

The value of 'community' in supporting transitions outside university

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Abstract Details

Statistics from the Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) survey has shown that graduate level employment or study 6 months after graduation is relatively low for psychology graduates compared to graduates from other disciplines. Due to highly competitive conditions for postgraduate places on professional psychology training courses, new graduates often spend time developing their portfolio of relevant skills and experience in order to compete for postgraduate places one or more years after graduating. In addition, QAA (2010) noted that only 15-20% of psychology graduates develop careers as professional psychologists. Many initiatives have been introduced across the UK (see Reddy, Lantz, & Hulme, 2013) to support students' transitions out of university and into employment or further study, however these initiatives vary in the extent to which they are embedded and capture student engagement. At the University of Strathclyde, we are taking a multi-pronged approach to enhancing students' employability that is underpinned by an ethos of 'community'. First, the creation of the Strathclyde Psychology Alumni Network (SPAN), developed in collaboration with students, provides a platform through which current students, alumni, and staff, interact as members of the Strathclyde Psychology Community, virtually via LinkedIn and face-to-face at networking events. Second, a new work placement class in the final year will provide students the opportunity to enhance their experience and apply their psychological knowledge and skills in a work-based context. Third, a novel curriculum review process involving staff, alumni, and employers (representing private, public, and third sectors) has sought to identify the opportunities and challenges that graduates face, and the characteristics of the 'Ideal Strathclyde Psychology Graduate'. A core competency framework will be output from this process and will drive the curriculum enhancement process so that students have the opportunity to develop the characteristics of the 'Ideal Strathclyde Psychology Graduate'.

Keywords

Community

Alumni

Work-based learning

Employability

Curriculum review