



**THAILAND-EUROPEAN UNION
Policy Dialogues Support Facility**

Learning and teaching:

Enhancing student achievement through employability

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Overview

- Ten challenges for Thai HE
- Employability: what it is...what it is not
- Do universities need an Employability Strategy?
- A vision for your university's students and graduates
- Developing employability skills
- Delivery and support
- Relationships with industry, business, and professions
- Good governance: measuring performance
- Concluding observations

Student achievement and employability

- High on educational and political agenda
- Global developments (higher fees, higher participation rates) impact on student expectations and economic awareness
- HE providers required to prioritise employability and entrepreneurship skills, alongside academic skills

Student achievement and employability

Embedding employability into the core of higher education will continue to be a key priority of Government, universities and colleges, and employers. This will bring significant private and public benefit, demonstrating higher education's broader role in contributing to economic growth as well as its vital role in social and cultural development. (HEFCE, 2011, p.5).

Ten challenges for Thai HE providers and national authorities

How well prepared is Thai HE education for the challenges of the student employability agenda?

- What **planning** do universities undertake to support student employability? Do they have a strategy?
- Would universities value some **training and development** to develop such strategies?
- How far do the **curriculum** portfolios of universities reflect the needs of employers?
- Do all study programmes provide opportunities for **work experience placements/internships**?
- What **initiatives** are there (at university level and at national level) to support universities in enhancing the achievement and employability of students and graduates?

Ten challenges for Thai HE providers and national authorities

- What practices do universities use for **developing students' skills** relevant to employability and the workplace?
- What **services** do universities make available to students to support career planning and job seeking and for improving access to the job market?
- In what ways and with what success does higher education interact with the **vocational education sector**?
- How effectively do universities link with **professional bodies and employer organisations** for the purpose of improving graduate employment opportunities?
- What arrangements/structures are in place (in universities? At national level?) for tracking and measuring **graduate employment outcomes**? Do HEIs set targets and monitor them? Is there a national survey?

Employability: what it is

Employability is:

- a lifelong process;
- relevant to all students;
- complex and involves a number of areas that interlink;
- about supporting students to develop a range of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attributes which enable them to be successful in employment and in life;
- a university-wide responsibility.

(Higher Education Academy, 2013)

Employability: what it is not

Employability is not:

- about replacing academic rigour and standards;
- just about preparing students for employment;
- the sole responsibility of the Careers Department;
- something that can be quantified by any single measure.

(Higher Education Academy, 2013)

Defining employability

Employability is recognised as:

'a set of achievements, understandings, and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen career, which benefits themselves, the community, and the economy'

(Yorke, 2004).

Do universities need an Employability Strategy? If so, why?

- Forward-looking HE systems promote employability and career management skills
- A modern university requires an employability strategy
- Highly skilled employable graduates essential for economic and social well-being
- Employers complain that graduates are deficient in ‘soft skills’
- Government reform requires universities to foster graduate skills for a global market place

Do universities need an Employability Strategy?

If so, why?

Examples of Employability Strategies of UK universities:

<https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/files/2014/11/Employability-Strategy.pdf>

http://web.anglia.ac.uk/anet/student_services/public/ARUEmployability%20Strategy-2011-2014.pdf

<http://www.brad.ac.uk/careers/media/academicdevelopment/documents/Employability-Strategy-Revised-September-2014.pdf>

A vision for your university's students and graduates

Take a minute to reflect on the following questions:

- does my university have a publicly available statement that communicates the values, skills, and characteristics it expects its students to develop?
- If so, what are they? If not, how would you describe these expectations?

A vision for your university's students and graduates: a UK example

An illustrative example: the University of Greenwich

- The Greenwich Graduate Attributes (GGA) statement
- A public statement of the 'behaviours, values, skills, and dispositions' expected of its students and graduates
- (<http://www2.gre.ac.uk/about/faculty/eddev/support/graduate>)

GGA has three components:

- Creativity and Enterprise;
- Scholarship and Autonomy;
- Cross-cultural and International Awareness

A vision for your university's students and graduates: a UK example

Creativity and Enterprise:

- problem solving;
- ability to generate new ideas;
- communication; use of ICT;
- ability to seize and shape opportunities after graduation.

A vision for your university's students and graduates: a UK example

Scholarship and Autonomy:

- informed understanding of discipline or profession;
- independent thinking;
- ability to draw connections with disciplines and professions beyond their own;
- and intellectual curiosity and resilience.

A vision for your university's students and graduates: a UK example

Cross-cultural and International Awareness:

- ability to engage with diversity;
- move fluently between cultural and political contexts;
- value the ability to communicate in more than one language.

Developing employability skills: using 'toolkits'

- How are employability skills conceptualised in your university? Has your university's approach been reviewed?
- An example of how you might undertake a review (see the Employability Strategy of Anglia Ruskin University)

http://web.anglia.ac.uk/onet/student_services/public/ARUEmployability%20Strategy-2011-2014.pdf

Developing employability skills: using 'toolkits'

- The Anglia Ruskin strategy contains '**A skills toolkit**' and an '**Employability audit toolkit**'
- Either can be applied to your own university for developmental, review, or audit purposes, or to undertake a 'gap analysis' of current capability

Delivery and support

National level support for employability

- National system needs its own infrastructure and ‘solutions’
- English HE Funding Council expects HEIs to embed employability
- HE Statistics Agency (HESA) undertakes annual survey of graduate leavers in work, studying, or seeking work, for each HEI
- DLHE (Destinations of Leavers from HE) survey enables benchmarking, target setting, use of KPIs; monitoring of performance
- Higher Education Academy (HEA) provides employability enhancement services
- Quality Assurance Agency institutional review method includes student employability

Delivery and support

Institutional level support for employability

- Each UK HEI will have a Careers and Employability Service
- Most have cross-university networks of faculty employability coordinators
- Top priority for governing bodies
- External representation in governance and advisory structures

Delivery and support

Institutional level support for employability

Students can expect to receive:

- advice with careers planning and access to the job market;
- work experience and internship opportunities;
- volunteering schemes;
- access to recruiter job database;
- and credit-bearing employability skills training.

Relationships with industry, business, and professions

- Employer engagement an essential ingredient of a successful employability strategy

Every university should ask of itself:

- how does this university use externality in developing initiatives that enhance student employability?
- how actively does this university and its faculties engage employers/industry representatives in the design and review of provision?

Relationships with industry, business, and professions

- No 'blueprint' for engaging with employers...

Some steps that a HEI can take:

- make employers aware of the attributes/skills that your students develop;
- provide opportunities for students to visit local employers;
- develop lines of communication with major employers of your students;
- invite employers to talk about employment opportunities and requirements;
- what skills, knowledge, and attitudes do your major employers see as important in the next 5 years?

Measuring performance: good governance and employability

- HEIs accountable to stakeholders for performance and quality
- Governments, funding bodies, quality agencies, employers, and students take a close interest in universities' performance and effectiveness
- Good governance requires effective and transparent mechanisms for monitoring and measuring institutional performance
- Governing bodies call senior university managers to account for performance in core activities – including student employability and employment outcomes

Measuring performance: good governance and employability

- All UK universities have arrangements to measure and monitor performance
- Annual reporting to University Council and Senate; progress against KPIs; student feedback; benchmarks
- Faculties and departments accountable through monitoring and business planning

Measuring performance: good governance and employability

Typical example of use of KPIs for internal reporting to governance bodies

- Number of students undertaking volunteering opportunities;
- Number of students obtaining part-time jobs through the job-shop;
- Number of students undertaking integrated short work placements;
- Number of students undertaking sandwich placement/study abroad opportunities;
- Percentage of students in employment/undertaking higher study within six months of graduation;
- Percentage of students obtaining graduate level jobs within six months of graduation;
- Number of active employer links.

(Performance measures used by Edge Hill University)

Concluding observations

- Employability should be an essential component of the student experience
- HEIs should prepare and support graduates to succeed in competitive labour markets
- National authorities should support strategy and infrastructure
- National monitoring of institutional performance and effectiveness
- Key role for governing bodies