‘Beyond the Curriculum’ Opportunities to Enhance Employability and Future Life Choices

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Introduction (1)
A well-rounded university experience

- Studying at university helps graduates to:
  - Think critically and analytically
  - Plan and organise
  - Solve problems
  - Work in teams, develop interpersonal skills
  - Communicate effectively
  - Develop leadership skills
  - …….. Make things happen

Introduction (1)
A well-rounded university experience

- Engagement beyond the curriculum helps graduates to:
  - Think critically and analytically
  - Plan and organise
  - Solve problems
  - Work in teams, develop interpersonal skills
  - Communicate effectively
  - Develop leadership skills
  - …….. Make things happen
- Approaches skills development in different but equally valid ways

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Introduction (2)
Preparing students for the future

It is important that students:

- Are provided with opportunities to engage in a breadth of activities
- Reflect on the skills they are developing in academic and non-academic contexts
- Understand and be able to articulate what skills they have acquired
- Gain proper recognition for their achievements

Introduction (3)
Wider context

- Importance of the student experience
- Higher Education Achievement Record
- Competitive employment marketplace
- Recession
- Funding and quality debates
- ‘Higher Ambitions’, #6, #7
  - Statement on how HEIs promote employability
  - Expectations of business will rise

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New 1994 Group policy report: ‘Beyond the curriculum’

- ‘Co-curricular’ activity and awards
- A ‘snapshot’ of activity within 1994 Group
- Sharing practice with the sector
- Assessing the challenges to delivering this effectively
- Making recommendations to HEIs, Government and Business

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Key findings (1)
The growth of co-curricular awards

- Commitment of universities to awards is increasing
- Thirteen 1994 Group members have established or agreed awards
- All members have high-level strategic commitment and dedicate significant resource to this area

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Key findings (2)
Nature of activity

- There is no one ‘right’ model
- Activity is aimed at enhancing employability alongside enhancing student experience
- Awards recognise aspects such as leadership & business skills, part-time work, personal interests, volunteering, clubs/societies
- Open to UG, PG, international, part-time

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Key findings (3)
Importance of partnership

Partnership working is key to success of the activity and awards:

- University senior managers, departments and dedicated staff
- Students' Unions (heavily involved in delivery of programmes/activity)
- Employers, alumni & local community (involved in development, delivery and assessment)
- "Active partners .. not passive customers"

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Some employers engaged in 1994 Group co-curricular awards

- Deloitte
- Ernst & Young
- Abbey Santander
- IBM
- BP International
- Eversheds
- PWC
- Civil Service
- Nestlé
- London Chamber of Commerce
- PwC
- Lloyds TSB
- BBC
- Accenture
- Aviva
- Financial Services Authority
- Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
- GetEnergy
- Institute of Chartered Accountants
- EDF Energy
- ACCA

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Case Study:
The York Award (est. 1998)

‘Sam’ gained points for his York Award by demonstrating the skills developed during:

- His chemistry degree
- His work experience at DEFRA Central Science Laboratory, bar work and a kids’ summer camp
- His time as SU Events rep and being involved in the university rugby club
- Completing 3 elective courses (sign language, team development, and the ‘York Enterprise’ scheme)

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Case study:
The York Award (est. 1998)

Once ‘Sam’ had achieved 100 points he:

- Completed a substantial application form
- Was interviewed by a panel (an employer, an academic and a York Award representative)
- Evidenced an analytic and reflective approach to the development of a range of skills

Key challenges to effective delivery

Time Constraints

- Busy student timetables / part-time work
- But continuity is important (long gaps between events demotivate participants)

Resourcing

- Development / delivery / assessment are time consuming and resource intensive

Scalability

- With larger cohorts the challenges are magnified
- If many students receive an award does it reduce the value / impact of the award?

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Recommendations (1)

Aim of awards

- Awards should aim to enhance both employability and the student experience

Participation & Scalability

- HEIs should investigate using different levels of award:
  - ‘General’ level – to maximise participation
  - ‘Elite’ level – to differentiate the highly dedicated (e.g. Exeter Leaders Award)
- Elements of an award programme should be open to all, even those not completing the award

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Recommendations (2)

Partnership working

- HEIs should work closely with SUs to develop, advertise and deliver programmes
- HEIs should seek employer involvement (SMEs and multinationals) throughout the process:
  - Early development stages
  - Endorsement and profile-raising
  - Delivery of programmes
  - Assessment

Recommendations (3)

Resourcing

- HEIs should seek to employ dedicated staff to manage and co-ordinate an award
- Funding challenge
- Government should create incentives for employers to engage in awards (e.g. Match funds to employer contributions – whether cash or in kind)

Endorsement for ‘Beyond the curriculum’ report

- *“The co-curricular awards which the 1994 Group has highlighted are an excellent way to enhance graduate employability and should be strongly supported.”*

  Miles Templeman, Director-General, Institute of Directors

- *“We endorse this report from the 1994 Group and welcome that Universities are increasingly turning their attention to the extra-curricular experience, alongside students’ unions.”*

  Richard Budden, VP Union Development, NUS

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‘Beyond the Curriculum’

Opportunities to enhance employability and future life choices

Policy report available online: www.1994group.co.uk

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