

LINK 22

Employer Engagement

Engaging Employers

Two important reports feature highly in any conversation about future directions for higher education, the Leitch and Lambert reports. Leitch sets ambitious targets for workforce upskilling to support the UK's success in competitive global markets. A target of at least 40% of the workforce qualified at level 4 and above by 2020 is set which, together with targets for increased qualification at lower levels and their likely aspiration-raising impact, provide opportunities for higher education as well as issues to deal with. The report talks about "demand-led" provision with the worrying connotation that higher education is simply a supplier to employers who always know what they want or need, and which risks underestimating the student demand side of the equation which is already the major influence on provision and viability.

In response to Leitch, HEFCE's Employer Engagement Strategy is now promoting growth in co-funded student numbers in higher education through provision which is funded 50% each by HEIs and by employers. Many institutions see this as an opportunity to develop new markets and to develop the processes and systems which support more effective engagement with employers and thus the potential for growth. However, the old adage that you can take a horse to water but not make it drink was never more true. Key features of successful employer engagement are employers who wish to engage, as well as institutions who wish to engage with them.

The Lambert Report looks to business-university collaboration in research to underpin increased productivity and competitiveness in global markets, describing those businesses which already collaborate in research as role models which others should emulate. The report sees the biggest challenge as being on the demand side, with businesses not being research intensive and with "unimpressive" investment in research and development. It makes a number of recommendations which seek to achieve the mutual benefits to research of collaborative working.

The HLST subjects have a long history of innovation and creativity in working with employers. From sandwich degrees which broke new ground in making the placement an integral and accredited element of the student learning experience, to the accreditation of in-company training; from individually negotiated work-based learning contracts for employees to highly vocational curricula preparing students for entry to industry; from Foundation Degrees with significant elements of work-based learning to CPD opportunities; from consultancy to Knowledge Exchange Partnerships, there is a rich vein of experience and expertise, as this issue of LINK testifies. And there are more exciting developments to come... working with employers who want to engage with higher education.

Clive Robertson
Director

Contents

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- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 02 | The Foundation Degree in Travel Operations Management | 25 | The Value of Real Working Environments in Developing Employability |
| 04 | A Reflective Perspective on the Running of the Programme | 27 | Employer Engagement: A Case Study of The Green Training Company |
| 06 | Oxford Brookes University and The Rezidor Hotel Group | 29 | Use of Realistic Environments for Teaching Foundation Degrees in the Management of Licensed Premises |
| 09 | Higher Education Academy Support for Employer Engagement | 31 | Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: Effective Working Relationships – An Associate Perspective |
| 10 | The Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) | 33 | Supporting the Needs of Student-Athletes |
| 11 | Joining up Work-Related Learning – Working Effectively with Industry | 35 | Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: Cardiff International Airport Ltd and UWIC, Cardiff School of Management |
| 12 | Induction for International Students at Queen Margaret University | 38 | Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: Leadership and Professional Learning |
| 14 | Leeds Metropolitan University Tourism and Events Research Partnerships | 39 | Bringing Your Learning to Life |
| 14 | Institute of Hospitality | 40 | Employer Engagement at Leeds Metropolitan University |
| 16 | The Tourism Society | 41 | Quick Wins in Providing Inclusive Teaching – Advice and Guidance from JISC TechDis |
| 17 | Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: The Seafood Restaurant, Padstow | 43 | The Student Experience |
| 18 | The Sheffield Area Restaurateurs Forum (SARF) | | |
| 20 | Working with the Travel Catering Industry | | |
| 22 | Designing a Sports Development Degree Fit for the Industry | | |
| 23 | Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: the Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Industry in Wales | | |

Higher Education Academy Network for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (HLST) Annual Conference

Employer Engagement: what does it mean for HLST education?

St Anne's College, Oxford, 6 November 2008

Employer engagement is on the agenda for everyone – government, academics, students and parents. The conference provides an opportunity to find out more about the current UK context and higher education innovative practice around this important theme. In addition to updates from People1st and SkillsActive on the new diplomas, paper and poster presentations, there will be keynote sessions from:

Hugh Tollyfield (Special Adviser – Employer Engagement, HEFCE)

Demanding Employers? The Sustainable Role for Higher Education in Creating the World Class Workforce

John Thorpe (Head of Technical Standards Unit, SkillsActive)

SSCs and Higher Education – Working in Harmony?

Mary Curnock Cook (Director, Qualifications & Skills, QCA)

Update on 14 – 19 Qualifications Reform

For full details see our website www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst

The Foundation Degree in Travel Operations Management

John Beech, Coventry University, Helen Dewhurst, the Lifelong Learning Network for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and Andy Smyth, TUI UK and Ireland

Over the last three years, and in response to employer demand, Foundation Degree Forward have supported the University of Wolverhampton, in partnership with Coventry University and University College Birmingham, to develop a unique and innovative Foundation Degree in Travel Operations Management. These two articles discuss the issues and challenges presented in the design, development and delivery of an innovative programme.

Programme Development

Introduction

'Employer engagement' is a term that calls to mind Lord Denning's famous view of 'pornography' – difficult to define, but you know it when you see it. Certainly there are "a number of existing models for employers to get involved with HE providers to develop the (higher level) skills of the workforce" (DIUS, 2008:22). One of these is in the development of foundation degrees which are intended to be co-designed by employers. There are now over 2,500 different foundation degrees in existence in universities and colleges of further education (DIUS, 2008) and over 200 of these are in travel and tourism and related subjects (Stuart-Hoyle, 2007).

The rapid growth of foundation degrees certainly suggests increased levels of employer engagement with higher education. However, attention should be given to understand the range and quality of this engagement. Indeed, the very term 'employer engagement' hints at the difficulties of spanning the industry/academe divide. The term reflects the perspective of the course providers, while equally important in the effective bridging of the gap is what industry would perhaps term 'educator engagement'.

This article presents the case of a foundation degree that was initiated by industry, facilitated by Foundation Degree Forward (FDF), the HEFCE-funded body whose remit is to generate and support employer engagement strategies across higher education (FDF, 2007) and developed in partnership with three Higher Education Institutions. It offers an overview of an approach to employer engagement and some of the lessons learnt by HE and industry during this process. It is perhaps an early example of what is now being defined as desirable practice (DIUS, 2008).

The employer parameters

In 2005, FDF financed a project to investigate the development of a foundation degree for the travel industry, initially at the prompting of TUI UK Ltd (now TUI UK and Ireland). Following the preliminary work conducted by the University of Wolverhampton, a foundation degree was developed by the University of Wolverhampton, Coventry University, and what is now University College Birmingham. This development took place with strong employer engagement by TUI and also Birmingham International Airport, and with the involvement of People 1st, the Sector Skills Council (SSC).

The employers were explicitly looking for a course that:

- provided personal development for their employees and those working in the wider sector
- would raise and broaden levels of knowledge, skills and thinking ability across their workforce
- offered a progression route into higher level learning for those members of their staff achieving level 3 qualifications in the workplace e.g. advanced apprentices
- was suitable for people employed in all travel business functions
- did not prevent access or provide a lesser experience to those working at a distance from either company or education locations
- could be conducted within a workplace environment avoiding periods away
- emphasised learning through workplace problems and experiences
- was delivered seamlessly and simultaneously by more than one HEI
- avoided the perception that it was designed as a "parochial" or 'in-house' qualification, and thus had the potential to become an industry standard
- represented a value for money option when compared to the private provider options that are available
- provided a sustainable, cutting edge development programme based on latest industry and academic best practice, both now and in the future

TUI's initial survey of what was then (2005) available from HE providers reached the conclusion that such a work-based,

travel industry-specific management development programme and qualification did not already exist. On the face of it, this may seem surprising. With the arguable exception of multi-institutional delivery, it might be expected that a number of those providers who had already developed one or more of the existing FD programmes should have been in a position to offer appropriate courses. However, it was TUI's perception that none of the existing programmes could meet all of their explicit parameters. It also became clear to the HEIs who participated in the development of the programme – as there were increasing levels of both employer engagement and educator engagement – that, in addition to its explicit parameters, TUI had implicit parameters too. These revolved around the content, emphasis and delivery of the course.

What was required of the syllabus was that it should be:

- firmly embedded in the tradition of business and management courses rather than tourism/travel courses
- at the same time, so deeply embedded in the travel (not tourism) industry in terms of the context of study materials and coursework that it would be inappropriate for people from outside the travel industry
- reflective of generic management skills, knowledge and competencies that were contextualised by the work environment and material provided, rather than being a "travel" qualification
- cognisant of existing employer based training and the need to accredit this where appropriate, to ensure learners could access appropriate AP(E)L routes into the programme and against assessments
- developed to allow learners to undertake chunks of the programme as short courses to fulfil CPD needs, and to build this up into a full foundation degree where required
- available in a range of blended delivery modes

The model of engagement of the employers in the design of the syllabus also emerged as one that was not then common in the development of industry-oriented HE programmes. The *modus operandi* that emerged was to refine the syllabus iteratively through the following process:

- very broad parameters laid down by the employers
- the fleshing out of a syllabus consistent with these parameters
- explicit identification of the "graduate attributes" that were required from the programme, rather than suggested content from the outset
- discussion of any contentious content (contentious, that is, from the employer's perspective) between the employers and the HEIs
- redrafting as required and re-discussion
- production of an agreed final draft

- the translation of this final draft into an institutionally-recognised format, in terms of a programme specification and module descriptors.

This iterative process required unbridled engagement from partners on both sides of the divide. For that engagement to be effective and synergistic, two particular challenges had to be faced and overcome.

The Clash of Cultures

Many of the incidences of culture clash during these iterative meetings and the email correspondence between meetings can be put down to specific differences in cultures between organisations in the public (specifically in HE) and the private sector.

The organisational culture in the private sector can be characterised as one in which:

- deadlines are deadlines, and meeting them is part of the way of life
- clear-cut decisions are the natural outcome of discussions
- management decisions are often influenced by case history
- systems are designed to allow rapid reaction to changing circumstances

On the other hand, the HE sector might be characterised as one in which:

- deadlines are soft targets, and a peripheral, if common, irritation
- fuzziness and greyness are often the natural outcome of processes
- regulation exists but is only referred to when necessary – in general, there is no conceptual 'book of rules' which impinges on the day-to-day operation by staff. There is often little case history.
- systems are designed to ensure stability, usually for reasons of quality assurance, and do not cope well with unusual and/or changing circumstances.

To achieve effective engagement, the direct participants in the iterative process had to embrace these differences in organisational culture, develop their skills of projection and learn to adapt.

As the process developed, those on the HE side found it necessary to broaden the participation of those within their institutions, cascading upwards to Faculty and University level, and outwards to include staff from IT and the Student Support Services etc, where again the need to respond to organisational cultural differences had to be recognised in order to achieve effective engagement. This demonstrated the importance of high level strategic leadership and the value of

consistency of personnel in projects of this kind. On the industry side, those involved took the time to better understand the mechanisms and processes of HE and the value of working to help develop these to become more flexible and responsive.

The Inclusion of the Workplace

At a micro level, some difficulties were encountered in adapting the course design and materials to the workplace of the industry partners. Whilst the HE course development team had a wide range of industry experience and knowledge, there remained some lack of familiarity with aspects of the parallel world of the practitioners. This obstacle to effective engagement was dealt with initially through recognising the need for better mutual briefing. In the longer term it was recognised that commitment on both sides to enhancing current arrangements for industrial updating would be beneficial and improve 'engagement' in the wider sense. On the industry side, there was a need to overcome competitive concerns and facilitate access to the information required to develop programmes of real value to the sector. Indeed, an outcome for both sides was the recognition that engagement for the benefit of the skills agenda is most effective when it is supported by a belief that working together can enhance performance in the competitive arena too.

Conclusions

The outcome of the whole process was the development of a foundation degree and this is now being further developed with a wider network of HE and industry partners into the national, industry standard product first envisaged. All participants at the core of the development process quickly saw the personal development requirement to achieve effective

engagement. For the academics, the 'real' world of the practitioner did become more real. For industry participants, the walls of the ivory towers of academia may not have been exactly stormed and broken down, but a clearer understanding of the common ground was achieved as goal congruence was achieved. In short, two-way engagement not only led to a better understanding of each other's world, but helped to facilitate an effective programme which would meet industry's needs yet avoid some of the constraints, short-comings and frustrations (from an industry perspective) of more traditional HE programmes.

The key to success in 'engagement' (employer and educator) is for participants from both industry and education to recognise that engagement is a two-way process, requiring understanding, adaptation and a level of risk taking by participants from both sides. Investing the time and resources required to achieve this mature relationship is the only way to ensure that employers will place increasing value on the role of HE in helping them plug their higher level skills gaps and HE can begin to secure a larger share of the significant industry spend on CPD (DIUS, 2008).

A more detailed account of other perspectives of the programme development process has been published elsewhere (Dewhurst, Smyth and Beech, 2007).

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

For further information contact John Beech, Head of Sport and Tourism Applied Research, Coventry University, Helen Dewhurst, Tourism, Hospitality and Retail Sector Manager, Leap Ahead, the Lifelong Learning Network for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire or Andy Smyth, Accredited Programmes Manager, TUI UK and Ireland.

A Reflective Perspective on the Running of the Programme

The Foundation Degree in Travel Operations Management (FD), launched in 2000, was developed in response to the Government's drive for 'new, innovative awards at sub-degree level'. At Wolverhampton, it is managed through the Department for Leisure and Lifestyle Industries Management (LALIM), the lead partner in the group of HEIs, working under the umbrella of the UK Travel Education Partnership (UKTEP). A project steering group involving staff from each HEI, the employer and Foundation Degree Forward, monitors the programme.

In September 2007, 60 students from TUI, the UK's largest tour operator, enrolled on an innovative new FD in Travel Operations Management, delivered online by the

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University of Wolverhampton, University College Birmingham and Coventry University. The long-term aim is for the programme to become the National Standard for the Travel Industry and the students are the pilot for this programme. Eight months on this article reflects on the progress of the students and considers some of the challenges for the future.

Induction

The programme is designed to be delivered using blended learning to meet the needs of different students and diverse employers. For the pilot group, the employer was keen for the students to study the course through distance learning, a necessity as the participants are based across the UK and overseas. However, at the start of the programme, there was a belief that the students, many of whom had been out of formal education for a significant period, should have the opportunity to experience University and to gain a sense of belonging to an HEI. This was achieved through a two-day induction event which provided opportunities for learners to: meet each other; understand what was required for a FD; find out about procedures; be introduced to the content of the year one modules and assessment; meet their personal tutors and course staff; and learn how to use PebblePad, the ePortfolio which is used as the delivery platform.

Student Support

Each student has a personal tutor. Currently these are based at Wolverhampton and responsibility for individual tutees is shared equally across the staff in the department. Tutors email their students monthly to ensure they feel supported and have opportunities to ask for help. Phone appointments and face-to-face meetings have proved invaluable where students have needed step-by-step help. A study day was held during semester 1 and this included an assessment surgery and explanation of some of the underpinning concepts for the forthcoming modules. This was not accessible to all the students due to work commitments and geographical location so the sessions were recorded and distributed on DVD, or through YouTube, and linked to the course materials in PebblePad.

Outside of the University, some students have got together 'in the pub' or 'over lunchtime' to work through formative tasks and support each other. An on-line student forum highlights student issues and these are acted on immediately by the course leader.

Module Structure and Delivery

PebblePad is used for all learning materials and for submission of student work. This is not traditionally the right tool for the job – a VLE is much better suited to tutor-led delivery. However, in trying to achieve commonality across three institutions PebblePad was a platform that all three partners used and it has been very successful. The content is broken down into 'lesson size chunks' of 12 sessions per module with formative tasks to reinforce learning, plus an introductory section with assessments to download. In addition, *Course Introduction* and *Learning Support* sections are linked to the course documentation, online reading lists, contact details and useful websites.

Lessons develop in difficulty as students build up knowledge of relevant theories and concepts and apply these to work-based examples. All tasks are given a time or word limit as a framework to ensure students are aware of the level of work and detail required for each task. This has proved valuable in ensuring students do not waste unnecessary time on the activities, although there have been some topics, in particular research methods, where the time has been underestimated. This has led to additional stress as students believe they are finding the work harder than necessary. These issues have fed into the ongoing review and further development of modules.

Assessment and Achievement

Assessment comprises a mixture of essays, reports and the creation of webfolios through PebblePad. One assessment required students to work in groups which

included members based overseas. Communication in these instances is coordinated through PebblePad blogs, email, conference calls and MSN Messenger. Achievement on the first completed module is very high.

The average grade point of B13 is the highest in the subject area. This in part reflects on the nature of the students who are used to working in the industry, expected to work to high standards and bring with them a wealth of experience. The lower grades relate to extenuating circumstances claims.

Retention

Since the inception of the programme the employer has undergone a major expansion and restructuring. Inevitably some students have been affected by changes in workload and management. This is the principal reason for withdrawal from the course with a minority also citing a lack of time, access to the internet overseas or insufficient time to achieve personal high standards. None of the students who provided feedback cited the content or delivery method as a direct factor, but concurrent modules over three semesters does put students under considerable pressure. Personal tutors monitor the effectiveness of student contact and it is generally the students who fail to engage in this process who struggle with assessment or withdraw from the course. Students' effective engagement and development of strong relationships with their tutor shows a direct alignment to their performance.

Student Experience

Overall the student feedback/response has been very positive, although students have highlighted minor, mainly technical issues which have been resolved by a dedicated member of staff with expertise in the use of PebblePad and its associated pedagogy. Students have also been supported in familiarising

themselves with different access requirements for electronic journals and books. Student feedback regarding support from the module team and general subject guidance has been very positive, although significant work is needed by the staff involved to ensure students receive quick responses to questions, especially in the early stages of study when systems, technology and procedures are still unfamiliar.

Evaluation

The national programme will involve a wider HE partnership, but the broad delivery method, 20-credit format and module content will remain the same. Over time each partner will develop electives and each will take on responsibility for the existing modules to fit with their subject specialisms. Many employers are already considering student numbers for the September start of the programme.

Critical reflection at this point in the pilot is essential to ensure that the course

is fit for purpose and that developments are based upon the experiences of staff and students involved in the first delivery of the programme. Some of the areas for development include the revision of some of the formative and summative assessments. Students have identified some tasks which take considerably longer than anticipated to complete, and one module is already progressing to minor modification in order to ensure that the testing of learning outcomes is work-related and achieved within the appropriate timescale.

Feedback is being monitored throughout the course to revisit and further develop modules for future cohorts. An important aspect is the almost organic move towards a blended learning model, rather than purely online delivery. In future this must be considered in the planning stages of the modules, and a particular student group may influence this, to be proactive in delivering content, rather than reactive in delivering support. The delivery method is being reassessed to develop a more interactive, tailor-made virtual learning environment to meet the needs of employers and a wider HE partnership.

It is important to reflect on how much has been achieved. Feedback from the first group of students is overwhelmingly positive for all aspects of the course. Their personal achievements, the unique partnership between three HEIs that would usually be competitors, the publication of research papers and a course textbook later this year, and the future development of an already innovative qualification are all aspects to be celebrated. Continued reflection and a partnership approach to review and develop the course will indeed create a national Foundation Degree of a very high standard.

A more detailed account of the operationalisation of the programme has been published: Wiscombe, C., Robinson, P. and Wale, D. (2007) *An Innovative Delivery of Foundation Degrees: but not without its problems!* Proceedings of The 2007 Annual ATHE Conference: Oxford.

Oxford Brookes University and The Rezidor Hotel Group

**Peter Harris, Oxford
Brookes University and
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Hotel Group**

Peter Harris and Knut Kleiven jointly reflect upon the evolution of almost ten years of collaboration between their two organisations.

Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management in the Business School at Oxford Brookes University is an industry-focused academic department with an established tradition and strong emphasis on applied research, scholarship and consultancy related to hospitality management practice. One of the major successes of the department was the early recognition of the role of industry in developing and improving the theoretical underpinning of the discipline for new applications and 'best practice' in the commercial environment. Critical to this is the ability of faculty members to be able to 'connect' with practitioners; and individual associations between the university and industry operators be allowed to develop naturally through personal interaction and exchange over time. In these conditions relationships evolve in an ongoing atmosphere of

common interest and mutual respect with each of the parties benefiting from the other's strengths.

Natural evolving associations that grow into longer-term relationships are not everyday occurrences, but where they do emerge the rewards can bring real advantages to all parties. One such association which has developed over the last decade is that between Brookes and The Rezidor Hotel Group. The Rezidor Hotel Group has grown more than tenfold since 1993. Today, it is recognised as one of the fastest growing hospitality companies in the world with currently over 330 properties comprising almost 68,000 rooms under the hotel brands Radisson SAS, Park Inn, Country Inn and Regent across Europe, Middle East and Africa, with the Corporate Office located in Brussels. The group is also soon to launch its first Hotel Missoni, a lifestyle hotel brand created in an exclusive partnership with iconic Italian fashion house "Missoni".

The Beginnings

Over the past ten years the relationship between Brookes and Rezidor has evolved and diversified into a wide and changing variety of forms, involving education and training, research and scholarship, consultancy, work experience and career employment. However, tracking back to the early beginnings proved to be an interesting opportunity to reflect on how far the relationship has developed.

The initial contact began in the late 1990s through discussion with Rezidor in Oxford and Brussels and Brookes about the subject content suitability of a planned series of outsourced financial management development seminars for the company's hotel property general managers. The approach prompted the initial introduction and proved an instant ice-breaker between the university and the company. This soon extended into discussions and cross-collaboration on a number of different activities, including some innovative company ideas for developing and piloting a new breed of hotel financial controller based on an interesting premise of 'business analyst' development.

A Solid Framework

In consulting terms, a key development in the relationship took place at a meeting of corporate finance executives and regional financial controllers in Stockholm in 2001 when the company decided to embrace marginal accounting techniques in the form of "The Profit Planning Framework", a marginal analysis application developed at the University to improve routine decision making at the hotel property level. This involved the design of a marginal analysis construct and a management accounting development programme for financial controllers and hotel general managers to be delivered across the company regions, commencing with Sweden in 2002, followed by Germany; Belgium/Benelux countries; Norway; Poland; UK and Ireland; France; Denmark and Iceland; and finally Austria, Switzerland, Italy and South-East-Europe region in 2006. In order to encourage consolidation and further embedding of the methods and techniques at the hotel properties, a similar programme was concurrently delivered to department managers through the company's Management School forum.

Where Industry and Education Interact Naturally

The consulting dimension provides a natural platform for cooperation and interaction between industry and education, where both parties have the opportunity to reflect on the strengths and potential contributions of each to the other. In the marginal accounting case, from a company standpoint, executives and managers gained access to new and novel marginal accounting applications which added value to routine operational decision-making information. From the university perspective, faculty members' research and development endeavours were able to be tried, tested and refined in the rigours of the 'live' commercial environment. This not only contributes to university resources, but facilitates ongoing cutting-edge experience for use in the learning and teaching environment.

Multi-fold Contributions

In research terms, Rezidor has collaborated in a variety of ways. For example, in 2002 the company contributed funds towards the sponsorship of a three year full-time PhD research project in the development of an industry-wide hotel "customer profitability analysis" (CPA) model. They also allowed access for the detailed data collection stage of the constructive case study which extended over a period of some thirteen months. In 2003, the company supported another PhD research project into "Hotel room rate

pricing in an international hotel group", giving comprehensive access to regional and corporate executives plus the hotel property management teams at some 33 Radisson SAS hotels in 18 cities in 16 countries across Europe. In addition to the doctoral research projects, company managers, financial controllers and corporate office executives routinely give generous data collection access to master's degree candidates for dissertation fieldwork. This is a useful process for all as the students obtain much needed data and the company participants (presented with an executive summary of research findings) gain insights into new and developing areas, often across their own (but anonymised) competitive set. Even as this paper is being prepared, the company has agreed to facilitate a master's candidate to carry out field interviews with key corporate office executives in Brussels as part of an investigation into "Assessing risk versus return in hotel investment appraisals".

Building the Future for its People

Beyond research and consultancy, there are a range of education and employment dimensions to the relationship. For instance, the company employs numerous Brookes alumni and facilitates supervised work experience for undergraduate students studying hospitality management. Brookes is also a preferred recruitment source, and accorded annual recruitment presentations and selection interviews on campus by corporate office and regional HR representatives. In addition, company managers have attended Brookes' Master's programme (by distance learning) whilst tutors have attended the Rezidor Management School to gain exposure to new industry practices. The company also donates an annual prize for the highest performing master's student on the MSc in International Hotel & Resort Management.

Creating Partnership Beyond the Ordinary

Beyond the more apparent collaborative activities, there are numerous instances which reflect the nature of the relationship that has evolved between Rezidor and Brookes. For example, in November 2000, the company sponsored a professorial inaugural lecture evening event comprising a reception and buffet for over 100 guests. In October 2003, the department staged "*Partnerships for the Future*", a major alumni event held at the Chelsea Football Club hospitality suite in London. The event called for a high profile industry speaker for the keynote address. Brookes' staff approached the Chief Financial Officer to enquire if he thought Kurt Ritter, President and Chief Executive Officer, might be prepared to accept the invitation, if approached. The CFO's words in reply were ... "I'll ask him for you". Minutes later a return telephone call to the University confirmed that he had accepted the invitation... which really seems to sum up the relationship!

In 2006, the company signalled an important endorsement of the university's work by writing the 'Forward' for a new edited book publication on state-of-the-art research and development in international hospitality accounting and finance which (had the company not been under severe pressure with numerous openings of new properties) would have also included a chapter containing a unique insight into corporate governance (transparency) in a hospitality industry context. Even though delayed and requiring some completion, the chapter content has the currency for future inclusion in a subsequent edition of the book; there is no escape!

Conclusion

During the past decade the relationship between Brookes and Rezidor has evolved organically over time and has flourished through a climate of openness, personal interaction and exchange created by the various participants. Most of all, however, the relationship remains, and the partnership sustained, through the mutual benefits perceived by the two organisations. Brookes is proud of the association with Rezidor and this is reciprocated by Rezidor. The company provides extensive opportunities for relating theory to practice, whilst Brookes offers new developments and applications for company practitioners. Again, with regard to new applications, the university presented the research findings from the earlier mentioned company-sponsored CPA project at the corporate office in Brussels in April, 2008. As a result of this, Rezidor has set up a development team to customise and test the CPA model in the new Radisson SAS EU Hotel in Brussels, with a view to implementing the model across the organisation. The CPA model represents one of the most significant steps forward in hotel management accounting since the introduction of the Uniform System of Accounting for Hotels pioneered in the USA in the 1920s – a shining example of the mutual benefits of collaboration!

In essence, the association promotes and enhances what can best be described as a 'virtuous circle' of benefit to all involved. Developments from research and enquiry lead to scholarship and publication for academics and practitioners. This, in turn, leads to advisory and consulting opportunities and both the research and the industry experience can feed back directly into learning and teaching. Maybe not a 'marriage made in heaven', but surely a 'pragmatic liaison here on earth'!



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Higher Education Academy Support for Employer Engagement

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For the academic years 2006/7 and 2007/8, the Higher Education Academy identified Employer Engagement as a priority theme, and it is one of seven in the draft Strategic Plan for 2008/9.

The Leitch Report, published in December 2006, highlighted the global economic impact, driving the UK to seek to be an economy based upon higher level knowledge and skills, and the demographic downturn in the 18 year old population over the next decade, meaning that 70% of the workforce for 2020 is already in the workplace. This encouraged us to concentrate our main emphasis on the innovative and challenging activity in the HE sector to support and develop existing workforce employees.

People at work have been shown repeatedly to favour shorter and flexible qualifications, in terms of both relevant curriculum content, and learning processes which allow for choice of time and place of study. They also appreciate opportunities to earn credit for previous experience and to accumulate that credit over time. This style of learning poses challenges to HEIs in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, staff flexibility, and virtually all institutional systems and processes. Nor is it made easier when Government strategy is that employers and employees should contribute significantly to the design, cost and often the delivery of their HE experience.

However, the good news is that HEIs are responding vigorously and creatively, with many innovative projects, initiatives and consortia. It appears to be part of the strategy to let a thousand flowers bloom initially, and then to cultivate and clone the strongest plants.

The Higher Education Academy was given two tranches of special funding by HEFCE to support Employer Engagement. During 2006/7, we spent much of our time helping the sector to understand the implications of the Leitch Report and individual institutions to position themselves appropriately, in accordance with their stated missions. We established three critical networks:

- a PVC Special Interest Group (SIG) to address, in particular, strategy and institutional systems and processes
- an exchange group of some 14 HEIs in the vanguard of employer engagement developments, who have exchanged their practice and also encapsulated it within a Higher Education Academy publication to help the sector at large, *Workforce development: connections, frameworks and processes*, available from the Academy website
- a research forum, to map the existing relevant studies, to identify gaps and to take up new commissions, in order to build more evidence-based practice

Academy York worked with national policy and strategy agencies, on both the HE and employer sides, to create more joined up support for HEIs, and also delivered two national conferences and local seminars.

Of particular interest to the present readership might be the six projects which some of the Academy's subject centres conducted with their counterpart Sector Skills Councils

(SSCs). Some dozen subject centres, including HLST, explored areas as diverse as:

- working in partnership with SSCs
- creating integrated qualification frameworks
- mapping Subject Benchmarks against National Occupational Standards
- supporting the development of National Skills Academies
- designing curriculum to match needs in the Sector Skills Agreements
- supporting the design of 14-19 year old Diplomas
- studying careers destinations and skills from HE in contextual use

HLST worked with 3 relevant SSCs – People1st, Skills Active and Skillsmart Retail – to conduct interviews with employers and employees, and produce case studies which reflect the skills required for different work contexts and progression routes. These were published during summer 2008 and will be promoted at the HLST conference in November 2008. The case studies will be of use to prospective students seeking careers and to staff devising workshop sessions.

The Academy's Employer Engagement Facilitation Group is negotiating with HEFCE for further funding for 2008/9 to continue, build upon and expand project work between subject centres and SSCs, and to address the enhancement needs which are emerging from the special QA Task Force in Employer Engagement www.qaa.ac.uk/employers/QAstatement.asp

In the meantime, the Academy has been granted funding for a further programme

of activity which focuses upon two particular areas. The first is the establishment of a research observatory for HE called SPHERE, which will address employer engagement as a priority theme. This will bring together the literature and resource in the field, identify research gaps and commission work to fill these, and encourage active participation and contributions from practitioners and researchers.

The second strand comprises support for HEIs, extensively and intensively, in embracing the employer engagement agenda. We will continue the PVC SIG, and have expanded the Exchange Group to become a formal network for HEFCE funded employer engagement pilot projects. We are establishing a directory of consultants from the sector who can deliver specific support to others using a limited subsidy from the Higher Education Academy. We also hope to run a themed Change Academy for HEIs undertaking significant employer engagement initiatives, and to run a "Network of Networks" which will bring together the many initiatives touching upon employer engagement to include Lifelong Learning Networks, Higher Level Skills Pathfinders,

third stream 2nd Mission projects, Flexible Learning Pathfinders and employer engagement pilots.

The Academy has now created a single programme spanning employability and employee learning, and hopes to be able to restore some attention to employability during 2008/9. However, our special funding initiative will continue to emphasise workforce development activity.

Anyone wishing to know more can contact
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The Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME)

| **Stephen Ball**

Employer engagement with CHME is an important facet in all the activities which form the ethos and principles of the association. Employers are involved in a variety of ways, examples of which are outlined below and highlight how their contribution helps CHME to achieve its five key aims to:

1. Promote high quality and internationally relevant hospitality management education;

Executive committee members contribute to debate and provide comment on government initiatives such as new qualifications and are recognised as an influential organisation lobbying external organisations and people for recognition and the enhancement of hospitality management education.

Compass has been a major sponsor in the joint publication with CHME reviewing hospitality management education in the UK. To date 2 reports have been published and one is in progress.

2. Promote and disseminate good practice in learning, teaching and assessment and in curriculum development;
3. Promote and disseminate research and scholarship which informs and enhances curriculum development and approaches to learning, teaching and assessment;

The annual research conference provides a valuable platform for new and more mature researchers, and attracts delegates both from academia and also industry from across the world. Topics and subjects presented include consumer studies; food and beverage; gastronomy; hospitality, leisure and tourism studies and other relevant areas. Contributions can include work in progress papers providing research students or new academics the opportunity to present their findings in a supportive and encouraging environment.

Special issues of the various themes are often published in a number of well recognised and highly regarded journals, such as Hospitality and Tourism Educator; Hospitality Review; Journal of Hospitality Tourism Planning and Development; Tourism and Hospitality Research; providing presenters and researchers with an added value. The inclusion of keynote speakers representing renowned educational establishments from around the world offers an invaluable opportunity for members to update their knowledge and learn about new developments and best practice from other countries.

4. Promote and disseminate research and scholarship which informs practice in the hospitality industry; and
5. Promote effective and beneficial links between industry and education

PATH (Placement advisors for tourism and hospitality), a sub group of CHME, offers an annual conference where placement issues and examples of best practice may be shared and disseminated. Again, this conference attracts delegates from beyond the UK and provides a platform for key employers and academics to discuss the range of opportunities where they can work together. These tend to be dominated by work based learning such as one year placements but may also include shorter projects including research projects; consultancy; guest speakers; staff development in industry or in universities or colleges; and any opportunity where best practice may be shared and offer mutual benefits. Employers play a major role in this conference and offer valuable sponsorship opportunities in a variety of ways.

A less formal members' forum is organised each year where issues or initiatives can be discussed and debated. These can include updates from the Institute of Hospitality; Sector

Skills Councils; QCA and QAA; and allow members the opportunity to learn how these agencies combine to ensure that hospitality education is current, coherent, meets the needs of all stakeholders, and also how changes may impact on higher education and the future student body.

Finally, working groups have collaborated with institutions and organisations on several research projects and encouraged networking opportunities between academics, and this has led to joint research and publications.

Joining up Work-Related Learning – Working Effectively with Industry

Ian Beattie, *Liverpool John Moores University*

At Liverpool John Moores University's Centre for Sport, Dance and Outdoor Education we feel it is vitally important to enable students to gain as broad a range of employment related skills as possible. To that end we ensure that work based learning (WBL) and work related learning (WRL) are an integral part of our BA (Hons) Sport Development with Physical Education (PE) programme and this has been the case since its inception in 1999.

A particular feature of the programme relates to the many opportunities students have to work alongside industry professionals. The vital aspects of student experiences, projects and research undertaken are based on creating partnerships and developing network systems in communities, schools and other institutions.

By working with external agencies and organisations, staff in the Centre for Sport, Dance and Outdoor Education strive to build a holistic curriculum which, when using WRL, seeks to provide a 'connectivity' for our students and our partners alike. Working with the CETL Community Support Officer, this connectivity involves the development of innovative and collaborative employer engagement, and opportunities for students to work with our partners at Level 1 through to 3 and at Postgraduate level; for industry experts to engage with curriculum design; for our partners to get to know what 'our students are all about' through working together at all levels; and, in the long term, provide positive results for all concerned.

This article gives an insight into placement provision on the Sport Development with PE programme.

Level 1 placements take place with Liverpool City Council's SportsInx project which introduces students to a number of key concepts. With links to a taught module and their learning experiences at the fitness testing sessions, students are able to place sport development and physical education in the context of school and community, whilst developing key skills, and gaining knowledge and experience in a innovative and exciting collaboration between higher education and sport development.

Occasionally we extend the opportunities at Level 1 and offer additional placement opportunities. For example, in the academic year 2006/07 we worked with the World Fire Fighter Games which are being held in Merseyside in 2008. This exciting opportunity allowed students to work with event managers to organise and assist with the 60+ events that will make up this international event. Students are now involved in voluntary capacities and a number of students continued to work with the events managers after Level 1 had finished.

Level 2 aims to enable students to identify and understand the roles of the main partners responsible for providing sport and leisure opportunities in a WBL environment; to provide a practical environment aligning course theory with industry application; and to develop student experience in a range of fields. This module comprises of 20 days WBL placement, preceded by two weeks of taught sessions and tutorials, with allocated tutors both prior to and on completion of placement. Students can complete no more than two placements.

Level 3 WBL is part of a core module which allows students the opportunity to specialise in a chosen area, whilst linking relating dimensions and perspectives of previous experiences from Level 1 & 2. Students choose to undertake either a work-based placement or an individually negotiated task. It is an opportunity to choose a specialist area and plan a long term sustainable project whilst on placement; to demonstrate skills acquired throughout the course; and develop contacts for career progression. The module aims to allow the students to experience, first hand, the policies and practices of their chosen agency; to establish links between work placement, theoretical studies and course based competencies; to experience an area of work relevant to future career choice; and finally, but most importantly, to reflect on their own development.

It is through our commitment to employer engagement that we can offer a diverse range and number of opportunities at all levels of our portfolio of programmes. One such example is our partnership with Everton Football Club's Youth Academy. Everton Football Club operates an extensive and highly successful Youth Academy. The Academy

has established new and improved structures for coaching, recruitment, medical and sports science support, administration, education and welfare.

The aims of the Everton Academy are to:

- identify and develop players for the first team squad
- develop players who can save the club expenditure
- develop players who can earn the club revenue in transfer fees
- develop players who can make professional football their first career
- develop players who can make a career outside football
- most importantly, offer players of all ages an opportunity to experience the best development programme possible

Students have an opportunity to fully engage in this approach with all of those involved in the Academy. There is an ethos which permeates throughout. There is an understanding that an Academy is not just a building, just a group of people, or

just a programme. It is all of those things and more... ..it is a philosophy, a culture, a way of doing things... this is known as THE EVERTON WAY. (www.evertonfc.com/academy/what-is-an-academy.html)

Our partnership with the Everton Academy sees a number of students undertake their Level 2 and 3 work-based learning in this environment and such an opportunity would not be available but for the enthusiastic engagement with our programme from the team at the Everton Academy. This enthusiasm is evident with all our partners and through a long process building up strong relationships with each and every one of them we aim to enhance the levels of employer engagement continuously. As noted at the beginning of this article, the Sport Development with PE programme began in 1999 and one of the most satisfying elements of employer engagement is with our graduates who now work in industry and provide high quality placements for our undergraduates.

For further information contact Ian Beattie, Senior Lecturer in Sport Development, i.beattie@lmu.ac.uk

Induction for International Students at Queen Margaret University

Bernie Quinn, Queen Margaret University

One of the most popular programmes within the school of Business, Enterprise and Management (BEaM) is the International Hospitality Management (IHM) BA. This programme is increasingly attracting a large number of level 3 direct entry international students. They are primarily from India, but also with rising numbers from central Europe and former eastern bloc countries. The employability of our international students is of prime interest and importance and tied closely to the currency of the degree programme. At Queen Margaret University (QMU) in Edinburgh, recent internal research has indicated that within six months of graduation, 97% of former students are in full-time employment or post-graduate study.

As international student numbers increase and the demand for applications to the Fresh Talent Working in Scotland Scheme (FT:WISS) multiplies accordingly, employability of these students is of interest to educators, increasingly reliant upon income streams generated by this market. At QMU we have recently re-validated the IHM programme and as part of this a wide ranging industry consultation exercise took place. This investigated what employers wanted, expected or suggested to be desirable traits of contemporary hospitality graduates.

Consequently, embedded now within the course structure are certain pre-requisites that cross-cut modules to enhance our graduates potential for future employment. These may be referred to as, continuing personal development studies, soft/social skills awareness, cultural issues, managing self and management of resources. Subsequently the induction programme for direct entry students now includes an emphasis on preparation for work.

All international students are now offered a four day induction and bridging programme conducted by lecturers from within the school. This introduces the student to study and research skills relevant to the hospitality sector, amongst other issues. As a large number of students come via partner institutions in India, two QMU staff went to Kolkatta to implement Phase One of the bridging programme in-house to start the acclimatisation process for students embarking on the journey to Edinburgh. During the induction, emphasis is placed not only on good academic research methods but also on communication skills, cultural challenges and how to 'sell' oneself in the job market in Scotland.

Phase Two of the bridging programme takes place during the week prior to the formal start of term. Again this is conducted by several members of the lecturing team that will primarily be

working with the students over the coming year. Students are reminded that they are part of a larger cohort of international hospitality students and that they should start to network beyond their existing social circles. We have tried (to a certain extent successfully) to prevent the Indian groups in particular from 'shoaling' in large groups of twenty or thirty. We point out that not only can it be intimidating to others but it also prevents them from making contacts with other nationalities and social groups. For these students, having the ability to speak and interact with others outside their safety circle is as important for their own personal development as it is to finding their first job in this country. The only problem is; they do not realise that! However as the teaching team at QMU are primarily all former hospitality professionals we do encourage these students to develop themselves further as individuals in a manner that will 'westernise' their soft skills, providing them with the social talents that employers are increasingly searching for.

Employability of these students is enhanced by several means. The in-country overseas student bridging programme has *managing student expectations* as its theme. These discussions enable students to express their expectations concerning studying at QMU, and their subsequent career aspirations. We respond by delivering practical advice on how to impress future employers, not just by having good 'hard' skills, but also development of effective behavioural skills. We also introduce the students to group working at this stage too, so that they have a first taste of student centeredness, and what it means to discuss issues whilst challenging the lecturer with their own interpretations and thoughts rather than rote learning. This independent learning that leads to the independent thinker will ultimately assist when students enter the UK workplace and perhaps find themselves in a highly empowered work environment.

Employability is further enhanced when the student completes the second part of the bridging programme in Edinburgh. This stage emphasises combining *practical studies* with *practical living* and supports students in settling into university life and combines this with an appropriate balance of work experience.

Working partnerships with industrial colleagues are an integral part of the hospitality programme. Regular invitations are extended to local hospitality practitioners at all industry levels to deliver guest lectures on hospitality modules. Similarly, taking students on industrial visits is considered important so that they see industrial practices in Scotland.

At QMU we are fortunate to have a very proactive Job Shop and the co-ordinator has been excellent in organising Job Fairs for new and returning students during the first semester. In this way international students have an early opportunity to apply for positions in Edinburgh without even having to leave the campus. Two years ago we lost some overseas students from the bridging/induction programmes and during the first week or two of term, as they went in search of part-time jobs.

Indeed one Indian student actually arrived at Edinburgh airport for the first time, left his bags in the baggage halls and raced across to the airport hotel where he had an interview arranged courtesy of a friend. He was hired, raced back to the airport, found his bags and eventually made his way to the university!

This story had a successful conclusion. However, there are many other instances of students attempting something similar but failing due to poor CVs, inappropriate approaches or insufficient communication skills.

The Jobs Fair encourages the students to wait for the hospitality employers to come to the university rather than racing around the city trying to find positions in organisations

that may not be actively recruiting. During a recent discussion with the new cohort of students, it was suggested that about 75% of that incoming group had obtained a job within two weeks of their arrival through attending the job convention. For this group, this was almost 60 students.

The recently redesigned programme has an embedded element of contemporary management training. Research with industrial forums last year indicated that employers wanted students to gain more experience in both soft and hard skills. Within our level 3 programme, students will now additionally be required to engage with issues including cultural integration of the contemporary workforce, self and resource management, and environmental, sustainable and ethical considerations for the hospitality industry.

During the last two years I have maintained contact with many of our international graduates and I have been delighted to hear of their successes. Many are now in management positions within the hospitality industry, many are considering post-graduate studies, but of great encouragement is that, at present it appears that almost 100% of these students are in full-time positions related to their degrees.

This approach to enhancing the employability of our international students is not infallible but it is a step in the right direction. Our students have increased opportunities to develop the necessary skills to work for employers who are, in turn, dealing with their own increased challenges. In the 21st century, global social tensions, large flexible but unskilled workforces and increasingly tightening financial parameters are major challenges for the hospitality industry and require an appropriately skilled workforce.

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Leeds Metropolitan University Tourism and Events Research Partnerships

Rhodri Thomas, ITT
Chair of Tourism and Events Policy

Creating research partnerships with practitioners, notably those in the private sector, has always been challenging for universities. This is not surprising as there is widespread misunderstanding of what we do, disagreement on the role of higher education in society and, as a consequence, it is difficult to find consensus on how universities might articulate with the sector. Leeds Metropolitan University's partnership with the Institute of Travel and Tourism (ITT) does not resolve these issues but it does provide a potential model for collaboration.

Universities are now at the heart of the ITT's conception of professionalism and its contribution to professionalising the sector. The Institute values the kind of research undertaken by universities, but often finds it inaccessible. It is thoughtful about how it might support such work and is open to suggestion on effective measures to develop its relationship with HE.

The ITT has a formal partnership agreement with Leeds Met whereby it sponsors a Chair and is committed to supporting the university's assessment, learning and teaching strategy. The latter has recently involved providing senior speakers for the Leeds Met ITT lecture series, collaborating on the design and assessment of a dedicated consultancy style module, and enabling research student access to several chief executives.

In return, I undertake an annual research project, and create links between university research more generally and the ITT's membership (see www.itt.co.uk). In addition to two research projects, we have so far created a suite of PhD awards (the first was won by Jane Carnaffan, University of Newcastle), an area of the ITT web site that highlights the kind of work published in tourism journals, and a system for offering ITT recognition to university tourism departments. Unlike very carefully defined contracts, this approach rests on trust, mutual respect and a shared 'project'.

The UK Centre for Events Management, based at Leeds Met, also has a research partnership with Logistik Ltd (a fast growing events and communications SME). Core features of this arrangement include their funding of a PhD (fees and full-time bursary) on a topic of interest to them and we collaborate on bids for events evaluation (consultancy) projects. It is refreshing to work with colleagues who are engaged for the long-run.

These collaborative arrangements are possible only because the university values working in partnership with the private, public and voluntary sectors (see www.leedsmet.ac.uk). It has created conditions that foster initiatives of this kind and is prepared to be pragmatic about how such partnerships might operate. Such an approach is essential for partnership working.

Institute of Hospitality

I Kathryn Benzine

The Institute of Hospitality is a professional management organisation providing services to members and stakeholders who work across all sectors of the hospitality and related industries. The Institute represents individuals working in the hospitality industry, many of whom are employers running small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These employers make up a significant portion of the UK's businesses. According to BERR, in the UK in 2006 there were an estimated 4.5 million businesses about 99% of which were small businesses with fewer than 50 employees which provided 47% of the UK private sector employment. In 2006, 82.6% of hotel and restaurant businesses employed fewer than 50 people. These smaller employers rely heavily on the Institute to provide support and guidance to run their businesses. By engaging with and supporting all members, the Institute enables them to employ staff productively, run a successful business and contribute to the overall economy.

To ensure members get the support they need, the Institute provides valuable business resources through a number of different means. Members have free access to both a legal helpline for taxation issues, VAT, employment and company law and a separate Human Resources-focussed web service offering an extensive collection of free customisable HR templates, letter and contracts. The Institute itself publishes industry-specific Management Guides to further support members operating in the industry. Additional publications, such as the quarterly *Hospitality* magazine and the bi-monthly *CPD Newsletter* and *Membership News*, keep members current on industry news and legislation affecting their businesses as well as free or low cost resources for training themselves and their staff.

In addition, members get the support of qualified subject specialist librarians through the Enquiry Service. For example, a member recently requested a job description for her promotion

to Front Office Manager. She received a description of applicable duties and further information about how to use Institute resources to create a legally compliant employment contract, determine a suitable salary level and negotiate the final salary. Free access to new electronic resources – such as e-books and e-journals that are available 24 hours a day – supplement the services provided by the Institute. Members are never at a loss for information or support when it comes to running their businesses.

The Institute has been widely engaged in qualification developments over the past few years, building a new management framework and participating in the development of other awards. In consultation with the Sector Skills Council People 1st, the Institute has provided input for the new professional cookery qualifications and the emerging 14-19 hospitality diploma. All of these qualifications are designed to fully engage employers with the way in which learning is delivered in schools and colleges and to ensure that education outcomes meet their needs in a rapidly changing business world.

The new Institute of Hospitality management qualifications have been specifically designed to respond to the management training needs of companies within the Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Industries. Accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the qualifications are now an integral part of the Sector Skills Strategy currently being disseminated by People 1st. The individual units may be taken as stand alone awards for continuing professional development or employer training purposes and may be customised by integrating specific content into the units where required.

In consultation with employers and training providers the Institute has built upon the concept of a one day training programme in the development of the new units which are all supported by online learning resources and assessed electronically. All features which are designed to promote maximum flexibility for learners and to meet the needs of employers.

The vital underpinning role of any professional association is in setting industry standards and maintaining them through various recognition schemes. The Institute of Hospitality has Management Standards that are both mapped throughout its qualifications and used to benchmark programmes of study in accredited UK and international colleges and universities across the world. This Accreditation Scheme builds confidence in the applicability of qualifications to the world of work and exemplifies the multitude of good practice being carried out in centres of learning in the field of hospitality, leisure and tourism.

The Institute also engages employers by endorsing company training programmes as continuing professional development for industry professionals highlighting the wealth of training available in industry. As government examines the role for employer training in the emerging *Qualifications and Credit Framework*, Institute endorsement will surely provide confidence in the validity of the employer offer.

With the spotlight now on customer service in preparation for the Olympic Games in 2012 and as a result of widespread industry research, the Institute focus on Hospitality Assured, as part of its employer engagement strategy, is timely.

Hospitality Assured (HA) is the Standard for Service and Business Excellence in the hospitality industry. It focuses on ten steps to excellence:

1. Customer Research
2. The Customer Promise
3. Business Planning
4. Operational Planning
5. Standards of Performance
6. Resources
7. Training and Development
8. Service Delivery
9. Service Recovery
10. Customer Service Improvement

HA uses powerful business tools and objective external assessment to stimulate and measure performance improvement in service delivery and business excellence. Successful hospitality organisations are able to benchmark against the best standards, see increased profitability and demonstrate their results to existing and new customers.

HA is not limited to specific types of hospitality organisation and it is currently held by a wide range of businesses including educational establishments, hotels, care homes, hospital trusts, conference centres, cruise lines and catering outlets, demonstrating yet again the wide range of businesses represented in the hospitality field. HA is employer engagement through the application of service standards and yet another way in which the Institute is able to demonstrate how it can truly meet employers' needs.

The Tourism Society

Flo Powell

The Tourism Society is the leading membership association for individual tourism professionals. Established in 1977, the Society has over 1,000 members from all sectors of the diverse travel and tourism industry including hoteliers, travel agents, airlines, consultants, academics, tourist boards, tourist attractions and many more. Together they contribute to the Society's influence, as well as developing their own understanding and knowledge of tourism.

The Society organises a varied programme of nationwide meetings led by key industry figures, produces a quarterly journal with thought-provoking articles about hot topics in tourism, and has a membership whose views help to shape national and regional policy.

One of the Society's founding objectives was to 'raise professional standards in tourism'. With that in mind, the Society organised two conferences in 2008, in conjunction with ABTA and the Institute of Travel & Tourism, with the aim of bringing together tourism academics and employers to raise awareness of the issues that face tourism academics, students, graduates and the industry today.

With the huge boom of tourism courses over the last few years it has become apparent that more needs to be done to get tourism academics and the industry to develop discussion to ensure that tourism courses are relevant to the industry, that tourism graduates are being employed as much as possible by the tourism industry and that tourism teachers are receiving all the help and support they need.

The first Tourism Academics and Employers Conference, held in London in March, was hailed a significant success by over 80 delegates drawn from industry, universities, further education colleges, schools and private training providers. Speakers and workshop contributors came from leading industry players such as TUI UK, Thomas Cook, Merlin Entertainments, Superbreak and Carlson Wagonlit Travel, with academic and professional development input from the HE Academy, the Association of Tourism in Higher Education, People1st, AA Appointments, Travel Uni and New Frontiers.

The opening session, chaired by John Humphreys of People1st, focussed on curriculum content. Andy Smyth of TUI UK challenged colleges and universities to provide potential recruits with well-developed business and decision-making skills and commercial ability, as well as relevant academic knowledge related to the sector. Phil Barnfather of Thomas Cook and Sue Kavanagh of CWT joined Andy in calling for graduates to have realistic expectations of job roles.

There was all-round agreement that schools, colleges and universities should continue to develop stronger links with local businesses across the whole travel and tourism sector. This could lead to high quality work placements, the provision of speakers and early talent spotting. The success of the Diploma in Travel and Tourism, launching in 2010, will very much depend on the backing of employers and their support in helping to deliver a dynamic and exciting qualification for young people. Hundreds of employers and other key stakeholders have contributed to the diploma consultation phase, and the Diploma Development Partnership of People1st and GoSkills will be looking to engage particularly with employers and higher education in the year ahead.

There was widespread agreement amongst contributors and delegates that collaboration is the way forward.

"The future is about collaboration, and we must look at how lecturers and teachers get curriculum content from us and we get the right product from them" said Andy Smyth.

Sue Kavanagh proposed regular one-day events with industry input from key speakers to upskill lecturers and teachers on the latest industry practice, whilst academics can share their research.

The conference was repeated in June in Birmingham where the debate continued, with arguments put forward for the benefits of university degrees, apprenticeships, diplomas and further education courses. The delegates and panellists eventually agreed that the system will never be 'one size fits all' and that, in fact, the tourism education system in the UK provides a number of different routes that match the variety of needs and wants of those that wish to study the subject.

In continuation of this topic, the Society will produce a special issue of the quarterly journal *Tourism* in autumn 2008 focusing on *Tourism & Education* with features including the Youth Travel Market; The Travel & Tourism Diploma; From a Student's Perspective: Studying Tourism in the UK; Industry Continual Professional Development (CPD) Schemes; School Visits; and Gap Year Travel.

For more information on the Society, its membership and events, please visit www.tourismsociety.org, contact Flo Powell, Executive Director, on 020 8661 4636 or email flo@tourismsociety.org

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: The Seafood Restaurant, Padstow

Chris Dutton and Harvey Ells, University of Brighton and Filip Jicinsky, Seafood Restaurant, Padstow

Introduction

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) are defined as partnerships between business and higher education institutions or research organisations. They are predominantly found in the engineering and technology related industries. However, more recently these have been extended to encompass service industries. Most advanced economies attempt to improve competitiveness through the fostering of links between knowledge based organisations and industry. The UK government has made constant reference to a "knowledge driven economy" and in July 2005 the Trade and Industry Committee stated that: "the performance of the UK's knowledge-based industries will be crucial in raising the UK's productivity performance in the future" (House of Commons, Trade and Industry Report, 2005: 1).

Currently there are 1100 KTPs attracting £27m of grant funding from the UK government. They are designed to help businesses improve their competitiveness and profitability through use of the knowledge and skills that reside within academic institutions. At the same time, KTPs also help to inform the business relevance of knowledge based research and teaching in universities. They also demonstrate good return on investment in terms of increased turnover and profitability for the companies involved. Data from the DTI indicates that, on average, annual increases in profit before tax after the completion of a partnership is £291K per company with the highest recorded at £24m.

How Does it Work?

KTPs involve the forming of a strategic alliance between a business (known as the company partner) and an academic institute (known as the knowledge base partner.) This enables academics to lead rewarding and ongoing collaborations with innovative businesses who require access to skills and expertise to help their company develop.

The Partnership also involves one or more recently qualified people (known as Associates) to facilitate this transfer of skills and expertise. These individuals are employed by the knowledge-based partner. Academic supervisors provide guidance to the Associate who works within the company (usually for a two year period) on a project of strategic importance.

KTPs provide academics with the potential to:

- Apply knowledge and expertise to important business problems

- Develop business-relevant teaching and research materials
- Identify new research themes and undergraduate and postgraduate projects
- Publish high quality research papers
- Gain a relevant and improved understanding of business requirements and operations
- Potentially impact the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)
- Lead rewarding and ongoing collaborations with innovative businesses
- Assist strategic change in businesses
- Supervise and act as mentors for postgraduate students
- Work on company based projects

Total Number of Partnerships in the KTP Portfolio

The University of Brighton has a very strong background in successful partnerships and indeed has its own Collaborative Training Centre that supports academics and KTPs, and currently the University has 18 live projects. In 2006 the celebrated chef, Rick Stein, visited the University of Brighton's School of Service Management (SSM) to receive an honorary doctorate and to formally open its state of the art Culinary Arts Studio. Whilst he was with us it became apparent that his organisation, based in Padstow, Cornwall, had a desire to grow the retail operation and that this was being frustrated by a perceived lack of expert knowledge on retail processes and systems. The School proposed a joint bid for a KTP which was accepted by the company board and the bid writing process and project design began. The primary aim was:

To define and implement a retail business strategy for e-commerce mail order, merchandising and management control, reducing costs, and providing a platform for expansion.

The bid was successful and a £105,664, two year project approved.

In the spring of 2007 Filip Jicinsky, a recent BA (Hons) Retail Marketing graduate, was appointed to the post of Associate. Filip began work in June at Padstow, supported by supervisors Harvey Ells and Chris Dutton from the University of Brighton. Filip's role is to implement the detailed project plan through liaison with his supervisors and with the management team within the organisation.

The Collaborative Training Centre at the University of Brighton

Filip's first specific objective was to increase the turnover and profitability of the mail order and online retail offer of the organisation. In conjunction with the retail manager and the marketing manager a new website was designed and developed via an outside agency, and the operation of packing and distribution completely redefined and redesigned. One very early success was to examine and analyse various distribution models, and by appointing a new courier the organisation saved over 20% on its direct mail service.

Filip frequently draws on the expert knowledge of his supervisors and they visit once a month to guide the project and make local adjustments depending on the needs of the

business. Meetings and discussions with Filip are numerous but also common are discussions regarding the strategic directions with the General Manager, Marketing Manager, Retail Manager and various supervisors throughout the organisation. Each quarter a Local Management Committee (LMC) is convened comprising of Filip, the supervisors, senior managers within the organisation and a KTP advisor, to oversee development of the project.

Filip's work with the mail order/online part of the organisation is now complete. The website has been implemented and the supporting operation is sophisticated, efficient and cost effective. His next target is to examine the operation and merchandising of the physical shops – a delicatessen, and patisserie and gift shop. With the support of his supervisors and willingness of the organisation to embrace innovation and change, confidence for a successful project remains very high.

The Sheffield Area Restaurateurs Forum (SARF)

Stephen Ball, *Sheffield Hallam University*

The issue of engagement between universities, employers and communities has been at the forefront of the political and higher education agendas for some time. Over the last five years, fuelled by government enthusiasm for such engagement and through reviews and reports such as the Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration (2003) and the Leitch Review of Skills (2006), interest and attention on strengthening links between these parties has especially increased. Neither of these reports specifically referred to the hospitality industry, but reflections on collaboration between UK hospitality management higher education and the hospitality industry by myself were published in the March 2005 issue of *Hospitality*.

This article begins with a brief summary of the nature of traditional links between industry and hospitality management education. It then gives an insight into a new and very different form of engagement between industry, a university and the community, namely that between the Centre for International Hospitality Management Research (CIHMR) at Sheffield Hallam University, the Sheffield area restaurant industry and other city regional stakeholders. This is embodied through the Sheffield Area Restaurateurs Forum (SARF), and its operational parameters are outlined below.

Traditional Business – Hospitality Management Education Links

Historically hospitality management education in the UK has largely been driven by a vocational agenda where students have been educated in universities and colleges in preparation for managerial careers in the industry. This vocational orientation encouraged an interdependence of hospitality management education and the industry, and accentuated the value of individual industrial and educational organisations forging links and undertaking collaborative endeavours. Such links have existed since the first hotel and catering management degree courses commenced in the mid 1960s

and spread as degree and diploma courses developed. Both the hospitality industry and hospitality management education have enjoyed and benefited from these links.

The 1998 review of hospitality management education (HEFCE 98/15) reported that many hospitality management departments had connections with industry. Such links included staff development programmes and in-company training, award-bearing courses specifically designed and/or run for client companies, student projects, contract research and consultancy. Furthermore, continuing professional development opportunities gave access to higher education programmes at all levels through part-time courses, work-based learning (including foundation degrees) and distance open learning.

Possibly the greatest interaction between industry and courses occurs through work experience placements and graduate recruitment. Industry representatives regularly visit universities and colleges to learn about course developments and to

present their placement opportunities and graduate recruitment schemes to students, and academics visit placement students and their employers in the workplace. Many employers also participate in the assessment of accredited student placements. Other links include the involvement of industrialists in the review, development, external examining and delivery of the curriculum through, for example, sponsored student exercises, fieldtrips and visiting lecturers, and industry advisory panels.

Academia has made significant progress in applied research in the sector. However, contract research is not exploited by the hospitality industry as much as it could be. There are many opportunities where the strengths, knowledge and research expertise of industry and academia could be brought together to bring new insights and knowledge to inform policy and practice, to help solve industry problems, and to contribute to sustained business and economic performance.

A feature of industry-education connections is that they have typically been, with some exceptions, between particular individuals within industry and education rather than between parts/departments of organisations or between organisations more generally. Consequently links have frequently concentrated on issues and needs related to the responsibilities of individual practitioners and academics. Furthermore relationships have commonly been restricted to those between education and people from a few larger hospitality firms. The benefits of widespread, strategic and long term relationships have thus often been missed by both business and education. SARF breaks this mould as it involves small independent restaurant businesses, and a university research and business development centre wide in scope and set up for the long term.

Background to SARF

The CIHMR was established in 2005 to provide a thrust and supportive environment for research and publication, business development, knowledge transfer and related activities concerned with hospitality. The centre specialises in projects involving applied hospitality management research, business development, and management and professional development programmes for a range of national and international, private and public sector clients.

Sheffield Hallam has maintained a strong focus on the practical application of knowledge, the economic and social transformation of the city-region, and actively contributing to the community. An opportunity for the university to 'tick all these boxes' arose from the 'Regeneration on a plate' conference hosted by Sheffield City Council, City Development Division, in March 2006. This focussed on opportunities for locally owned independent restaurants and food producers in the regeneration of Sheffield. From this came the initial idea for a restaurant forum for the Sheffield area.

SARF Development Process

The CIHMR had an initial meeting with the City Development Division of Sheffield City Council and Business Link South Yorkshire in May 2006. Following further meetings with these two stakeholders and Sheffield Tourism at Sheffield City Council, Sheffield College, Business Link South Yorkshire, Yorkshire Forward and restaurateurs, during 2007, the SARF project developed. The next steps towards making it happen were the:

- production of a scoping document, budget proposal and action plan
- pump priming funding from South Yorkshire Destination Management Partnership for a 4 year period
- appointment of a business manager
- development of an external facing brand – Eat Sheffield – managed and operated by CIHMR

- internal university and external launch events in June 2007

Aims, Objectives and Activities of SARF

SARF represents and supports the Sheffield area restaurant sector and aims to promote and encourage a thriving and locally distinctive food offer in the Sheffield area; raise the profile of the sector; and enhance the area's reputation as a culinary and tourist destination. Continuous dialogue and the facilitation of better exchange of information between the stakeholders are vital to achieve these aims.

The key objectives are to:

- champion the high quality and diverse restaurant sector in the Sheffield area and promote the delivery of the highest standards of food and service
- encourage the use of the best fresh local food produce, encourage local supply chains and promote healthy eating in the sector
- champion best practice in the sector through annual awards
- provide a voice and networking opportunities for all members
- organise events that will raise the profile of Sheffield as a leading dining destination
- promote and market the leisure and entertainment offer of the city to residents, businesses, investors and visitors as a prime destination for all age groups

The following short and longer term objectives form a basis for the work and priorities towards achieving these key objectives.

Short term objectives are to:

- influence and contribute to business tourism within the region
- research the needs of the restaurant sector in the Sheffield area identifying key priorities for the industry

- develop a database of restaurants in the Sheffield area
- develop an annual awards scheme to reward best practice
- promote and raise awareness of eating out in the Sheffield area
- develop a website related to promoting restaurants in the Sheffield area
- develop an annual restaurant alfresco event for the Sheffield area
- coordinate SARF's contribution to any food/other festival in the Sheffield area
- develop PR and marketing of the restaurants in the Sheffield area
- provide networking events for members, targeting key themes

Longer term objectives are to:

- develop working partnerships between members, local and regional government agencies eg. Sheffield City Council, South Yorkshire Business Link, Sheffield Tourism, Yorkshire Forward
- develop sustainable working partnerships between members and local and regional food producers
- develop effective links between members and local higher and further education providers
- develop working partnerships with the leisure and entertainment sector within the Sheffield area

- promote and sustain development and regeneration
- encourage enterprise and new expanding business into the city
- sustain cultural tourism – creating new jobs opportunities and skills

Since its formation SARF has achieved and done much including:

- development of the *Eat Sheffield* portal www.eatshffield.com
- production of a membership package
- organisation of the ground breaking Sheffield area restaurant awards competition www.thestar.co.uk/food/Cousins-scoop-top-title-in.3983772.jp
- lobbying of various agencies on behalf of Sheffield area restaurants
- various research projects on ethical and local food usage in Sheffield restaurants using the SARF database
- knowledge transfer through the running of educational workshops for members
- facilitation of a number of student projects and academic publications.

Summary

Sheffield has been transforming rapidly over a number of years. There has been a dramatic upturn in investment in offices, education, culture and retail, and the resident population has grown significantly. However, there is a wealth of local sectors that are important both economically and culturally to the area which have not yet responded to the same degree. One of these is the restaurant sector. SARF was formed in response to this need and to fulfil a range of other objectives. It resembles a city region 'restaurant association' involving a host of different stakeholders with a university at the heart of it. SARF demonstrates Sheffield Hallam's commitment to the city region, and to strengthening of links with the community and a variety of stakeholders in the Sheffield area. It is innovative and exciting and a unique example of engagement between a university, industry and regional stakeholders.

SARF is currently working on a number of new and existing programmes. Further information about these and on SARF generally, can be obtained by contacting the author s.ball@shu.ac.uk

Working with the Travel Catering Industry

Peter Jones, University of Surrey

The International Travel Catering Association (ITCA) is a worldwide trade association whose membership includes operators (airlines, rail, and sea), caterers and suppliers (food and non-food). I have been the ITCA Chair of Production and Operations Management at the University of Surrey since 2000. In working with ITCA, and the industry in general, activity can be divided into five main areas: teaching, research, dissemination, advice/consultancy and media relations.

Teaching

We offer two elective modules in travel catering: *Travel Catering Operations*, a second year undergraduate module, and *Travel Catering Management*, a postgraduate one. Both of these are supported by the textbook *Flight Catering*, the second edition of which I authored and edited soon after becoming the ITCA Professor. A key feature of these modules is the high number of visiting speakers from industry that come

to talk about their specialist subjects such as menu planning and design, food safety, flight kitchen design, onboard service, logistics, and information systems. Surrey's proximity to both London Heathrow and Gatwick airports means there is a large pool of industry expertise close at hand that can be tapped into through the ITCA network.

As well as teaching at Surrey, I am also invited to give travel catering presentations to students in other institutions. I do so on an annual basis at WIHOGA in Dortmund, but have also done so at Cornell ESSEC in Paris and am currently discussing a virtual presentation to a class in the USA.

Research

All of the ITCA endowment goes towards supporting the Travel Catering Research Centre (TCRC) at the University of Surrey, which is directed by myself and staffed by a fulltime Research Officer. The Research Officer works full time on travel catering research, whereas I research travel catering as well as topics that I have had a long term interest in – revenue management, service productivity and innovation. Very few of the research projects undertaken have arisen from a direct request by the ITCA Board or an ITCA member. In most cases, informal discussion and networking has identified topics that are of interest to the membership and we have devised projects designed to address these needs. For the last three years we have been producing *Quarterly Market Intelligence Reports* that forecast the demand for airline meals in three different regions of the world – North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific (accounting for over 90% of all passengers). Another 'industry report' we produce is an annual *Trends Survey* that seeks to identify and prioritise the key trends affecting the industry and the potential impact of these.

As well as working on these two reports, the ITCA Research Officer routinely collects data on the industry, particularly rail and sea. This is in preparation for a third edition of *Flight Catering*, which will be re-titled *Travel Catering*. The Research Officer also assists in producing industry-style reports based on student research, as well as conducting ad hoc research into topics raised by external enquiries.

Given that students are able to study Travel Catering, some of them choose it as the subject of their Master's dissertation. For example, in 2007, four students did so and were supervised by myself. If a student does a good piece of work, which we judge would be of general interest to practitioners, we work with the student to revise their project and re-write it as an industry-style report.

The relatively high profile of travel catering at Surrey has also attracted PhD applications. One student has already completed her doctorate on the subject of mass customisation in flight catering, a second is currently researching the drivers of sustainability on the flight catering supply chain and a third started in July.

Dissemination – Publications and Conference Presentations

As with any field of research, we also seek to disseminate our work. One implication of having an endowed chair is that there are clearly two audiences for this – the academic community and practitioners. Hence any of the research undertaken may be presented as a conference paper (at both academic and industry events), submitted to a refereed journal, written up for a book chapter or published in a practitioner publication. For instance, in 2007 there was a chapter on mass customisation of in flight catering published in a book (which itself was a collection of the best papers from a conference), a chapter on flight catering in a textbook, and an article in the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*. In addition, I now write a regular column in *Onboard Hospitality*, which serves as ITCA's in-house magazine. There are also a number of working papers that are now available on Surrey Scholarship Online (<http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/>).

Advice and Consultancy

If ITCA get an enquiry for information about the industry, this is passed on to me, and many people contact me directly. Such enquiries come from three main sources – students, practitioners and the media (see below). Wherever possible I try to assist students, and can usually do so by referring them to my textbook or sending them copies of TCRC publications. Practitioner enquiries tend to be more specific and require more detailed responses, which may entail a face-to-face meeting or drafting a specific response by email. I welcome these enquiries as they extend the network of industry contacts, which is invaluable in supporting the research that we do. For example, in 2007 I received enquiries from caterers about industry trends and quality management, from airlines about developments in the supply chain, and from consulting firms about the size and scale of the industry.

Media and Public Relations

One of the most surprising things about having an endowed chair was the relatively high profile this gave with respect to the media. Initially this was due to the launch press release wherein I was described as the 'world's first and only professor of flight catering', which many in the media found of interest, albeit somewhat tongue in cheek. Subsequently I have been interviewed on television and radio, as well as quoted in broadsheets and magazines across the world.

I see this very much as part of my role – to disseminate what we know and have learned about the industry to a wider audience, rather than as a spokesperson on behalf

of the industry. I try to deal only in facts, rather than proffer opinions and ITCA have never once asked me to 'spin' any story for them.

Conclusion

Overall I have found working with ITCA and colleagues from the travel catering industry to be a highly positive experience. Everyone I have worked with has understood and respected the notion of academic freedom. This has allowed me to continue my research in other fields of enquiry, as well as assume duties and positions typically associated with the professoriate. Hence I am currently an associate dean in my Faculty, President of I-CHRIE and serving on the RAE Panel in Business and Management – all with their full support.

I think I am fortunate to have a chair endowed by an industry association as this preserves the notion that I am independent of any specific commercial enterprise, whilst creating a sense of me being part of the industry. For instance, we routinely

extend visits overseas by half a day or so in order to visit a flight kitchen or some other kind of operation in order to keep up-to-date with industry practice and extend our network.

I am not sure if there are any general principles to do with working with industry that can be drawn from the above. The ITCA relationship undoubtedly opens doors that might otherwise be closed, but having contacts is not enough. Practitioners are very busy people. They tend to make and maintain relationships that add value to their working lives. It is easy to see what an academic can get from industry – visiting speakers, access for research projects, and even funding. Academics need to make clear what they can give industry – usually their expertise – and present it to practitioners in ways that make it accessible and relevant.

Peter Jones is the ITCA Professor of Production and Operations Management and Director of the Travel Catering Research Centre at the University of Surrey. He is founding president of EuroCHRIE and is currently serving as International CHRIE's President.

Designing a Sports Development Degree Fit for the Industry

Rob Griffiths and Paul Rainer, University of Glamorgan

Background

The strategy for sport in Wales, Climbing Higher, has established ambitious targets of gaining 70% adult participation in physical activity by 2025. The University of Glamorgan is located in the heart of the South Wales Valleys and currently up to 70% of the adults in this region are not taking part in any physical activity (Sports Council for Wales, 2005). Furthermore the Sports Council of Wales Audit (2001) highlighted Rhondda Cynon Taf as having the lowest adult physical activity participation levels in Wales, a trend that is replicated by children aged (7-11) participating in extra curricular activity.

The undergraduate provision of sports programmes in South Wales is now significant, with over 700 students graduating each year in sports related courses. However, we felt that the provision of a programme that would allow students to develop vocational skills and experience was fundamental in supporting the specific challenges faced by the Welsh Assembly Government in terms of improving both physical activity levels and the health of the nation.

Consultation with Key Industry Partners

Consultation with two key industry partners, namely SkillsActive and the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM), was vital at the design stage. The university was delighted to become the first in Wales to be accredited by the ISRM,

reflecting the vocational nature of our courses, and the ISRM provided a crucial insight into the skills and knowledge required by the sector. Following this initial consultation, we saw an opportunity to create a business-based degree programme that would equip graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge to gain employment within the field of sports development. The structure of the course had to combine theory with practical and vocational skills that would be transferable into the workplace. It was also essential to include the national occupational standards for sports development within the modules.

Skills Active research conducted in 2005 highlighted the key tasks that characterise sports development work and so the following key business skills were included within the degree:

- partnership work, project planning and management, liaison and negotiation, monitoring and evaluation
- financial and budgetary control
- inter-agency working, decision making processes, governance at a 'micro' level, organisational change, consultation processes

- management of staff and marketing
- strategic planning

In addition to the subject specific knowledge, employers stated that students would need the following pre-requisites to work within the sector:

- industry experience in either a paid or voluntary capacity
- personal qualities, such as willingness to learn, 'people skills' and enthusiasm
- coaching qualifications

Industry Experience

The integration of community placements within the programme allows our undergraduates to develop vocational skills and experience, and helps address the local and national challenges outlined by the Assembly. The partnerships are designed to be mutually beneficial as the students act as 'community volunteers', helping to increase participation rates in sport and physical activity.

Students spend their first year at university developing the skills required to work within the community and students also complete a number of nationally recognised coaching awards in a variety of sports. Embedded within the second and third years are a number of community based modules that require students to deliver sports sessions and organise clubs. Students spend 15 weeks during the second year running Dragon Sports Clubs in local primary schools and 20 weeks in their final year organising after-school clubs in secondary schools as part of the 5x60 programme. The focus is on creating an enjoyable, safe and positive experience for the children, which will hopefully result in the children continuing their participation in physical activity into adulthood. Students are assessed via a number of techniques, including reflective logbooks, reports, practical coaching sessions and through the organisation of sports events.

Success of the projects is reliant upon the establishment of a multi agency partnership. Current partners include the RCT Sports Development Unit, the Teaching Local Health Board and the schools themselves. The partnership has been able to secure significant funding to allow students to gain a number of national governing body coaching awards. Experiential learning underpins the modules, with students required to reflect on the challenges that they face, and the placements allow them to experience the complexities of working within the sports development sector. To this extent the role of the Sports Development Unit is crucial as they provide the training for students, organise placements, conduct practical assessments and mentor the students: a significant challenge with over 120 students currently on placement.

A key objective of Climbing Higher, aligned with the Olympic vision, is to improve the physical activity levels of young children, with an aim to get at least 90% of boys and girls of secondary school age taking part in sport and physical activity for at least 60 minutes, five times a week. Many of the projects do not necessarily focus on sport, but the development of health and lifelong physical activity, through engaging children in multi-skills physical activity. Future projects will not exclusively focus on young children, but will be delivered to adults, and we are hoping to combine initiatives to focus on inter-generational learning.

For our students, the future employment opportunities in Wales are very exciting. The Welsh Assembly Government plans to employ 5x60 officers in every secondary school in Wales by 2009, each fully equipped to coordinate the new secondary school specific extra-curricular programme. The community projects integrated within the academic programmes will provide the students with the knowledge and experience to work in such roles following graduation. Inevitably the success of the programme may be measured by how many students gain employment within the sector. However, what is certain is that the sustainability of the programme is largely dependent upon the relationship with key external industry partners, and it is hoped that this will continue to prosper.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: the Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Industry in Wales

Paul Barrett,
UWIC

The main thrust of universities in the 20th century was to teach students and create new knowledge through research, although a UK Government White Paper published in July 2003 which proposed cutting research in many universities challenged this. In the Cardiff School of Management at UWIC, where new knowledge and learning comes from and is then applied to the areas of life where it can make a difference is termed knowledge transfer. To date, the School has worked on more *knowledge transfer* programmes in the tourism, leisure and hospitality (TLH) sector than any other university in Britain.

Even though tourism is now the biggest industry in the world (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2003 – 2004), the implication of the knowledge-driven economy for the hospitality, tourism and leisure industry has yet to be fully considered. The knowledge based economy is just as important to the future

competitiveness of the tourism industry in Wales as the science and engineering base is to the UK economy, and the potential excellence of its research and development base is crucial to its capacity to respond effectively to competition, both at home and globally. For years the Welsh economy has suffered from a significant balance of payments deficit vis-à-vis tourism i.e. Welsh people spend much more money on holidays overseas than they, together with other visitors, spend in Wales. No accurate figures are currently available, although work is under way on satellite accounts both in Wales and Scotland to rectify this. For now we have to rely on figures from the UK Office for National Statistics. In May 2003 they published a paper on UK Travel and Tourism showing that in the three months to March 2003, the difference between earnings and expenditure resulted in a deficit to the whole of the UK of £4,050 million, £290 million more than in the previous three months.

Whilst we see the tourism industry facing many of the same problems as other industries, the understanding of and involvement with the knowledge economy is weak. Global networks are forming in response to opportunities for leading firms to collaborate with cutting edge science and technology. For example, the Global Research Council, based in South Africa, leads an alliance of nine knowledge-intensive organisations from around the world with the aim of exploring the cumulative knowledge and expertise of the participants to the benefit of society at large. Similarly, technology transfer between universities and industry in the UK has existed for many years. It was with this in mind that the Cardiff School of Management made the groundbreaking decision to appoint someone to be responsible for setting up a system of knowledge transfer between the School and the TLH industry in Wales and I was appointed in 2000.

As the knowledge transfer work progressed, it became apparent that evaluative research into this area would be useful in order to gain a better understanding of the whole process. Four examples of knowledge transfer partnerships (KTPs) between UWIC and the TLH industry in Wales were examined. All programmes were funded by the TTI and led by UWIC staff.

The geographic spread of the schemes was wide, extending from Bala in north Wales, Machynlleth in mid Wales, Saundersfoot in west Wales to Trehafod in south-east Wales, and included an outdoor activity centre, two hotels and a consortium of tourist attractions. The businesses had grown in a relatively capital-poor environment, Wales having one of the lowest GDPs of any of the regions in the UK. All companies benefited in that they were essentially service rather than manufacturing based and had limited capital needs; although the hotel in Saundersfoot went through a £4m refurbishment with the aim of being upgraded to a five star establishment.

The fact that the companies wanted to take on Associates (the person responsible for the knowledge transfer) meant that they were in a state of expansion and were probably role models,

in some way, for other companies in the service/leisure sector. Although all four programmes were very successful, they did not result in the creation of a large number of jobs. The growth of the companies has been satisfactory for the owners/managers, but not spectacular, and it is possible that they have not totally fulfilled their potential.

One of the features of the lack of growth of business in the tourism sector in Wales is that there is not a pre-existing hinterland of academic entrepreneurial experience as exists, for example, within the computer industry in Silicon Valley, which may act as a spur to greater entrepreneurial activity and encourage a more aggressive vision. Hence the Cardiff School of Management stands alone and companies have little other support from the academic sector.

Promotion of knowledge transfer is seen by key members of the University's management team as a means of stimulating the economy and gaining an edge on the competition, not just within Britain, but also the rest of the world. University staff have been seen to be the prime movers in this process and, at the moment, it is because of them that the knowledge transfer process takes place. However, the initiation of knowledge transfer will probably rest with staff working on programmes and myself because, even though staff are exhorted to seek outside funding opportunities, on a more practical day-to-day level, pressures operate in the reverse direction. For example, although relationships with companies have been extremely valuable, providing essential contacts and insights into the marketplace, when researchers are evaluated for the various assessment exercises current in British higher education, these contacts are not taken into account and only peer-reviewed grants are included in evaluation. This means that, as a matter of common sense, a UWIC academic will devote most of their energies in seeking funding from research councils, charities and other such bodies, rather than from KTPs. Additionally, the unit of output considered in assessment in this country is the published paper rather than the amount of successful links involving knowledge transfer.

The key finding of research carried out on knowledge transfer in the TLH sector in Wales is that KTPs have worked very well in all the areas of the sector and all the regions of Wales, and that all the players involved have been more than satisfied with the outcomes. However, I am convinced that more effective pathways of transformation can be found. Perhaps undergraduates could be considered as part of the knowledge transfer chain or they could do placements working on certain areas, for example in web development or e-commerce, under the guidance of the associate.

University staff aided the four companies studied and, whilst everyone was very satisfied with the results, it is possible that they may have benefited from input from other disciplines such as sports, the arts or even the sciences. Drawing people with diverse talents into the process could make the transfer process

more effective by harnessing more of the available resources.

The research undertaken has suggested some characteristics of successful KTPs in the tourism industry, as well as proposed development actions. However, some shortcomings in the research will readily be apparent and future work could be undertaken in order to expand on these findings.

The study reported here only describes a small number of companies, from which statistically significant conclusions cannot be drawn. A future study could look at a larger number of companies. A longitudinal examination of knowledge transfer in other fields could uncover the evolving influences that are experienced during the process. It has been identified that knowledge transfer is positively affected by the level of economic development of the recipients. It may be possible to determine at what level of development a company becomes ready for a KTP. It would be instructive to undertake a more detailed study of the University environment itself to identify the structures of traditions and norms, which have a strong influence on the process of knowledge transfer in all the fields that the University works in.

The Value of Real Working Environments in Developing Employability

**Crispin Farbrother
and Simon Thomas,**
Bournemouth University

Introduction

For some time, the School of Services Management (SSM) at Bournemouth University and many other schools, within HEIs, offering hospitality courses have been challenged to reconsider and reconfigure the skills based learning of its hospitality students. For many institutions this has been prompted by a number of drivers, not least the growing evidence that a modern university must acknowledge the demands of an increasingly diverse cohort of learners. The closure of some traditional training restaurants has also had other drivers including growing demand on resources, space and budgets particularly with the change in undergraduate funding where the band C and B weighting was reduced. Many schools have, and are, independently looking at a variety of delivery models and this article shows how the SSM has moved away from the traditional training restaurant approach and utilised a different strategy for the delivery of their practical curriculum. The team delivering the curriculum is now 48 months into the new delivery method and this article reflects on this.

The Bournemouth Experience

The above drivers, and in particular the university's financial management systems where overheads are charged in relation to space occupied led to a number of models being considered during early 2004. Following a review of what was needed to achieve the vocational learning demands of the courses, a working group was set up. Various options were considered and it was decided to close the training restaurant and a three-pronged approach was phased in over two years (Farbrother and Dutton, 2005). This was: running the University's staff dining facilities; enhancing the HAVE project to a compulsory status; and a computer simulation exercise to support management decision-making. The first prong commenced in 2004. The second two followed in 2005. However, the HAVE project has gone onto the back burner and the IT simulation is taking a little longer than planned as we are unable to source a suitable and complimentary system.

Whilst the approach to learning has been redesigned it has been done so to retain the strengths of previous provision. The previous strengths were based on the premise that there was a desire to reflect industry practice with real commercial environments

and the diversity of the industry. Therefore a working environment that allows the continuation of the development of the wide range of skills needed to prepare students for employment is required.

The traditional training restaurant has been replaced with the staff dining facilities. However, the supporting general laboratories and the microbiology lab are retained as essential elements of the learning environment.

Where Are We Now?

We have reached the end of the 2007/8 academic year and the restaurant is trading well, with high levels of customer satisfaction and an increase in till income from about £600 to over £2,000 per week on average. There has been only one minor price increase over the time period. The quality of food has significantly increased and some capital investment has improved the kitchen facilities, with a new kitchen in the beginning and restaurant furniture during 2007. Whilst table service has been added, the main business is still counter service. A new take away counter has also been added this year.

Customers also have longer opening hours, a larger menu, fresher food, higher staff to customer ratio, and a choice of counter or table service. These are just some of the new benefits.

The principal aim of the restaurant experience is to prepare students on hospitality programmes for employment with appropriate sets of skills, knowledge and personal attributes.

Employers want graduates with knowledge; intellect; willingness to learn; self-management; communication; team-working and interpersonal skills (Harvey et al., 1997). Valued attributes include being able to work under pressure, commitment, working varied hours, dependability, getting on with people, imagination/creativity, and a willingness to learn (Yorke, 1999).

In order to enable students to achieve competence in these types of skills, the curriculum must be sufficiently robust and good curriculum design should help learners to construct understanding of the subject matter and develop skilful practices, or 'skills' (Mantz and Knight, 2006).

Students are thus involved in all operational and management aspects of the restaurant encompassing stores, production, back of house, support office and food service functions. Students spend a total of 10 weeks full time through the first year and the second year in "employment" within the staff restaurant environment. Second year students take on the role of a management team part way through their year and operate all aspects of the business unit.

Student benefits:

- provides a protected yet real food service environment for skills development across practical and interpersonal areas
- product knowledge, development and food production skills are retained as a core element of course provision
- customer service, communication and the development of other interpersonal skills remain a core element of the course
- students are active in the area for two years and therefore other units can link with a standard model for finance, marketing, HR etc
- the environment allows opportunities for problem solving and decision making on a day to day basis
- retaining core operations allows health and safety at work, food hygiene and safety etc to be directly applied within the learning environment
- the opportunity to inspire an interest in food which is currently missing due to the lack of exposure in schools

Our research over the past 3 years clearly shows that students benefit from the experiential learning and development carried out within the working environment. Students complete questionnaires during their placement year asking them to reflect on their first and second year. The questionnaire results clearly identify the practical environment as being the key area in preparing students for employment. This appears to be the case whether or not students take their placement within a food and beverage operation.

In addition, what is also of interest is the significant increase in general awareness of the course and the students across the university. The change in operation has raised the course profile and enhanced the quality of staff dining at the university. A welfare benefit for all!

How We Got Here

Reactions to focus groups early on and the weekly meetings with students and staff has meant a number of changes have been made from the original starting point in order to get to the present position of success for both students, customers and the budget holder.

Research from the first year of activity in 2004/05 indicated that we needed to:

- move student perception away from one of "dinner ladies" and enable them to step beyond the counter service and approach the learning environment from a food service management contract perspective
- have a staffing structure that was sufficient to meet flexible learning needs, staff sickness and holiday requirements — we needed to avoid the use of agency staff as this gave insufficient quality control and limited learning
- ensure that second year "management" students felt as though they had guidance when empowered
- ensure supporting academic modules reinforce practical learning through academic underpinning
- ensure consistency of guidance from academic and training staff
- be clear that where empowerment is being encouraged then clear boundaries are needed
- establish a standard of performance manual for daily duties and routines, to avoid confusion and misunderstanding for all concerned
- ensure that when students are training other students that there is still some staff control
- ensure that students are able to attain a variety of work experiences

Findings from the review meetings in 2006, 2007 and 2008 have reinforced some of the above points and show that each year we need to get a little better at what we do.

With the continued success of the operation the capacity and throughput increases each year, thus providing a much more realistic work environment. The restaurant is often full. In addition students now have the opportunity to experience a much wider area of operations management spanning from fine dining to pot wash (yes, pot wash). As potential managers, we believe that it is important that students gain as much insight into the way operations are managed and this includes menial tasks as well as management decision making. Whilst placement years may be part of the students' development, for the employer it is

a job and students are expected to arrive with the competences and skills indicated previously. Our evaluation has shown that we appear to meet industry needs and further research with employers is planned in the near future.

References are available at:

www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

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Employer Engagement: A Case Study of The Green Training Company

Introduction

The Green Training Company (GTC) is a collaborative venture between Sandra Barnes-Keywood, Old Chapel Forge B&B Bognor Regis, and Dr Andrew Clegg, Subject Leader for Tourism Management at the University of Chichester. The aim of the training offered by the GTC is to provide a supportive, step-by-step approach to accreditation in the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) (www.green-business.co.uk), drawing on the expertise of industry trainers and green tourism business champions that have been successful in developing their own green credentials. The key driver of the training is to 'de-mystify' the concept of green tourism, itself a major barrier to business engagement, and relate green tourism to achievable, realistic and practical actions that give businesses the confidence and encouragement to engage in green accreditation.

Background

Green accreditation and the development of green credentials is now seen as a unique selling point for tourism businesses, not only in terms of cost-savings derived from energy efficiency gains but also the added-value that promoting green tourism can add to the overall quality of the visitor experience. Underpinning the perceived legitimacy of green tourism, particularly from the consumer perspective, has been the emergence and emphasis placed on green accreditation schemes.

The GTBS is the largest global accreditation programme for green tourism. First established in 1997, the GTBS now has in excess of 1,400 members across the UK (GTBS, 2008). Businesses opting to join the scheme are assessed by a qualified grading advisor against a set of detailed criteria, with points awarded for actions covering a range of areas including energy and waste efficiency, biodiversity, purchasing decisions, information provision, monitoring and management. Businesses that meet the required standard, receive a Bronze, Silver, or Gold award based on their level of achievement. The current network of members is comprised of a wide range of business types, including accommodation providers, visitor attractions, visitor centres and corporate offices.

Training work undertaken for Tourism South East by the University of Chichester since 2000, has consistently shown that many businesses, while incredibly keen to be

Andrew Clegg,
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green, have a very narrow and limited understanding of what green tourism is about, and largely relate the concept to energy efficiency and environmental measures such as recycling. However, energy efficiency is only one small part of the overall GTBS criteria, and the aim of the training is to encourage businesses to understand the broader social, economic and environmental remit, emphasised by the 'quadruple bottom line' of the VICE model which covers the interaction between visitors, the industry that serves them, the community that hosts them and their collective impact on and response to the environment where it all takes place (Partners for England, 2008). Advocated by Tourism Together, and central to 'Place Making - A Charter for Destination Management', recently published by Partners for England, the VICE model provides an effective management tool, facilitating a coherent and holistic view of a destination, which allows all related stakeholders

to recognise the role they can play in supporting a sustainable visitor economy.

The credibility and legitimacy of training and advisory support offered by the GTC is centred on the combined experience of Sandra and myself. Sandra provides the practical business experience and 'know-how' of an established green tourism business, and I provide the academic context, and the training design and delivery expertise.

A View from Business (Sandra)

The establishment of the Green Training Company is the formalisation of a long association with the University of Chichester. In 2004, I attended a green tourism course delivered by Tourism South East and supported by the University. Recognising the value of green tourism, I invested £250,000 into renovating my business, with a view to getting green accreditation. We were awarded a gold award on our first inspection and the business has gone from strength to strength and now our occupancy levels are 89.6% all year.

Working with the University I am now in a position to help fellow businesses across the country recognise the potential of their own green credentials. I am also a guest speaker on the Tourism Management degree, and discuss key areas such as best practice in green tourism, small business management, e-commerce and entrepreneurship.

A View from the University of Chichester (Andrew)

From a University perspective, working with industry has influenced module design, and provided valuable opportunities to embed employer engagement across the programme in key areas such as work placement, fieldtrips, student-led consultancy work

and assessment. Training work has also influenced further research and consultancy activity. For example, the University is working with the GTBS to undertake a national survey of GTBS members and look in detail at the impact of green accreditation on business operations and the visitor experience. The GTC contributes to research and scholarly activity, and the demonstrable link with industry underpins the legitimacy and quality of the student experience.

Course Delivery and Feedback

Tourism South East contracted the GTC to deliver training across the South East region, as part of their wider remit to support sustainable tourism development. The initial 12-month period was used to pilot the training and a number of free seminars have been run to encourage business awareness and engagement.

In total, nine courses have been delivered across the region, 68 businesses (in excess of 100 delegates) have attended and 18 businesses have signed up to the GTBS, a conversion rate of 26%. Accreditation is a slow process and in the South East region alone there are only 112 GTBS businesses. Evaluation of the training has been very positive and the overall satisfaction score for training is 8.9 out of 10.

While not all the businesses that have attended the courses are formally accrediting their green credentials, the training is making them more aware of green issues on a day-to-day basis. The success of the training in encouraging a 'sea-change' in business attitudes is illustrated by feedback from delegates:

- Hill Farm Centre, Northmoor Trust, South Oxfordshire
As a result of some of the discussions at the Understanding Green Tourism workshop I have been able to put together a decent action plan of how to communicate to our visitors the ways in which the Hill Farm Centre is fulfilling its environmental policies. I have also been able to exchange some useful money saving tips with the rest of my colleagues. Always useful when you work for a charity!
- Bedford Lodge, B&B, Isle of Wight
The Green Training Company really inspired me to look at my green marketing in a different light. It's not about lightbulbs; it's about being innovative and really participating in my local community. The course structure was engaging and unravelled a lot of myths about green tourism. I now feel I can advance my business being green by being proud of our achievements.

Conclusion

The GTC provides an example of the success of a collaborative enterprise that typifies the current emphasis on employer engagement. As Andrea Nichols, Director of the Green Tourism Business Scheme points out:

The Green Training Company has supported the GTBS by helping businesses to recognise the rationale for green tourism, and giving businesses the ability to develop their own green credentials, and the confidence to apply for green accreditation.

The GTC is now working with VisitBritain to pilot training in the East Midlands, to support the national rollout of the Green Start programme.

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

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Use of Realistic Environments for Teaching Foundation Degrees in the Management of Licensed Premises

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Introduction

One of the key motivators underlying the introduction of Foundation Degrees (FD) was to give people the opportunity to undertake a higher education qualification whilst in employment which would take into consideration their previous vocational and academic experience (DfES, 2003). However, despite the Hospitality Training Foundation (HtF) identifying the relevance of these new qualifications to the hospitality sector (HtF, 2001; 2002), the experience of City College Plymouth was that the hospitality FDs recruited low numbers, leading to the assumption that neither employers nor potential learners appeared to be aware of these benefits

A Network Hospitality Initiative was established in 2004 to bring together representatives from local hotels, restaurants and other regional stakeholders (e.g. British Institute of Innkeepers) to promote links between the college and employers. This initiative proved highly successful and was recognised nationally through the award of Centre of Vocational Excellence status. Despite strong employer links, recruitment and subsequent retention of learners, particularly those studying part time on the FD in the management of licensed premises, remained disappointingly low.

Therefore in 2005, with the support of a Higher Education Learning Partnership (HELP) Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) Teaching Fellowship Award, a research project was undertaken to investigate the relevance of hospitality FDs for employers and also the needs of the learners, particularly those studying part time, to identify the barriers to their learning success.

Methods

A questionnaire was sent out to 25 employers who were members of the Network Hospitality initiative, of which 15 responded. This questionnaire explored employers' understandings of the various qualifications their employees may have and the skills they give them. It also questioned employers on their willingness to contribute to the design, delivery and assessment of modules on FDs.

A second questionnaire was sent out to past and present students who either were undertaking, or had already completed, a level 3 qualification (e.g. National Diploma/NVQ level 3) that would serve as a progression route onto FDs. Their opinions were sought in order to explore their willingness to progress and their perceptions of the FD. In total 45 questionnaires were distributed and completed by the current level 3 students and 15 responses were obtained from past students. The questionnaire was also sent out to the 16 FD students registered on the course in the 2005/06 academic year to explore their perceptions of the FD.

Findings

Employers

Employers cited the vocational skill base of potential employees as being of primary importance when recruiting. They demonstrated an interest in supporting

the development of their staff, as long as these activities did not negatively affect their business. Despite this positive response to staff development, employers were generally unaware of the options available beyond level three. The willingness of employers to support the development of their staff appeared to depend largely on the size of the business. The smaller hospitality employers generally had limited opportunities for staff development, perhaps indicating financial constraints or a lack of wider appreciation of the potential benefits to their business from the development of employees.

The employers viewed City College Plymouth as providing expert training and education for their staff and therefore were keen to contribute to the future development of courses, particularly if it would have a direct benefit to their business. Their proposed level of engagement with the college was variable but they expressed an interest in acting as mentors to their staff whilst on courses offered by the college. Employers were keen to promote the accreditation of prior experience to ensure appropriate recognition of employees' existing expertise and skills. They also wanted to explore the use of their workplaces to provide training, with college lecturers delivering courses in the workplace rather than at the college.

Level 3 Students

The majority of past and present level 3 learners had not considered undertaking a FD as they appeared intimidated by the perceived nature of the qualification. Many felt that FDs were not accessible due to their vocational backgrounds and their current commitments. This

reflects the profile of hospitality students at City College Plymouth, who often entered the hospitality industry due to a lack of school qualifications. Therefore they generally viewed career progression in the industry as being primarily due to their hard work and development of the necessary practical skills, rather than their academic ability.

The level 3 students also felt that there was an apparent mismatch between the modes of study, delivery and assessment for the FD, which were not necessarily tailored to their vocational backgrounds. The part time FD, which is the route the majority of level three learners would wish to study by, was delivered over three years with an emphasis on classroom based delivery and written assignments. Some students felt that this style of delivery and assessment was not suited to their primarily vocational skills base and so the course was not appropriate to meet their learning styles or needs. For these students this may indicate a general lack of confidence in their own abilities, particularly for those who may be returning to education.

The level 3 learners did not necessarily view the FD as directly relevant to them and their chosen career. This was attributed to the titles of courses and modules, which tended to refer to general aspects of hospitality training, rather than specific skills or areas of potential interest to students. Similar issues were identified by Maguire (2005) in research undertaken to explore whether hospitality foundation degrees were meeting the expectations of learners.

The limited progression of level three students to FDs also appeared to represent a missed opportunity on the part of the college. Past students had received little or no progression information regarding FD opportunities at the college.

Foundation Degree Students

The current FD students were generally happy with the format of the course. They appreciated the small group sizes and opportunities for individual support. The majority of the students were full time, which in reality equates to two and a half days in college per week, so they could continue to work whilst they studied. They tended to be in casual employment and therefore viewed the FD as potentially enhancing their employability following graduation. Interestingly, although they had progressed internally from the vocational courses to the FD, none of the students wanted to progress on to the final year of an honours degree, as they generally felt that they had achieved their learning goals. However, a small number did cite general disenchantment with either education or the hospitality industry as the reason behind their decision not to continue with their studies.

Recommendations

Based on the questionnaires completed by the employers and students, several key areas for course promotion and development were identified, which included:

- Further development of FD provision and delivery, particularly for part time students, to ensure they gain "realistic" work experience which will be directly applicable to their chosen career;
- Formal recognition of the existing vocational experience of students;
- Development of a structured approach to engagement of hospitality employers at City College Plymouth and more widely through the network of partner colleges affiliated with the University of Plymouth.

Postscript – Two Years On

Since this study was completed, the hospitality FDs have been redeveloped taking into account the recommendations listed above, to ensure that the needs of students and employers are being addressed. Since this redevelopment there has been an increase in the number of students undertaking FDs from 16 in 2006 to 50 in 2008, with approximately half of these students studying part time. This may reflect the overall trend nationally of increased uptake of FDs by a diverse range of learners (HEFCE, 2008). It may also demonstrate the advantages of actively engaging with employers, as amongst the employers involved with the Network Hospitality Initiative, it has promoted the accessibility of FDs with their employees and ensured students are gaining the relevant skills. Employers are also beginning to take a more active role in the design and assessment of modules, a level of engagement which they did not necessarily consider prior to this research project. The hospitality FDs at City College Plymouth are continuing to develop and expand. Currently new modes of flexible delivery are being explored through bite size provision to further promote the accessibility of FDs to hospitality employers and employees throughout the region.

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

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Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: Effective Working Relationships – An Associate Perspective

Axel Klenert,
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Introduction

"Higher education and the business community operated in a relatively static environment in the 1950s and 1960s, characterised by a closed system orientation with little or no interaction with the environment" (Yasin *et al.*, 2000: 227).

One of the solutions to improving this lack of interaction and engagement between employers and higher education in the UK includes Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), established in 1975 and previously known as Teaching Company Schemes (TCS). Research has shown that the benefits KTPs bring to an organisation are promoting organisational change (Peattie, 1993), enhancing knowledge transfer between academia and industry (Klenert and Rimmington, 2003) and bringing value to the all the parties involved (Halls, 2005).

KTPs typically involve a project team comprising of:

- a project consultant who acts on behalf of government to ensure that project timelines and focus are adhered to
- a KTP associate who is a young well qualified person of high calibre employed to work on the project full time
- an industry sponsor who is a senior person in the company who takes ownership of the project and facilitates its development
- a lead academic with established expertise in the area, where the lead academic's university is paid to enable time to be dedicated to the project

Given the number of team members involved it is important that any working relationship is effective in order for the

project to meet its goals successfully to the mutual satisfaction of all participating members. Research into successful collaboration in the form of partnerships identifies some key essential characteristics such as good communication, openness, effective planning, ethos and direction (Trafford and Proctor, 2006).

This article reviews some of the key characteristics that contributed to the effective working relationship of a KTP project between the Department of Hospitality Leisure and Tourism Management at Oxford Brookes University (HLTM) and Scher International, now Taylor Nelson Sofres Hospitality & Leisure (TNS H&L) division. This was one of only a few KTP sponsored projects focused on the UK hospitality industry. I was the KTP associate on this project so this article is from an associate's perspective and highlights the key characteristics that made for a successful project.

Concept of KTP Projects

KTP projects are based on a UK-wide programme funded by the Technology Strategy Group and 18 other funding institutions. Previously KTPs were run under the umbrella of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The partnership works on the basis that an associate of high calibre works in the company. The associate may be a bright undergraduate, already have a Master's qualification or be a post doctoral researcher. The project length is flexible, from one to three years (KTP, 2007)

Project Background

Brookes and Scher International bid successfully for a KTP project in 1999. This application was based on developing an existing amicable relationship and enabled Scher to gain necessary funds for further research and development (R&D). At the start of the project, Scher specialised in training, service-delivery and customers-satisfaction measurement in the hospitality and leisure industry. One of Scher's key products, the Scher/BHA benchmark, needed to be reviewed in terms of development and innovation to ensure sustainability. As with all KTP projects, as associate I was based at the company and had the advantage of having conducted previous Master's level research focused on customer feedback techniques and involving interviews with key industry management figures in the UK.

The project goals included:

- developing a rigorous and robust methodology for benchmarking customer service in service organisations
- revising and implementing the methodology for benchmarking customer service in the hotel industry
- exploring opportunities for applying the customer service benchmark to other industries in the service sector
- developing, implementing and reviewing a methodology for monitoring the key dimensions of customer satisfaction and retention in hotels
- incorporating the resultant methodologies into a benchmarking software application

Scher was a relatively small independent company with around 30 employees at the time of the project so the KTP provided a unique chance to strengthen Scher's market position. However, the challenge was to ensure that the KTP was successful

from the first day as a large degree of the company's R&D was dependent on the project. Consequently, I had to not only meet the academic requirements but, more importantly, possess the right set of social skills in order to create a successful working partnership between all parties involved.

Maintaining Effective Working Relationships

In terms of this particular project, I found that there were several key characteristics that were pivotal to maintaining an effective working relationship, namely:

- the associate role itself
- suitability of the partners at project initiation
- communication levels between the team members
- effective planning

In retrospect, one of the key elements that contributed to the successful completion of the project was the continuously high level of involvement of all partners, through regular meetings and review presentations, but even more so by a constant flow of communication initiated by myself. The work involved a large element of primary and secondary research, but it also included taking the role of communication facilitator to sustain a constant flow of information between the various stakeholders.

As well as working to meet the main project goals it soon became evident how crucial it was to be self-driven and maintain a constant exchange of information throughout the project. For example the relationship with the lead academic at Brookes involved not just meetings for the project but also writing papers for and attending key conferences together, and sharing project developments and information with undergraduate and postgraduate students at Brookes.

In addition to quarterly meetings that were part of the KTP structure, constant communication was promoted within the team by telephone and email, and this helped to build trust. In particular activities that fostered positive communication included a joint TNS/Oxford Brookes University online conference that lasted for 12 months and facilitated an exchange of views about service-quality and customer-satisfaction, and the benchmarking of performance. The online conference meant that I was very involved in communicating with the technical team within the company in order to resolve any problems and meant that planning had to be precise in order to meet project goals.

Given that the project was within a social science context it warranted precise goals, especially within the area of the highly subjective notion of service delivery and customer satisfaction measurement. Having precise goals also impacted positively in terms of cost and time savings. This gave the whole project a more focussed direction. In retrospect, an

important element was setting objectives of a defined nature and focussing on them rigorously.

This project began from a positive standpoint given that Scher already had an established working relationship with Brookes and the joint application for the KTP project served to strengthen this relationship further. Brookes was certainly a common denominator between the stakeholders as it was the academic partner and also both the associate and the managing director had completed Master's degrees at the University, and therefore had a good understanding of the institution. Furthermore, I had a keen interest in feedback techniques/measurement of customer service delivery and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry, which was shared by the lead academic and which was a main business proposition of Scher. There was also a deep understanding of the industry itself, which was shared by all of the four key stakeholders and thus they had a common, industry-specific way of communicating.

Limitations

The biggest limitation is the rather long lead time it takes to set up a KTP and the time for it to take off. In today's fast changing commercial environment, setting objectives in the context of a small company and then having an associate working on a project for two, sometimes three years, provides a high risk of the project being out-of-date by the time it is finished.

On the social side, there are sometimes clear situations where cultures clash, be it the university vs the company culture or, at the individual level, the respective understanding of the other stakeholders' perspectives. This aspect requires even more sensitive communication and information needs to be exchanged in a professional manner in order to complete projects successfully.

Conclusion

This particular KTP was very successful. First and foremost it was completed within the specified time period of two years. From a topic-specific perspective it was also successful as it delivered on a range of the set objectives and contributed positively towards a sustainable position for the company in the market. Lastly, the project fed into the start of doctoral research into customer satisfaction measurement in branded hotels and developed into a key position for myself within the company leading a team of researchers after successful completion of a PhD, which in turn can be seen as a major benefit for the university.

Overall, this KTP was a win-win-win partnership between Oxford Brookes University, Scher/TNS H&L, DTI and myself, and the success can mainly be attributed to the highly effective working relationship it was founded on.

References are available at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Supporting the Needs of Student-Athletes

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Within Higher Education (HE) institutions in the UK the number of world class student-athletes is increasing, and the role of HE in supporting student-athletes is slowly receiving more government attention (McKenna and Lewis, 2004). This can only intensify as we move closer to the London 2012 Olympics, as a high proportion of the 2012 athletic representation are likely to be joining the 1st year of our undergraduate programmes within the next 2 years.

The intention here is to:

- 1) Highlight the experience of the UK 'student-athlete' based on a decade of in-depth interviews, focus groups, elite student-athlete support programme management, and extensive review of US and UK literature;
- 2) Clarify and confirm the importance of the role HE can play in ensuring that experience is a positive one; and
- 3) Embrace the importance of that role in ensuring student-athletes become successful employable graduates as well as potential representatives in the London 2012 Olympics.

The Student-Athlete Experience

An elite student-athlete, has not only the roles of a 'normal' student, such as attending lectures, completing coursework, revising for exams and fulfilling a social calendar; but also sporting commitments such as training, competition, recovery, rehabilitation, media work; activities that can be seen as additional challenges to those of traditional students. Elite student-athletes must then, by default, hold and effectively balance both a student and an athlete role and as a result, these young adults face increasing pressures to excel athletically, academically and socially.

As both roles are enacted in the same university environment they may compete for temporal and psychological resources, which may result in role conflict (Killeya Jones, 2005). For example, energy, time and effort, spent on the role as an athlete will not be available for the role of student, therefore it could be said that athletic participation reduces the time and energy that would be given to studying. The relatively high degree of freedom in university requires an even stronger autonomous personal investment from the student-athlete to attend to academic activities, and acquire the organisational skills to plan their workloads and commit enough time to academic study in addition to their sporting commitments (Wylleman and Lavallee, 2004).

For first year student athletes especially, the challenges associated with being in a new environment, adjusting to a new training schedule and balancing academic demands makes this developmental period particularly difficult, as their dual role has the potential to complicate their experiences as well as impede their personal development, dependant on the level of importance assigned to each role. Studying at university requires responsibility and dedication, whilst living away from home brings self-care and self-funding issue (Nicholl and Timmons, 2005).

The degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role can be an important source of perceived competence and positive self-evaluation and may occupy a central role in identity structure, but the student identity is also considered very important to achieve academic success at their university. However, fatigue from training, travelling

and competition, insufficient time for studying, and isolation from the general student population have the potential to reinforce disengagement with the student identity and academic matters, often resulting in academic failure and non-completion. The inability to unite sport and education is a matter to be addressed, as the goal for most students is to graduate successfully and a goal for HEIs is to produce employable graduates.

The multiple roles student-athletes hold may be a source of potential conflict whereby the demands of one role impede the enactment of another, or the addition of a role is associated with reduced well being. For example, student-athletes frequently take part in more than 20 hours of sport related activities per week. It is not difficult then to understand how these young adults can experience mental and physical exhaustion resulting in a lack of energy for other areas of interest and responsibility.

Student-Athletes in Their Own Words

Extracts from interviews with elite student-athletes

I'm not around so it's difficult to make friends and for people to get to know me... Academically, it can also be very difficult; in the summer especially, with exams, because everyone is busy revising up until the last minute, but when you've got a big event the day before an exam there's a big conflict, like I had a National Event the day before an exam last year, therefore I didn't produce my potential in either...I did so badly in my exams and I had to explain why I hadn't done any work. It's not that I didn't understand it, it was because I

spent so much time playing sport, but my sport is my priority but I suppose my tutor's job is to make sure my degree is my priority and that the sport is just a hobby...They obviously think I'm just playing games anyway...

I've had to take a couple of days off for different trials and stuff but the tutors don't know that because I just don't turn up [to lectures]. I mean, loads of people miss lectures and that, so at least I'm justified in doing it. I'm not missing them because I've got a hangover, so I don't think my tutors could really say anything if they did know I'd missed those few days... But then recently, when I was given a good mark for a paper, actually it was the top mark, immediately everyone was saying 'How?', and 'Why?' It was as if I look sporty I'm not supposed to have a brain.... It just seems that wherever you go to try and get help in the University you find the powers-that-be who think it's their job to make it difficult for you... It would be nice if there were more people to point me in the right direction, letting me know that they are there for me so that I can say this is my situation, what could I do about it; people there for advice really.

We strongly believe however, that this role conflict – given the right understanding and mechanism for support – could result in athletic interest and academic commitments having complementary components. For example, success in one role often serves to alleviate stress and motivate success in the other. These students are forced by their multiple responsibilities to organise their time and can therefore be more focused and disciplined during their competition season. For example having to manage assignment deadlines and trials for World Championships requires self-discipline to its highest level. When individuals have multiple identities and enact multiple roles, they may do so with little negative effect, successfully enacting and deriving satisfaction and well being from each role and gaining additional benefits as a result.

The essential phrase here however, is '*given the right understanding and mechanism for support*'.

We believe a cognitive shift must occur, from seeing the 'oppositeness' of the 'student' and 'athletes' roles, to balancing them and achieving complementarity, as student-athletes whose roles are experienced harmoniously, will experience more positive psychological adjustment and satisfaction and as a result perform better academically and athletically.

So What is the Role of Higher Education?

University is often considered to be the transition between school education and achieving employment status. A place where young adults have the opportunity to demonstrate and develop qualities which will enhance their lives and encourage them to be able to make worthy contributions in the workplace and in society. Also a place where students are faced with

establishing new relationships, making important career and life decisions, balancing academic and social priorities and adjusting to the independence and freedoms of university life. As stated above, for those that are highly talented in a specific sport, it is also a time of managing the two roles of student and athlete; coping with studies, training and competition; but like the rest of the student population, confronting the challenge of daily life in their own way.

Student-athletes enrol in the full range of academic programmes and not exclusively Sports Studies, PE, Sports Science and so on, so there is likely to be a need for specialist sport science and lifestyle support programmes that are made available across an institution to address the specific needs of these dual-talented individuals: placing greater emphasis on helping them to succeed in the classroom, therefore allowing them more options outside of sporting life and a greater level of employability.

Over the last 10 years we have found that student-athletes who value academic achievements as highly as athletic ones are more likely to meet with greater academic success while in university and to enjoy greater life satisfaction after graduation. With the right (university) support they can commit to both the athlete and student role identities simultaneously, effectively enabling non-sport career options after graduation if they so desire. However, career planning is an individual developmental task that athletes have difficulty with, due to the time commitment to sport during HE, or even as a result of their own feelings of invincibility and the perception that they will always be able to compete.

Previous investigations by McKenna and Lewis (2004) found that students felt that with more support and understanding of their specific needs there would be less need for the 'hard work' of prioritising, as they would be able to maintain a high level of performance in both roles. This can be enabled by institutions providing personal and performance management training, flexible schedules, accelerated programmes, and academic as well as career development learning experiences that are both practical and tangible, and fully cognisant of the high performance sport lifestyle.

Scholarship schemes for elite student athletes have been operating in some HE institutions since the mid-80s. However, a financial scholarship is just one example of the help that can be made available for elite student-athletes. Over the past 20 years many institutions have recognised this and have instigated support programmes such as the one we have at Newport.

Embracing the Importance of Our Role

Through the *Elite Sport Squad* programme at the University we provide sports science, social, financial and academic support for student-athletes competing at regional, national

or international standard in any sport, irrespective of course of study. Sports accredited professionals in psychology, physiology, nutrition and sports therapy support the squad in its mission to support and develop excellence, and to enable its members to balance their roles of student and athlete effectively. Peer social support and cohesion is essential to the programme and utilised to help athletes with academic, personal, emotional and athletic related stress in university life.

Close relationships are forged with personal tutors, coaches, academy directors, local media and national governing bodies' Performance Directors to ensure holistic and coherent support. Voluntary as well as credit-bearing work experience opportunities are negotiated with local employers and student-athletes are linked with appropriate mentors. All of this is managed by a named individual to ensure the effective co-ordinated facilitation of personal and professional development with the student-athlete. This seems to be an effective move towards improving the progression of the 'student-athlete', both in the sporting context and in their academic studies as all stakeholders have regular communication in order to ease the pressures experienced by the student.

However, this is potentially an extremely complex and hazardous process, so the interests of the student-athlete must be the key priority. The difficult decision is who decides what the key priorities are; the athlete, the coach, the funding body? As we explore this issue in view of the London 2012 Games approaching, what is clear is that there needs to be fluent and comprehensive dialogue between all parties associated with our cohort of student-athletes and the time for action is now.

The development of such support programmes is not to be taken lightly. It requires a high investment of time, staff and resources, plus a willingness to work collaboratively with student-athletes and a wide range of external stakeholders to improve their experience. However, the benefits of having such a programme within an institution far outweigh any perceived investment implications.

Through embracing the support available to them, student-athletes at Newport have an improved opportunity to optimise their passage through their study, and become more alert to their own needs and the needs of those around them. They have the chance to develop in such a way as to sustain sport and academic achievement, and make their transition effectively into their post-HE careers. Elite Sport Squad members have progressed into prestigious first posts after leaving the University (including graphic designer, accountant, PR consultant, PE teacher, sport development officer, international rugby coach and paramedic) and as a result have become valuable ambassadors for the university and highly regarded mentors for current squad members.

Conclusion

All this surely suggests that an Elite Sport Squad style system not only meets the student-athlete's needs of successfully graduating whilst also maintaining excellence in their sport; the University's needs, of producing successful employable graduates; but also the national sporting community's need of effectively preparing and nurturing a 2012 athletic representation that is all fired up and ready to perform.

References and further extracts from student interviews are available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/publications

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: | Mike Snelgrove, Cardiff International Airport Ltd UWIC and UWIC, Cardiff School of Management

Summary

In September 2005, work commenced on a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) between Cardiff International Airport Ltd (CIAL) and UWIC's Cardiff School of Management. The project proved to be a great success, achieving significant benefits for the company, the university and the associate, and exceeding our most optimistic expectations. This case study gives some insight into the project, its challenges and

highlights, and demonstrates the lasting value that can be generated by positive industry relationships.

Background to the Project

The UK air transport market is currently standing at some 210 million passengers annually. Cardiff Airport's market share is approximately 1% (circa 2 million passengers). The UK government forecast a growth in air transport to approximately

500 million passengers annually by the year 2030, with Cardiff therefore expected to reach 5 million passengers by that date assuming no change in market share. However, market share is increasingly dictated by the activities of the low-cost carriers. CIAL proposed, through the vehicle of the KTP, to develop their partnerships with the low-cost carriers, increase their market share and thereby accelerate the target achievement date.

Whilst CIAL was experiencing growth, its market share remained static in the face of tough competition from other regional airports as well as the principal London airports. At the commencement of the KTP, CIAL carried 48% of all passengers originating from South Wales. The remaining using Heathrow (18%), Bristol (12%), Gatwick (12%), Birmingham (3%) and others (7%). Only 8.5% of Cardiff's passengers originated from outside South Wales. Since the South Wales region has a lower GDP than adjoining regions, and, as a result, a lower propensity to fly, CIAL felt it had to look beyond its local market – its primary catchment area. It identified six geographical regions in its secondary catchment area where they believed the airport could increase its market share.

The Role of the KTP

CIAL felt their objectives could be achieved by working with the KTP associate and academic staff to develop a more complete and detailed understanding of the travel choices and motivations of the target markets; to create and implement innovative and well-targeted marketing and relationship-building strategies; and also to convince the carriers (particularly the low-cost carriers) of the business case for developing new routes. It would develop advanced and integrated Business Information Systems, which would advance strategic decision-making and create the foundation for on-going monitoring and policy adjustment.

The seven objectives set for the KTP were to:

1. Increase the range of destinations offered by Cardiff Airport.
2. Increase the number of South Wales originating passengers using Cardiff Airport.
3. Increase the number of non-South Wales originating passengers using Cardiff Airport.
4. Change the business emphasis across the Company.
5. Enhance perceptions of Cardiff Airport held in the target regions.
6. Enhance CIAL's strategic planning capability.
7. Improve the profitability of the Company.

From these objectives a detailed plan of work was formulated with five key components:

1. A structural analysis of CIAL's operating environments and critical offer features would be undertaken in order to identify strategically significant elements and opportunities to add value to CIAL services.
2. CIAL's competitive position would be established, both in existing and 'new' markets to identify strategies to build market share.
3. Regional market development strategies would be developed and implemented focusing on new route/product development and an enhanced competitive position.

4. A business strategy information system would be developed with relevant processes and procedures to support future strategic decision-making and monitor performance against key performance indicators.
5. Inbound demand would be investigated and developed to support the Wales Assembly Government's Events Strategy for Wales, and the Wales Tourist Board development strategy.

It is clear that the KTP was intended to have significant effect on the future success of the business by providing the resources to support and enhance existing expertise in the company, and allowing the space to explore untapped opportunities using innovative, creative, and rigorous methods developed in conjunction with the university partner.

The role of the university partner was crucial to the success of the project, and it should not be forgotten that it too expected to benefit from the KTP relationship. These expected benefits included:

- to extend the school's engagement with industry and build a lasting relationship with a company of significant importance to the economic and social development of the region
- the development of expertise in the area of product development and route development in the airline industry
- the publication of at least two journal articles and wider exposure to action research
- the development of case studies for undergraduate and post-graduate programmes
- student work placements
- enhancement of the school's applied research portfolio
- an MPhil registration

The Team

Whilst the composition of the KTP Local Management Committee (LMC) was important for the objectives of the KTP to be achieved and the benefits fully realised, it was the Associate that would prove to be key to its ultimate success. We were lucky to recruit Oliver Jaycock – a 1st Class Honours graduate from the school – into the position. His maturity (he was a mature student in his late 20s) along with his commitment to the project, drive, common sense and ability to fit in, were ultimately a winning combination.

The Project

At the heart of the KTP has been the imperative to engender change within the airport; to build, on existing experience and expertise, a culture that recognised the value of high quality information to support its decision-making and, perhaps most importantly, a culture that looked for and resourced the creation of that information.

To this end, the KTP comprised a series of high quality, rigorous research phases that addressed real business issues, and then created the mechanisms and structures that disseminated the information in such a way that changed the way these problems were understood. The research also informed the marketing of the airport to external stakeholders such as the airlines (the route providers) and the general public (the route consumers). Integral to this was the need to create viable attractive business cases that demonstrated real opportunities for airlines to develop new routes and/or new capacity. This is where the KTP has evinced tangible bottom-line value; value that has significantly changed the way the airport informs its business cases and presents to airlines; value that has contributed £2.3 million in extra revenue, 8 new routes and a 15% increase in passengers. It is this tangible, bottom-line success that has engendered the cultural sea-change mentioned earlier.

This has been achieved through:

- the development of a thorough and innovative approach to understanding the geo-demographics, needs, and travel choices of the primary and secondary catchments
- utilising a range of primary and secondary data, and choice modelling techniques, to challenge preconceptions, and create a detailed and dynamic picture of the market
- undertaking a series of in-depth interviews and relationship building activities with airline executives in order to more fully understand the business imperatives at the heart of their route development/airport choice decisions
- marrying up the two sides of the equation to create credible, precisely targeted, informed, and costed route development cases

At the same time, Oliver used this industry intelligence to build regional market and product development strategies, and to

drive a review of the distribution mix, in particular the use of the web as a distribution channel. At the heart of this was his development of the use and understanding of web metrics to recognise usage patterns and drive change.

It hasn't all been easy. Organisational culture is a delicate beast and some were more resistant to change than others. Oliver exceeded our expectations in all aspects of the project, but particularly in his ability to bring these people on board through hard work, tangible results, and his belief in himself and the project.

There have been some changes to the project along the way, but these were driven by the findings of the work taking place. For instance, and perhaps the most important change, the original brief was to develop business in the secondary catchment area – effectively to take market share from the competition. The KTP research showed, however, that the development of the primary catchment area in order to prevent leakage and build market share would be more beneficial, so the plan was changed accordingly.

A particularly innovative aspect has been this development of the primary catchment area. The value of the immigration from EU accession states has often been proclaimed, but Oliver soon found out that the availability of hard facts to inform the bid for a new Polish route was very limited. He therefore built a relationship with the local Polish community and gathered information directly from them about their travel needs, leading to new routes to Gdansk and Warsaw. His approach has since been rolled out to the Italian community and has been taken on board as best practice by the wider (parent) Abertis Group and other airports.

From the university's perspective, the programme has had a number of significant and exciting benefits. It has led to important projects addressing real business issues at both undergraduate and master's level, as well as Oliver's MPhil; it has led to a PhD registration that will extend the relationship between university and airport for at least the next three years; and papers have been submitted to the 2008 Air Transport Research Society conference in Athens and others are to be submitted to aviation journals.

Conclusion

This KTP has worked well. Outcomes have exceeded expectations and we have built a relationship between the university and airport that will grow. It has lived up to its name in that genuine knowledge transfer has taken place, the Associate acting as the conduit whilst adding his own real value to the process. Oliver has also now taken up a senior position at the Airport, building on the legacy from the project.

Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: Leadership and Professional Learning

The overarching aim of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership and Professional Learning (CETL) is to develop existing innovative approaches to work-related learning within the subject areas of sport, exercise, dance and physical activity, in order to enhance students' employability, leadership and entrepreneurial skills. In developing curriculum approaches that promote good learning for good employability, the CETL's primary aim is to enable students to become 'leading learners' who are also 'learning to lead.'

Having the CETL located within two faculties – education and science – and coordinated centrally by the educational development unit provides us with a somewhat unique opportunity to try different approaches to similar challenges. In some cases activities are jointly devised but in the majority of cases they are set up according to locally defined needs and circumstances. We believe a distinctive and noteworthy feature of the CETL is the different 'change models' that are being developed within the disciplines of education and science, reflecting differences in disciplinary contexts and cultures.

Party Poppers Approach: a Range of Concurrent, Diverse Projects and Activities

The model adopted in education focuses on a variety of curriculum related initiatives and extra-curricula projects to ensure best fit and needs-led development. Projects have taken an action research approach: identifying a need for improvement; designing and piloting the initiative; evaluating it and, if successful, embedding and replicating it in different subject areas. The outcomes from this process are feeding into programme review and validation of courses. This approach is less centralised than the planned curriculum change model adopted in science, and depends on a high level of programme team and individual staff motivation, to drive the initiatives and ensure engagement in the process of reflection and evaluation.

One example of work in this area was a change to the traditional induction activities: the first five weeks of the semester were re-packaged, taking away module codes, assessment information and some of the more traditional information. What was developed was a full timetable of activities to enable us to provide more constant tutor support; to enable students to find their feet, and create friendship groups and support networks; to let them have some fun whilst also challenging their understanding of the subject they have come to study; and develop their own goals. This was a very successful intervention and the ideas are now being adopted by other programmes and teams.

Sarah Nixon, *Liverpool John Moores University*

Slow Burning Fuse: the Dynamite Trail for Planned, Whole-scale Curriculum Change

In science, the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences has taken a holistic approach, focused on whole curriculum change. A comprehensive review undertaken as part of the CETL activity resulted in the development of a structured model that embeds employability throughout the three years (levels) of the degree programmes:

- At Level 1: Familiarisation – the students are familiarised with the various types of careers open to them within the area of sport and exercise science
- At Level 2: Skilling-up – students are provided with vocational training as part of their core modules
- By Level 3: Engagement – the students should have the appropriate practical skills and self-belief to engage in an externally driven, sustained Work Related Learning project that has been developed with a potential employer

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Salvatore Circelli: DDP HE Engagement Manager

Salvatore has a Master of Arts in Educational Management (Distinction) and also won an award for Excellence for his Dissertation on Cultural Diversity in Education. He has over 12 years experience working within the Travel and Tourism industry. His work roles have included: Senior Business Travel Consultant – American Express Travel, Senior Overseas Tour Operations- Thomson Holidays and Specialist Travel Consultant for several independent travel companies. Over the last 14 years he has worked in travel and tourism education, including Head of Department for Travel & Tourism, Business and Modern Foreign Language departments at Southwark College, as Examiner/Moderator for Edexcel and Examination Question Writer for NCFE. He currently lectures at London Metropolitan University – Business School and is working with London South Bank University on a school-based project.

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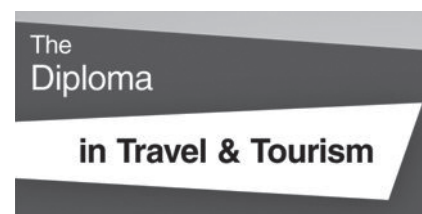
Claire Steiner: DDP Employer Engagement Manager

A CIPD qualified HR & Training Consultant, Claire has over 16 years working in the HR field, predominantly in the travel and tourism industry. Following seven years as Head of HR for the Travelbag Group, she became an independent consultant working with a variety of clients, including lastminute.com, ABTA, Happy Holidayz and the NHS.

Since 2005 she has chaired the Education & Training Committee of the Institute of Travel and Tourism and is also a Board Director. Her role at the ITT involves a number of initiatives, including Skills Zone at the World Travel Market, industry recognition of University and College Tourism Departments, the Aspire Conference, AA Graduate scheme, the ITT university awards and the Tourism Academics and Employers Conference, organised with ABTA and The Tourism Society.

Claire represents the ITT on a number of industry committees – she is Chair of the Steering Group for the Accredited Travel Professional Scheme, a member of the National Advisory Council for T&T at City and Guilds, chairs the reviewing board for the National Occupational Standards, is a member of the Steering committee for the Diploma and chairs the Diploma Quality Group.

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Employer Engagement at Leeds Metropolitan University

Stella Walsh, Peter Cox, Isabell Hodgson, Dr Alex Kenyon, Zoe McClelland and Sofia Rebelo, Leeds Metropolitan University

Learning takes place in a number of ways, and there is recognition that learning and understanding of complex theoretical or social phenomena is easier if placed into context, brought to life and practiced (Moesby, 2004, cited in Meredith and Burkle, 2008). Thus theory that is supported by practice makes understanding, and hence learning, far more likely.

This view is strongly supported by staff in the Hospitality and Retailing Centre at Leeds Metropolitan University (Leeds Met). Throughout their programmes students are encouraged to engage with experts from industry and also gain valuable work experience. The following examples provide a brief summary of just some of the engagement activities between students, staff and employers.

Global Perspectives in Industry

According to Yorke and Knight (2004) the lack of collusion between employers and education has resulted in a gap between student learning experiences and their relevance to industry practice. With this in mind, hospitality management tutors developed a module which is jointly delivered by a university tutor and an 'expert' from industry. The main aim of this module is to develop and enhance students' employability skills – through creating a greater awareness of the practical application of theory to practice and making students aware of employer expectations regarding knowledge and skills requirements of students on graduation.

The module involves both level 1 and level 3 students: Critical Perspectives of the Industry at level 1, and Global Business Perspectives at level 3. The level 1 and level 3 students come together for the seminars, but have separate tutorial sessions. Both modules rely heavily on full joint delivery by tutors and an industry representative.

The delivery of the modules is organised around 6 seminars which introduce and debate 6 contemporary issues impacting on the international hospitality industry. The topics are suggested by level 3 students and are focused on areas they believe will be important to them in their first employment following graduation. The skill levels of the 1st year students in communication, questioning techniques and debating have increased significantly as a result of attending these seminar sessions and these students also gain additional knowledge and experience in preparation for their placement.

The assessment requires each group to write either a newspaper or journal article, requiring customisation of writing styles to appeal to a broader audience and not just that traditional for university assessment.

Final Year Consultancy Projects

Collaboration with industry partners from retailing and hospitality sectors plays an integral role in the learning, development and experience of our final year students. Industry partners offer a range of real projects which provide students with the opportunity to develop a range of skills to enhance their employability. In small groups students act as consultants to industry firms on a variety of projects which may include problem solving projects, developing a new initiative or a feasibility study, or re-branding a concept.

The groups are given a short overview of the requirements from the host organisation and they have to develop this into a project brief and bid for their preferred project through a presentation to the organisation. The bidding process is a reflection of industrial practice, and so there are winners and losers. A timeframe is agreed and a tutor assigned. The culmination of the research and recommendations results in formal presentations and an executive summary delivered to key personnel from the organisation.

Owing to the standard and outcomes of the projects many organisations continue on a yearly basis to support this initiative. Students not only develop the obvious presentation and communication skills but also team work, negotiation, project management, and working to deadlines within budgetary restraints, not to mention the importance and benefits of working with senior management.

Industry Based Learning

The retail marketing management course includes a traditional one year sandwich route but students are encouraged to undertake work experience throughout their course. Work based learning in an optional module throughout all three levels of the programme and students can take it for one, two or all three years. This type of work based learning provides more variety and flexibility, rather than having just a one year insight into industry students can develop their skills and knowledge over 3 years, bringing their work experience into the classroom and assessment, whilst gaining credit for their learning at all levels. An important aspect is the development of the students as reflective

learners. The links with industry over three years gives them time to consider their own development and learning with the support of university and industry staff and also enables development of links between academia and industry more generally. The programme is flexible: students are not required to stay with one particular company and have the opportunity to experience different types of operations, so further broadening their understanding.

Field Visits and Industry Speakers

Students have benefited from a number of industry visits over the last year.

For example, at the Quebec Hotel, Headingley Carnegie Rugby Stadium, the Director of Hospitality Services took students on a tour of the 'back of house' and discussed the challenges of delivering 2,500 high quality meals to VIP guests and catering for a thirsty crowd of 36,000.

Guest speakers for Casino Management have also brought real world dynamics into learning. These have included different "players" in the industry, Ladbrokes Casinos and Alea Casinos, Leeds (London Clubs International), and Red Casino Huddersfield, a smaller regional operator which covered the dynamics of opening a new casino, allowing an opportunity to hear first-hand how an idea became a reality. Furthermore through field visits students are not only able to see a real-life casino, but also have the opportunity to meet and debate with the casino management on various issues.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

A good example of a CPD partnership is offered with UNITE plc, the fastest growing student accommodation provider in the UK. The company wishes to 'grow' their own managers and have a comprehensive management development programme, running from induction through to PhD as applicable. Each employee participates in modules specific to their role within the company. The modules are flexible and capable of matching a variety of requirements and modes of delivery in the workplace. Credits can then contribute to a Professional Diploma in Student Hospitality from Leeds Met, and on successful completion of the Diploma, students can top-up to an honours degree.

Course content, tasks and assignments meet the needs of staff in terms of both current practice and future developments, and enhance organisational effectiveness by enabling staff to improve their competence in planning and structural matters. It provides an excellent opportunity for employees to apply their learning in the work situation through mini projects. The final assessment, which includes a reflective learning journal,

reviewing both the project outcomes and the learner's development, benefits both the learner and the organisation.

The course offers the opportunity to combine attendance, independent study and the exchange of ideas with peer support in a reflective and reflexive context. This complements the normal work of staff and incorporates self evaluation of performance. It is a developmental programme that can be supported by the organisation and/or the individual's professional body.

Industry, Schools and University

As part of a Government initiative, the British Institute of Innkeepers (BII) launched 'the Schools Project' to promote the hospitality and licensed retail industry as a preferred career choice. The Schools Project provides stimulating material for young people aged 13-16 years to encourage them to take personal responsibility for themselves and their community, through education and engagement with the industry.

As a result of a partnership between students from the IT and Media Faculty and the BII and coordinated by a tutor from the hospitality group, a set of interactive multimedia materials were developed. The materials educate young people about the effects of alcohol and were much appreciated by the BII, which hopes to continue this work through more projects in the future.

Quick Wins in Providing Inclusive Teaching – Advice and Guidance from JISC TechDis

**Simon Ball, JISC
TechDis Service**

The student body is increasingly diverse in terms of the needs and learning styles of individual students. Legislation like the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Equality Duty have succeeded in raising the aspirations of disabled students, while an ageing demographic creates more age-related impairments, from failing sight to

shaky movements. There is a growing awareness among teaching staff that traditional methods may not be the best way of increasing learning among an

ever-larger proportion of the student cohort. Many lecturers and tutors would like to adopt more inclusive teaching techniques, but do not have the time or resources to invest heavily in major changes. The JISC TechDis Service specialises in providing advice and guidance to staff on small and achievable changes using technology to provide a more inclusive learning and teaching experience, with the potential to benefit all students, not just those declaring disabilities.

Technologies we Use Every Day

Almost everyone uses Microsoft Word or PowerPoint, or Adobe PDFs every day. There are a host of simple tips and tricks one can employ when creating Word documents, PDFs or PowerPoint presentations that will make them much more accessible to a much wider range of students. None of these techniques takes any great effort; all simply require a slight change to existing practice.

JISC TechDis has produced a series of free guides to take staff through some of these simple changes step-by-step. The Accessibility Essentials guides are available in hard copy (each containing a CD showing each aspect of the inclusive practice covered and explaining the rationale for adopting it) from helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk or can be downloaded from www.techdis.ac.uk/accessibilityessentials

An example of the benefit of adapting your practice in this area is the use of the Styles and Formatting menu in Microsoft Word. Many users set up their headings in Word documents using a change on Font Size, Bold, Underline, perhaps a change in Font Type, and so on. These changes can also be made using the Styles and Formatting menu. However, if this route is chosen, each heading is 'labelled' as a heading by the software. In addition to being visually distinct (this feature has the added advantage of allowing you to change the style of all

headings of a particular level at once) your headings can then be used by Microsoft Word to support many user needs. For example, a user can use Word's Document Map feature to see an overview of the headings within your document, which not only helps them to navigate the document much more quickly (this is of especial benefit to blind and dyslexic users) but they can also use this list of headings to navigate to sections of the document quickly. A handy side-effect of having used the Styles and Formatting menu to create your headings is that the *Insert Table of Contents* feature will work automatically, creating an on-the-fly table of contents for your document instantly, and one that will update whenever you make alterations to the document.

Open Source/Free and Portable Software

There is a huge range of free software available for staff to utilise in making their teaching more inclusive. JISC TechDis has gathered together many of these at www.techdis.ac.uk/geffreesoftware along with providing video clips and 'how to' guides for many of them, to help make their use more achievable for many staff. Many of these technologies are also portable applications which means they can run from a USB memory stick rather than needing to be installed on the computer. This makes them usable by staff who do not have installation rights on their machine, and users who move between different computers. Examples of free applications that are easy to integrate into teaching include:

- DSpeech – automatically read out text or convert it to an MP3 file
- Audacity – create simple podcasts for distribution to students as a revision aid, supplementary information and so on
- Camstudio – capture demonstrations on screen, including sound, for students to use to reinforce learning
- Xerte – create simple learning objects incorporating text, images, sound clips or videos, and, when you are more confident, quiz questions, YouTube videos, Flickr slideshows and more.

Alternative Format Publications

Many students require, or would benefit from, publications being produced in a different format. JISC TechDis have produced a leaflet explaining how to go about obtaining alternative format texts from publishers, what kind of formats are best to ask for, how long the process is likely to take, and so on. This guidance can be obtained from www.techdis.ac.uk/getalformat

There is also a new database of publishers of academic texts in the UK, giving contact details for the person within each company who deals with alternative formats, thereby speeding up the process for staff and student. This can be found at www.publisherlookup.org.uk

Conclusion

There is a huge range of ways in which teaching and learning can be made more inclusive, which benefits disabled students in particular but actually benefits all students. JISC TechDis provides a wide range of resources advising on topics as diverse as web accessibility, the creation of e-learning or m-learning materials, and accessibility of e-assessment. Our website www.techdis.ac.uk contains a host of materials, as does our more informal support site at www.techdis.ac.uk/community. If you have any questions about inclusion and technology, or if you try any of the techniques or software

mentioned above and need some guidance to move forward, please contact us at helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk. We receive a great many queries so we may not be able to provide an instant response, but we will get back to you and provide whatever help we can, as soon as we are able.

Go on – try something different in your teaching. We are here to help, and your students will benefit from having a wider range of experiences and options before them.

Dr Simon Ball, JISC TechDis Service

NETWORK FOCUS

The Student Experience

In the spring of 2008, the British Association of Sport and Exercise Science (BASES) and the Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) held their student conferences, at Bedfordshire University and Sheffield Football Ground respectively. At these events, the HLST Network took the opportunity to run focus groups with the students attending from a variety of higher education institutions. The BASES focus group was led by Richard Tong (HLST Network) with the assistance of Professor Jo Doust, Chair-Elect of BASES, and the CHME session was run by Maureen Brookes (HLST Network) with assistance from Stephanie Jamieson (CHME Executive).

Full summaries of the sessions and student views can be found in the events archive on the HLST website, but some highlights are:

Sport and Exercise Science

The sport and exercise science students felt that the best aspects of their course were:

- Small group lectures
- 1:1 supervision
- Specialist facilities and readily available resources
- Dissertation support
- Applied assignments
- Wide range of experience of working with lab equipment
- Advice and support of lecturing staff
- Friendly and approachable staff
- Interaction between theory and practice

Overall, all the students were very positive about their experience. They highlighted the positive atmosphere created on their courses by enthusiastic and approachable staff. They reinforced the importance of practical activities to enhance learning and enjoyed their practical experiences. In their opinion a good lecturer was:

- Organised
- Approachable
- Enthusiastic

- Interesting
- A good communicator
- Knowledgeable
- Friendly/helpful

Interestingly, most of the responses regarding a good lecturer related to their personality and approachability. These seemed to be more important to students than the academic qualifications, research reputation etc. They admitted that these were assumed qualities. They emphasised that one of the key factors that influenced student learning was the quality of the teaching staff.

In terms of improvement, the sport and exercise science students felt that aspects of their course that should be reviewed included:

- Lack of option choices due to small cohort
- Lack of equipment
- Practical application
- Delivery and application of statistics
- Consistency of tutor feedback
- Placement opportunities
- Assessment criteria
- Bunching of assignments
- Timetabling

Overall, the three points that were reinforced were concerns about the delivery of statistics and research methods, and timetabling. Suggestions regarding statistics and research methods provision included further application and integration with the core modules and more hands-on practical classes. Regarding the structuring of the timetable and length of lectures, students generally preferred lectures to be clustered so that they had blocks of lectures and blocks of time for directed study, paid work or writing assignments. The final point related to bunching of assignments especially at level 3. The added pressures of a dissertation seemed to be a focus point for most of the students.

Hospitality

The hospitality students talked about the assessment that they had enjoyed and felt that they had gained the most from. There was general agreement that a balance of different types of assessment activities was important. Comments included:

- A balance of everything keeps up motivation
- Variety is important
- Variety of module types as a balance
- We need more choice later in the course
- Its important to be able to personalise your own study

The use of live case studies and participation from industrialists was valued:

- To keep you motivated
- For good learning experiences
- It brought the workplace into the college
- It was the best way of learning

Hospitality students felt aspects that could be improved on their courses included:

- regular industry visits in different industry sectors and more industry speakers
- flexible marking in group work
- more workshops
- less group work
- more hands on industry experience in order to stay abreast of changes
- more consistency across degree programmes in the UK
- more feedback to track development and progress to improve performance
- more involvement by students in their courses rather than leaving them to get on with it as adults
- more involvement with events management

For more details, see the full reports in the Events Archive section of our website:

www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/events/archive

LINK 23 – Supporting Students

For LINK 23 we welcome contributions which focus on the services and facilities that are provided to support the student learning experience. Aspects that could be covered within this include:

- Personal tutoring systems
- Student well being
- Meeting the needs of individual students
- E-supported learning
- Use of digital technology
- Student induction
- Embedding careers information
- Contributions to programmes by alumni
- Field trips and study visits
- Supporting students with disabilities
- Student and staff exchange programmes

See website for further details. www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/linknewsletter

www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst



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