



Issue 24 – Friday 7th June 2019

The following items have been discussed at the most recent SPEP Meeting:

Operational

There has been a decline in Level 5 Natural Science students opting for placements in 2018/19 compared to previous years. The PLSU have ideas in place to improve the placement process for Natural Science students including:

- Increased and earlier contact points with students in the next academic year
- Target students by programme
- Work closely with academics to promote placement uptake and paperwork support
- Streamline support for all three Schools with a focus on providing improved support for credit-bearing modules
- A “Placement Paperwork Mentor” will be assigned to students
- Paperwork sessions with students after lectures
- Increased liaison with Employer Engagement Team

Introduction

The Science Placement and Employability Panel consists of Academic and Support Staff representatives who meet regularly to discuss placement and employability matters arising within the Faculty. The SPEP Newsletter has been devised to report back the matters discussed and keep all Faculty of Science staff up to date.

The PLSU, Deborah Pownall, Carlo Meloro, Penny Oakland and Torsten Wronski are scheduled to meet to discuss expectations from placement activities in Wildlife Conservation, Animal Behaviour and Zoology, and review the differences between placements in charities and profit making organisations with regards to the Code of Practice.

It was suggested that inviting former placement students to talk to Level 4 and 5 students about their experiences whilst on placement could increase uptake.

Students who go through a recruitment process, despite not achieving a placement, still benefit as it provides real world experience that will prove useful after graduation.

Students who are unsuccessful in securing a placement will be signposted towards work experience via Careers and the Student Engagement Team as this also increases employability.

Careers Advice

The MSc Biomedical Science Employers Forum took place on Friday 15th March. It is a new course which is expected to be validated this year and will be available for students to enrol on in the 2020/21 academic year. It proved a successful event in gaining the skills needs of students from employers' perspective.

Employers who attended have now agreed to attend a Careers event in April, with some also signing up to guest lecture.

Deborah Pownall has introduced various LJMU staff to Unilever contacts with more connections planned once projects are finalised. Unilever opportunities will be sent to staff who can then inform students. Initial opportunities will be paid internships by LJMU but could potentially be company funded in the future.

Colette Ashbrook has launched the Careers Team Career Coaching Pilot. During tutorials, staff can refer students for a one-to-one Careers appointment.

Skills and Taught Content

It was reported that some students are unable to fulfil their anticipated hours on placement for a variety of reasons, including financial. Similar situations have occurred in previous years and the University is working with employers to explore these issues.

This has raised questions regarding whether the students will still meet the placement criteria. As the University does not formally track placement hours, a meeting will be arranged to discuss options for how to implement this in placement modules.

Employer Engagement

Optional Careers Events were very well attended throughout the year and would be worthwhile to run again in the future.

'Get That Job Day – Science, Technology, Engineering, Construction and Maths', will take place on Tuesday 9th April, 11am-2pm, Byrom Street G05/07/09. Laura Aldridge will be reminding students via email, with details also being broadcast on screens and monitors on campus.

The LJMU Careers Team blog (<https://ljmucareerszones.wordpress.com/>) is a useful source of information for staff and students. It provides details of upcoming events, follow-up posts after events, opportunities and hints and tips for students.

Graduate Outcomes Survey – the first survey of graduates took place in December 2018, with the first data expected to be published in spring 2020.

Any Other Business

Concerns were raised that the titles of the placement paperwork forms were confusing for students. The PLSU agreed that the paperwork process will be reviewed to prevent confusion. Further discussions will take place during module reviews.

Kate Phillips raised the issue of students being unable to enrol on their placement module until September. Ideally, this should happen earlier as it is an easy way to communicate with students. Torsten Wronski explained that the same situation occurs in Natural Sciences; however, there is a "pre-placement page" set up that allows students to enrol via invitation.

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Should you have any information you wish to feed back to the Science Placements and Employability Panel, good practice you would like to share or any input with regard to the items mentioned above please contact your School Representative or David Wood.

Date of the next Science Placements and Employability Group Meeting: **TBC**