



University of Salford
A Greater Manchester University

'Engaging with Employers: getting the people right'

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Background

- Ongoing and future development within workplace learning and employer engagement activities will require staff with different sets of skills, knowledge and understanding.
- This applies not only to staff within the HE sector in being able to communicate more effectively with employers but also staff within the workplace who together with HE colleagues will be responsible for the development, approval, delivery and assessment of these programmes.
- This will also link closely with the requirements for quality assurance and enhancement processes and procedures in the workplace, particularly in relation to mentorship and supervision of learners.



Aim

- To provide support and development opportunities for staff within HE engaged in the delivery and assessment of workplace learning.



Issues

- The University recognised importance of being pro-active and adaptable in response to emerging internal and external developments and demands
- Need to provide a coherent and systematic framework of development which incorporates key changes to meet the needs of both the organisation as whole and individual employees.
- The ongoing and future developments within workplace learning and employer engagement will require staff with a range of knowledge and skills to ensure effective delivery of the entire business processes involved
- Including the adaptations and approaches required for the development, approval, delivery and assessment of these types of programmes.



Activities

Developed and delivered a programme of staff development in key areas of:

- 1. Working the curriculum** – for staff involved in design, delivery and assessment of work based learning for employers, including staff with responsibility for QA and the approval process
- 2. Engaging with employers** – enhancing understanding of the market, making successful contact with employers and developing strong customer relationships with businesses
- 3. Costing Employer Engagement**
- 4. CRM – Business processes and system application**



Why Staff Development as an Enabler?

- Staff our most important asset
- Improves performance
- Enhances delivery



Key Challenges

- Creating interest and support
- Introducing new ideas and concepts
- Developing a programme of bringing out the best in those colleagues with experience whilst creating a safe environment for those with little experience in this area
- Getting over the 'we know how to do it – why should we attend' and/or the 'it's not relevant for my role' barrier



Our Approach

- Customer Focused
- Practical & Relevant
- Celebrated our existing best practice
- SD Programme vehicle to promote EE internally and change attitudes



Our Solution

- Programme of 6 linked sessions, focus on 2 areas:
 - i. Working the Curriculum
 - ii. Engaging with Employers
- Delivered face to face in half-day sessions
 - Open to all staff
- Creation of supporting learning materials
- Development of online materials



Key Benefits

- Improved confidence & capability for staff
- Platform to promote employer engagement and our new work-based learning framework
- Enabled communities of best practice
- Key mechanism for changing culture!



Impact & Evaluation

Feedback was extremely positive with participants recognising both the relevance of workshop content and the quality of delivery:

Initial evaluation of the programme demonstrated a high level of satisfaction (average 80%) with the content, format and delivery of the workshops.

"The workshop [was] an excellent balance of effective group activities and interesting anecdotes/experience from the workshop leaders. It has given me lots of food for thought."



Impact & Evaluation

Across all the workshops, the evaluation indicated that 90% of respondents stated that the workshops would make a positive difference to the way they approached employer engagement.

"More confidence on issues to consider...early on in the development process." "Given me more confidence when speaking to academics in the faculty planning new programmes..."



Lessons Learnt

- Awareness of the growing importance of EE/WBL and most want to address this and learn new skills to help them develop their careers
- Staff Development in this area needs to address the practical needs of staff to enable them to 'better do their job' - it can also be fun!
- In terms of content its beneficial to include both face to face and on-line aspects, and to ensure that provision is reviewed and improved in line with staff requirements.



What next?

- Full integration into mainstream SD programme (eg PG Cert)
- Expansion of SD offer to inc CRM and Costing
- Further development of SD resources;
 - Embedding of communities of practice
 - Further development of workshops
 - Enhancement of on line resources
- Development of rewards and recognition policy for staff to encourage participation in employer engagement



Questions?

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