

SEN16D008

Title: UEA Employability Report
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Date: 31 October 2016
Circulation: The Senate – 9th November 2016
Agenda: SEN16A0001
Version: Final
Status: Open

Issue

An update on employability

Recommendation

Recipients are invited to receive the authors report on UEA employability activities.

Resource Implications

None

Risk Implications

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Timing of decisions

None

Further Information

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Background

It was agreed at Senate last academic year that there should be an update on employability at each subsequent meeting of 16/17

Attachments

Summary report below

Introduction

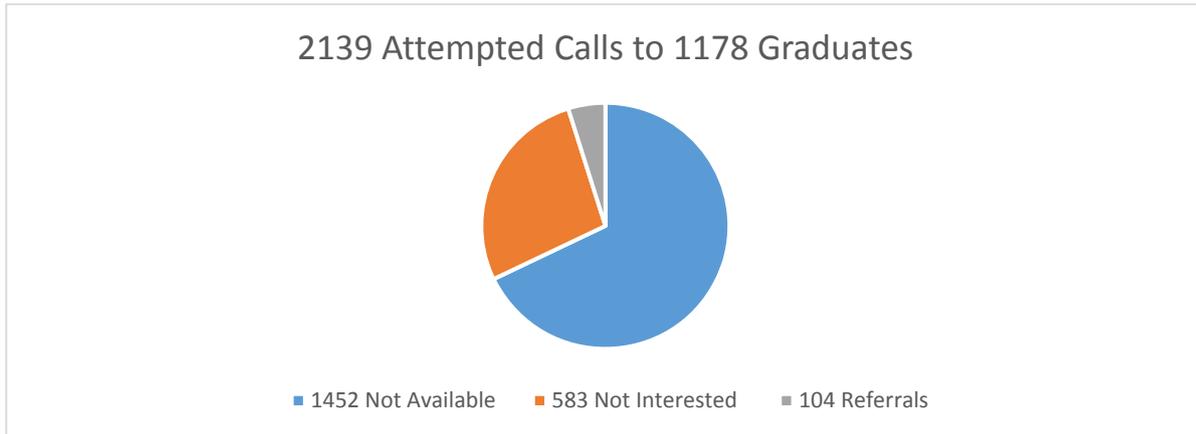
1. At Senate last academic year it was agreed that there should be an update on employability at each subsequent meeting of Senate in academic year 2016/17. It was also agreed that Faculties be asked to report on their actions in support of employability. It is suggested that the three remaining meetings are used in the following way: meeting 1 – SCI & SSF reports & data on student engagement with Careers Service; meeting 2 – HUM and FMH reports; meeting 3 – Careers Service update.
2. **Class of 2016 Call Campaign: Final Report**

The Careers Service is always looking to improve the support provided to students and the quality of data available on student outcomes. We wished to put in place a scheme to provide additional support to students who had recently graduated but may not have secured suitable employment/further study. We put in place a call campaign which has been very successful and will be repeated in subsequent years.

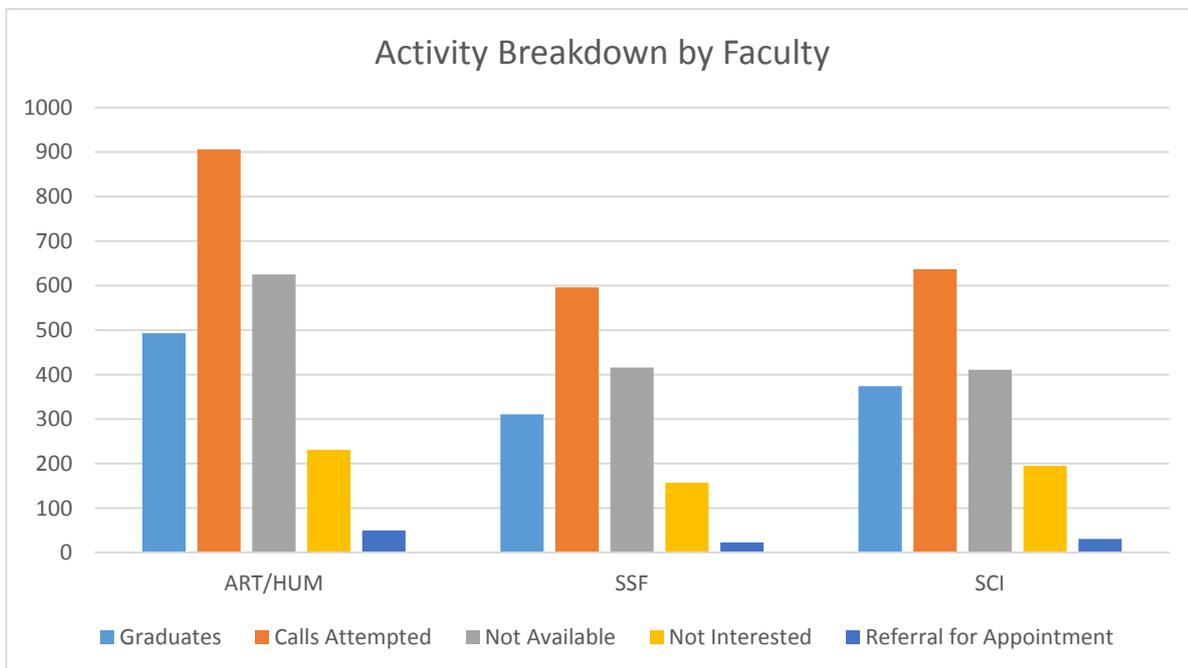
Overview and aims

- The goal was to contact “Class of 2016” UEA graduates by telephone and find out how their careers were progressing with a view to offering help where needed
- Our target cohort of graduates was those completing undergraduate courses with Home fee status from non-vocational Schools (all Schools except MED, HSC, SWK, PHARM) for whom we did not have a record of initial destination after their course. We therefore excluded those who we knew were carrying on into further study at UEA or who had been successful in securing graduate level employment. From a total pool of 2899 finalists, this amounted to a target cohort of 1,178 people
- Current UEA students and recent graduates were employed as callers to have a friendly, peer to peer chat with the 2016 graduates in order to understand their situation and to engage them with Career Central and its services
- If appropriate, our “Class of 2016” graduates were referred for a 30 minute initial telephone careers guidance discussion with a Careers Adviser, at a specific pre-arranged time
- Telephone contact details for the cohort were provided by the Alumni Office
- The campaign was run by an experience call centre manager with plenty of previous experience working for UEA
- 21 callers representing a broad range of academic subjects were recruited and trained, subsequently working 61 x 2.75 hour evening shifts between 25/08/2016 and 06/08/2016
- We targeted the scheme to achieve 100 Careers Adviser referrals, in order to ensure we maximised the opportunity for support to be provided to new graduates, with the potential to help improve results of the forthcoming DLHE survey of 2016 leavers in 2017

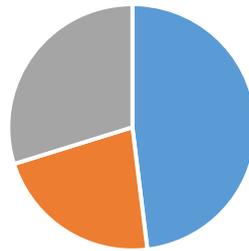
In Numbers



- All 1,178 of our graduates were attempted at least once, Where the graduate was unavailable we made a further 651 2nd attempts and 310 3rd attempts to contact them
- **In total we managed to contact 687** of these graduates (58.3%)
- Our contact rate for 1st attempts was 35.4%, for 2nd attempts was 31.3% and for 3rd attempts was 22.6%. These are acceptable “hit rates” considering the age of the data we were working from
- Many graduates had moved out of the family home/changed number/were away travelling and were therefore difficult to contact (hence not all uncontacted graduates had 3 attempts)
- **We booked a total of 104 appointments** against our target of 100 (see below for a more detailed analysis)
- For our purposes “Not Interested” means no appointment booked. Many of these people were engaged with us but simply didn’t need an appointment at the moment



104 Referrals



■ ART/HUM - 50 ■ SSF - 23 ■ SCI - 31

- Activity, when split by Faculty, broadly reflected the number of people that Faculty had on our call lists. All Faculties and Schools were given equal priority
- Conversion rates (percentage of contacts leading to a referral) were as follows:

ART/HUM – 17.8%

SSF – 12.8%

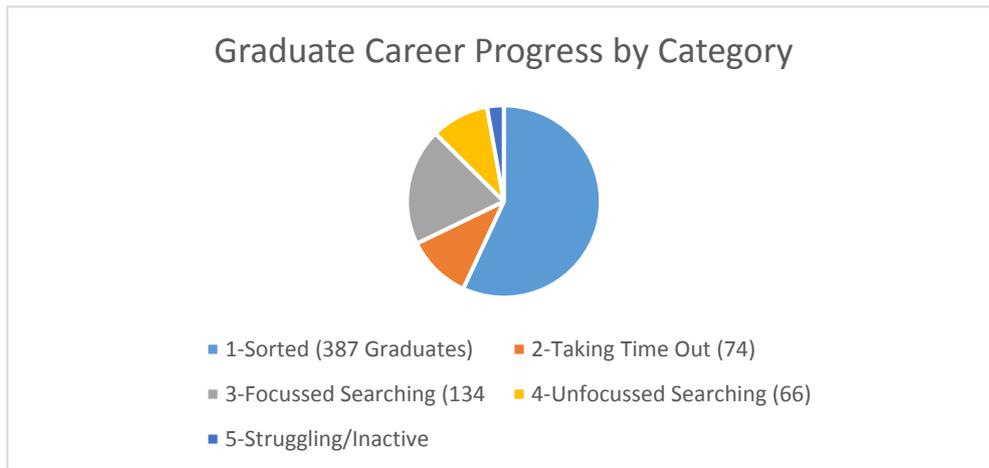
SCI – 13.7%

- The call campaign manager observed that from his experience ART/HUM seem to be more receptive and open to phone contact. SCI and SSF, although happy to talk to us, appear to be more natural “researchers”. Once we’ve chatted with them, they tend to prefer to conduct their business online and to work things out for themselves

What our Graduates are doing

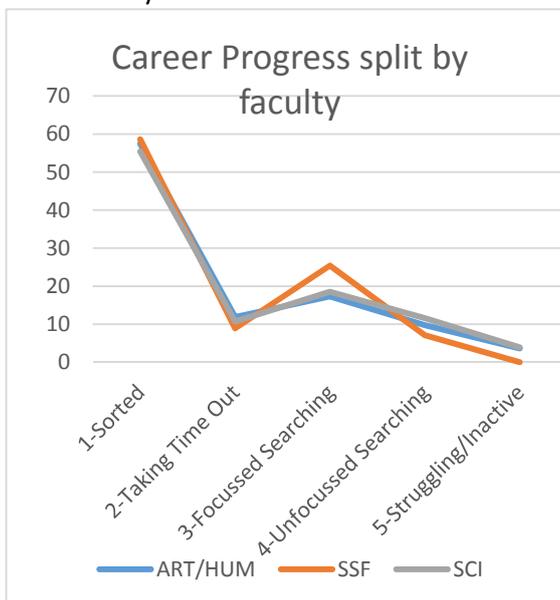
- The main goal for our callers was to grasp the graduates’ situations through dialogue and be aware of how Careers Services could benefit them. This enabled them to engage the graduates with Career Central and explain the benefits in a way that was meaningful and specific
- In doing this, we gained a reasonably detailed picture of what is going on out there with UEA’s recent departees
- In order to make it easier to process all of this information, we split our graduates into 5 broad categories, named as “The Assistance Scale”. The categories were as follows:
 1. **Sorted** – In a graduate role or about to start further studies
 2. **Taking Time Out** – Not currently looking for work and with a definite plan for the short/mid-term future (travel, working a temp job to save for a masters, etc)
 3. **Focussed and Searching** – Know what they want to do and are actively searching and applying for opportunities
 4. **Unfocussed Searching** – Applying for a number of different jobs but unsure what they want to do. Less clear in their ambitions than a 3

5. **Struggling/Inactive** – Not active and no plan. Perhaps procrastinating, perhaps issues with confidence



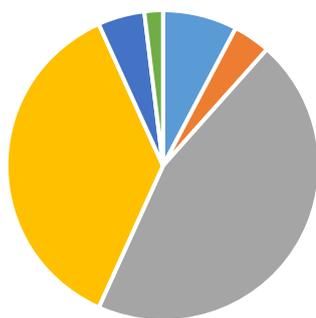
Note that those in temporary employment were usually categorised as (3) or (4) although this was not consistently applied and in some cases those graduates were placed into category (1). This is something we will rectify next time.

- 68% of our graduates told us that they are exactly where they want to be. These people were either in the careers they wanted to be in, studying or preparing to begin studies, or travelling
- 29% of people were actively looking for work opportunities. Some were in temporary work to pay the bills and some were unemployed but all were looking to move their career forward and were mostly taking active steps to do so
- Only 3% seemed genuinely lost. Some seemed a little paralysed by having to plan a career and they didn't know where to start



- The figures on the left are percentages of graduates in each situation from that Faculty, rather than raw graduate numbers
- The 3 Faculties had very similar results in terms of the career progress of their graduates
- The one notable outlier was SSF, which had a higher percentage of those not in Graduate work who had a definite focus on what they wanted to do and were working towards securing those roles
- For a more nuanced commentary on what our graduates are up to, please see the "What We Heard" section below

Referrals by Graduate Category



- 1-Sorted (8 Graduates)
- 2-Taking Time Out (4)
- 3-Focussed Searching (47)
- 4-Unfocussed Searching (38)
- 5-Struggling/Inactive (5)
- Unknown (2)

- Out of our 104 bookings, 85 of them were for people who were not in graduate level employment and who were actively searching for such employment
- Our calls were very timely: these 85 people were a few months into their job searching and really did need, and want, help in get them to where they want to be
- From the 220 who told us that they were not where they wanted to be (levels 3,4,5), 90 of them booked careers guidance with a careers adviser (a 41% conversion rate)
- The 8 people in graduate level roles (level 1) who had appointments booked did so because they told us they were not happy in those roles and were thinking about moving. Some spoke of a parallel move to a different employer whereas others wanted to discuss a complete change of career

What we heard

- The calls were set up as being made from a UEA student/Graduate on behalf of Career Central, to have a chat and to see what we could do to help.
- This immediately put people at their ease, they were happy to talk to us and were very open and conversational. We had lots of feedback about how nice it was of us to call to ask how they were and offer assistance whereas they were expecting a survey and data gathering exercise
- Compared to many other Schools, a number of graduates from the traditional “Hard” sciences (BIO, CHE) were looking to move on to Masters and PhD level to improve their career prospects
- People looking to work in more creative industries (radio, film, TV, writing) were having difficulties getting internships and the necessary experience to get the jobs they wanted.
- Some graduates wanting to move into the “professions” such as Law and Accountancy were finding the job market very competitive. Many wanted help with CVs and applications to get them through to interview stage
- Some people from non-vocational subjects (HIS, LDC, etc) wanted to use their degree in their work but were unsure how to, or what opportunities there were out there for them
- Lots of people were in short term basic jobs saving money to pay for a Masters or to pay for their travel plans
- A spreadsheet can be provided on request which contains some detailed notes captured by our callers for many of the individual graduates. This provides a highly textured picture of the predicament of new UEA graduates

Moving Forward

- Calling at the end of August/start of September seems very timely. Graduates have had a few months to work things out and those who are not yet sorted are eager for advice but not yet demoralised by the challenge of making multiple applications
- Many of the graduates contacted as part of the call campaign have since got back in touch and are receiving support, so its reach continues to be extended. The call campaign was therefore successful in increasing awareness of the support available and demonstrating a desire for support. In early November, a further analysis will be carried out on the progress of these graduates
- We recommend the call campaign is repeated during the same time period in 2017. However, it should be borne in mind this is a very late stage to make an intervention to improve employability of graduates who have not engaged while they were with us. To sustainably increase our Graduate Prospects it is therefore imperative that we embed employability and work related opportunities within the curriculum so that all students get a basic grounding as part of their course
- We have been careful to keep clear separation between the call campaign and the DLHE Survey that begins in November and culminates in January. Call campaign graduates were grateful for the offer of support without a survey being conducted. We hope this warm feeling towards the University will translate into good levels of cooperation with the DLHE Survey when it takes place

3. Recruitment and Opportunities Fair

The annual Recruitment and Opportunities Fair, the largest event organised by the Careers Service, was held on 20th October. A detailed analysis is underway but the 'headline' is that we have continued the trend of increasing student attendees year on year. In a 4 hour period over 2040 students attended. The formal report will be presented to the next meeting of Employability Executive.

4. DLHE Consultation

Members may be aware that a consultation on the future shape of the DLHE survey has been undertaken. A summary of responses has been published but confirmation of specific changes are still awaited. https://www.hesa.ac.uk/files/NewDLHE_consultation-synthesis.pdf

- Support for data linking was high i.e. using income tax data to allow for graduate salaries to be reported
- Support for a continued survey alongside this was high
- The survey should remain a census – so a major operation to conduct
- Salary will need to be contextualised (e.g. moderated by sector, WP, geographic location, etc.)
- Methodologically, preference emerged for a single survey point at 12 months.
- Slight preference for centralisation of the running of the survey amongst institutions.

The bulk of the survey lay in the different options proposed for widening the debate about how to look at the relationship between employment outcomes, the wider economic impact of HE and subjective issues of graduate happiness/satisfaction. The key points that emerged from the sector responses were:

- Understanding a graduate's perception of the value of their degree, or return on investment
- Identifying the link between degree subject and job taken
- More information about work experience
- Aspirations and whether these have been met by course/provider

- Job satisfaction or whether a graduate is in a 'positive destination'
- More information on start-ups, business incubation and internships/preparedness for entrepreneurship
- Consistent terminology with TEF 2's 'highly skilled employment' measures
- Expand skills to include attributes, experience, behaviours
- Social Responsibility

Employability Executive will address any necessary actions as policy changes follow the consultation.

James Goodwin
Helen Lewis

29 October 2016