The changing face of employability within higher education

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What is employability?

- \$64,000 dollar question!
- Difficult to define and cannot be boxed into a single point in time and is very personal and unique (Crisp et al. 2019).
- Needs to be embedded within every aspect of the student journey (Tibby and Norton, 2020).
- Employability and continuing professional and personal development is a key aspect of higher education and subsequent career journey (Taylor, 2016).
- Important to support the development of employability "resources" (Taylor, 2023).



The evolution of employability

What is employability – definitions

Embedding within curriculum - course level

Capital and agency - individual level

- Employability has become one of the critical priorities within the higher education landscape across the world (Abelha et al., 2020).
- Within higher education there has been an evolution of employability to become more focussed on a capitals-based approach facilitating individual agency to better prepare students for the transition into the workplace and throughout their careers (Tomlinson and Jackson, 2021).

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Still a gap between employer expectations and graduate work readiness (Orr et al., 2023).



Graduate Capital Model

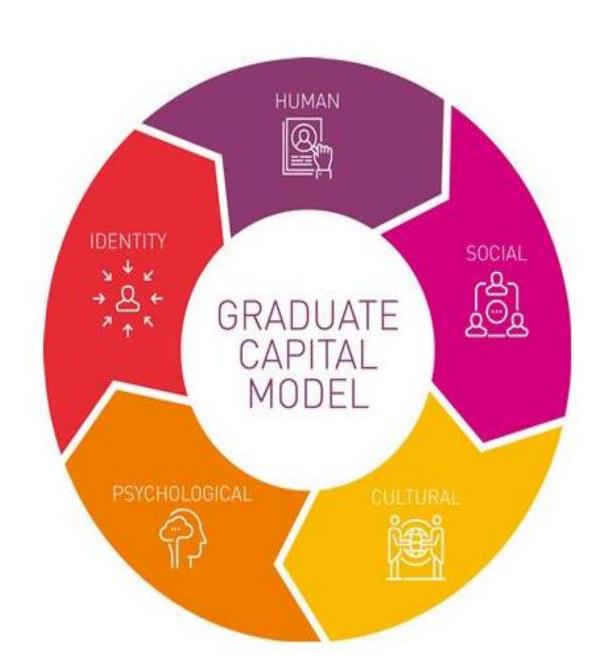
Tomlinson's *Graduate Capital Model* (Tomlinson, 2017) presents five capitals that impact on employability.

- 1. Human
- 2. Social
- 3. Cultural
- 4. Identity
- 5. Psychological

(Please note the information for this presentation and image is taken from <u>Graduate Capital Model | Careers, Employability and Student Enterprise | University of Southampton</u>)





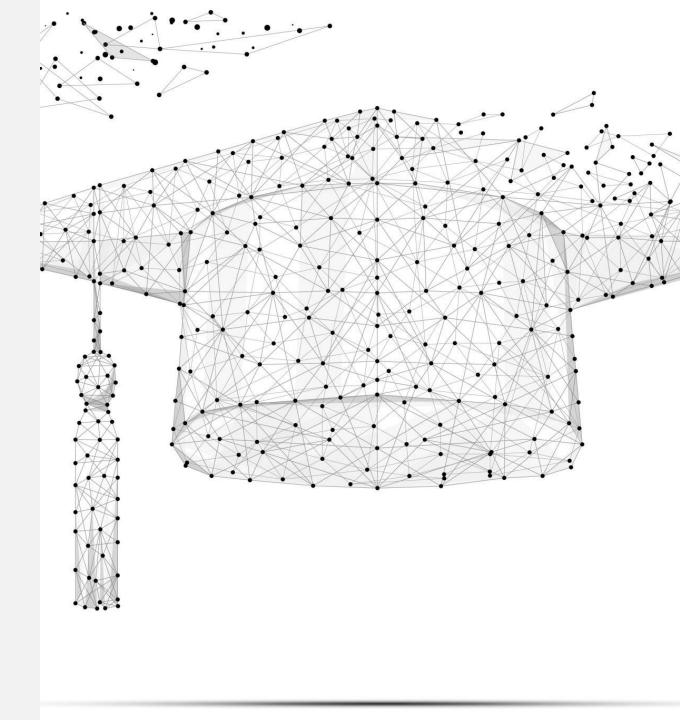


Human Capital

Graduate level knowledge and skills and confident to access the labour market.

- Able to apply transferable skills and knowledge
- Ability and understanding to identify job opportunities
- Able to realise job opportunities
- Competent with the job application process





Social Capital

Identifying and accessing employment opportunities through development of networks.

- Aware of changing work landscapes
- Knowledge of key individuals within the area
- Make and take opportunities
- Build networks within their chosen area
- Develop online networks and profile
- Be bold to promote themselves within their networks



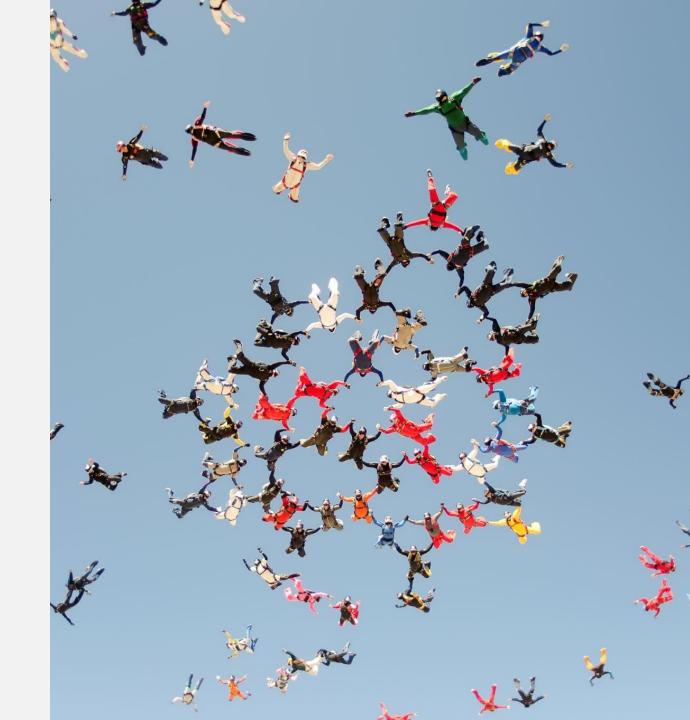


Cultural Capital

Cultural awareness within the sector and organisations and how they would fit within this.

- How they would add value through extracurricular activities they have undertaken
- Use a range of mediums to present themselves
- Develop knowledge and understanding of different cultures within their area
- Demonstrate an appreciation of different cultures





Psychological Capital

Flexibility and ability to cope with work challenges.

- Able to manage and plan around uncertainty within the workplace
- Able to adapt and absorb any setbacks or changes
 Develop their own strategies that work for them to manage workplace stress and challenges
- Have alternative routes for their career as contingencies





Identity Capital

Understanding themselves and what they can bring to the job market and what they may want to achieve through their career.

- Able to articulate and evidence skills, attributes and experiences but also aware of any gaps that need to be filled
- Consider what is important to them values and motivation wise
- Evidence their strengths but also areas for improvement
- Use placements and other work experiences to ascertain what is important to them
- Use their knowledge and understanding of themselves to establish jobs and careers that will fit their profile
- Reflect and evidence their progress





Individual ownership and agency

Metacognitive approach to employability - students need to understand their thinking and learning processes.

- Basic literacy (skills and knowledge);
- Rhetorical literacy (problem solving, goal achievement);
- Personal and critical literacy (theory into practice, selfawareness and efficacy);
- Emotional literacy (feelings of self and others);
- Occupational literacy (career awareness and paths);
- Ethical, cultural and social literacy (individual responsibility, behaviours, beliefs and values, global citizenship).

Bennett (2017, 2018)

Pham and Soltani (2021) build on Tomlinson's capital model (2017) to include agentic capital.

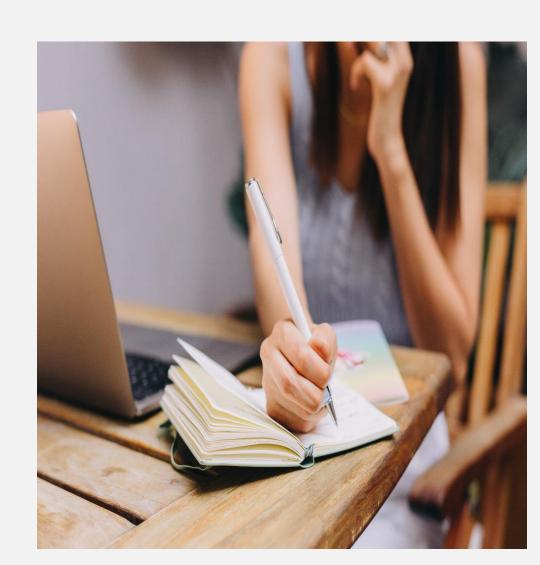




Reflection and action planning

- Reflection aids individuals to gain a self-identity, agency and ownership of their employability Bennett (2017, 2018).
- Supports metacognition.
- What? So what? Now what? (Borton, 1970).
- Action planning a crucial looking forward aspect of reflection.
- Links with professional requirements portfolios evidence of employability – confidence in articulation.





Curricular and extra-curricular opportunities

- Curricular and extracurricular experiences support development of capitals (Tomlinson, 2017).
- Students can process and internalise experiences to develop and shape their individual identity and aspirations (Holmes, 2013).





Employability Strategy

Transformational, creative and innovative, inclusive, ambitious, collaborative.

- Embed across all curricula
- Strengthen connections with alumni and employers
- Part of every student experience
- Meet diversity within student cohort
- Emerging, future thinking and institutional in approach.



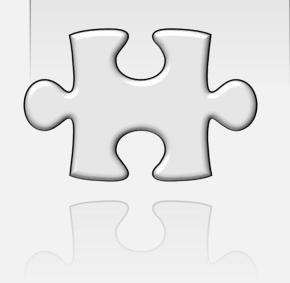
Enhancing student success – Advance HE



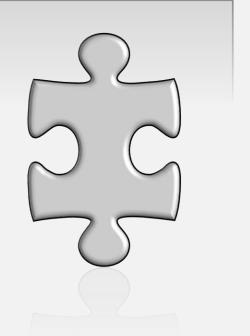


Embedding employability in the curriculum - strategy

Institution
strategy, policies and
practices to support
embedding
employability



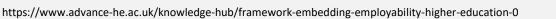
Course or programme teams to take a holistic approach to employability, connecting it with pedagogic practice within and across the curriculum



Identify the attributes and competencies a student should have the opportunity to develop and practice to enhance their success



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Extracurricular employability

"Extracurricular activities are crucial if you want to boost your graduate career prospects" (Lewis, 2024)

Quotes below taken from Lewis (2024)

"What I look for most in graduate candidates is if they've done something other than their degree course such as volunteering or being involved with their university sports club" Rod Flavell, a founder and the chief executive officer of FDM Group.

"The extracurriculars on a CV can tell you a lot about a candidate" Ian Yeulett, global head of enterprise sales at Bloomberg L.P.

"I'd rather take through to interview a candidate who has a 2.2 but has been involved with student societies and had a part-time job than a candidate who has a first but has done nothing but study" Emma Simpson, early careers talent partner at ISG.

- Activities can show personality more to employers
- Opportunity to develop some of the missing employability "resources"



Extracurricular activities (information taken from Ghoshal, 2021)

Examples

- Societies
- •Sports
- Mentoring Schemes
- Fund Raising
- Enterprise
- Leadership Awards
- Committee Positions

- Representation
- Volunteering
- Exhibitions
- Buddy Schemes
- Community Projects
- Student Ambassadors
- Show/Performances

Benefits

- Expand social networks
- Meet a diverse group of people
- Improve communication skills
- Develop teamwork skills
- Boost self-esteem
- Help with conflict resolution
- Heighten emotional intelligence





Employability and placements

- Employability (process) is an individual's life-wide and life-long journey with employment destinations (outcomes) on the way (Taylor, 2023).
- Employability has evolved to become more focussed on a *capitals-based approach*, facilitating *individual agency* and preparing students better and building self-efficacy for the transition into the workplace and throughout their career journeys (Tomlinson and Jackson, 2021).
- Placements are the most common employability activity (The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services and Shortlist Me, 2022).



Placements

- Is increasingly theorised to support learning for students when well designed and supported with evidence-based pedagogies underpinning the learning process (Lester and Costley, 2010).
- Traditional lengthy placements within industry can be burdensome for students (Hayes and Cejnar, 2020).
- Travel and accommodation costs can limit accessibility for all students (Thompson and Brewster, 2022).
- Online provision of placements removes some of the barriers, with a more flexible and accessible approach of delivery in many cases (Gamage, 2021; Sophonhiranrak, 2021).
- Use of existing systems so all students have access to the learning (Crompton and Traxler, 2018; Sophonhiranrak, 2021).



The online/remote working context

- 70+% of graduates still work from home one or two days a week (Institute of Student Employers, 2023).
- "55% of Gen Z graduates of Class 2023 prefer remote or hybrid work" (Kashyap, 2023).
- Early Career Survey of approximately 5000 students and graduates 51% working remotely or hybrid (Prospects Luminate, 2023).
- A different set of skills and can be challenging (Hughes and Thambar, 2023).



A sustainable online placement model

- The Peer Enhanced e-Placement (PEEP) was initially created as an emergency response (Taylor and Salmon, 2021).
- Built around placement learning outcomes "anchors", delivered entirely online, harnessing robust evidence-based online (Salmon, 2011) and peer-learning pedagogy (Tai et al., 2021; Topping et al., 2017).
- The PEEP was a catalyst for reimagination of placement provision offering sustainability as a placement model (Taylor, 2023).
- Formal evaluations of the PEEP demonstrate that students develop team working, communication and in depth critical reasoning employability resources as well as experience and confidence of online/remote working within the placement/workplace context.
- Recognised by professional and statutory bodies (Council of Deans of Health, 2022) Erasmus+ research project (Erasmus+, 2023) and recommended within recent Higher Education Commission Policy Connect report (Policy Connect, 2024).



PEEP core components

- Professional standards and specific placement learning outcomes "anchors"
- PEEP pedagogical principles and timetable design
- Online placement environment using VLE/LMS/other technology platforms



Scaling up the PEEP - 2020 - present

- An online synchronous PEEP acquisition experience workshop was created and piloted and is delivered by Professor Lisa Taylor and Professor Gilly Salmon.
- The online synchronous workshop and associated learning aimed/s to enable PEEP placement teams (including higher education academics, clinicians, and service users) to work collaboratively in the design and delivery of their own PEEPs.
- The objectives of the PEEP acquisition experience was to maximise the team's understanding of the robust pedagogical principles and transferability of the PEEP, and to support contextualisation and application of those principles for their own individual team's local and profession specific needs.



Examples of evaluated PEEPs across professions

- An Occupational Therapy PEEP for 100 students in the Northeast of England received positive evaluation from the students. In depth understanding from their participation in the PEEP. Positive findings resulted in plans for the PEEP to be embedded into ongoing programme provision (Payne and Downes, 2021).
- Orthoptists PEEP delivered by an NHS Trust in Yorkshire with positive evaluation. Subsequent joint PEEP was completed with orthoptists in Scotland.
- A physiotherapy PEEP evaluation in Scotland strengths included a range of different teams, the peer group learning and support, the clarity of the structure of the PEEP, the opportunity to follow a patient journey and the good support from the staff leading the PEEP. Demonstrates that the PEEP was effective to provide physiotherapy students with an initial experience of practice-based learning (Stears et al., 2022).



Evaluated nursing PEEP projects (shortlisted for three Student Nursing Times Awards 2024)

- Buckinghamshire New University in partnership with Professors Gilly Salmon and Lisa Taylor and partner NHS Trusts to develop the first PEEP for mental health pre-registration nursing students in 2021. The success of this project led to the development of the Northwest and Southwest London PEEP project funded by NHS England. This project involved the roll out of PEEP across 5 universities and 3 mental health practice learning providers. Positive evaluations and plans for expansion and further evaluation.
- Kingston University London a PEEP pilot Hospice E Learning Placement (HELP) Child and Young Person PEEP. A PEEP designed and delivered for children's student nurses and learning disability student nurses to work in collaboration across fields. Fist cross-field nursing PEEP. Positive evaluation and plans for increased students in 2025 then will be compulsory for children's nursing and learning disability nursing students from then onwards.





Operating Department Practitioners nationally

PEEP
contextualisation for
the Operating
Department
Practitioner (ODP)
profession – national
project



Engaged with the President of the College of ODPs, the immediate past president, the chair of the education standards committee, clinicians, employers, academics, and student ODPs

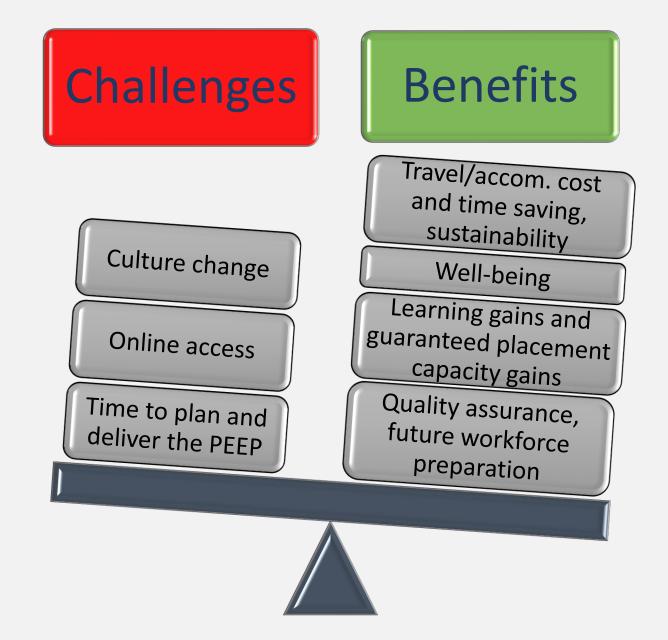


"Such a valuable tool, so many ideas to individualise and implement across all three years of the ODP programme" "PEEP is a valuable evidence-based tool to support learning" "I think virtual placements could be effective in exposing ODP students to non-traditional roles, such as working as a practitioner in ED [emergency department] or transferring an intensive care patient to a different hospital"



Within six months
175 ODP PEEPs were
delivered, with
positive feedback - a
further 636 fourweek PEEPs have
been delivered to
date with
programmes
embedding PEEPs
into their ongoing
placement provision







Reach and impact of the PEEP



Over 80
placement
teams over
20
professions/
fields.



Over 2000 students formally recorded completed PEEPs to date.



Research completed on the synchronous online PEEP acquisition experience and completed PEEPs.



PEEP examples
across occupational
therapy, diagnostic
radiography,
orthoptists, speech
and language
therapy, nursing,
physiotherapy,
operating
department
practitioners and
dietetics.



Positively evaluated across many health and social care professions, offering a quality, sustainable, collaborative, evidence-based, authentic placement option.



Multiple conference presentations, publications and awards.



Publication of a book

https://www.routledge.c om/Constructing-Online-Work-Based-Learning-Placements-Approachesto-Pedagogy/Taylor/p/book

/9781032326207



NHS England contract to translate existing PEEP acquisition experience into an asynchronous online on demand elearning for healthcare programme.

























PEEP summary

Sustainable mitigation against further disruption & placement capacity challenges

"Non hands on"
employability and
professional
development gains for
students and staff

Quality robust design and
evidence base
underpinning the PEEP
model built around
learning outcome
"anchors"

Flexible model for local adaption and adoption for local need with a breadth of bespoke learning opportunities



Conclusions and application to your employability strategy

Transformational, creative and innovative, inclusive, ambitious, collaborative

- ✓ Embed across all curricula.
- ✓ Strengthen connections with alumni and employers.
- ✓ Part of every student experience
- ✓ Meet diversity within student cohort
- ✓ Emerging, future thinking and institutional in approach



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PEEP resources

www.e-placements.net and https://www.educationalchemists.com/placements.html#/

The original PEEP – structure and pedagogy; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= EHZfjUjwM8

PEEP placement innovation; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nQn2y3eXNg&t=6s

PEEP 6 months on – adapting and scaling; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXaFM9CXTI8&t=8s

Achieving online health placement delivery with Deborah Lewis and Martin Rhodes - Highly Specialist Orthoptists; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q052vMeb57I

PEEP implementation with Helen Lowes Sheffield NHS Trust; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3Xz2BaAapl&t=367s

Student experience and feedback Glasgow Caledonian University Physiotherapy students; https://youtu.be/YBGtCsumFiw

Peer Enhanced e-Placements - Accessibility, Diversity and Sustainability; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtXf-IDVlgw

Council of Deans Innovation Fortnight CoDHCast; https://www.councilofdeans.org.uk/2022/01/codhcast

Visualisation work as part of the PEEP contextualisation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nt-a2cqc2DI&t=2s

5 stages of learning information https://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html

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Thank you for listening



Workshop Introduction

Application of employability theory and strategy

Build on key principles presented from the keynote presentation.

Will be moved into breakout rooms to discuss some reflective questions.

An opportunity to explore some of the concepts in more detail and work through the application of these within your own contexts.

Learn from others within your group.

Time to reflect consolidate and action plan.

What goal/s do you want to achieve from this session?	Who will help you to achieve your goal/s?	What resources will you need to achieve your goal?	What tasks do you need to undertake to achieve your goal?	What timescale do you need to apply to this goal?	How will you know you have achieved this goal?	Review your action plan to see if you need to set further goals.