Employability Strategy 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan of Aberystwyth University cites 6 main challenges that encompass the institution's ambitions over the coming years to become a leading interdisciplinary institution making an impact in Wales, in the UK and globally:

- Creating opportunities
- Research with excellence that make an impact
- Teaching that inspires
- Engaging the world
- Working in partnership
- Investing in our future

Underpinning these strategic aims is our commitment to delivering a high quality student experience, and ensuring that students who choose us are rewarded with a qualification that equips them fully for their future challenges.

The Employability Strategy is paramount to ensuring that all these elements work cohesively together to create a teaching environment and learning culture that fully supports the development of effective employability skills as an integral part of the student experience.

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.
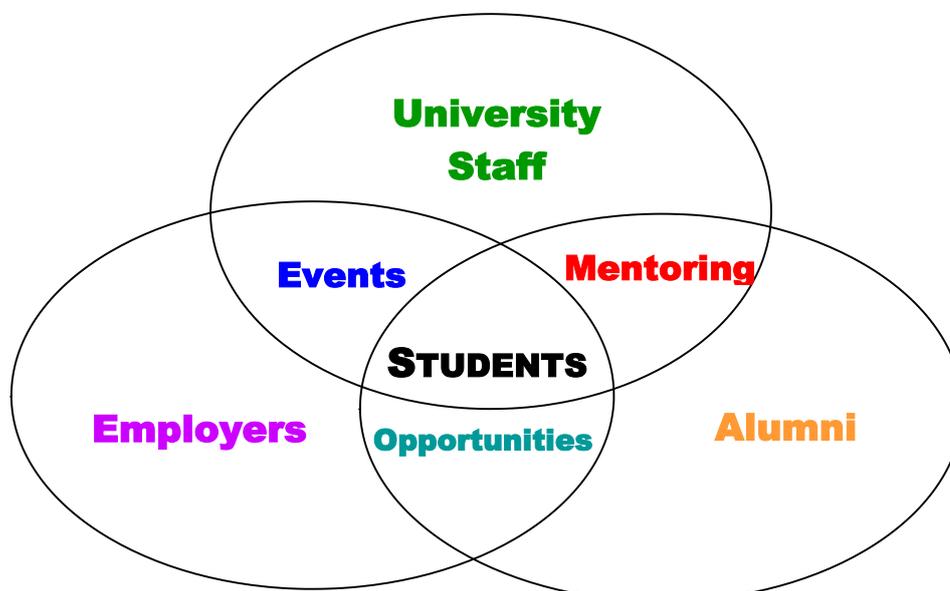
There is a definite distinction that must be drawn between employment and employability. Employment is synonymous with finding a job, whilst employability is associated with possessing qualities that facilitate and enhance employment (and other) opportunities. Employability and career management skills 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 Institute
1.1 Establish employability working groups in each Institute to drive the development and enhancement of this agenda across all departments.
1.2 Devise and implement Employability Plans for each Institute, setting clear goals and KPIs.
1.3 Evaluate feedback mechanisms and module descriptors to ensure that employability skills embedded in the curriculum are highlighted and clarified to students.
1.4 Establish an employer-led forum in each Institute to support curriculum development in line with industry needs
1.5 Adopt and adapt the Careers Education Framework as a structure for embedding career management skills in the curriculum
1.6 Utilise students as partners (via the Staff Student Consultative Committees, Academic Representatives 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 Encourage the engagement of students with all aspects of the curriculum
Teaching that inspires

AIM 2: To create a broad and diverse range of opportunities to support our students in developing employability skills
2.1 Establish a database of employers and alumni, reflecting all sectors and career areas, organisational types and geographical spread.
2.2 Source and advertise work experience opportunities to cater for all tastes, from basic work shadowing through to long term graduate level roles
2.3 Promote greater involvement in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities - volunteering, clubs and societies, lifelong learning
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 and internationally based Year in Employment Scheme opportunities

Creating opportunities/Engaging the world

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

3.1 Provide appropriate PDP portfolios for each year group in all taught programmes, ensuring the availability of opportunities to engage with the portfolios 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 and processes are in place to record the activities undertaken by students both within and without the curriculum that are relevant to be recorded on the HEAR

Research that makes an impact/Teaching that inspires

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, supporting 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, specifically inviting them to participate in employer advisory panels in each Institute

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 Gather and evaluate graduate labour market intelligence and utilise this to inform curriculum changes and opportunity development

4.6 Advantageously use all opportunities available to network with employers and alumni in order to progress the employability agenda

Working in partnership/Engaging the world

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 with other colleagues and departments to facilitate dissemination of this strategy and its principles

Investing in our future

OUTCOMES

To create:

'The Aber Grad'

- Critical, creative and/or enterprising thinker who is able to analyse, evaluate and problem solve

- Global citizen whose perceptions and perspectives stretches beyond actual experiences

- Effective communicator and contributor in professional practice and as a community member

- Proficient in the appropriate use of contemporary technologies

- Committed to continuous learning and development