Employability for students

How to get the best from your Education course

Dr Julie Anderson

Dr Helena Mitchell

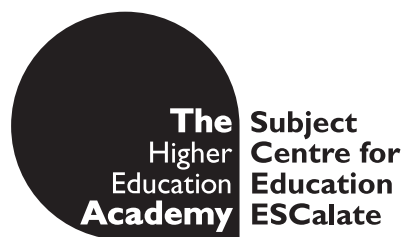## Published by

Employability - for students

How to get the best from your Education course

By Dr Julie Anderson
and Dr Helena Mitchell for the
ESCalate Employability project

The Higher Education Academy | **Subject Centre for Education ESCalate**

Acknowledgements:

Contents

Introduction

Congratulations on getting onto your course! You may be at the very start or much further on but wherever you are and however you think it is going, this booklet is **for you right now.**

The booklet is designed to stand alone and has most of the resources within it to enable you to follow the majority of the practical project activities enclosed. If you have access to the internet, you can access this booklet through www.escalate.ac.uk where you will find there are further weblinks to activities that you may find useful too.

So again, many congratulations for getting onto your course; it is no small achievement but however remote it seems right now, sooner or later you will leave your institution and probably want (or if not want, need!) to look for a job.

This isn't a publication aimed primarily at helping you write successful job applications or even to help you at interview; there are lots of excellent books already on the market for that and we provide a link to a new ESCalate online module to help with these issues too. This book is to help you think about how to get the maximum out of your time at college or university while you are **still on your course** so that you are the most **employable** candidate you can be when the time comes to get a job!

Could taking an hour or so to read and work through some of the practical projects in a booklet really help you? Yes, if you allow it to create in yourself a more reflective attitude towards your studies so that when you are in the lecture, seminar or tutorial, or perhaps doing groupwork, assignment writing or research, you are not only thinking about the subject content being taught but are increasingly aware of how the **process** of learning can help build or create transferable skills and experience – **employability currency** – to go alongside your new qualification.

ESCalate

This publication has arisen from an employability project within ESCalate, the Subject Centre for Education. The centre would be delighted to welcome you into free membership – see www.escalate.ac.uk for details. It will also set up a discussion forum or offer other further support if it is clear that there is a demand so if you think you would be interested, do email julie.anderson@bristol.ac.uk.

In the meantime, lets get on to what employability is all about.

Employability – what it is; what it is not.

Different employability definitions tend to reflect different viewpoints. For example, it has been suggested that the following definition could be viewed as labour market centric:

a set of achievements –- skills, understanding and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the community and the economy. (Yorke, 2004)

Another more recent definition, that it is

the motivation, skills and experience to add value in your choice of paid work and in your broader roles, for example in your family, social and community lives (Crust, 2006)

provides a somewhat different focus. What would your own definition be?

These are just two definitions – but as you will see when you come to the card sort later, they reflect what employability is in broad terms. One aim of this booklet is that it will help you to develop your own employability definition and profile.

In the following pages you will find comments and thoughts from students who worked with us on the main project. If you are reading this by yourself, these may provide something for you to use as a sounding board for your own perceptions and ideas around employability.

Employers

The project was in touch with some employers who completed a brief questionnaire. They noted that in terms of skills looked for in graduates the following were particularly important to them:

1.   Communication – both oral and written
2.   To work strategically and operationally
3.   Networking abilities
4.   Awareness of current issues in relevant fields
5.   Teamwork
6.   Potential ability to manage budgets

When asked to list in order of importance, the top skills wanted were **communication skills** and **team working.** These were seen as essential.

Also seen as important were good time management skills and the ability to critically appraise situations and data. Other skills noted as being valuable were effectiveness in problem solving, analytical ability and data analysis skills.

More recent data collected and discussed by the Biosciences Subject Centre fits the same pattern of employer response. Kay Wardle, managing director of a science recruitment company was able to give a science employer's perspective. She said that the three main requirements employers look for are:

■   A good degree in a relevant subject
■   Practical work experience
■   Transferable skills (communication, teamwork, initiative/problem solving, flexibility/adaptability, self-awareness, commitment and commercial awareness)

Further data from Biosciences split the skills and qualities most in demand into five main categories:

[1]   Self-reliance skills [self-promotion, self-awareness, networking];

[2]   People skills [team-working, communication, leadership];

[3]   General skills [problem-solving, entrepreneurial, numeracy, commitment];

[4]   Specialist skills [specific occupational skills, technical skills] and

[5]   Commercial awareness.

(quoted in Blackford S et al, 2006).

There are further resources on their website: www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/issues/employability and www.prospects.ac.uk is a website providing further data on employer comments amongst other useful career and employability issues.

You may think that not all of the above may be immediately relevant but if you remember that education graduates go into an increasingly broad range of posts after their time at university or college, the above categories are useful reminders of what may be required by various employers as essential or desirable attributes.

Kay Wardle summed it up: "A good degree is not enough".

Background

For the ESCalate project, Dr Helena Mitchell and I talked to students on an Education course at a new university in England. We wanted to see what they knew about employability. They included mature students who had left school many years earlier.

We asked:
1. How has the employability project impacted on you?

Well, it really opened my mind up to things that I'd never even thought about because before it was just about the work, not about what was outside the work. It made me focus on which modules I'd want to do, because before I was just doing the modules without any thought where… is this going to be useful? But after that, when I thought again, I did look at the whole module structure completely differently; I looked more into the work for what I could gain, for where I want to go.
I look back and I think, yes, I have achieved quite a lot and I do have quite a lot of knowledge and having a focus group, it makes you realise in which direction you can use your best abilities.

So what had we done together to make the difference the students refer to? Mostly it came down to the fact that we had raised awareness about what an Education course can offer over and above mere subject knowledge. If there is little or no obvious work on employability issues being highlighted by the staff on your current course, this is something you can begin to consider for yourself alone or perhaps with a group of friends. Why not start by taking a coffee break and trying our edited questionnaire for yourselves? There are only eight questions, but it just starts the thinking process on this topic.

8

Questionnaire for students

1. Do you know what you would like to do after you graduate?

2. What did your school do to prepare you for leaving school,   i.e. careers talks, work experience?

3. Have you done any kind of work experience?

4. Are you planning to do any paid work during your degree?

5. Do you have a job now?

6. Draw on your own work experience or imagine…

   a. What makes a good work colleague?

   b. What makes a good work environment?

7. What do you expect to gain from your degree in terms of:

   a. Knowledge of current research in your field

   b. Presentation skills

   c. Team/group effective working

   d. Clear perspective on future employment

   e. Understanding of your own learning needs

8. Should a university degree prepare you for professional work afterwards,
   or should it be about personal development?

Having begun to think about what makes a good work colleague and what a student might expect to gain from a course in terms of question seven, a smaller number of the students met us and did a card sort.

Card Sorts

Card sorts are increasingly popular in higher and further education (HE/FE) and are amongst other things, designed to enable:

■ Focused reflection;
■ Focused discussion with peers on both divergent and similar views;
■ Prioritising of choices, modules etc as a result of reflection and discussion;

Perhaps most importantly, they have the capacity to raise awareness about aspects of employability which may not previously have been considered.
Other subject centres have created their own card sorts which are available through the Higher Education Academy and which you can do online. They can be accessed below:

■ Electronic Employability Card Sort for Students includes guidance for tutors (developed by the Higher Education Academy Bioscience Subject Centre for students) (www.bio.ltsn.ac.uk/issues/employability/CardSort/index.htm)

■ Electronic Employability Card Sort for Students includes guidance for tutors (developed by the Higher Education Academy Physical Sciences Subject Centre for students) (www.physsci.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/employability/notes.pdf)

In addition, Dr Peter Hawkins and the Windmills programme which may be found online at www.windmillsprogramme.com have card sorts and other career/employability resources.

Our project students used a card sort developed by the Generic Centre and ESECT (Enhancing Student Employability Skills Co-ordination Team). The students looked at the forty statements that are reproduced in the table overleaf and sorted them into piles depending on how they felt about each statement.

Why not have a go yourself? The trick is not to ponder too long but go with your immediate response. Then, read on to see how your replies compare with those of the students' survey from the project.

Employability is…a card sort for you to try

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither disagree/ agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
For undergraduates for all ages	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Graduates getting jobs in areas cognate* to their degree specialism (* relevant or associated)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The responsibility of the individual student	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Skills for life	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
About creating a learning environment which develops student employment related attributes	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Compensating for disadvantage	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
What employers want	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A distraction from the academic agenda	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
About equality of opportunity	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Not related to the academic process	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
About academics understanding how to help their students become employable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
About helping students recognise and develop their strengths and weaknesses	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
About meeting the economic requirements of society	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Encouraging involvement in student clubs and societies	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Part of the contract between the HEI (higher education institution) and the student	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Extra curricula activity	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
About initiating CPD (continuing professional development) activity with students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither disagree/ agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Getting a work placement	O	O	O	O	O
Doing a vocational course	O	O	O	O	O
Covering key skills	O	O	O	O	O
The latest fad	O	O	O	O	O
Creating a learning environment which enhances students' skills	O	O	O	O	O
Having the right skills for the market place	O	O	O	O	O
Having work experience	O	O	O	O	O
About citizenship	O	O	O	O	O
Meeting standards set by professional bodies	O	O	O	O	O
What the paying customers expect	O	O	O	O	O
The involvement of many groups in the curriculum	O	O	O	O	O
Learning about the world of work	O	O	O	O	O
Benefiting from part time and casual and voluntary jobs	O	O	O	O	O
Keeping the graduate market buoyant	O	O	O	O	O
A challenge to the traditional concepts of higher education	O	O	O	O	O
The job of the college or university	O	O	O	O	O
Social engineering	O	O	O	O	O
Taking the right course at the right institution	O	O	O	O	O
The responsibility of the students union	O	O	O	O	O
Addressing the agenda of the current government	O	O	O	O	O
The responsibility of the careers service	O	O	O	O	O

Project student replies from the card sort

Statements that the students definitely agreed with, sometimes strongly, included the following.

Employability is:
- For undergraduates for all ages
- Skills for life
- About creating a learning environment which develops student employment related attributes
- What employers want
- About equality of opportunity
- About helping students recognise and develop their strengths and weaknesses
- About meeting the economic requirements of society, and
- Creating a learning environment which enhances student skills

Furthermore, the students broadly accepted that employability was:
- About initiating CPD activity with students
- About academics understanding how to help their students become employable
- Getting a work placement
- Covering key skills
- Having the right skills for the market place
- Having work experience
- Meeting standards set by professional bodies
- What the paying customers expect
- Learning about the world of work
- Benefiting from part time and casual and voluntary jobs

Neutral statements

Things that the students were generally ambivalent about, stating that they neither disagreed or agreed, were that employability was about:
- Keeping the graduate market buoyant
- A challenge to the traditional concepts of HE
- The job of the HEI
- About encouraging involvement in student clubs and societies and
- 'Social engineering'

Statements the students disagreed with

Statements provoking strong disagreement were the following:
- Employability is the responsibility of the students union
- The responsibility of the careers service
- For the less capable students

They also disagreed or were neutral about statements defining employability as compensating for disadvantage, the latest fad and not related to the academic process.

Broad range of responses – from strongly agree to disagree were those that said employability is:
- The responsibility of the individual student
- About doing a vocational course
- About citizenship
- Addressing the agenda of the current government

How do these compare with your own responses?
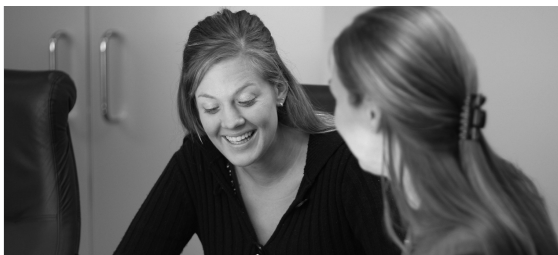
Conversations and separate focus group discussion

Helena and I talked with the students on different occasions. One, with Helena was videoed (and may be seen on the ESCalate website). For this booklet, these different conversations have been combined into the edited comments below. They are included here because they may reflect some of your own thoughts and therefore be useful but if it is not of interest, please move on to the next section.

One conversation was about how the students came to be on their course and one commented on how she feared she'd be 'found out':

> …*so when I applied for it* (the course) *just to see if I could get there, and I got in it was just a huge shock that I had been accepted…and waiting to actually come here I was thinking somebody would send me a letter saying look you are a fraud…but they didn't…it's a real amazing eye-opening thing because I didn't actually think I would be intelligent enough to come here, because of my background…*

Talking on another occasion about their conceptions of employability we quickly saw that what was said in the focus group discussion did not always coincide with what had been identified in the card sort. In fact there was some confusion about what was implied by some of the statements in the card sort – perhaps you found this yourself – as well as an admission that in general employability within the course and career planning through the Careers service was far from a priority.

In the following, which outlines some more of the main conversation in the focus group, **I** *is used for interviewer and* **S** *for student respondent.*

I. What do you consider a generic employability skill? That you will take into any sort of role you get into?

S. I think quite a few transferable skills I have got here (the university), definitely.

I. Could you name, to be more specific, something you feel you've got now that you perhaps didn't have when you started with the course?

S. Patience (and) time management.

The students commented on the expansion of higher education leading to more opportunities.

S.   We were talking to a first year (student) the other day and talking to her about her modules and we ended up talking about how we got here and she was saying the same thing…she was sure somebody was going to come up to her and say look we've made a real big mistake and you really shouldn't be here.

The use of PDP (Personal Development Planning - something we come onto further later) should also help you as students to take control of your own learning and to identify your goals beyond successfully gaining credit from individual modules. The comments above may also indicate an awareness (conscious or otherwise) that factors leading to success in work and life include those which may be described as 'non-cognitive' (Knight,2003), including attributes such as self-esteem, behaviour and peer relations and this again we come to later.

Issues about culture continued to surface during the focus group conversations, with all students stating that, when they were younger, higher education had never seemed an option for them. For their children however, it was different.

S.   My five year old she told me the other day she was going to University.

Issues about future careers were then pursued where one respondent gave the following reply:

S.   I'm just constantly changing my mind depending on which module I'm doing. And I'm just constantly changing which career I'm going to go for.

Perhaps you feel the same? We are not suggesting that it matters to the point that you should worry – but that you perhaps keep as many options as possible open by developing and honing a broad range of skills and attributes which will help you be employable whatever you eventually choose to do.

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Project Conclusions

Working with the students in the project demonstrated that employability is as much about helping each other understand and promote the skills you already have as helping support the learning of additional skills, experience and abilities. This is shown perhaps most clearly through the following student quotes:

One of the first things that you think is going to happen when you come to university is that you will become a more critical thinker…and you think what on earth does that mean… and I find to my surprise that I am…and one of the other things that I realise is what an organised person I am.

This term, I've just started doing a management course…I seem to have taken to it. I am an organiser, but I would never have realised it without doing this course.

Employability module

ESCalate has joined with the Physical Sciences Subject Centre to develop an employability module from work originally done with the Careers service at the University of Hull.

It is an interactive course with personal study dimensions which aims to be flexible, accessible and engaging.

Your university or college may have downloaded the module for use on campus through your Virtual

Learning Environment (VLE) system. We also provide a stand alone version available through the ESCalate website student pages.

The module in detail
Overall, the module is designed to be:
- A tool to encourage engagement with employability issues.
- A tool to enhance preparedness for further study or work upon graduation.
- Ideally, a tool that can enhance the career prospects of education undergraduates.
- A tool that can be refined on the basis of evaluation: both individual feedback and feedback arising from focus groups.

The module is made up of 14 sections. These include:

Section 1– Where are you now?
Tasks to assess where you are in relation to choosing your next step after graduation.

Section 2 – Where do you want to be?
Information on employment, postgraduate courses and other options.

Section 3 – Getting the balance right
Information and advice about aspects of jobs that can impact on life outside of work.

Section 4 – Skills audit
Exercises to encourage you to discover where your skills and motivations lie.

Section 5 – Skills development
Work on improving presentation skills; advice on how to go about improving other skills.

Section 6 – Searching for opportunities
Information on where to look to find information about job vacancies or postgraduate courses or work placements.

Section 7 – Building up your contacts
Information about who you can get in touch with in order to find out more about your chosen career, from your careers adviser to people already doing the job that you are interested in.

Section 8 – Doing your research
Information that you need to find out about an employer or course and how to obtain this.

Section 9 – Making applications
Different styles of CVs and application forms and receive advice on how to sell your skills effectively. There is an activity to create two styles of CV and the opportunity to practice filling in an online application form

Section 10 – Interviews
Advice about the interview process along with some videos of sample interviews.

Section 13 – Application outcomes
Information and advice for both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

Section 14 – Where to go from here
Information about how to organise the final year in order to be ready for the next step upon graduation.

The module may be used in part or as a whole but however you engage with it, we would be pleased to hear any comments you have as we will regularly review the content to keep it up to date and relevant.

Self Efficacy

Another means of helping you engage with issues surrounding your employability is through self-efficacy tools. These provide an indication of the extent to which you believe that you 'can make a difference' in situations that confront you in higher education and life overall.
The first tool of this sort available is one designed for ESECT by Professors Peter Knight and Mantz Yorke. It is a questionnaire to help reflection on self-efficacy and is described with an edited version below.

Self-efficacy questionnaire
A component of employability is self-belief that one can affect situations through one's actions. Evidence from pilot work indicated that there are a number of students whose self-efficacy could be enhanced. The edited/adapted self-efficacy questionnaire (SEQ) below can be used as an individually-focused activity. You could also use it as a group activity with fellow students. The SEQ does not provide a 'score' in the manner of an IQ test but the questionnaire should help you in developing your self-knowledge, especially if you can discuss the outcomes with friends or tutors. Do visit the web page www.heacademy.ac.uk/2313.htm for further information.

The Questionnaire

Against each statement, circle the number that most closely relates to your response

Item		Agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Disagree
1.	The academic tasks I am set motivate me to put in quite a lot of effort.	1	2	3	4
2.	In life in general, I am stimulated by the challenge of difficult problems.	1	2	3	4
3.	Chance will probably be influential in what I achieve in employment.	1	2	3	4
4.	The amount of work I put into my studies is reflected in my grades.	1	2	3	4
5.	No matter what kind of person someone is, it is always possible for them to change significantly.	1	2	3	4
6.	I don't like situations in which I, rather than others, am responsible for what happens.	1	2	3	4
7.	I see employment as a good opportunity to learn new things.	1	2	3	4
8.	I don't let other people determine the way I tackle what I do outside higher education.	1	2	3	4
9.	I have a fair amount of freedom as regards the way in which I tackle my academic work.	1	2	3	4
10.	The tasks that people outside higher education expect me to undertake usually energise me to work hard at them.	1	2	3	4
11.	I find that academic work doesn't stretch me intellectually.	1	2	3	4
12.	Luck doesn't play much of a part in what I achieve academically.	1	2	3	4
13.	In the things I do outside higher education, I find that there is not much of a connection between what I achieve and the effort I put in.	1	2	3	4
14.	An individual can't change their intelligence by much.	1	2	3	4
15.	As a student, I like learning situations in which I, rather than the teaching staff, can shape the work to be done.	1	2	3	4
16.	Higher education doesn't give me much of an opportunity to develop new skills.	1	2	3	4
17.	My academic work is determined by what the teaching staff tell me I ought to do.	1	2	3	4
18.	Outside higher education, I have a fair bit of scope to influence the way in which tasks are tackled.	1	2	3	4

18

19. What has been developed in you, **outside the education system**, that will probably assist your employment chances in the *graduate* labour market? Please list up to three things.

20. **(First year students only)** What do you hope your undergraduate programme **will do** to support your employability in a graduate job? Please list up to three things.

21. **(Students in 2nd and subsequent years only)** What, if anything, has your undergraduate programme **already done** to help you to become an employable graduate? Please list up to three things.

Reflect on your answers and try to return to them from time to time to see what has changed.

Personal Development Planning

PDP was mentioned earlier in this booklet and we return to it now because it is another potentially valuable tool in terms of employability. The acronym, PDP, is referred to as Performance Development Planning by some which you may find useful to keep in mind too!

ESCalate commissioned Janet Strivens, from University of Liverpool and Senior Associate Director, Centre for Recording Achievement[1] to write about the latest PDP developments.

Janet told us that it had been suggested that Progress Files (a term that many of you will know from your school days) had recently been introduced in schools to replace the National Record of Achievement and were to be developed in Higher Education. The idea is that they will consist of two elements:

- A transcript recording student achievement;
- And a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development

A definition of PDP which has become equally widely accepted is
"a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual:

- To reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and
- To plan for their personal, educational and career development".

Institutions were to aim to have transcripts available for students for the academic session 2002–3 and to have provided PDP opportunities for all students by 2005–6. Many institutions have chosen to embed the PDP process into the curriculum through designated credit-bearing modules. Other institutions see PDP as an overarching entitlement best delivered through a tutorial or mentoring system.

The CRA noted that HEI staff saw the PDP initiative as being essentially about supporting the development of the self-identity of the learner. The model of PDP which received widespread support from practitioners was as a process of:

- Thinking ahead and planning, using both critical rational thinking and imagination
- Doing something and being more aware of what is being done
- Recording these observations and perceptions
- Reviewing/reflecting on actions and their effects
- Evaluating and making judgements about self and the effects of own actions
- Engaging in conversation with a teacher/tutor and/or peers in order to discuss/challenge experiences, perceptions and judgements
- Using this personal knowledge as a resource to inform future actions

(Please see www.escalate.ac.uk/2619 for Janet's full report of which the above is an edited version).

Hopefully your institution will have PDP support available for you and this is a valuable way of reflecting and recording employability issues that are personal to yourself and your own development. If nothing seems to be available, why not ask?

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[1] *CRA is an educational charity originally established – as a project – in 1991 whose purpose is 'to promote awareness and understanding of recording achievement processes as an important element in improving learning and progression throughout the world of education, training and employment'*

The University of Wolverhampton is one institution that has developed an online e-portfolio (www.pebblepad.co.uk) that you may like to look at for ideas and further information. The ESCalate Summer 2006 Newsletter also has an article about its use written by students with their tutor Julie Hughes (www.escalate.ac.uk/2610) with a further article planned in the Autumn.

Student profiles

What can be helpful when thinking about your PDP or employability is what your course could typically be equipping you for. A group was commissioned to create student profiles to present just this information. Peter Forbes headed up the work which suggested that for example, a student in Education Studies is likely to graduate with the ability to firstly manage their careers and also :

- Understand theoretical knowledge and research evidence about the processes of learning, including some of the key paradigms and their impact on educational practices.
- Understand aspects of cultural and linguistic differences and societies, politics and education policies, economics, geographical and historical features of societies and contexts, and moral, religious and philosophical underpinnings and their effects on learning.
- Understand their own and other education systems, and the underpinning value systems.
- Understand the complex interactions between education and its contexts, and relationships with other disciplines and professions.

- Analyse complex situations concerning human learning and development in particular contexts, including their own learning.
- Accommodate new ideas concerning globalisation relating to education systems and issues such as social justice, sustainable development, peace education, social inclusion and the knowledge economy.
- Provide well argued conclusions relating to these main global issues.
- Reflect on their own value systems, development and practices.
- Question concepts and theories encountered in their studies.
- Communicate and present oral and written arguments.
- Use Information and Communication Technology.
- Interpret and present relevant numerical information.
- Work with others, as a result of the development of interpersonal skills, to demonstrate the capacity to plan, to share goals, and work as a member of a team.
- Improve their own learning and performance, including the development of study and research skills, information retrieval, and a capacity to plan and manage learning, and to reflect on their own learning.

Education Studies is concerned with understanding how people develop and learn throughout their lives. It facilitates a study of the nature of knowledge, and a critical engagement with a variety of perspectives, and ways of knowing and understanding, drawn from a range of appropriate disciplines. There is diversity in Education Studies degree courses but all involve the intellectually rigorous study of educational processes, systems and approaches, and the cultural, societal, political and historical contexts within which they are embedded.

As a graduate in Education Studies you will be able to participate effectively in a number of constantly changing discourses around values and personal and social engagement, and how these relate to communities and societies.

Education Studies provides an academic foundation for practitioners in formal and informal contexts and phases of education, and provides a framework for understanding aspects of human development. These contexts and phases encompass a diverse range of people including community workers, education administrators, health workers, human resource managers, those who care for and educate children of all ages, librarians and information management professionals and other professional educators.

The majority of education graduates enter teaching, whether directly after their degree or following a few years' experience in other jobs. Jobs providing support for children, young people and adults are also popular options. Examples include advice worker, careers adviser, counsellor, education administrator, lecturer, learning mentor, social worker, training and development manager and youth worker.

Conclusions

You may feel surprised at the range of skills and abilities suggested by the above.

The project Helena and I undertook and outlined earlier in this booklet certainly suggested that on the whole students undersell themselves and are too modest!

We hope that this publication will encourage you to think more about what you have in terms of skills and abilities and what your course may be equipping you for. The Education studies profile contains many elements that will be common to other education courses and should help you reflect on your own studies in those terms. The online module will also help as will the various activities within this booklet and suggested for access through the web addresses.

We would strongly encourage you to start thinking about this as early as possible, for:

Feedback from graduates…indicates that they fail to engage with Careers issues early enough in their academic programmes. This probably limits their use of opportunities for personal and skills development, may restrict their vision of the career opportunities available and means that they don't give sufficient time to how to communicate their skills and aptitudes to prospective employers.' (Cooper and Froud, 2003)

– but better late than never and if we can help further, do get in touch!

References and Bibliography

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Crust, Glen. (2006) www.bestvalueHE.org.uk See website for details.

The Centre for Recording Achievement: www.recordingachievement.org

Yorke Mantz, *Employability in Higher Education: what it is - what it is not,* HE Academy/ESECT 2004 - see HEA website for details (www.heacademy.ac.uk)

Ward, Strivens and Jackson (2005) *Progress files: are we achieving our goal?* at: www.recordingachievement.org/downloads/PFWorkingPaper.pdf

Useful websites:

Our own ESCalate site is www.escalate.ac.uk
plus
www.windmillsprogramme.com
and
www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/issues/employability
and
www.prospects.ac.uk all have excellent employability resources.

In addition, the Higher Education Academy has an employability resources page. Much of the content is designed for staff tutors but may be of interest to you as students too. For example, the Self efficacy tools may be found there.

The page may be accessed at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/employability.asp

ESCalate @ Bristol

We have a continuing policy of responding to consultation and advice. We invite you to participate in shaping ESCalate's future direction and activity.

please contact us at:
ESCalate
University of Bristol
Graduate School of Education
35 Berkeley Square
Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1JA UK

Tel: +44 (0)117 331 4291
Fax: +44 (0)117 925 1537
Email: heacademy-escalate@bristol.ac.uk

We are

Dr Tony Brown: Director
Dr Julie Anderson: Academic Co-ordinator
Liz Hankinson: Administration and Finance
Teresa Nurser: Projects and Publicity
Jane Tuffill: Information and Design

ESCalate @ St Martin's

Centre for the Development
of Learning and Teaching
St Martin's College, Lancaster
LA1 3JD UK
Tel: +44 (0)1524 384232
Email: escalate@ucsm.ac.uk

ESCalate @ Stirling

University of Stirling
DAICE, Institute of Education
Airthrey Castle, Stirling
FK9 4LA UK
Tel: +44 (0)1786 467942/49
Email: escalate@stir.ac.uk

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