Higher Education Achievement Report

(and beyond the Honours Degree classification)

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- The context
- Progress
- Possibilities

Burgess Steering Group Report (2007)…

Honours Degree Classification No Longer Fit for Purpose

The Case for Change (Why Develop a HEAR?)

- Summative System at Odds with Lifelong Learning.
- Stronger focus upon ‘Employability Skills’ > Employers have clearly defined qualities they are looking for in graduates.
- Greater financial investment than ever before.
  - Students require more than just a certificate.
  - All stakeholders should have detailed information on what is behind a particular class of degree.
- Wider Recognition of Achievement.

The wider context…

- *‘a need to do justice to the full range of student experience by allowing a wider recognition of achievement;’*
- *‘the present system cannot capture achievement in some key areas of interest to students and employers.’*

The HEAR Proposals (2007)…

- a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) will be the central vehicle for recording all university-level undergraduate higher education student achievement in all UK higher education institutions.
- The HEAR will be a single document, based on, and developed from, the current academic transcript, and incorporating the European Diploma Supplement (so first and foremost an academic record...)
- The HEAR will contain information which the institution is prepared to verify. Further work should be done on how to measure and record skills and achievements gained through non-formal learning…

What is the HEAR?

- ‘Core template framework reflecting a more detailed and rounded view of a student’s experience and achievements.’
- Key building blocks (sections):
  1. Information identifying the holder of the qualification.
  2. Information identifying the qualification.
  3. Information on the level of qualification.
  4. Information on the contents and results gained.
  5. Information on the function of the qualification.
  6. Additional information.
  7. Certification.
  8. Information on the national HE System.

Key HEAR Components…

- **Academic Transcript (module marks and grades, possible drilling down').**
- **Additional information** esp. section 6.1 - a 'richer picture' of verified additional achievements recorded under one of three headings:
  - measured or assessed performance in non-academic contexts accredited by, or with external accreditation recognised by the University, e.g. awards concerned with employability;
  - additional recognised activities undertaken by students which demonstrate achievement but for which no recognition is provided in terms of academic credit, e.g. Course Representatives or Students' Union Officers;
  - University, Professional and Departmental Prizes.

The HEAR:

1. provides a detailed (national and international) single **record of student achievement;** (incorporating both the DS and HE Transcript);
2. enables provision of **a full academic record,** including the opportunity for detailed information of achievement in respect of different forms of assessment;
3. provides **a common structured format** within which to include details of the wider achievements of the learner within section 6.1.

4. is designed to be much **more than an exit document**, being developed from entry to HE onwards. This will enable it to be used:
   - as a basis for reviewing progress and planning future activities;
   - to support student engagement with a range of opportunities beyond the curriculum;
   - as an aide memoire for students in considering applications for sandwich placements, study abroad or internships, or for permanent employment or further study before the final award is made;
   - subject to appropriate permissions, as a source of information that can be accessed by prospective employers (and admissions tutors).

Where are we up to…

- 2008 on Two cohorts of trial institutions (30 overall), the first purposefully chosen to reflect diversity…
- 2012 Final report recommending adoption, endorsed by UUK and Guild HE.

➢ 16 institutions issued HEARs to graduates in 2012, (45,000+ HEARs, full range of mission groups).

➢ 36 additional institutions implementing by 2012, many more have formal timetabled plans for implementation.

So what have we learned…

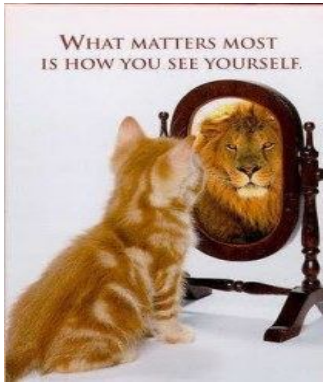
- Broad agreement on the framework and Guidelines for implementation approach, signed off to 2014…
- Perceived congruence with institutional agenda key…
- Implementation requires an alliance of Registry, Learning and Teaching, Careers and Employability, Students, Senior Managers…
- Early decision taking in respect of decisions about Section 6 important.
- The holding of data related to student achievement within centralised record systems a real advantage.
- Early moves toward an electronic HEAR a priority.

Possibilities… four perspectives:

- an institutional record to be implemented;
- a context for institutional development;
- **a resource for students to support progression…**
- **a potential resource for employers and recruiters…**

A resource for students…

- Supporting awareness and planning…



- A helicopter view of their achievements (integrative)…

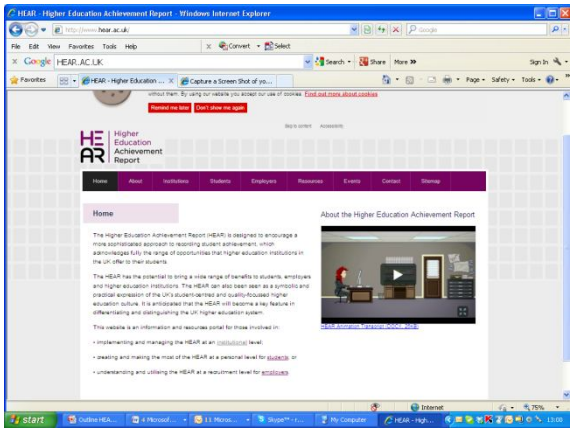
- A microscopic view of their achievements (evidential)…

Key employer feedback…(note the overlap)

- Expect to reap benefits *substantively but indirectly*;
- Support HEAR as an aide memoire/resource for students;
- Students cannot start consciously making the most of their time in higher education, too soon…
- ‘Richer picture’ welcome but mediated through the student tailoring their application using the employer’s system.
- Electronic format key – *“to be really useful, and used, the HEAR needs to be a seamless part of our process – it can’t involve extra work”.*
- Access to verified information prior to graduation welcomed.
- Attraction of business efficiencies that could potentially arise through being able to verify the HEAR electronically.
- For those who will read parts of the HEAR information needs to be short/concise/within the common template.

Going forward…

- HEAR.AC.UK…



- BIS funded AGR Project to engage employers with the HEAR…

- Join the HEAR community at HEAR-EXTENSION-LIST@JISCMAIL.AC.UK