The University of Surrey’s Role in Influencing Graduate Employability

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Universities and Economic Prosperity

• Universities generate £59 Billion (€70Bn) a year of output for the UK economy

• Universities have a key role to play in creating a sustainable economy through:
  > being a key provider of a higher skilled workforce
  > innovation and knowledge exchange to the wider society
  > the development of new ideas, products and services from research
  > continuing to raise the education levels of citizens
Understanding What Employers Seek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important factors</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employability skills (eg teamworking, problem solving etc)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive attitude</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant work experience/industrial placement</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree subject</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree result (1st, 2:1, 2:2 etc)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University attended</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language capability</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Important factors Senior Executives look for when recruiting graduates

Source: Universities UK (UUK) and CBI report “Future Fit: Preparing graduates for the world of work” (2009)
Employability Skills Businesses Need

Positive Attitude

- Self-Management
- Team Working
- Application of Numeracy
- Application of IT
- Problem Solving
- Communication and Literacy
- Business and Customer Awareness

Source: “Time Well Spent” a report by the CBI for the Department of Education and Skills (2007)
International Employers rate high employability skills but also look for a higher calibre of employee with:

- overseas professional work experience – 65% of international employers believe this makes graduates more employable

- a good degree classification – 70% value this highly compared to 52% of companies with no international dealings

- language skills – 26% of multinational employers place importance on language skills among new graduates compared to 5% of UK-only companies

Source: CIHE Survey Report
Students View: Who is Responsible for Helping Them Acquire Employability Skills

- **Self**: 44
- **University**: 32
- **School/college**: 16
- **Employers/businesses**: 5
- **Careers services**: 3

*Source: Universities UK (UUK) and CBI report Future fit: Preparing graduates for the world of work (2009)*
Case Study

The University of Surrey
Working with Business to give Students a Competitive Edge for the Future
No 1 for Graduate Employment

Selected universities

- University of Surrey: 96.9%
- University of Cambridge: 95.2%
- University of Oxford: 92.6%
- University of Exeter: 92.1%
- University of Southampton: 91.2%
- University of Bath: 90.5%
- Loughborough University: 90.5%
- Imperial College: 90%
- University of Warwick: 89.2%

Figures from HESA (Higher Education Statistical Agency)
Creating Highly Employable Graduates at Surrey

- **Careers Service** with links to 500+ employers across the world
- **Professional Training Year (PTY)**: 55% Surrey students undertake PTY
- **Academic Staff** involved in sustaining employer relationships
- **Specifically Designed Academic Degree Programmes** with content relevant to acquisition of employability skills
- **Research and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships**
- **Providing an Enterprising Environment for Studies**
Providing Valuable Work Experience

- Surrey has been pioneering Professional Training since 1940s
- The Professional Training Year (PTY) is integral to degree programmes
- Students work in business and other organisations in a professional capacity
- Over 55% of students choose to do a Professional Training placement per year
- Students interests, academic strengths and career ambitions are matched to employer requirements
- We have placements in all major companies, research institutes, charities and hospitals in the UK
Why It Works

• The benefits of PTYs for students:
  > gaining confidence, maturity and motivation
  > providing focus for their final year of study
  > confirming their career path
  > opening their eyes to new opportunities
  > experiencing jobs that they may not otherwise be considering
  > 40% of Surrey students receive direct or conditional job offers from their placement provider
Why It Works

• The benefits of PTYs to employers:
  > valuable contribution to the workforce
  > opportunity to engage with the universities
  > access to high-level skills and innovative ideas
  > potential to recruit talented and experienced graduate
In Conclusion

• The role of universities in the economic recovery is not to train people for jobs but to develop the skills and education to meet tomorrow’s challenges for a skilled workforce and increase their capacity to innovate.

• It’s vital that Universities achieve very high levels of graduate employability.
  > to meet interests of student
  > by achieving a high level of employability skills
  > by understanding what employers seek

But …

• We mustn’t lose sight of the real purpose of why HE exists – as a place of learning to broaden knowledge.