the achievements of students, there cannot be an assessment about whether or not the activities being undertaken are effective.

It is proposed that the Careers Service working with Schools should develop a single University wide set of minimum expectations for approval by UCLT.

Working practices across campuses

There are different working practices on each campus. The Riccarton campus has the largest number of staff (and students) and the careers service is a largely self-contained unit. In contrast, the staff in Malaysia and Dubai work within a wider student services team. In those campuses, many professional services staff will be involved in activities (such as employer events and careers fairs) and in turn the careers staff will be involved in open days, student activities etc.

There are clear advantages to better integration of the Careers Staff within the wider student support activities. On the Riccarton campus, the Careers Service will move to a central location on campus next to the student service centre and this will open up the opportunities for closer working. A newly appointed Deputy Registrar will be responsible for both Careers and Student Services and so will be key to achieving greater integration.

A debate that has been on-going at Riccarton has been the balance between staff providing one-to-one support for students or providing support to groups of students and between having discipline

specific support or support from any generic advisor. One-to-one support and discipline specific support are claimed by the professional staff to be better. However, the number of students who can receive advice is much higher if students meet as a group of 4 or 5 students at a time and the response is faster if every advisor can provide an answer to a student.

The system that has evolved provides a very good service to a few students and provides a means of staff managing their workload.

A challenge for the Edinburgh staff is to develop an operational system that will allow staff to engage in the full range of activities set out in the Role Profile whilst still providing an effective service to students at a time when demand is likely to grow. Part of the solution (currently being implemented) is to use the new IT system to manage bookings and to use the portal to provide on-line answers to common questions. This will require a review of the roles of individual staff within the global team.

In Dubai and Malaysia, there are other challenges including a lack of connection to the UK (which controls some resources and general policies), a lack of resources to deliver campus specific events, activities and student support. The approach of working collaboratively with other staff in student services provides a partial solution but, as student numbers grow, so additional resources will be required outside the Edinburgh campus.

A distinctive feature of the University is the number of students who move between campuses whilst studying on a particular programme. It is expected that this will grow to 50% of undergraduates over the next few years. These students currently receive generic support from the local Careers Service but cannot easily access the country specific advice that they would receive in their home campus. The new facilities in Edinburgh will facilitate better support for students.

The operational plans for the global Careers Service will need to look at how staff from across many locations can work together to provide an integrated service for students.

Employer engagement

One of the roles of the Careers Service is to link with employers. In Edinburgh, there is a dedicated member of staff for this role whereas in other campuses the same person engages with employers and supports students.

A particular challenge for Malaysia is the need to find employers who will provide internships for students and there are times of year when this is the key focus of staff.

Although Dubai students do not have mandatory internships, there is a high expectation from students that the university will provide support for students making the summer a busy period for engagement with students. In practice staff in all campuses support students gaining both internships and employment.

Staff training

One of the features of Taylors University was the emphasis placed on training and staff development both for the specialist Careers Advisors but also for School staff (Academic or Professional Services) who are often the first point of contact for students. As with HWU there is a trend of appointing staff upon completion of a PhD (or in the UK a Post Doc) so that many academic staff have no experience of industry practice or needs.

HWU has no such staff development scheme and it is not clear how School staff know what is expected.

Next steps

By the end of August, the Careers Staff in Edinburgh will hold a series of planning meetings with the Provost Emeritus to develop strategic plans that meet the changing needs of the University and build on the experience of the staff. These meeting will include contributions from other campuses and if appropriate other professional services or schools.

The areas identified for consideration are listed below but this is expected to grow as discussions move forward.

1. A proposal for how the Careers Service will be organised so as to fulfil the role set out above taking into account the changes as Edinburgh staff move to new premises.
2. A proposal for increasing the effectiveness of inter-campus operations and for providing support to students studying on another campus. Note this has been partially anticipated by staff.
3. A plan for staff development on all campuses to ensure that all Careers staff and other staff involved in providing skill development and support to students are properly prepared.
4. A statement (to be approved eventually by UCLT) setting out the threshold level of expectations for skill development in students by academic level. This should be accompanied by a proposal on how students will be assessed and how achievements will be recorded and reported.
5. A review of the effectiveness of the partnership with schools for delivering the necessary skills to all students. This will include an assessment of every undergraduate programme.
6. A review of the annual list of events, activities and consultations (all campuses) together with an estimate of the number of students who participate in each. This will provide a base number against which future performance will be measured.
7. Plans for a globally integrated approach to managing employers
8. A proposal for Performance Indicators

The review will include consideration of the support provided to PGT and PGR students.

An output from this process will be a more clearly defined Role Profile for the Careers Service and an action plan.

The effectiveness of the implementation of this plan and the quality of the overall provision will be assessed at a 1 year follow-up review in 2019.

Update on Progress to QSC Following the Review of the Careers Advisory Service by Professor R. Craik, Provost Emeritus, July 2018

During academic year 2017/18, the Careers Services underwent an Academic-Related Review. In preference to a standard review event, a more longitudinal review was undertaken by the former Provost of the University's Malaysia Campus. At the QSC meeting on 26th September 2018 the Committee received an interim report from the Deputy Registrar, and a further update is provided for the meeting on Wednesday 20th March 2019.

Interim Update

Progress on implementing the recommendations arising from Prof Craik's review have not progressed as planned. This has been mainly due to the delay in appointing a new Head of Careers Service. A job description has been developed, graded and a financial case has been made to the University's Vacancy Management Group, but approval is still pending.

This gap in leadership for careers activity has delayed the development of a Careers and Employability Strategy, but the following areas are progressing:

- Discussions between the Careers Service and Alumni Relations are underway to progress complementary objectives (e.g. Graduate Outcomes, promoting/supporting mentoring, internships and graduate-level opportunities).
- Inclusion of Careers registration questions into student enrolment process for September 2019.
- Engagement with Schools to support the development and implementation of the graduate attributes.
- Establishment of an Employer Engagement Committee.
- Development of Service Level Agreements, to be agreed with Schools

QSC should also note that the launch of the Registry Services Building our Commonality programme, in the spring of 2019, will also have an impact on the future development of the Careers Service.

The Deputy Registrar will be in attendance at the QSC meeting on 20th March 2019 to address any further questions.

Campbell Powrie
Deputy Registrar & Head of Student Services
13th March 2019