



# Successfully Delivering our Edge Hill University Employability Strategy

The next phase  
2019 - 2024

An update for academic staff

[ehu.ac.uk/careers](http://ehu.ac.uk/careers)



Since the 1990s Edge Hill tutors and Careers staff have worked in partnership, within and outside of the curriculum, to ensure that students are developing the correct skills and experience for future graduate careers. In 2013 we produced our first University Employability Strategy, nationally endorsed by OFFA (now OfS) 2014, as best practice in the sector. During 2013 – 19 we successfully delivered this strategy by embedding employability throughout faculty and departmental planning, with designated employability leads, creating employer advisory panels, ensuring employer engagement in curriculum planning & delivery, investing in Careers, and other employability activities, that contributed to improving graduate employment outcomes, and TEF Gold in 2017.

TEF Gold judgement Statement of Findings, bullet points 1 & 3 out of 6:

*A strategic focus on the employability of students from all backgrounds, ensuring that students acquire knowledge, skills and understanding that are most highly valued by employers*

*A partnership approach to curriculum design that includes academics, employers, practitioners and students*



Recognised in the Top Ten Universities nationally for our Employability Strategy in 2017 & 2018 at the TargetJobs Awards



Moving on from 2017, most recent changes to the TEF evaluation framework have made Highly Skilled Employment & Further Study even more significant in future TEF judgements. Whilst in the past we at Edge Hill chose to invest in the future of our students and their careers, now OfS Regulatory Frameworks, University Access and Participation Plans, TEF and Graduate Outcomes ensure that universities are all legally compliant in doing so. The engagement of ALL STAFF in helping students to develop employability skills, explore personal strengths, undertake career planning, and seek out employability opportunities is even more important than ever.



## **Vision:**

*We believe that going to university should be personally transformative and that developing students' employability is an essential part of learning, should be accessible to all, help address social inequality, develop aspiration, self-esteem and skills for life.*

## **Four Foundations:**

- Knowing employability skills
- Knowing employers
- Knowing your employability strengths and being able to practise
- Knowing how to present as a compelling candidate

## **Cross Cutting Themes:**

- Develop academic colleague's knowledge, skills and understanding of employability to engage and inspire students' development
- Ensure all students from all backgrounds have equality of opportunity in developing resilience, well-being and employability skills



To support academic staff with the implementation of the new Student Employability Strategy and their own faculty and departmental employability plans, Careers has created a menu of staff development sessions. These are not exclusive - and in the first instance departmental careers advisers will be happy to discuss thoughts and ideas with you.

We hope that these sessions will help to develop academic colleagues' knowledge and understanding of employability, and how Careers can support you to ensure that together we are providing clearly signposted, transparent & consistent employability opportunities & messages to our students.

Your departmental Careers Adviser will be happy to attend team meetings/other group meetings and update staff about how to deal with careers queries from students. We do not expect you to be Careers Advisers but want you to feel confident in knowing how to signpost students, how to book appointments and access online resources.

If you are wondering about how to build employability-related activities into your modules, your Careers Adviser and Employer Engagement Manager can offer advice about activities and events such as careers fairs, mock assessment centres and guest speakers. We know that in working together we can inspire our students to make the most of their time at Edge Hill and embrace all opportunities open to them for their personal and career development.



Geography students at Thames Tideway in London as part of the annual GIS Employability Trip, with Careers Adviser Debby and departmental staff



Below are **examples** of staff development sessions that Careers can provide to support academic departments. Please feel free to “pick n mix” as needed and contact us with additional requests and ideas for further sessions that we can tailor to your needs.

These can be with senior staff members, specific programmes, whole teams or individuals from 30-minute bite size sessions up to a whole day.

### **What is Careers?**

Useful introductory session for new staff in departments and faculties. What tutors need to know to signpost students effectively. 30 minutes

### **Talking about Careers & Employability at Open Days: everything a tutor needs to know**

when talking to applicants and parents at open days: how we develop student employability skills, getting parents and applicants engaged, promoting our unique employability opportunities: Sandwich placement support, Extra Edge, Volunteering Awards and Scholarships, Student Opportunity Fund, placements, Part time job support (every parent asks this one!) including on campus and Careers Awards, what jobs do our graduates go into, what do our students say about the Careers support we give them, promoting our employability strengths and externally recognised awards... 45-60 minutes

### **Implementing the University Employability Strategy**

Overview of what Employability means at Edge Hill University, where we have come from, where we are going to, individual's responsibility in delivering, some quick fix suggestions and how the successful delivery of employability will increase student engagement, support retention & motivation, increase academic attainment and improve graduate outcomes – leading to increasing student recruitment. 60 minutes

## **Supporting Retention & Engagement: Careers interventions to support retention**

Introduction to Extra Edge Certificate for First Year students, Volunteering Opportunities including bronze, silver & gold awards, Careers Awards Evening, Student Opportunity Fund, interventions targeting those most likely to drop out, ensuring that students from all backgrounds succeed. This is particularly useful for 1st year & all personal tutors and can include feeding back data to departments on their students' engagement with Careers, including those with protected characteristics, across all three years.

30 minutes

## **Engaging all students in developing employability skills and professional attributes in each year of the student journey**

Developing in-curricular employability activities and/or extra-curricular – using employability tools, measuring effectiveness and employability gain, developing whole department or faculty systematic approaches throughout each year.

45-60 minutes

## **Equality of Opportunity: Closing the Progression Gap**

How do we ensure that students from all backgrounds have equality of opportunity in developing employability skills & positive graduate outcomes? A session considering the requirements of OfS, TEF, our Access & Participation Plan, implications for departments, examples of good practice and targeted interventions.

60 minutes

## **Knowing how to present as a compelling candidate - are you confident that your students will know how to do this by the end of your final year?**

Is this part of your curriculum either through learning & teaching activities or via Careers staff inputs into your lessons? Do you have some knowledge of the latest graduate recruitment and selection techniques? Would you like to hear from employers, alumni or Careers staff about this?

60 minutes or a half day session with employers and alumni

## **Developing a strategy for employer engagement within programmes**

Departments and faculties – what, why, who, and when – understanding context and drivers – including curriculum & extra-curricular inputs, event management & planning incorporating the Student Voice, employer visits – students & staff. Where do Edge Hill graduates go to work? What does success look like and what outcomes you hope to achieve?

60 minutes

## **What is Graduate Outcomes?**

How has this changed from DLHE (Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education) and what are the implications for departments? What strategies do departments need to put into place to improve positive graduate outcomes – for students and graduates? If published departmental outcomes are poor – what will your narrative be for student recruitment and open days?

60 minutes

## **Subject specific updates**

Including training & employment, recruitment & selection in areas such as Law, Finance & Accountancy, Media and other vocational topics.

30-60 minutes

## **Careers Wiki**

In addition to these sessions, we will be creating a new staff Careers Wiki where we will locate useful websites and the latest news, research and reports on graduate careers and employability to keep you up to date with what is happening in the sector.

60 minutes



Our team of knowledgeable Careers Advisers work specifically with academic departments, and are the best point of contact for you to approach when looking to implement any of the above.

Our advisers and their respective departments are as follows:

### Adviser

### Subject Area(s)

Emma Bonati

- Criminology
- Law
- Psychology
- Politics
- Policing
- PGCE Early Years

Becka Colley-Foster

- Sport & Physical Activity (shared)
- English, History & Creative Writing
- Secondary Education QTS courses

Nicola Critchlow

- Biosciences
- Computer Science (shared)
- Media & Performing Arts (shared)
- Sport & Physical Activity (shared)
- PGCE Further Education & Training
- OfS funded Courses - Secondary (BA Education)

## Adviser

Cathy McGahan

Debby Murray

Joanna Nutt

Alistair Shimmin

## Subject Area(s)

- Social Sciences (shared)
- Social Work
- Applied Health & Social Care (OfS funded courses)
- Part-time, foundation & top-up courses in the Faculty of Education (OfS funded courses)
- Geosciences
- Media & Performing Arts (shared)
- Early Years Undergraduate QTS
- Computer Science (shared)
- Nursing
- Midwifery
- Paramedic Practice
- Operating Department Practice
- Primary Education with QTS (undergraduate & PGCE)
- Full time and postgraduate FOE courses in the Faculty of Education (OfS funded courses)
- Medical School
- Business School
- Social Sciences (shared)

# Celebrating Employability in the Future

We have come so far since producing our first Employability strategy back in 2013 and the success of that strategy lies not only in tutors and Careers staff working in partnership, but also in the support and engagement of staff from across the whole university. Shortlisting for national employability awards, the best graduate destination outcomes (DLHE) 2017, the contribution of employability activities to TEF Gold and moreover the endorsement from our own students, What Uni Awards Job Prospects 2019, clearly demonstrate that our strength lies in working together.



Supporting & celebrating First Year student retention with new initiatives such as Extra Edge

As we embark on the next phase of our Student Employability Strategy let us:

- Showcase the employability activities that students can engage with at Edge Hill to increase **student recruitment** across all faculties
- Promote early engagement in employability and careers activities to support **retention**
- Work together in creating more innovative opportunities, to increase **student engagement** in developing employability skills & professional practice
- Celebrate with our students as we continuously improve **graduate outcomes**
- Seek out those “award” opportunities that usually favour collaborative engagement and which contribute to the success of our university

Finally – thank you to everyone for your contributions to date on this employability journey – the adventure continues!

**Jacqui Howe**  
**Head of Careers**



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*"I had a lot of support when I came to decide what route I should take next. The careers advisers and tutors were incredible at researching with me."*

**- Final year student, WhatUni Review: 'Job Prospects'**

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