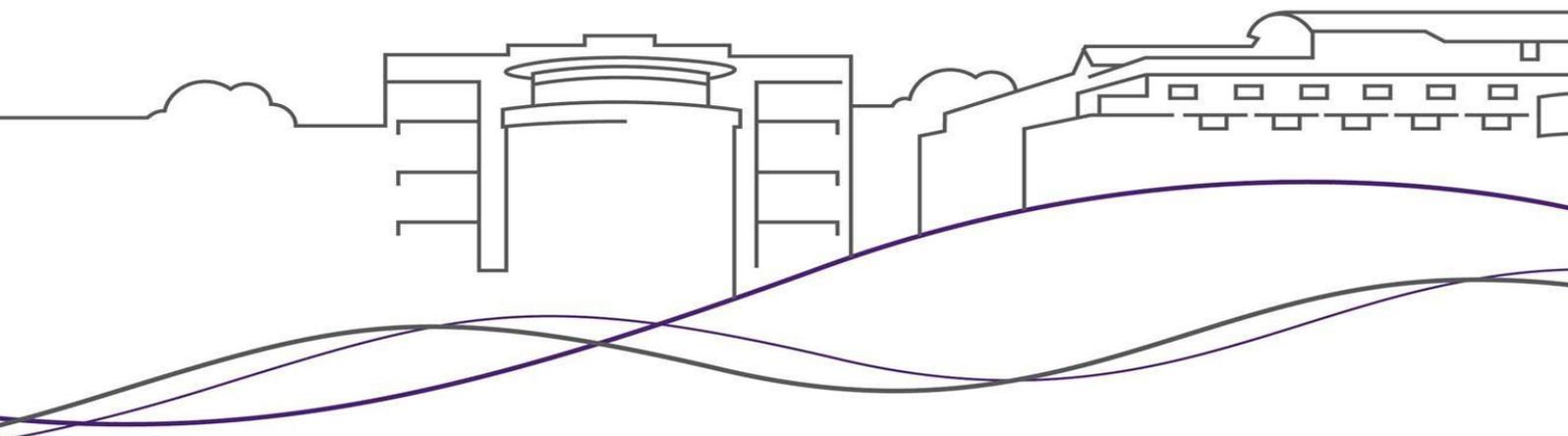




HIGHER EDUCATION

STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY (HEFSPPD1)

2021-22



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Higher Education Strategy for Enhancing Student Employability

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aim

The strategy aligns with our **Higher Education Vision Statement**: ‘South Devon College is passionate about providing excellent quality, accessible and employment focused Higher Education’.

It was written in conjunction with the **Higher Education Strategy 2019-2024 and the College’s Career Policy 2019-2022..** The strategy has also been informed by the QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (2020).

The strategy aims to:

Establish a clearly articulated and prominent framework which identifies career development and employability as intrinsic to the student experience at University Centre South Devon (UCSD).

Engage and support students with a diverse range of needs and ambitions in managing their employability development throughout the student journey and beyond.

Grow co- and extracurricular opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and develop relevant skills and experience; supporting them to become well-rounded graduates.

1.2 Context

UCSD is committed to supporting all students into employment, highly skilled employment and/or further study through dedicated activities as part of and outside of their core programme.

Under the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey which was replaced with HESA’s new Graduate Outcomes model in 2018, UCSD’s progression rates were high compared to the national average, as the majority of our students progressed to further study at Level 6 . In the 2016/17 survey, 94.7% of UCSD respondents were in employment or further study (compared to 91% nationally¹). Of those in employment, 72.5% of UCSD graduates were in a professional or managerial job (compared to a national average of 73.9%²). Official statistics from the first Graduate Outcomes census identified that 52.94% of our 2017/18

¹ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/data-and-analysis/Documents/patterns-and-trends-in-uk-higher-education-2018.pdf>

² <https://luminare.prospect.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

graduates who had studied with us full-time were in full-time, high-skilled employment 15 months after graduating.

Students can access employability support through a range of activities delivered by the Higher Education Employability Co-ordinator (HEEC). Current provision includes 1-1 appointments, promotion of work-related and volunteering opportunities, careers related events and awards. Students can also access a wealth of careers and employability resources through the UCSD Careers & Employability Moodle page. The HEEC also works closely with programme teams to support and co-ordinate co- and extra-curricular activities such as bespoke volunteer programmes with local organisations.

We continue to utilise relationships with stakeholders including local employers, alumni and University of Plymouth's Careers and Employability Service to support provision.

Students also receive support with careers and employability within their programme. This support is typically embedded within dedicated modules and can include Curriculum Vitae (CV) development, visiting guest speakers, live projects, placements and additional qualifications. To facilitate this, programmes work with internal and external stakeholders including local employers and organisations, partners and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies (PSRBs) where aligned to programmes.

In the wider context, the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), launch of Graduate Outcomes to replace DLHE and Access and participation plans, have placed an even greater focus on actively supporting student progression, graduate employability and positive outcomes.

2. Key objectives

2.1 Raise the profile of employability at UCSD

To achieve this, we will:

- Increase use of UCSD digital platforms (website and social media) to promote and share relevant, student-focused employability content
- Continue to develop an integrated approach to raising the profile of Graduate Outcomes amongst students, graduates and staff
- Capture and promote student and alumni employability success through mediums such as case studies, working with Marketing and programme teams

2.2 Provide comprehensive support to enable students to develop their employability

To achieve this, we will:

- Enable access to inclusive 1:1 employability support for students outside of their core programme
- Provide targeted employability and career development support to specific cohorts, including final year students
- Continue to administer an 'employability profile' for all students to complete annually during induction/reinduction. The profile will capture employability data including work experience to date and career intentions, to inform provision and help track progress
- Increase the number and breadth of real world work opportunities accessible via the SDC & UCSD Careers and Employability Centre
- Draw on experience and expertise of employers and alumni to improve students' knowledge of labour market and recruitment practices

2.3 Engage students in managing employability throughout the student journey

To achieve this, we will:

- Explicitly recognise and value employability across the curriculum, ensuring that students are supported to understand the wider relevance and application of their learnings, such as choice of assessment
- Provide opportunities to recognise and celebrate students within UCSD who are actively engaged in developing employability, to inspire others
- Develop and promote co- and extra-curricular opportunities to enable students' personal and professional development
- Work in partnership with Programme Teams, , Helpzone, the Student Support Hub and other relevant support services to enable students to access opportunities and recognise, reflect on and articulate the skills and qualities they are acquiring

2.4 Support students to progress into employment, highly skilled employment and/or further study.

To achieve this, we will:

- Work closely with academic teams and the Student Support Hub to promote and help students access progression, further study and employment opportunities

- Continue to grow our alumni network and utilise the network to input into student employability, such as developing graduate case studies to promote varied career pathways and advocating extra-curricular activities
- Support with the systematic review and monitoring of student outcomes at both institution and programme level to help inform employability initiatives, including through the UCSD Graduate Destinations Survey
- Support the development of course level employability activity and the review of work-based learning as part of the Annual Monitoring Process. The HE Employability Co-ordinator will also attend stage 1 approvals in an advisory capacity.

2.5 Measure progress and achievement

To achieve this, we will:

- Monitor the success of extra-curricular interventions undertaken to enhance students' employability
- Develop our reporting method for employer engagement activity within and external to the curriculum to increase staff engagement and access to employer engagement opportunities for all programmes of study, where relevant and possible
- Assess the feasibility of running a number of student focus groups to help shape employability provision at UCSD

3. Evaluation

We will measure the success of the strategy and its implementation through monitoring of:

- Student views including course reps, Student Consultative Forums, Student Satisfaction Surveys, programme meetings and evaluation forms.
- An increase in the number and range of opportunities available to students.
- Student participation in employability events, workshops and engagement with promotions and resources including via the Careers and Employability Centre, Moodle and social media
- Employer feedback through methods such as Employer Focus Groups, Sector Focus Groups and Industry Liaison Panels.
- Tutor engagement with initiatives and feedback on the level of active understanding among students of the skills they are developing.
- Interventions such as the employability profile to measure and map students' perceptions of and confidence in their employability.

4. Future work

- A review of the Higher Education Strategy for Enhancing Employability will be undertaken in one year (May 2022).
- Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for employability enhancement will be established for 2021/22 implementation.

