Business Studies – Career Development Planning course

The aim of the Career Development Planning course (CDP) is to develop students’ ability and confidence to make informed and effective choices about their ongoing education and extra-curricular/ work experiences, which will enhance their ability to choose and embark on fulfilling and satisfying careers.

**School/Subject area:** Business School

**Target Audience:** Year 2 undergraduate Business students

**Staff Involved:** Business Studies, Careers Service, MBA ACORN team, eLearning, Employability Consultancy

**Date:** Delivered annually, across six weeks in the early part of Semester 2, with two 50-minute sessions per week

Key features

The aim of the Career Development Planning course (CDP) is to develop students’ ability and confidence to make informed and effective choices about their ongoing education and extra-curricular/ work experiences, which will enhance their ability to choose and embark on fulfilling and satisfying careers. Embedded within the course is also the opportunity to gain skills in making successful presentations and contribute effectively in groups. Throughout the course there are opportunities for genuine personal reflection, and encouragement for ongoing self-reflection & career management. The teaching style includes opportunities for individual or group interaction in the vast majority of modules.

The course is compulsory and non-credit-bearing; students must pass CDP to progress to Honours, by submitting three assignments by the end of course deadline. These assignments are currently a CV, an Action Plan, and a critique/review of a sample CV. General feedback on assignments is made available to group via WebCT based on sampling. All assessed elements are submitted via the e-portfolio tool, PebblePad, as well as in hard copy.

Key learning outcomes from the course include the ability to:

* describe the graduate labour market, decision-making strategies and barriers to decision-making;
* critically review CVs and action plans;
* apply the approaches discussed to the construction of a CV and action plan;
* make informed decisions about course choices within a degree;
* appreciate the relevance of courses and extra-curricular/work experiences to any future career;
* plan activities to acquire further knowledge and ‘transferable’ skills;
* identify and communicate relevant knowledge and skills acquired;
* demonstrate an understanding of the general expectations of graduate recruiters;
* assess individual strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for development; and
* use an e-portfolio tool to assist in reflection and career planning

Planning

Initial course development involved a significant numbers of days, from both the academic and Careers Service staff, together with a series of – at minimum – three meetings to coordinate actions. Further iterations of the course require 2–3 days' development time spread between the academic and Careers Service staff, and at least two meetings to propose and agree improvements. Room bookings significantly in advance of course dates are also vital.

Project: CDP course modules

1. Introduction and Goals. CDP: What’s in it for me? (Pt 1)
2. CDP: What’s in it for me? (Pt 2). Intro to PebblePad (PP)
3. Groupwork Skills
4. Career Choice: Where might I go and how can I get there?
5. Achieving your Goals: Reflection & Action Planning (using PP)
6. Writing effective CVs & Application Forms (using PP)
7. Work Experience: Getting and making the most of it (including student testimony)
8. Making Course Choices. Graduate destinations and alumni testimonies
9. Presentation Skills (for study & employment contexts)
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11. Support & Review (including peer feedback on individual Action Plans)

Resources

A comprehensive course booklet is provided to all students. Lecture notes and other information are made available through WebCT

PebblePad accounts are created for all students registered on the course. PebblePad is used to produce the assessment outputs – containing templates for a standard CV, a career-planning Action Plan, and inventories designed to help reflect on graduate skills and learning styles. Support for PebblePad is in the form of a written guide, plus up to three drop-in clinics, offered by e-Learning, together with an email help-desk and telephone helpline.

Real-time inputs from both alumni and existing 3rd or 4th year students to the course are additional and valuable resources requiring annual planning.

Evaluation

Students complete a standard course feedback electronic questionnaire at the end of the course via WebCT. Results have been consistently good and are available on request from key contacts. The CDP course has seen consistently encouraging turnout rate, despite lunchtime session timings, of typically 100+ attendees, and anecdotal commentary from students has been very positive, with the course generating subsequent individual career planning activities in conjunction with the Careers Service.

Key contacts

[Ruth Saville](mailto:ruth.saville@ed.ac.uk), Careers Adviser

[Professor Wendy Loretto](mailto:wendy.loretto@ed.ac.uk), Business School Director of Undergraduate Programmes

[Dr Gavin McCabe](mailto:gavin.mccabe@ed.ac.uk), Employability Consultant

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/employability/staff-information/how-employability-addressed/good-practice/hss/career-development-planning>