

PDP NEWSLETTER: WELSH EDITION

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WINTER 2013

The HEAR Story so Far—Ruth Wasson, University of Ulster

The University of Ulster engaged with the HEAR since its inception and agreed that our HEAR would be made available to students on full time undergraduate programmes who entered the institution from September 2011, with a view to providing a full electronic verified HEAR for the first cohort of students who will graduate in 2014.

Since then the 'HEAR at Ulster' Project Team was set up, led by Ruth Wasson, Director of Student Administration. The first task for the Project Team was the establishment of a new HEAR database which was rolled out to Year 1 students in November 2011 through our own Student Portal. Here the students could view the modules they had undertaken and the results achieved so far during their course of study.

A series of communications followed in Ulster's internal magazine; with the Students Union; and through a variety of conferences and seminars with staff and students in order to raise awareness and the profile of the HEAR, to ensure staff and students were familiar with what had been developed so far.

Ulster was very keen to ensure there was a strong focus on the HEAR as a formative document, with a clear link to Studies Advice. Studies Advice guidelines were developed which included HEAR information and this was also communicated to all staff.

Based on this emphasis the team's next task was to develop an information portal for University staff, with a section where academic staff could access the HEAR's of students for whom they had Studies Advice responsibilities. For us, this was a

substantial piece of work particularly as the Project Team is made up of full time members of staff and all except one are undertaking the HEAR project alongside their daily duties. However, we got there and launched the Staff Portal in February 2013. This also meant that Studies Advisers and Year 2 students in particular could meet, talk about and use the HEAR when planning for Placement interviews in Semester 2.

Running parallel to this work, the team were also engaged in raising awareness amongst staff and the Students Union, of the content of Section 6.1 Additional Activities and the inclusion of activities in this section in accordance with our protocols. At Ulster we have the Ulster EDGE award which has been designed to enhance the employability of our students by providing official recognition and evidence of activities outside the programme of study. It was already agreed that anyone undertaking the Ulster EDGE would have this included in Section 6.1 of their HEAR. The team used this as an example and automatically included all Ulster EDGE activity into students HEAR's and circulated this to Faculties, Departments and Student Union to give them an idea of what could be included and asking them to nominate activities that would meet the HEAR criteria for Additional Activities. We are currently working with Faculties and the Students Union to ensure that these approved activities are recorded and verified within HEAR's. The plan going forward is to approach Faculties and Students Union at the beginning of each Semester, requesting any new activities for Section 6.1. We have built up a database of a wide variety

of already approved activities so that staff and students can see what is available for consideration during Studies Advice meetings.

The University also has a large number of prizes and awards and the team have again incorporated this information for HEAR purposes with a data mapping exercise undertaken to populate the fields in the achievements tab of Section 6.1.

There is still a long way to go and a lot to do before Graduation 2014, however our priorities for 2013/14 are to engage with employers; develop Digital Signature and to fully complete the Course details in Section 4.

The work so far has been interesting but challenging and we see the availability of our first electronic HEAR's in July 2014 as the first stage in this journey. There is so much more that we could do and want to do, but we have had to be realistic given time and resources, and with the students' best interests in mind, prioritised what will be available for our first release. We have progressed a long way in a short space of time, so there will be more to HEAR at Ulster soon.

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Bangor Employability Award— Mari Roberts , University of Bangor

Following a 2 year pilot scheme in selected academic schools, Bangor University's Employability Award scheme is now rolled out across the institution with an opportunity for all undergraduate students to take part in the scheme.

Currently for undergraduate students, the Bangor Employability Award (BEA) aims...

1. To provide a core, blended learning programme of personal development planning and career management activities
2. To accredit an extensive range of Bangor University students' extracurricular and co-curricular skills development activities, including work experiences, paid employment, volunteering and training opportunities
3. To enhance Bangor University students' knowledge, understanding and practical experiences of the skills, attitudes, behaviors and values vital to professionalism in the graduate workplace
4. To guide Bangor University students in identifying and articulating their own skills and qualities, and to provide the opportunity to reflect upon their graduate level attributes

The BEA scheme operates in conjunction with the University's academic schools, service departments and Bangor Students' Union, along with private, public and voluntary sector organisations. The scheme is split in to two programmes, the Core and Activities Programme.

The Core Programme consists of workshops and online sessions to enhance students' career management skills (including CV-writing, interview skills and reasoning tests) and their personal and professional development planning (through reflection, skills analyses and role identification), provided by the careers service, employers and Bangor University alumni.

In the Activities Programme, activities can be chosen (and tailored) from a wide-ranging menu, or suggestions may be considered for inclusion. The

value of each activity is determined from various criteria, including the role fulfilled, the duration and commitment level, the range of transferable skills involved, and of course, the perceived value to potential employers.

Extracurricular activities, which may not be formally recognised in the academic degree programme, but which are valuable in the graduate jobs market, are accredited: -

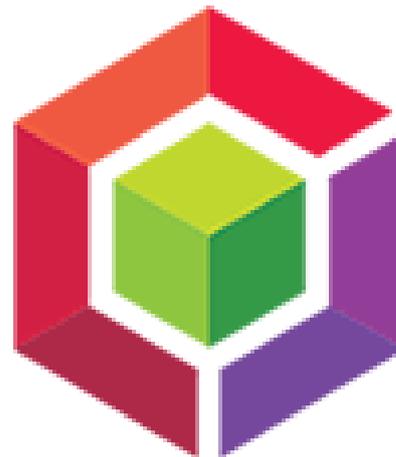
- Part-time work, placements & internships
- Volunteering & mentoring
- Peer guiding & representation
- Societies & sports clubs
- Enterprise & innovation
- Second languages & skills development

Students' co-curricular activities are also acknowledged (e.g. discipline-specific societies, vocational work experiences, guest lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences), as is the opportunity to reflect upon their curriculum in the context of tangible experiences and scenarios.

Students completing the Bangor Employability Award should be able to

link together and reflect upon the curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular aspects of their student experience in order to identify their transferable skills and personal qualities, and articulate them to prospective employers. The BEA helps them to understand the importance of employability, and use career management skills to effectively navigate their chosen career path (s).

The scheme is administered via a tailor made system – the BEA Hub – built within the university's intranet system. Students access Core Programme activities and workshops through the system, as well as record activities and present evidence to be verified for inclusion in the scheme. With the scheme now in its third year, the BEA team continues to work closely with academic schools to promote engagement with the award, as well as developing the scheme to streamline with the implementation of the HEAR. The scheme will also be piloted to a small group of postgraduate students in the 2013/14 academic year.



bea

Bangor
Employability
Award

E-portfolios, Employability and PDP- Catherine Naamani, University of South Wales.

The role of technology to support Personal Development Planning (PDP) is not a new concept and staff and students at the former University of Glamorgan (now University of South Wales) had been using Campus Pack as a tool to support blogs, wikis and e-portfolios for a number of years. Increased emphasis on enhancing students' employability skills through the University's Grad Edge initiative and the introduction of the HEAR however, led to a re-evaluation of how e-portfolios could support these areas.

It was in this context that in 2012, CELT (the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching) at the University was successful in obtaining JISC funding under the Transformations Programme, to explore how e-portfolios could be used to track student participation in work-related activity and to support reflective practice. The project involved a number of different groups both across the University and outside. Consequently, not only were staff and students included in the project, but we also worked closely with employers to gain their perspective on how e-portfolios can enhance PDP and employability skills.

Developing a Template

As we started the project, there was general agreement that for students to get the most from using an e-portfolio, it should be 'owned' by the student and contain very little content other than some simple guidelines. With this in mind, we developed a template, which was made available to all students:

Employer Engagement

Employers from a range of sectors were involved in the project, including Health & Social Care and Nursing, Education, Business & Marketing, HR, Music Technology and Film Production. Their input ranged from providing advice as to the development of the template, leading sector specific workshops for students on the benefits of e-portfolios for PDP and involvement in the evaluation of the project and wider dissemination amongst staff.

"I was delighted to be asked to participate in the e-portfolio workshops. As a health and social care employer I feel it is crucial to evidence CPD and the e-portfolio is a great canvass to do this. I feel that it gives the students a focus and enables them to record their journey over the course of their studies

It also is an excellent tool for reflection " (Kirsty Knowles, New Directions, Social Care Recruitment)

Lessons Learnt

The University of South Wales offers courses, ranging from Business and Engineering, to Health, to Education to the Creative Industries. Student focus groups enabled us to explore what they felt an e-portfolio might be used for and how it might support PDP and the development of employability skills. Early on in the project, it became clear that an e-portfolio needs to be flexible enough to cater for the needs of all students at different stages in their University career.

The following features were identified as being essential:

- Flexible to fit the needs of as wide a range of students as possible
- Portable – students need to be able to take their e-portfolio with them
- Easy to use
- Can be shared with potential employers, lecturers, peers for feedback for example
- URL link to share externally
- Integration with VLE
- Ability to integrate other tools such as social networking tools, or to upload evidence from a mobile phone for example
- Learner owned/customizable/personalisable
- Mobile friendly
- Supports multiple media

Next Steps

The University is currently undertaking a review of all its online learning systems and as part of that review, we will be evaluating our current e-portfolio provision with a view to rolling out a system which provides the flexibility required.

The screenshot displays the 'My e-Portfolio' interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'My Institution', 'Courses', 'Organisations', 'Online Results', 'Help & Support', 'Learning & Teaching', 'My Portfolio', 'Assessment Diaries', and 'Assessment'. Below this, the user's name 'Catherine Naamani' is visible, along with options to 'Subscribe', 'Export', 'Settings', 'Permissions', 'Widgets', 'Page List', and 'Attachments'. The main content area is titled 'Getting Started' and includes a 'Created by' field, 'Tags', and a 'What are e-Portfolios?' section. The sidebar on the right contains an 'Add New Page' button, a 'Pages' list, 'Tags', 'Page Contributors', and 'Latest Activity'.



Conference— Future Directions for Higher Education in Wales Wednesday 2nd— Thursday 3rd April 2014

We are delighted to announce that the second Future Directions conference will take place on 2-3 April 2014. Bringing together individuals and groups engaged in enhancing the student learning experience, the conference will feature a series of keynote lectures, paper, poster and workshop sessions. More information will be available soon.

Future Directions encompasses the quality enhancement work being carried out in the Welsh HE sector, which aims to enhance specific areas of the student learning experience through encouraging academic and support staff and students collectively to share current good practice and to generate ideas and models for innovation in learning and teaching. The Future Directions work is planned and directed by the Future Directions Steering Group which is coordinated by the HEA. To find out who represents your institution or sector organisation, you can view the [Steering Group membership list here \(DOC, 210KB\)](#).

Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning

In June 2013, the Future Directions Steering Group identified the second Future Directions enhancement theme for the Welsh higher education sector, Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning.

The three work strands within this new theme are:

- Distinctive Graduates
- Inspiring Teaching
- Learner Journeys

The new enhancement theme will build on the successes of the current enhancement theme, Graduates for our Future and work strands.

Global Graduates: Enabling Flexible Learning and the three new work strands will be launched in autumn 2013 and run concurrently with Graduates for our Future until the Future Directions conference in spring 2014.

Graduates For Our Future

The Welsh Government published [For Our Future: The 21st Century Higher Education Strategy and Plan for Wales](#) (PDF, 369KB) in 2009. The document outlines twin priorities for higher education: delivering social justice; and supporting a buoyant economy. For the sector, this means prioritising the strategic themes of widening access, student experience, skills, knowledge transfer and research. Wales' first quality enhancement theme was born to address some of these. The HEA organised a sector event in 2010, which resulted in the theme – Graduates For Our Future – being identified. The theme has three work strands:

1. Students as Partners;
2. Learning in Employment; and
3. Learning for Employment.

Find more details for this conference at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/wales/future-directions>

Conference—Sharing best practice in relation to learning: HEARing the student voice— Manchester , Wednesday 16 Apr 2014

This event will involve sharing best practice in regard to the design of supplementary learning workshops. The intention is to explain, justify and demonstrate the validity of key principles, to explore the importance of a two-way dialogue with the student voice and to embed the latest technologies within learning services.

We are trying to support students in becoming independent and active learners. The aim of the open training plan is to enable students to take the skills they have gained at university so that they may transfer and apply them elsewhere and they have a record of supplementary learning in the form of their HEAR. We are also seeking to foster students who exhibit a growth mind-set and are able to successfully use

feedback they receive. Students come to university to learn more than a specialist subject and the University of Manchester Library is working to create dynamic and research supported personal development programmes that continue our work using the HEAR as a formative device. Using the HEAR as a formative tool enables us to adapt workshops according to student needs and enables students to customise their choice of workshops or 'bundles' to suit their personal learning requirements.

Aims/outcomes

Delegates will gain awareness of the role of the student voice in the development of the Learning Commons and its open training programme. Training delivered must adhere to specific guidelines and delegates will

be given the chance to see the key principles in action and to apply them in a practical activity. They will discover why workshops delivered as part of the open training will appear on students HEAR if 4 or more are attended within a key strand and how this assists in enabling students to communicate their skills and enhance their employability. Delegates will also gain insight into how the open training naturally embeds technology into practice.

Bookings

There is no charge to attend the seminar, but a place must be reserved.

Read more about this event at http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2014/Seminars/Themes/GEN870_Manchester



FORTHCOMING EVENTS ON-LINE WEBINARS OPEN TO ALL

Risk Assessment – PDP, Knowledge – Exchange and the 21st Century Graduate.

Led by Sonia Hendy Isaac, Birmingham City University

12.30 – 1.30p.m., Tuesday 21st January 2014.

This webinar will explore notions of traditional curriculum and assessment approaches and review these in light of the 'PDP agenda', graduate employability, and the progression from Knowledge-Exchange to Knowledge-Applied learning environments.

This webinar is free to CRA members and a small cost to non members

To download a booking form please click [here](#)

Putting the Learning in the Learning Commons: Interactive and Interdisciplinary Skills Support".

Led by Jenny Blake, University of Manchester.

1 – 2p.m., Friday 21st February 2014.

The Alan Gilbert Learning Commons is the University of Manchester Library's newest site and a hub for interactive student work. Deliberately designed to encourage exploration and group work, the building is also one of the sites for the new "My Learning Essentials" open training programme. My Learning Essentials focuses on student skills support that is interactive and innovative, including a growing suite of online resources meant to tackle the most common requests for support from the student body. The sessions follow a common methodology that requires facilitative structure and a focus on continued personal development. We are currently trailing a HEAR link to the workshops to enable students to verify their continuing development in the areas of academic and transferable skills and employability and work actively with other support providers across the University of Manchester to bring best practice to the skills area. The website for the programme can be found: <http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/academicsupport/mylearningessentials/>. This webinar will focus on the methodology behind the programme, our work with partners and our plans for the next steps in skills support at Manchester.

This webinar is free to CRA members and a small cost to non members

To download a booking form please click [here](#)

A Strategic Institutional Approach to Implementing the HEAR.

Led by Julie McLeod, University of the West of England

UWE, Bristol has developed and implemented the HEAR as a formative tool which is held electronically and which, together with the work of Academic Personal Tutors and the UWE Futures Award e-portfolio, allows students to monitor and build their HEAR throughout their learning journey. This webinar will present the approach taken and provide a context for those attending to raise issues and explore institutional experience.

This webinar is free to CRA members and a small cost to non members

To download a booking form please click [here](#)