

Inspirational session 16

Session's theme: Guidance and counseling

Paper number: 20

Presenters: Dr Louise Walker

Presenters' Organisation: University of Manchester

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Calculating Careers- helping first years develop interview skills

Abstract:

In the current higher educational climate, the need to provide undergraduates with opportunities to develop career awareness is becoming increasingly important. In the UK, the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey gives the % of graduates who are in work or full time education six months after graduating. These figures are made available to applicants through universities promotional material and UCAS, the organisation that manages undergraduate admissions in the UK. Feedback from graduate employers suggests that some students, although well qualified, fail to be shortlisted because their CVs and application forms are poorly constructed. Those students who reach the interview stage may also find they are less able to articulate their skills than students from other disciplines.

In mathematics, most students enter an undergraduate programme with little idea where their education will lead them. It is important that students address their career planning at an early stage in their undergraduate programme, ideally during their first year. To this end the School of Mathematics at the University of Manchester has developed a series of careers awareness initiatives, aimed specifically at maths students, under the banner Calculating Careers . Although they are aimed at maths students, the schemes are transferable to any discipline.

In this presentation I will outline the following Calculating Careers initiatives and discuss their evaluation: "Our annual Calculating Careers fair where students can talk to representatives from graduate employers, many of whom are alumni. "A student led employability audit of our undergraduate programmes, with input from industrial contacts and careers advisors. "An interview scheme in which first year students apply for mock internship posts and are shortlisted and interviewed by higher year students, with detailed feedback provided at all stages.

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Session's theme: Guidance and counseling

Paper number: 35

Presenters: Joanna Y Ye, Hamieda Begum

Presenters' Organisation: University of Leeds

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Nurturing Talent - Mentoring that Makes a Difference

Abstract:

At Leeds University Business School we have launched the Nurturing Talent Mentor Scheme aimed at enhancing first year students employability, increasing confidence and developing key skills. We have recruited over 70 professionals from a range of industries to mentor our students on a one to one basis. A mentor can help by passing on their knowledge, skills and experience that will guide and support the student. The scheme is particularly focused on students from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education who might not have access to professional networks through family and friends. Mentors will provide support and guidance on:

- Building confidence
- Enhancing students communication skills
- Insight into industry and career direction
- Interview techniques and CV tips
- Developing professional contacts
- Understanding the application and selection process for internships and placements

Students benefit from:

- Visiting mentor s workplace to gain an insight into the business environment
- Discussing career plans to get an unbiased, experienced view of next steps
- Networking with mentor´s colleagues to find out about alternative roles
- Accessing potential work shadowing or work experience opportunities
- Gaining a realistic knowledge of various career roles and developing a personal strategy for success
- Guidance on the interview and selection process

Constructive advice on how to demonstrate the skills that employers are looking for. The early evaluation results suggest that students are achieving positive changes and are becoming more confident and employable. An overwhelming number indicated that they have developed very good relationships with their mentor and have found the mentoring to be effective for their personal and professional development.