



Issue 17 – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017

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

## New staff appointments

Kate Phillips and Andy Powell now share the role of Module Leader / Placement Coordinator for PBS sandwich year placements, with Kate overseeing biomedical sciences and Andy overseeing biochemistry and forensic sciences.

Torsten Wronski and Carlo Meloro have assumed the role of Module Leader / Placement Coordinator for Natural Sciences Professional Training (sandwich year placements) and Work Based Learning (summer placements) respectively.

Katie Evans is no longer the PBS Erasmus Coordinator. This role has been superseded by the International Academic Mobility Coordinator (IAMC) role. Katie is still an Employability Champion and requested re-clarification of the role and its responsibilities. Careers Centre representative Laura Aldridge

## 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.

clarified that the role includes promoting optional Careers events and graduate opportunities via the Brokerage team.

## **International Academic Mobility Coordinators (IAMC)**

The Faculty has appointed International Academic Mobility Coordinator (IAMC) in each School. The main focus of the IAMC role is promoting the 60 credits study abroad module. The IAMCs for each School are Amanda Boddis (PBS), Michael Richter (NSP) and Dominic Doran (SPS).

## **DBS updates**

No issues regarding DBS checks from a placement perspective were reported. Rapid progress in the processing of checks for MPharm was reported. Previous issues with DBS checks for major final year projects were discussed. Attendees were informed that any DBS requirements for PGR students, such as NHS research passports, be directed to Katie Lawrence (Information Officer).

Previous issues with DBS requirements for NHS lab based placements were discussed. While students were not perceived to be working directly with vulnerable persons, Atlantic Data has queried their role and responsibilities, and the legal requirements for a DBS check. Nonetheless, the NHS, in accordance with Health Care Professional (HCP) regulations, will insist upon a DBS check.

A similar issue was reported with medical records clerks who, whilst not patient facing, had access to patient records and therefore underwent a DBS check, although this did not meet the legal criteria. It was noted that biomedical scientists would have access to patient records.

## **Placement opportunities**

The PLSU is looking to create a “Periodic Table of Placements” to advertise placement opportunities to students, including yearlong and summer placements. It is hoped that this will provide a visual way for students to see opportunities and enable the PLSU to engage with other subject areas, such as geography. Whilst geography students do not participate in shorter length placements via the PLSU, they can opt for a sandwich year.

## **Graduate opportunities**

Increased difficulty in locating graduate opportunities with large companies was reported, particularly opportunities for PBS students. It has been noted that large companies are less likely to utilise major recruitment websites, such as Milkround and Indeed. For instance, graduate opportunities with MedImmune were relatively hidden, whilst AstraZeneca and GSK recruit via their own application systems. It was noted that the recruitment process for biomedical opportunities has become more robust and speculative applications are no longer sufficient. The cost of advertising with major websites was cited as a potential factor. The Careers team continue to encourage students to search via specific company websites.

## Degree apprenticeships

Pat Barry provided an update about Degree Apprenticeships. In PBS, a biomedical degree apprenticeship has been created, entitled BSc Healthcare Science Practitioner (Biomedical Science). Pat praised the establishment of the programme as a real team effort, and thanked Steve Crosby (Academic Manager) for supporting the creation of the programme. Despite losing their levy, employers requested that the programme be ready by September 2017. There are six new students enrolled at Level 4. They spend twenty percent of their time away from the workplace and complete their final year project in the workplace. They pay no tuition fees. Previously enrolled part time students have been converted to the new programme. The programme should receive accreditation soon. Only time will tell as to how the creation of degree apprenticeships affects traditional placements and work experience opportunities.

Pat explained that 0.5% of an employer's wage bill is capped. Employers with a wage bill below £3 million are not capped but can still access funding from the levy. In principle, a degree apprenticeship can be created in any discipline but needs to meet accreditation and skills standards. It was noted that FET has created degree apprenticeships by creating many new and part time modules. It was mentioned that degree apprenticeships may have an impact on NHS training schemes for roles such as physician's assistant, laboratory assistant and so on. The potential for postgraduate level degree apprenticeships, including PhD (Level 8), is undergoing review and further details should be available by February. The Government commitment to degree apprenticeships is confirmed until 2025.

## Careers Centre updates

Careers Centre representative Laura Aldridge gave an update from the Careers Centre (formerly WOWCC). Laura circulated a document detailing optional careers events aimed at science students. Students need to book online at: <https://worldofwork.ljmu.ac.uk/events/>. The events are aimed at particular cohorts but all interested students at all levels are welcome to attend. It was suggested that with the move towards personalised student timetables, it may be possible in future to incorporate relevant careers events into student timetables.

The Careers team have scheduled various "Careers Thursdays", where employers will be present in the Byrom Street Careers Zone to talk to students on an informal basis. Laura highlighted the range of events, including exhibition style events, such as a Pharmacy Pre-registration Employer Event on Wednesday 8th November, Exchange Station, 13:00 to 5:30pm, and events focused on STEM careers and working abroad. The events have been scheduled to best fit around student timetables. More events may be scheduled at short notice.

The Careers team has launched an LJMU Careers team Facebook page. Updated career planning guides are now available for each School. Students can collect a hard copy from the Careers Zones or download an electronic copy from: <https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/Careers/123871.htm>.

Academic staff reported many Level 6 students have been contacting them with regards to graduate careers. Laura highlighted that Careers offer one-to-one appointments. It was suggested that the new workload allocation model (CATAC) may allocate time more time to Employability Champions for this support. The PLSU has hard copies of Rate My Placement's "Top 100 Undergraduate Employers" guides. Academic staff and students are welcome to visit the office and collect a copy.

## **Support for students on overseas placements**

The scope and availability of University support for students on overseas placements was queried, in particular the availability of University counselling support. Examples of students witnessing and/or being involved in traumatic events whilst on placement was raised. Whilst Placement Coordinators are responsible for supporting students, further clarification about the role and its responsibilities in such cases was requested.

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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 Bethany Cragg.

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