



Learning outcomes: employability

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Plan

- “ What is employability?
- “ Bologna and employability
- “ How can learning outcomes help?
- “ How have learning outcomes helped?
- “ What challenges remain?



No better method, it seems, could be fallen upon of spending, with any advantage, the long interval between infancy and that period of life at which men begin to apply in good earnest to the real business of the world, the business which is to employ them during the remainder of their days. **The greater part of what is taught in schools and universities, however, does not seem to be the most proper preparation for that business.**

Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 1776



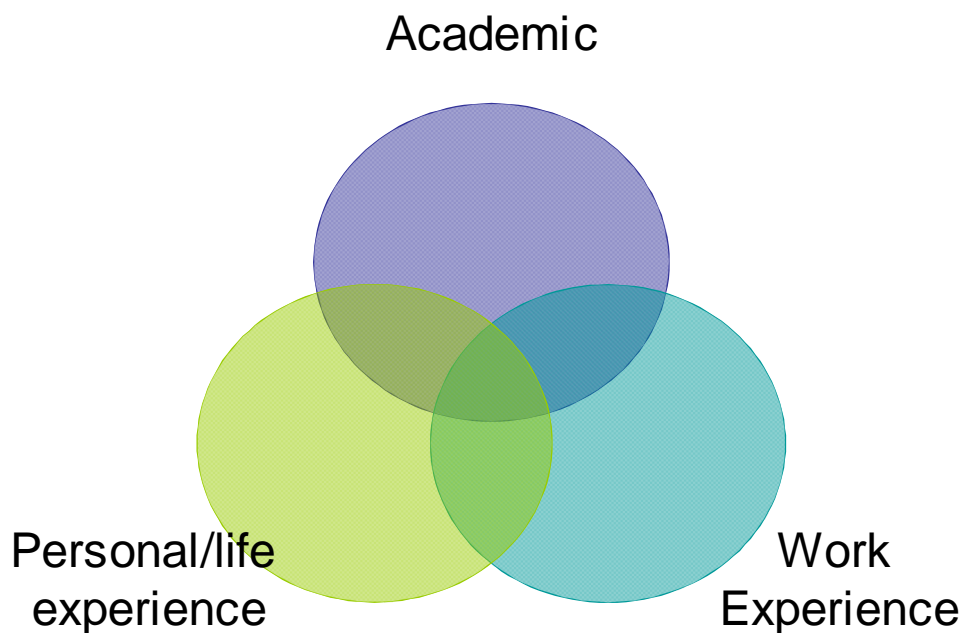
Employers want

“ intellect “ knowledge “ commercial awareness “
willingness to learn “ flexibility “ adaptability “ self-
regulatory skills “ self-motivation “ communication
skills “ interpersonal skills “ team working “ self-
assurance “ drive “ leadership “ resilience “
professionalism “ teamwork “ business focus “
problem solving “ self-awareness “ self-promotion “
exploring and creating opportunities “ action planning
“ networking “ decision making “ negotiation “
political awareness “ coping with uncertainty “
development focus “ transfer skills “ self-confidence

Financial Services Skills Council, *Graduate Skills and Recruitment in the City*; The Centre for Research into Quality, *Graduates' Work*;
www.agr.org.uk



Employers want



Evidence of skills and abilities now and of potential



A definition

A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

Mantze and Yorke, 2004



Further definitions

- “ A statement of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate at the end of a period of learning

- “ A mixture of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and understanding that an individual will attain



Bologna and employability

- “ **Embedding skills in the curriculum** is a key element of the Bologna reforms and as such needs to be monitored, with an emphasis on sharing good practice across Europe
- “ Higher education institutions should **assist students to recognise and articulate the employability skills** developed within the curriculum **and in other activities**
- “ The Bologna reforms are creating a new range of transition and exit points from higher education – requires the provision of **high quality professional staff guidance for students** and appropriate staff development for academic and other university staff.



Long-term potential

- “ Transparency for students
 - “ Potential and current
- “ Student centred approach
 - “ Developing intentional learners
- “ Curricular development
 - “ Employer involvement
- “ Transparency for employers
 - “ What it means to be a graduate of X course/discipline



Scottish dimension

- “ 4 year degree programmes
- “ Tradition of ~~an~~ any discipline+graduate recruitment
- “ Vocational . Semi-vocational . Non-vocational degrees



Current benefits

- “ Encouraged an attitude of learner responsibility
- “ Helped integrate employability considerations within curriculum design
- “ Presented opportunities for Careers Services to work more closely with academics



Examples

- “ Academic and career planning in economics
- “ Learning Outcomes approach to reviewing non-curricular activities
- “ PDP and learning outcomes in psychology
- “ Use of benchmark statements in skills audits
- “ Curricular employability audit



Some questions

- “ Employability talks of attitudes . are they compatible with LOs or can we make LOs compatible with attitudes?
- “ Engaging employers . especially SMEs?
- “ Embedding employability - at course or programme level?
- “ Is it inevitable that employers will always be dissatisfied?