Planning Ahead: Development of university strategies to enhance the transition to employment of Surveying Undergraduates

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Why is this important?
Universities & Employability

- Continued expansion of graduate numbers despite introduction of tuition fees.
  - As the financial burden on students grows, the issue of employability is a growing and major concern
- Universities facing growing competition in their recruitment drive
  - Employment statistics - important marketing feature
  - Reflected in University league tables
  - Student satisfaction surveys
  - Requirement to meet professional accreditation by RICS
The Problem

- Insufficient student placements in leading surveying firms
- Recent ISR identified lack of support by School/University as key issue

*NB Of the 60% none are in leading property consultancies*
Aim

- To optimise the employability of graduates within the School of Surveying & Planning by developing better relationships.

Academics → Young professionals/employers in practice → Students → Academics
Research Objectives

1. To investigate the meaning of employability
2. To identify themes in surveying employment selection criteria
3. To identify issues our graduates encountered in applying for jobs
4. To identify mechanisms to support students
Objective 2 - Surveying firms – skills selection criteria

- Qualifications
- Technical skills
- Market awareness
- Report writing skills
- Time management
- Numeracy skills
- Presentation skills
- Self reflection
- Team working
- Leadership skills
- Articulate communicator
  - Written & verbal
- Organisational skills
- Ability to work under pressure
- Ability to work independently
- Willingness to learn
- Interpersonal skills
- Work experience
- Knowledge of your firm
It’s tough out there!
An example

Second year 8 week summer placement with DTZ
- 40 minutes telephone interview
- Shortlist 40
- Day interview 11am-6pm
  - Numerical reasoning test
  - Written exercise
  - Verbal case study
  - Group exercise
  - Social event
School of Surveying
Plan of Action

**Work based learning**
- Work experience, internships, sandwich year

**Applied Learning**
- Guest lecturers, projects, case studies

**Personal Development**
- Reflection, assessed CV writing, personal development plans

**Career Management**
- CV writing, on line application, psychometric testing, interview workshops

**Skill Development**
- Presentations, team working, IT, business skills

Source: adapted from Rae 2007
1. Personal Development
Assessed CV writing, reflective diaries & PDP

- Assessed CVs
  - Start in first year
  - Encourage work experience
    - Property related
    - Non-property related
    - Charity work
      - National Trust
  - Join clubs - evidence of team sports
  - Join professional bodies
    - RICS - free student membership
    - Attend RICS events
  - Second language Growth area –

- Reflective diaries-
  - group dynamics learn from experience, critical review
2. Career Management

Careers board on studyspace

- Explain in Induction across years 4, 5 & 6
- Announcements for
  - employer presentations
  - Workshops (assessment centres/interviews/CV writing)
- Job adverts - smaller firms - how to apply
- Job application deadlines - graduate schemes for major firms
- Skills section -
  - helpful websites
  - Booklet - Applying for a Job
- Voluntary work/short work placements
- Support of a good administrator
- Emails regularly sent
Career Management - Employability skills workshops

- Psychometric numerical tests
  - Web site www.shl.com
- CV writing workshops
- On line application workshops
- Interview technique
  - Firm run assessment centres
  - Speed interviewing
Career Management
Completing on line application

Presentations by firms- what to watch out for

- Check web site for recruitment guide- JLLS, Davis Langdon
- Take time- save, continue
- Do not edit and paste other applications
- **Check & recheck for grammatical and spelling mistakes 100% correct**
- Answer questions specifically
  - Ensure your information is relevant
- Complete every area of form, stick to word limit, use examples especially if working in a team

- **Knowledge of company**
  - Check website
  - Relate application to company
  - Latest issues/news
- Appreciate different surveying routes
- Appreciate range of specialist jobs and personality required
- Develop strong solid reasons why you want a career in surveying
Career Management
Firm run assessment centre

- DTZ involving ex Kingston graduates
- Group discussion based on role play
- Interview in group
  - Commercial awareness
  - Business analysis
  - Building relationships
  - Innovation/creativity
  - Forward thinking
  - Enabling delivery

DTZ Tips
Think about eye contact, facial expressions as well as verbal Express your views- calm, confident manner
Try to reach a conclusion
Make a contribution
Firms need diversity and different types of people for different types of jobs
Career Management

Employability skills speed interviews

- **Speed interview evening with 26 employers**
  - Positive feedback
- Links with industry
  - CBRE, JLLS, Cushman Wakefield, Knight Frank, British Land, Bidwells
  - Hyundai, Rider Levett Bucknell,
  - Local Authorities, Indigo Planning, Savills
- Strong Alumni connections
  Practitioners guest lectures
  Employ Kingston graduates
Career Management
Alumni social event

- Set up Surveying & Planning Alumni Society website
- Alumni database with graduates over 3 decades
- Social launched September 2009 at RICS HQ now meet approx twice a year in London
  - Questionnaire
- Alumni members now feeding back into School-
  - guest lectures
  - Advertise vacancies
3. Applied learning
Alumni involved in project work

- Level four students
- **Site visit**
  - Arrange visits over office buildings in London relating to a project
  - Talk with agents
- **CBRE Alumni member assists in marking of group presentations**

Tower 42
City of London
Applied Learning
Deal or no deal!

Fun group exercise run in `enrichment week’ by member of Alumni from Lambert Smith Hampton on the practical process of completing a property deal.

- Excellent student feedback
- Networking
- Practical implications
- Investment process
- Market players?
- Property Investment market

- **Prepare students in first year**
- Assessed group presentations - involve alumni to assess
  - Advisory papers available online
  - Presentation marking schedule
- 2nd year DTZ Challenge
  - Prize money for best group presentation based on field trip to Dublin
- Assessed minutes from group meetings for group work
- Report writing
- IT skills included within curriculum
5. Work based learning

Relevant Work Experience

- **Shadowing scheme** –
  - Write CV
  - 1 day in a firm level 4
  - Assessed reflective diary & report on company

- **Summer placement**- 4-12 weeks- level 4/5
  - Look for firm’s initiatives eg internships on web sites

- **Apply for 1-2 weeks work experience** (unpaid) in Research department

- **Local firms**- 1 day per week/weekend work

- **Sandwich placement**- level 5
Work based Learning
Internships for level 5 students

- **Shanghai initiative**
  - Complete essay on Chinese market
  - CV & covering letter & interview
  - Summer placement in China- Shanghai office 4-6 weeks
  - 1 post grad & one undergrad vacancy

- **DTZ 8 week summer placement**
  - 40 minute telephone interview
  - 1 day assessment centre

- **Knight Frank Internship** 8 weeks over summer
Work based learning
Other Experience

- Part-time jobs-
  - customer skills/leadership/time management

- Interests-
  - Society membership/team activities/sports
  - Charity - fund raising - marathon etc
  - Voluntary work-property related & non
    - National Trust, Student Union,
  - Student mentoring schemes

Make yourself stand out from the crowd
Impact

- Final year UG students starting to get jobs in leading consultancies and with Alumni employers
- Second year students obtaining successful internships in leading consultancies
- First year students starting to build up work experience
Moving forward

- Offer PG programmes
  - Introduced a suite of property specialist masters programmes - Sept 2011
- Setting up Careers Fair in Oct 2011
  - Involve HR from firms
- Aim to improve market awareness
  - Mini student led conference
    - Research topical issues
    - Present to staff and students
  - Debating Society
Thank you for listening
Any Question?