

Aberystwyth University Employability Strategy 2018 - 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Aberystwyth University Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023 cites the following core objectives in relation to our Education and Student Experience vision:

- *Continually develop our undergraduate provision to ensure attractive, high-quality courses which lead to graduate-level employment.*
- *Embed employability skills across our range of programmes, including further opportunities for work experience, volunteering, international experience and other transferable skills.*

In addition, the importance of nurturing a range of external stakeholders, providing students and staff with openings to engage with organisations and opportunities, investing in entrepreneurial skills, encouraging participation in wide-ranging experiences, supporting the enhancement of trans-national education and language skills, contributing to the economic growth of Wales, as well as acting as a catalyst for increasing cultural awareness and integration are explicitly noted.

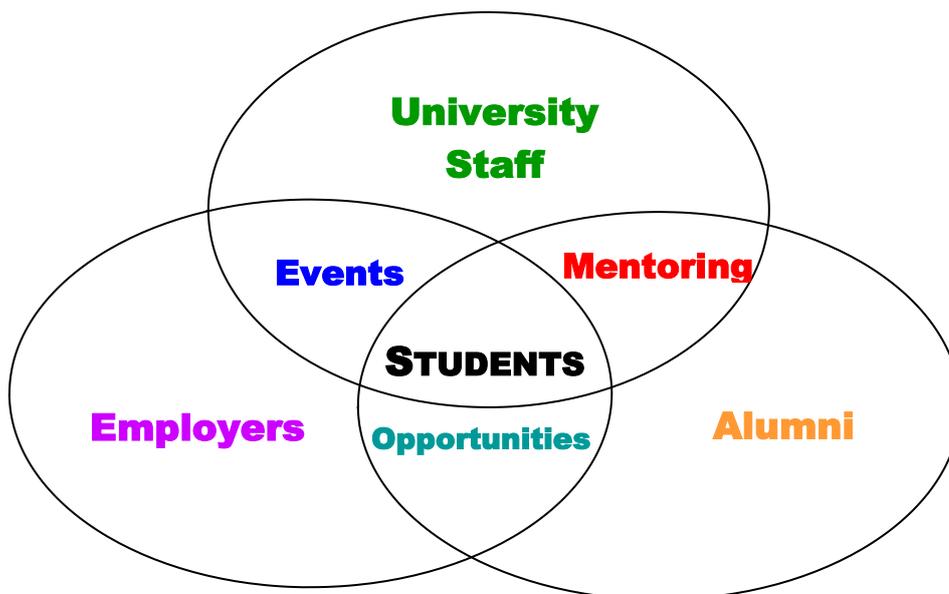
This Employability Strategy is focused on ensuring that these aims and objectives are realised. Thus, providing students with the necessary experiences for us to create graduates who are empowered to be

- Inclusive** in all that they do and with all who cross their paths
- Ingenious** in nurturing their skills to empower them to think outside the box and solve global problems
- Inspiring** in utilising all opportunities that come their way, unlocking their future potential
- Independent** in developing to be informed and confident citizens
- Individual** in creating their own unique career paths and contributions to the world

DEFINITION

The CBI and UUK defined employability as “*a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider community.*” (2009)

It is the responsibility of every member of staff at the institution to engage with this to ensure that our students are supported and prepared for their future paths, whatever those paths may be.



There is a definite distinction that must be drawn between employment and employability. Employment is synonymous with finding a job, whilst employability is associated with possessing qualities that facilitate and enhance employment (and other) opportunities. Employability and career management skills are of relevance to every single student who enters our institution.

STRATEGIC AIMS

Recognising parity between career management skills development and academic studies:

AIM 1: To embed employability into the academic curricula of each Faculty

- 1.1 Establish employability working groups in each Faculty to drive the development and enhancement of this agenda across all departments.
- 1.2 Devise and implement annual Employability Action Plans for each Faculty, setting clear goals based on the annual KPIs for each department.
- 1.3 Continually evaluate feedback mechanisms and module descriptors to ensure that employability skills embedded in the curriculum are highlighted and clarified to students.
- 1.4 Establish and embed mechanisms and processes in each Faculty to support employer-led curriculum development to meet industry needs and professional standards.
- 1.5 Adopt and adapt the Embedding Employability in the Curriculum framework as a structure for ensuring career management skills are overt in the curriculum.
- 1.6 Utilise students as partners (via the Staff Student Consultative Committees, Academic Representatives, Students' Union links and other student

- representation mechanisms) to enhance curriculum development and assessment methods that further embed employability in the curriculum.
- 1.7 Recognise the importance of the tutorial system as a means of highlighting and supporting both employability and academic issues to students.
 - 1.8 Actively encourage and support the engagement of students with all non-credit bearing aspects of the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and work related opportunities.

AIM 2: To create a broad and diverse range of opportunities to support our students in developing employability skills

- 2.1 Contribute to the updating of our central database of employers and alumni, reflecting all sectors and career areas, organisational types and geographical spread.
- 2.2 Promote work experience opportunities to cater for all tastes, from basic work shadowing through to long term graduate level roles, and covering both on-campus opportunities and external options (Industrial Year, ABERforward, Summer Internships, Year in Employment, agency options, Aber Works, graduate employment).
- 2.3 Support greater involvement in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities (volunteering, clubs and societies, lifelong learning, eMentoring).
- 2.4 Foster diverse mind-sets throughout the academic curriculum and via extra-curricular activities, specifically with regard to enterprise, entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship.
- 2.5 Create a structure that drives student engagement with the broad range of activities that are created for them, working collaboratively across every University department, the Students' Union and with students as partners.
- 2.6 Inspire students to develop greater global and cultural awareness by engaging with exchanges, study abroad, Erasmus+, eMentoring and internationally based Year in Employment Scheme/Industrial Year opportunities.

AIM 3: To fully encourage students to reflect on and monitor their learning and development

- 3.1 Provide appropriate AberGrad Skills Checklists and Planning Grids for each year group in all taught programmes, ensuring the availability of opportunities to engage with the resources in meaningful ways.
- 3.2 Guarantee a minimum tutorial package for each students in each academic department as an expected element of their academic course, with an agreed core content common to all disciplines that allows for appropriate research, reflection and monitoring.
- 3.3 Adapt the existing academic curricula as required to ensure adequate opportunities for students to reflect on their studies and research the range and impact of the transferable skills developed therein.
- 3.4 Ensure that structures are in place to reference skills development and provide students with formative processes to recognize this.

AIM 4: To work with employers and alumni to support curriculum development and aid with enhancing the professional credibility and reputation of our degree courses, and graduates, in line with industry standards and requirements

- 4.1 Source employers/alumni to support and highlight the practical and work-related relevance of theoretical aspects of the academic curriculum.
- 4.2 Utilise a range of employers/alumni to facilitate and deliver on-campus skills development workshops, enhancing the work of the Careers Service.
- 4.3 Engage employers/alumni with curriculum development in order to meet the requirements of given professional bodies and industry standards.
- 4.4 Identify, source and make available as broad a range of work experience opportunities as possible, utilising all relationships with employers and alumni globally to facilitate this provision.
- 4.5 Evaluate and disseminate graduate labour market intelligence and utilise this to inform curriculum changes and opportunity development.
- 4.6 Support the development of alternative courses and curricula, specifically Degree Apprenticeships, to facilitate closer alignment with industry needs and standards whilst providing alternative routes into highly skilled career paths
- 4.7 Advantageously use all opportunities available to network with employers and alumni in order to progress the employability agenda.

AIM 5: To offer staff development opportunities across the academic year that support all staff of the University to fully engage with and contribute to the employability agenda and fulfil the principles of this strategy

- 5.1 Provide training for staff in employability related practices and principles, not least as a core component of the PGCTHE.
- 5.2 Establish the importance of the Employability Strategy and its implications at all induction programmes of new staff.
- 5.3 Work in partnership across the University to facilitate dissemination of this strategy and its principles.