

Learning in the Workplace: Initiatives through Learning to Work 2, Placements and Internships a summary of findings in work placements: where are we now, impact and lessons learned?

April 2013

Acknowledgements

Report Prepared by Christine Irving, Research Fellow, Centre for Social Informatics, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh and Rosemary Allford, Academic Development Officer SHEEF.

The Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum would like to acknowledge the cooperation and support of all individuals who contributed in the development of this report. In particular, thanks go to staff from those Institutions who share best practice with us.

Contributors at Comparison LTW2 Placement Projects

Fiona Boyle, Co-director Third Sector Internships Scotland, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Dr Martha Caddell, Co-director Third Sector Internships Scotland, The Open University

Carol Humbert, Director, Enterprise into Education, Adam Smith College, Kirkcaldy

Dr Neil Lent, Project Manager, Making the Most of Masters, the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh

Dr Colin Smith, HE-FE Liaison for e-Placement Scotland, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh

Sally Smith, Project Director for e-Placement Scotland, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh

Cover photo:

Dr Paul Bennett, Head of Surveys, Higher Education Academy

Neil Stewart, Placement Student (Year 3 BSc Creative Computing), at Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum

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Executive Summary

This report is based on a literature review of the four Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Learning to Work 2 (LTW2) July 2012 mid-project review reports. The first section highlights the main quantitative data from the mid-project reviews. Whilst the projects are similar in that they are involved in student placements, there are fundamental differences including whether the placement is paid by the employer, funded by the project or accredited as part of the student's course, in addition to the length of the placement ranging from 10 days to a year.

All four projects reported in the mid-project reviews that they were having an impact and are continuing to do so with additional data and information within the Where are we now? section of this report. The project case studies provide employer and student experience of the placements and work based projects and the impact it has made. The report contains examples from each of the four LTW2 projects highlighting the benefits and value to the employer, the student and the positive experience and insight gained. There has also been an impact on the projects and the organisations involved.

Lessons have been learned by and from all four projects and the review of the mid-project reports carried out by the Scottish Funding Council sums up the important messages and lesson that were beginning to emerge and are still relevant. Lessons learned include: providing support for employers and students; engagement with employers and forming a working relationship to discover what employers need and want; engagement with teaching staff / academics; intermediary for the matching process and robust programme infrastructure.

The mid-project review reports highlighted the challenges and issues the projects have including the sustainability and long term future of placements not just within the projects but as part of a wider collaboration across Scotland and this is still the case.

A dialogue exists around placement activity including employer perceptions of paid placements vis-à-vis unpaid work experience and clarification of terminology. Amongst the paid versus unpaid debate is that employers cannot afford to pay a wage but that placements are being 'paid' in experience and academic credit, with the potential of future employment after the placement is completed. The paid argument is based on attracting the best and paying for the work so making it easier to set expectations and demand progress. The terms placements, internship and work experience are all terms that are used in relation to students working with an employer to gain work experience, can be paid or unpaid and be of any length and terms are often used interchangeable. All of which can be confusing to those involved.

Since the mid projects reports have been published, the LTW2 Projects have continued to develop resources including web resources, student and employer packs and presentations at conferences, and remain on target to meet the planned outcomes. With the projects on-going, the process of collecting and analysing data continues, adding to the present information and knowledge known about placements which will inform the SFC LTW2 Evaluation (2013).

The future and the sustainability of the student placement and work based project programmes post the initial funding period is a significant challenge. If the Projects are going to be sustained and developed across the sector then broader support, development and funding is required. Support for students and employers have been a key factor for all the projects. Some of this support is and can be replicated and provided within print guidance materials however, there is a role for an 'intermediary' role to provide support for both employers and placement students with the matching process.



Recommendations

The LTW2 Placement Projects all report that they will achieve their targets. The available quantitative and qualitative data provides evidence that the Projects are having an impact on the students, employers, placement organisations and institutions involved in the project placements and internships.

Lessons learned include: providing support for employers and students; engagement with employers and forming a collaborative working relationship to deliver what employers need and want; engagement with academic staff; the need for a matching process and a robust programme infrastructure.

The key issues and challenges faced include:

What is the long term impact?

What will the project legacy be?

Will the project be sustainable after the project period and funding ends?

Reflective recommendations are listed below that require further reflection by senior management and Project stakeholders and involve issues that would benefit from being re-visited and re-examined.

Consideration should be given to:

1. the provision of broader support, development and funding if the projects are going to be sustained and developed across the sector.
2. design routes, where appropriate, so that work placement programmes may be embedded in the curriculum. The capacity to sustain work placement programmes will be limited where there is competing Institutional resourcing to support discrete work placement programmes.
3. the creation of or continuation of a role for an 'intermediary' to provide support and help both employers and placement students with the matching process. Support for students and employers has been a key factor for all the Projects, and there is limited value added activity in the sole use of printed guidance materials or on-line resources.
4. the status of work placements. Within the education sector, work placements are not a required element of many courses nor are they core to the student's learning experience. A greater impact could be achieved if work placements were offered to all students as standard and developed as a core aspect of the curriculum.
5. developing internal communications strategy to raise the profile and awareness of work placements, internships and work-based projects.



Introduction

This report is based on a literature review of the mid project review reports of the four Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Learning to Work 2 (LTW2) projects.

- e-Placement Scotland
- Education into Enterprise (EIE)
- Making the Most Of Masters (MMM)
- Third Sector Internships Scotland (TSIS)

These 'four LTW2 projects, and SHEEF's current work, build upon extensive employability work developed through LTW1 [Learning to Work 1] initiatives and practices, including the Employability Coordinators Network (ECN) and the Scottish Higher Education Employability Network (SHEEN), which was the forerunner to SHEEF' (SHEEF 2012).

Learning to Work (LTW) is the 'Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) strategy to promote, enhance and improve employability for graduates from Scotland's universities. The strategy supports initiatives and practices in higher education which contribute to enhanced graduate career and employment opportunities. SFC define employability as "*a combination of knowledge, skills and attributes (attitudes and values) which result in capable people who will be effective in their chosen occupation - as employees, employers and entrepreneurs.*" (SHEEF 2012)

Learning to Work One (LTW1) operated from 2006 until 2011. In '2009, SFC published a revised LTW strategy in response to an increased emphasis on employability and skills in Scottish Government priorities and the introduction of the Horizon Fund for Universities' (ibid).

The LTW2 projects aim to support a range of work placement initiatives throughout Scotland. The four projects started in 2010; three of the projects are three year programmes whilst the TSIS project is four years. In 2012 all four projects submitted a mid-project reports. The reports differ in length and format.



Learning to Work2 (LTW2) Projects 2012 Mid Term Reviews

This section highlights the aims of each of the projects and the main quantitative data from the LTW2 mid-project reports.

Education into Enterprise (EiE)

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Skills_LearningtoWorkTwo/Education_Into_Enterprise.pdf

EiE is a 'business-led student work placement programme providing employers with skilled student resource for short term projects' and it 'aims at providing accredited work placement opportunities for students enrolled in Higher Education courses which do not currently offer this option.' (EiE 2012, p4)

Mid Term Review Report: July 2012		Project Planned Outcomes: 2010 - 2013	
Target placements	418	Total Placements	800
Sourced placements	333		
Filled placements	280		
Placement length days	10		
Students registered	825	Work with 500 employers	
Vacancies	138		

e-Placement Scotland

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Skills_LearningtoWorkTwo/E-Placement_Scotland.pdf

e-Placement Scotland 'is a partnership between Edinburgh Napier University, e-skills UK and Scotland IS, designed to increase the number of paid placements for computing and IT students studying at Scotland's universities and colleges' (e-Placement Scotland, 2012, p.3).

Mid Term Review Report: July 2012		Project Planned Outcomes: 2010 - 2013	
Students registered on the website and accessed project resources. Approximately 23% of eligible students have registered	>1500	Over 1500 students will have registered on the e-placement register.	>1500
Students from every university and 23 colleges have registered. They span a wide range of courses, ages and stages of education		Work with all Scottish colleges and universities offering computing and IT courses,	
No of employers actively involved 2011 No of employers actively involved 2012	45 163	Employer Engagement	400
No of paid placements(3 month equivalent paid placement opportunities)	214	No of high quality, paid, employer supported placements	750



Making the Most of Masters (MMM)

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Skills_LearningtoWorkTwo/Making_The_Most_of_Masters.pdf

The aim of this project is 'to help improve cooperation between employers and universities across the Scottish higher education sector by developing tools, resources and support systems that will enable Scottish universities to create opportunities for masters students to undertake work-based projects as an optional alternative to a traditional dissertation' (MMM 2012, p.2).

Mid Term Review Report: July 2012		Project Planned Outcomes: 2010 - 2013	
Project Phase 1 (2010/11)	6	Project Phase 1 (2010/11) = 0 projects	0
Project Phase 2 (2011/12)	110	Project Phase 2 (2011/12) = 60-80	60-80
		Project Phase 3 (2012/2013) = 220/240	220-240
Total	116	Total	300

Third Sector Internships Scotland (TSIS)

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Skills_LearningtoWorkTwo/Third_Sector_Internships_Scotland.pdf

TSIS is 'developing a programme of internships in voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises in order to

- (i) offer work experience and skills development opportunities for students,
- (ii) promote the third sector as a graduate career option, and
- (iii) enable students to make a valuable contribution to the work of Scotland's Third Sector' (TSIS 2012, p.9).

	Internship type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Target	Funded by TSIS	20-30	60	70	40	200
	Part-funded by Third Sector host	0	5	10	20	35
	Fully funded by Third Sector host	0	0	5	10	15
	Total	30	65	85	70	250
Achieved	Funded by TSIS	32	80			
	Part-funded by Third Sector host	3	5			
	Fully funded by Third Sector host	1	1			
	Total	36	86			

Comparison of data across all the four projects

Whilst the four projects are similar in that they are all involved in placement/internship activity, there are fundamental differences including whether the placement/internship is paid by the employer or funded by the project or accredited as part of the students study, in addition to the length of placement. The comparisons that this report is looking for are in the impact and the lessons learned from the four projects. The Projects metrics and outcomes are detailed on the LTW2Projectwebsites.

<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/FundingOutcomes/Skills/LearningtoWork/LearningtoWorkProjects.aspx>



Impact and lessons learned:

All four projects have reported having an impact, as evidenced by the number of employers they have engaged with and the number of student placements or projects in the case of 'Making the Most of Masters' they have created or facilitated. Case studies are provided to demonstrate the impact the placement has had on the employer and the student.

Project case studies

Below is a sample of case studies from each of the four work placement projects.

Education into Enterprise (EiE)

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

Alex Thomson, Event Manager at SCVO

"This is a great programme that not only benefits the employer but gives the students a great chance to gain valuable work experience and knowledge of working in the voluntary sector. I certainly want to continue this working relationship next year and possibly expand the placement time period and the amount of students we can take on to give experience, especially working in the events industry where hands on experience is so valuable. We also enjoyed giving the photography students the opportunity to participate at the event and look forward to welcoming the advertising student to assist us working on our awards programme".

Simon Moorhouse, HNC Photography student

"EiE has given me an insight into the photography industry. It provides the opportunity to work with clients in a high pressured environment which if done correctly, can be a real value to your learning experience. I would highly recommend the EiE programme"

Robbie Leiper, NC Events student

"Education into Enterprise managed to find me a placement at SCVO helping Alex Thompson in organising The Gathering. I have been on placement at SCVO for 6 weeks now and as it is coming to an end. My experience has been nothing less than very positive. I've had first hand experience in the Events Industry and now feel I have enough knowledge and confidence to organise events myself. Thanks to EiE I have been able to gain a positive overview of events and it has given me a boost personally and educationally. With this experience it will now be easier to apply for jobs and more work placements throughout my educational career."

Clan Charters

Nick Robb, Marketing Director of Clan Charters

"We recently took on two students in partnership with James Watt College with the aim of developing an advanced database to replace the current manual booking system. With the project nearing completion, we have found the students to excel far beyond our expectations and the project has expanded far beyond the initial targets. The project saves us time as a business by drastically reducing our time spent on paperwork and to the students as a source of real work experience. We now hope to take on a further student to continue the project beyond its initial scope and will certainly look to the college for future projects."

<http://educationintoenterprise.org/employers-success-stories>



e-Placement Scotland

Employer Experience

Tabassum Sharif, Operations Manager, Flexiant

"The whole process has paired us with an exceptional talent who shall be taken on full time, the student we had proved to be great value for money, it was a meaningful experience to the business and as such we continued her contract part time until she becomes available for a graduate position. Overall enhancing the skills pool of our business and providing us with a route to talented students that we can develop and grow into our business!" (e-Placement Scotland 2012, p.20)

Student Experience

Victoria Gerrie, Student at University of Edinburgh, on placement with the Institute for Informatics and Digital Innovation

"While looking for permanent work I realised that a placement might increase my skills and develop new skills, thus improving my employability. The website is a fantastic opportunity to find placements that are different from other placements available – a really good resource." (e-Placement Scotland 2012, p.23)

Employer Experience

David O'Neil, Partner Account manager, Cisco

"The placement co-ordinators are obviously working with the employer to understand exactly what the placement is here to do."

Student Experience

Nicolas Stuart, summer placement as a Student Technician at Edinburgh Napier University

"Taking my classroom knowledge and using it within real world scenarios has been massively beneficial to my learning experience. Using this experience and moving forward with future job applications has given me an insight as to how the interaction between various staff members and departments comes together to create a functioning IT system".

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/sites/sheef/sheef_documents/e-PlacementCaseStudies_Sep.pdf



Making the Most of Masters (MMM)

National Trust for Scotland www.nts.org.uk/Wildlife

Toni Watt, The National Trust for Scotland Project supervisor

“The student was excellent ... a good communicator, keen and got on with the project. She was and is also very good at keeping us informed of progress and results. A pleasure to work with. She produced a report for us to read and also thoughts for the future of the project which will help as we take the overall project further. This has helped us with work we do not have time / resources for ourselves and helping us to plan/adapt the project for the next few years”.

Nicole Pearson, MSc Ecology & Environmental Sustainability

“I realised I could gain more experience by working with an outside employer. I was allowed free reign to design the project myself but I had to keep in mind that it [also] had to be to the benefit the NTS”.

www.mastersprojects.ac.uk/upload/casestudies/NTS%20case%20study.pdf

Engineering Company (anonymous)

Employer Experience

“This was our first experience of utilising a Masters student and were unsure of the process...we enjoyed the experience and achieved so much more than we thought we could...much progress has been made”

“We enjoyed the student selection process and were glad of the documentation provided”

“The student contributed to a much larger project and has developed a model that we are going to implement on a nationwide basis”

Student Experience

“I knew it was a live project. It wasn't something to be done and simply abandoned; my supervisor instilled the importance of my work, which I believe was a motivating factor that made me work harder.”

“The project has given much greater insights and better subject understanding. It has motivated me in my job hunting in that I am now able to speak from experience.”

Supervising Academic

“This student worked much harder than his peers as this was a dedicated ‘real world’ project that demanded the input. We provided a driven student who could contribute in real terms, and who has now gone on to a relevant career.”

www.mastersprojects.ac.uk/upload/casestudies/CHE%20case%20study%202011%20-%202012.pdf



Third Sector Internships Scotland (TSIS)

Cothrom ReStore

This internship focused on extending recycling projects on the island. Amy feels her confidence increased greatly as a result of the autonomy she was given. From the employer perspective Barbara commented, “None of this would have happened without the internship. We really value what Amy has done. It’s worked out so well and we’d definitely have another intern.”

Volunteer Development Scotland

Hannah developed a series of case studies on how organisations collect and use data to inform their volunteer practices. This has brought fresh ideas and new perspective on the issue, and will have on going impact on the organisation’s work. As Helen Harper, Hannah’s manager, puts it “For VDS it has been very, very valuable in terms of what and how the organisation has developed internally and externally. It has been gold dust”.

New Caledonian Woodlands

Gillian took on an internship working to develop the Planet Pledge project. The internship has really boosted her confidence and given her a way back into the job market after a career break, as well as sharpening her skills in communicating science for lay audience and her IT skills. As she says “It’s nice to have this on my CV. It’s good to have recent / current employment and an employer reference rather than just an academic reference.”

www.3rdsectorintern.com/case-studies/view_details/10/

Lessons learned at the mid-project review point

Lessons have been learned as all four projects have progressed resulting in an impact on students, interns, employers and the education institutions involved. A review of all Learning to Work 2 mid-project reports was carried out by The Scottish Funding Council (2012) in addition to ‘extensive engagement with the project managers of all of the four placement schemes’. In their review they reported that ‘while the projects are only half way through, some important messages and lessons are beginning to emerge’ (p3):

- Some of the LTW2 projects experienced difficulties in starting up, which were out of their control. Once staffing and mechanisms have been put in place, projects were able to deliver to and beyond target.
- Employer demand has varied between the LTW2 projects. In some instances, the supply of interns has been greater than the available funding to support them.
- Strong relationships between institutions and employers are being forged and have resulted in better understanding of employers’ needs and the needs of students.
- Students require active support in the matching process such as writing CVs, applying for jobs and interviewing techniques which, even if the student is unsuccessful in securing the placement, helps boost confidence for the student and improves their employment prospects.
- In all four projects, students have reported an extremely positive experience from being on placement. While we can be confident about the contribution that placements make to future employment prospects, we don’t have good tracking data yet to determine exactly how beneficial placements are, but there is evidence from the LTW2 projects to demonstrate positive destinations.



- The level of pay that students can expect varies by industry. Some sectors, such as the Third sector, would have limited resource to run these schemes without additional public sector support. Some industries, such as IT, appear more than prepared to pay for the placements but a degree of student support for matching them would still be required to make these successful.
- Internships and placements are useful in revealing gaps in skills, which, in turn, can help institutions to better adjust and develop their course delivery.
- Placements and internships have shown to be highly beneficial to employers for their own organisational development and growth.
- Students bring back valuable experience from their placements, which can help inform a more vocationally/practical focussed delivery of the course that better embeds the skills that students require in the workplace.
- The Making Most of Masters project is beginning to build ideas and lessons on how taught masters projects can be delivered with a greater vocational focus, which benefits employers, students and institutions by taking students and academic staff more out of their traditional academic comfort zone.
- While larger businesses have a greater capacity to pay for interns, they often see less of a need to do so because students are willing to work for them for free if there is a prospect of them being permanently employed after graduating.
- Where placements are paid for by the public sector, there is greater leverage by institutions to expect feedback and mentoring support from employers.
- Employers tend to show great flexibility regarding the timing of the placements, which students and institutions should exploit more.
- Placement projects have to be well-managed and supported from all sides and are not a cheap solution.

(Scottish Funding Council, 2012, pp.4-5)



Sustainability and the future

Whilst the projects are having an impact, the Mid Project Reviews highlight the challenges and issues they have or are facing including the sustainability and long term future of placements not just within their own projects but as part of a wider collaboration across Scotland.

MMM (2012, p.18) highlight that 'while there is a very clear focus within the project on learning how to facilitate and sustain programmes of work-based dissertation projects this does not happen in isolation. In planning and implementing our work we are very aware that the project is part of a much wider network concerned with work-based and work-related learning'.

EiE reported that:

There is sufficient evidence that the EiE approach is successful and has significant merit in being continued and rolled out to other academic institutions in Scotland. This will require a discussion by members of the EiE Steering Group to identify ways this could work beyond 2013 and should be one of the key objectives in the coming year.

To be sustainable, a work placement programme delivering projects of value to business, students and staff requires resource.

EiE has opened up work placement opportunities, and college / university relationships, to Scotland's SME community. This is the community to which government is currently looking to drive growth within the Scottish economy and to which a high level of support is being focused. A number of key business organisations within Scotland, including the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, recognise the programme's worth to the business community. It is recommended that EiE becomes a long term part of this focus, and embedded within the curricula of Scotland's colleges and universities.

In addition, exploration of any potential integration with other work placement programmes should be undertaken, now that outcomes for businesses, academic organisations and students are being achieved. (EiE 2012, p19)

e-Placement Scotland (2012, p.20) reported that they will be 'exploring all options to continue to deliver paid placements in Scotland beyond the current project funding.' TSIS also recognised that 'some form of intermediary will continue to be required to support collaboration at national scale' (2012 p.10).

In addition, the breadth and depth of data collected as part of the TSIS programme offers clear opportunities for learning and development across the two sectors. 'As we look to ensure a positive and lasting legacy for the project, our aims are threefold: to provide practical guidance and core resources for employers, students and university staff; to determine how best to provide the intermediary support necessary to sustain the programme; to capitalise on the successful partnerships established through TSIS and extend opportunities for collaboration between Scotland's universities and third sector organisations'. (TSIS 2012, p10)

Whilst the above comments are from the Mid-Project Reviews they are still relevant to where the Projects are now, and show the challenges of sustainability and future impact.



Where are we now? April 2013

Since the mid projects reports have been published, the LTW2 Projects have continued to develop resources including web resources, student and employer packs and presentations at conferences, and remain on target to meet the planned outcomes. With the projects on-going, the process of collecting and analysing data continues, adding to the present information and knowledge known about placements which will inform the SFC LTW2 Evaluation (2013).

e-Placement Scotland, MMM and TSIS provided some of their most recent data that was felt to be most relevant for this report. EiE reported on no additional data at this time as they have still to do their formal evaluation work on the project, however they provided a verbal update. The data supplied is a mix of quantitative and qualitative with some predictions and additional comments information about either impact, lessons learned and or the future and sustainability. The following data is at the time of writing not in the public domain.

Education into Enterprise (EiE)

The project finishes on the 31 July 2013 and has reported that they are 'on target'. The project has been a 'huge learning experience' with some of the original assumptions revisited such as envisaged difficulties engaging with employers which has not been the case but staff engagement has been difficulty (Humbert 2013). The end of project evaluation will include survey and focus group qualitative data, the project already has placement evaluations from student and employers' perspective which can be utilised in the evaluation process. It is reported that the project coordinators have been a key part of the project building up a relationship of trust with employers, students and staff.

The EiE Sub Evaluation group recently met to undertake a 'word-storm exercise which focused on the outcomes and outputs in the original Project Plan' (EiE 2013).

Table showing Outputs as at March 2013

Mid Term Review Report: July 2012		Project Planned Outcomes: 2010 - 2013		Outputs (as at March 2013)
Target placements	418	Total Placements	800	Good support from 700 SMEs Knowledge Transfer Partnerships Target achieved for Student Numbers Engaged
Sourced placements	333			
Filled placements	280			
Placement length days	10			
Students registered	825	Work with 500		
Vacancies	138	employers		

For the college sector in Scotland there has been and are great changes in process as a result of the Scottish Government's Regionalisation strategy. This is impacting on where the EiE Project is now, and how it will progress. The EiE's steering group is considering how EiE placement programme could continue to operate beyond 2013.



e-Placement Scotland

Table showing Outputs as at April 2013

Mid Term Review Report: July 2012		Project Planned Outcomes: 2010 - 2013		Outputs (as at April 2013)
Students registered on the website and accessed project resources. Approximately 23% of eligible students have registered	>1500	Over 1500 students will have registered on the e-placement register.	>1500	1683
Students from every university and 23 colleges have registered. They span a wide range of courses, ages and stages of education		Work with all Scottish colleges and universities offering computing and IT courses,		e-Placement Scotland brand now well established in HE and FE, particularly amongst ICT sector employers
No of employers actively involved 2011 No of employers actively involved 2012	45 163	Employer Engagement	400	130 974 (includes outreach employers) 53.1% of the placements created are with SMEs
No of paid placements(3 month equivalent paid placement opportunities)	214	No of high quality, paid, employer supported placements based on a standard	750	506

Appendix 1 (pg 23-24) provides a breakdown of Placement and Student Data for e-Placement Scotland as at April 2013.

During 2012/2013, e-Placement Scotland has rolled out a programme of events at universities with employer input. Sample feedback following e-Placement Scotland Speed Networking event at University of Glasgow (March 2013) includes:

“Appreciated the opportunity to speak in small groups with company representatives.”

“Employers were very approachable and offered important information.”

“Very enjoyable and informative – a good format.”

“Great to talk to recent graduates now in employment.”

“Gained a sense of how the skills I’ve learned so far relate to the real world.”

Almost 2000 students have registered, created CVs and profiles. The project worked with students on CV quality, interview preparation and feedback, and utilised local careers services.



Feedback from placed students includes:

“The whole experience was very positive for me as it has allowed me to gain valuable skills to aid me in my career path, and I have also secured a permanent job with the company on completion of my degree.”

“The experience, knowledge and general understanding I gained is invaluable. I would recommend it to anyone.”

“It has been a very positive overall in gaining experience relevant to my degree. It has also been useful experience to have when applying for graduate positions.”

“Apart from developing my skills, the placement also enabled me to meet many interesting people including students, academic staff and local businessman. I was also forced to work on my time management skills in order to meet the deadlines and get work done on time.”

The project predicts 600 placements by the end of July 2013 and anticipates reaching their target of 750 placements by the end of the funding.

Arrangements having been made with the SFC to carry forward the project underspend beyond the original end date.

Lessons learned

e-Placement Scotland reports a number of lessons learned including:

Students in their third year of study are most receptive to undertaking a placement. 73.73% of the placed students are in or have just completed the third year of their studies.

The dominant ‘shape’ of the placement is 3 months full-time over summer – 58% of the placements have been this format.

The ‘self-service’ model originally did not provide the throughput of applications required. The pro-active matching service now actively promotes new placements to students with suitable skillsets.

With FE students taking just 6.5% of available roles, the project is aware of employer preference for students who have completed at least three years of study. FE students who have transitioned to a degree have been successful in applying for roles.

The relationships established with employers and our strong/experienced team are a valuable resource.

The model of building placements through project teams which include trade bodies (as exemplified by e-Placement Scotland and Third Sector Internships) could be replicated in other sectors, for example in Scottish Enterprise key sectors.



Making the Most of Masters (MMM)

At the time of the LTW2 mid project reports in July 2012 the first full cohort of MMM students were undertaking but had not finished their work based projects (WBPs). These were completed by early September 2012 and students and the organisations they worked with were subsequently surveyed in September using an online survey. At the time of this report (April 2013) the results of the survey are subject to an on-going analysis particularly the qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions in the survey for the final project report in December 2013. The WBPs undertaken in the academic year 2011-2012 represent the first full projects across all three MMM Institutions (Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Stirling). The data presented here was selected as likely to be that of most interest to general LTW2 reports to give an indication of overall success and satisfaction among employers and students and also to attempt to give a 'feel' for the motivation behind taking part and the outcomes achieved for each stakeholder group. (Lent 2013)

MMM Survey data: employers

The 'overall impression' from the employer survey data 'is one of a positive experience' for 35 employer respondents who hosted a work based project. 'Nearly half of the reasons for their interest in hosting a Masters project related to 'a practical outcome for the organisation (though not necessarily in a very direct way)' including: help with research and development (31%); to undertake a 'backburner' project (11.5%); and to cover work not done (9%). Followed by what is described as 'giving something back such as improving student employability (10%), contributing to wider professional development (20.5%) and corporate social responsibility (5%)'.

Respondents saw the main likely gain from commissioning projects as research related (65%): background research that may be useful in the future (51%); technical research (14%) and market research (3%). This finding is viewed by the MMM project as seeming 'to be in terms of making a contribution to something bigger rather than as a distinct entity in itself' which may be 'related to the timeframe for a project on a taught Masters programme (12 weeks maximum). 'In terms of actual gains these roughly matched the above expectations' showing that 'WBPs can make a contribution that employers see as useful to their work.'

Seventy seven percent of respondents indicated satisfaction in terms of setting up projects. Most respondents (63%) claim to have found the project outputs useful. Another 31% of respondents indicated that the work carried out by students may be useful. The MMM project feel that 'this might be related to the background nature of some of the work carried out'. Ninety one percent of respondents stated that the experience of working with a Masters student was at least generally good with 54% saying the experience was consistently good. Sixty six percent of the respondents indicated that they would host another Masters WBP.

MMM Survey data: students

Of the 110 students who undertook the work based projects 40 responded to the survey. The main stated motivations for undertaking masters level study were 'career related, 66% of the responses given indicated career-related reasons for undertaking further study' including: to improve employment prospects (26%); to progress in current career path (i.e. a professional qualification) (22%). As 'respondents were free to give more than one response to this question so some are likely to have combined academic, career and personal interests in their motivation for further study'. The reasons for wanting to do a work based project indicate a clear bias towards vocation motivation in relation work based projects; 31% of responses indicated the respondent undertook a work based project to enhance their employability while



a further 26% of responses related to learning to apply theoretical knowledge. A further 17% of responses indicated a desire to gain advantage in the labour market by standing out in this market (the choice of WBP presumably relating to having more than 'just' a Masters degree).

MMM sustainability and the future

For the Project there are certain challenges and issues. Currently work experience is not embedded as part of the curricula. The MMM model is still in the developmental stage and another year is ideally needed to build something sustainable. It is therefore difficult at this stage to suggest models however a possible model could be a devolved sector wide network with a pool of employers rather than a national body. Some collaboration has taken place with the Highly Skilled Workforce bid. If the MMM programme was sustainable then further mutual collaboration could be explored.

Whilst terminology is an extant issues for the MMM project, the terminology issue for them is related to the use of the terms 'dissertation; and 'Masters Project'. Whilst academically there is a distinction between the two, for employers the more commonly known term for a research project that a student undertakes at university is dissertation.

There is also confusion around the terminology associated around work-based-learning, internship and placements. There are several definitions of the terms 'work placement' and 'internship'. In Universities Scotland, *Taking Pride in the Job: University action on graduate employability* report (pg 68), work placements are defined as structured work experience of up to one year. Work placements, by this definition, may be offered to students or to recent graduates, they may be paid or unpaid, and may or may not bear credit as part of a student's course.

Another issue for the MMM Project team is timing; the team was not in place when the Project's three year term started and the team had to 'start from scratch'. In addition the timing of the master's research project takes place at a specific time in the year. As a result the Project team feel that the project has only really been working for two of the three years and is still developing and would benefit from another year to aid future sustainability. As the MMM Project deals with Master's research projects that are part of their accredited course and involve work for their course, the issues around paid placements are not perceived to be core to MMM as in some of the other LTW2 Projects.



Third Sector Internships Scotland (TSIS)

Table showing Outputs as at April 2013

	Internship type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Target	Funded by TSIS	20-30	60	70	40	200
	Part-funded by Third Sector host	0	5	10	20	35
	Fully funded by Third Sector host	0	0	5	10	15
	Total	30	65	85	70	250
Achieved	Funded by TSIS	32	80	83		
	Part-funded by Third Sector host	3	5	15		
	Fully funded by Third Sector host	1	1	1		
	Total	36	86	99		

TSIS has (as of April 2013) received over 5,500 applications from students for the 221 unique internship opportunities that have been hosted in third sector organisations across Scotland. The geographic reach of the programme now spans the country, from Orkney to Dumfries, Gigha to Eyemouth, providing opportunities for communities across Scotland to benefit from the skills and enthusiasm students bring to their internships. Students from all Scottish universities have applied for posts and all universities are represented in the appointed interns.

Interest from employers in hosting an internship has been strong, with demand outstripping the available funding for intern salary costs. There is considerable appreciation of the benefits that a paid intern can bring to third sector organisations and employers report strong support for this model. However, a key issue is the question of financing salary costs. While the overwhelming majority of employers would like to host further interns, the critical question is how salary costs could be covered. Some organisations are able to budget for 50% input to salary costs, but for many 100% contribution would be difficult without external support. This raises key questions for TSIS and for the HE and third sector more broadly. If this is, as both students and organisations emphasise, a useful experience having discernible impact on the individuals, organisations and communities across Scotland, external funding will be needed to sustain the programme. Recognising this, TSIS is focusing efforts in year 3 and 4 on developing strong evidence of community and social impact from the organisation / service provision perspective as well as the HE and employability benefits accruing to students.

The TSIS project routinely collects data from a range of sources, including student application forms and skills audits, interview observations, employer expressions of interest, reflective feedback, and post internship reviews. In addition, it has a strong research and evaluation strand that focuses on student destinations and the outcomes and impact of internships for interns and organisations. More thematic work on reflective learning, articulating skills and employer support is also on going. Updates are available from the TSIS team. TSIS runs until Sept 2014, so their 'analysis and evaluation timeframe is slightly different to the other projects', with their key analysis and reporting phase being in Year 3-4 (TSIS 2013).

Preliminary analysis of the application, short-listing and appointment data highlights some key issues for consideration, with certain groups appearing to have greater success at written application and interview stages. Some headline findings are that 'of critical importance in understanding success is exploring how students are able to articulate their skills and



experience to potential employers' and that 'those who provide more information, indicated through character length of the responses to these questions [three open-ended questions on the application form], are more likely to be short-listed and to be successfully appointed' (TSIS 2013). Full data analysis and exploration of emerging themes is available in the midpoint report (TSIS 2012).

TSIS is on track to achieving or even exceed its internship targets. In their final year (year 4) the project is putting particular emphasis on working with organisations to increase the number of employer-funded opportunities and develop a strategy for the long term sustainability of the project. This includes, crucially, looking for sources of funding to sustain the intermediary role that TSIS plays and to support intern salary costs.

Lessons learned

TSIS reports a number of lessons learned including:

The importance of providing comprehensive support for students and to employers to ensure they get the most from the internship. Key to this has been building in opportunities for reflection and development throughout the process including:

the significance of the open application process as a way of giving students 'real world' experience of interviews. All interviewees get detailed, personalised feedback.

the considerable benefits of strong links with university careers services in promoting the programme and supporting students to prepare applications, interviews and build on the TSIS experience.

Internships are not just for 'young' students, but are of interest and benefit to students at all stages in their study / work / life journeys. They can be a useful stepping stone for career change and re-entry to the job market as well as for first career entrants.

An intermediary that is able to support and assist employers is essential if small and micro organisations are to be able to offer internships to students

Paid and unpaid placement activity

In 2012 a research study (funded through the Higher Education Academy) was carried out by a team at Edinburgh Napier University and the Open University; a collaboration between e-Placement Scotland and TSIS to explore the drivers, motivations and experiences of employers in the context of paid and unpaid placements / internships. The study 'Can pay, should pay? A comparison of outcomes for paid and unpaid work opportunities for employers and students' collected data via an online survey from placement employers and students. In addition a brief and focused literature review into employer perceptions of paid placements vis-à-vis unpaid work experience and clarification of terminology was carried out.

Of interest to this report is the brief literature review carried out by the study into the paid versus unpaid debate and clarification of terminology. The literature review identified that amongst the paid versus unpaid debate is the claim by employers that they cannot afford to add to the headcount of the organisation so many then opt for unpaid and justify this by saying the placements are being paid in experience and course credit, with the potential of future employment after the placement is completed. The paid argument is based on attracting the best and paying for the work making it easier to set expectations and demand progress.



The 'Can pay, should pay?' study provides some rich data for the paid versus unpaid debate and the perceived values of student work placements from both employers and student perspectives. Gaining skills, financial costs and constraints are key to both employers and students particularly in the present climate. Whilst the qualitative data supports the argument that placements should be paid and that it is an ethical and moral issue; it is also a financial and funding issue.

For many students payment was important in their decision to undertake a placement due to financial constraints and commitments. For many an unpaid placement was not financially viable and references were made to how they create inequality and gave an unfair advantage to those from privilege backgrounds that could offered to take unpaid placements. Students strongly felt that employers should provide paid placements particularly where the placement is for an extended period of time and the work undertaken is the same as or equivalent to that of an employee. Therefore employers should pay if they can. (Irving et al. 2013, p1)

The issue of payment and accreditation for placement and internship activity is one which has been taken up by a number of the LTW2 projects. The research team from TSIS has been actively exploring the legal, ethical and practical issues around payment for interns, particularly in relation to the third sector (Caddell and Mcilwhan 2011, Caddell et al 2012). This work reflects the growing volume of popular and political discussion and campaigning on the potential exploitation of interns, many of whom are unpaid, and the perception that internships and work placements are elitist, with access to opportunities based on who you know rather than any meritocratic basis. The work conducted by the TSIS team argues that universities need to be aware of these debates and ensure that placements and internships are compliant with National Minimum Wage Legislation and are equitable, fair and ethical in their content, design and accessibility. The work also explores the particular issues relevant to the third sector and the qualitative differences that both interns and employers have noted between 'volunteering' and 'paid internship' positions.

The terms placements, internship and work experience are briefly explored through the literature review - the term 'student work placement' is used in the study where an organisation provides an opportunity to a student to spend a period of time in an organisation in order to complement their academic skills. It is recognised however that the term 'internship' is sometimes also used and that both are related to working with an employer to gain work experience and can be paid or unpaid and be of any length. (Irving et al. 2013, p1)



Appendix I- Placement and Student Data as at April 2013 for e-Placement Scotland

Placement data: 12 th April 2013	
Sectors	IT/Tech (70.30%) HE (18.4%) Finance (5.85%)
Location	East (62.30%) West (26.08%). Highlands (0.53%)
Salaries	<£13k (21.90%) £13k-£15k (65.80%); >£15K (12.30%)
Length	3 months (58.2%) 3-6 months (17.50%) 6-12 months (24.25%)
Disciplines	Software Development (17%) Web Development (9.7%) Digital Marketing (6.8%) IT Support and Testing (7.21%) Applied Development (4.85%) Other (54.34%)
Student institutions	Edinburgh Napier University (24.34%) University of Strathclyde (14.28%) Heriot Watt (12.5%) University of the West of Scotland (10.4%) University of Edinburgh (7.8%) Colleges (6.5%) Glasgow Caledonian University (3.40%) University of Stirling (2.6%) University of Glasgow (2.6%); Abertay University (1.30%) Robert Gordon University (1.3%) University of Aberdeen (1.3%) Not known (11.7%)
Courses placed students are studying	Software engineering (10.6%) Computer science (10.3%) Computing (10.3%) Business management (3.88%) Networking (1.94%) Web development (1.94%) Other (61.04%)



Student data:: 12th April 2013					
Students made outreach to	1462				
Students engaging via social media	1283				
Students registered on dbase since start	1982				
Students currently registered on database	1683				
Students: ethnicity	Registered		Placed		
White (UK)	56.80%		60.20%		
White (other)	21.90%		31.10%		
Asian (Indian)	5.6%		8.00%		
Asian (Chinese)	1.80%		0.70%		
Asian (Pakistani)	2.40%		X		
Asian (other)	2.60%		X		
Black (African)	6.20%		X		
Black (Caribbean)	0.40%		X		
Others	2.30%		X		
Students: gender	Male		Female		
Registered	77.90%		22.10%		
Placed	82.50 %		17.50%		
Students: mode of study	full-time		part-time		
Registered	95.30%		4.70%		
Placed	98.10%		1.90%		
Students: age profile	<21	21 – 23	23-25	>25	
Registered	15.80%	29.80%	17.20%	37.20%	
Placed	0	20.00%	41.30%	38.70%	
Students: level of study	1st Year UG/HNC	2nd Year UG/HND	3rd Year Degree	4th Year Hons	Masters
Registered	9.24%	14.50%	40.90%	19.06%	16.30%
Placed	0.97%	3.90%	73.73%	13.60%	7.80%



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Making the Most of Masters at <http://www.mastersprojects.ac.uk/>

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Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum (SHEEF) at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sheef>

Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE) at www.sie.ac.uk

The Scottish Funding Council at <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/>

Third Sector Internships Scotland at <http://www.3rdsectorintern.com/>

Universities Scotland at www.universities-scotland.ac.uk



Get in touch

To find out more about SHEEF please visit www.heacademy.ac.uk/sheef

Or contact Rosemary Allford: rosemary.allford@heacademy.ac.uk

Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum
The Higher Education Academy
106 Holyrood Park House
Edinburgh
EH8 8AS

Tel: + 44(0)131 202 3194

