

Five years of SCEPTRe's involvement with the professional training community

One of the most important aspects of SCEPTRe's remit as a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) has been to support the professional training community within the university in whatever ways its members believed would be most beneficial to the students and the members of the community. During the life of the project five main themes have evolved within which SCEPTRe has tried to fill and bridge the gaps, enhance and spread effective practice and share information for better understanding and practice.

These themes are:

- Sharing knowledge and projects across the university
- Supporting the professional training process and developing good practice
- Staff development
- Encouraging students to take up placements
- Reaching out to local businesses and raising awareness of the benefits of the placement scheme

Within these themes a range of practice-based initiatives have been undertaken, some have been successful, others have been less successful and some are very much "a work in progress".

Reviewing this range of practical activities, we have highlighted some below that we think would be beneficial to continue beyond the life of SCEPTRe. From our perspective there are two types of activities – those that are working well, & those that are in need of development but are worth persevering with.

Successful innovations:

- Monthly cross-community (**SCEPTRe**) '**drop-in**' sessions – all this needs is a comfortable venue & people willing to take it in turns to organise the topic.
- **Sharing of unused placement opportunities** between departments – someone needs to remind colleagues in May/June to do it.
- **Careers Service brochure** that continues to incorporate workshops from other departments (SPLASH, Students Union, etc) within the calendar.
- '**Virtual**' **handbook** of policies, procedures, useful resources, etc (currently the PebblePad web folio administered by Lindy).
- **Lifting the Lid** series of workshops – Careers has agreed to continue with these if there is sufficient interest from the students.
- **L1 pre-preparation workshops** – these received excellent reviews, but space has to be made for them in the students' timetables.
- **L3 returners pack** – someone will need to co-ordinate the updating of this. Students from MAD TV may be prepared to organise the filming & editing.
- **Placement Briefing Breakfasts** for local employers – this requires time for the organisation, but the results are well worth it.

Activities that are a “work in progress” and worth developing:

- Producing a **cross-Faculty spreadsheet of companies** listing all the students who are currently on placement with them. If this is produced, when the names of other students are mentioned, visiting tutors will know which department they belong to. If this was set up, maybe some visits could be shared between tutors? The issue with SITS is that by the time the spreadsheet is ready, first visits have already taken place.
- The **business coaching scheme** could be an excellent opportunity for students who did not undertake a placement year. It was popular with business people. This would, however, require a significant allocation of time to make it work properly.
- The **staff development programme for the PT community** has not been reinstated, but could be valuable for both new and experienced staff. Senior management would need to acknowledge the value of this and allow for it within allocation of tasks.
- The **placement scheme for staff** (up to four weeks in an academic year) would allow individuals to update themselves on sectors of work, keep abreast of HR/recruitment initiatives, build closer relationships within key companies and carry out research.
- The marketing department now has a large stand **promoting the university to companies**. It needs to be encouraged to promote the university to businesses as well as to students. When they attend fairs & conferences they could wear both ‘hats’ benefitting placements, research and general employment links.

We hope that PTCC will be able to consider these activities and allow time at the February meeting to debate what needs to be kept and how this will be achieved. We have come to the conclusion that having an individual who is engaged in facilitating cross-university activities has been productive and has encouraged new thinking. We hope that senior management will bear this in mind in the future.

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