

## **The Higher Education Academy Strategic Enhancement Programme 2014-15**

### **Embedding Employability: Regent's University London**

#### **Background:**

Regent's University London (RUL) is an independent, not-for-profit, higher education provider, with a highly diverse, international student population originating from over 140 countries. Student and graduate employability already has a high priority at RUL; the University's mission statement focuses on developing 'internationally aware, innovative and employable graduates' and 'professionalism and employability' is one of its five main strategic goals.

A number of initiatives are already in place to improve student and graduate employability, such as work placements, internships, consultancy projects and industry links.

#### **Method:**

Through the HEA's Strategic Enhancement Programme, RUL brought together both academic and support staff from across the University to work together on improving the employability of Regent's graduates. The group was tasked with identifying best practice from across the institution and the sector - through the Programme's network meetings - supporting new initiatives and ensuring that these would become fully embedded across all degree programmes.

Students were involved throughout the programme, in particular through surveys and focus groups, providing useful feedback to ensure initiatives were designed to fulfil their needs.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Two credit-bearing professional skills modules were developed as part of a postgraduate programme, delivered by academic and careers staff and by industry professionals. The modules reflect industry requirements for graduate employees and draw on the HEA's Employability Framework.
- A Skills Award was developed to recognise extra-curricular activity by students which will enhance particular skills. The award drew on feedback from student focus groups and the HEA's Employability Framework.
- Digital literacy courses were run to help staff access new technology in learning and teaching and so improve the digital literacy of students as a key feature of employability. Hundreds of educators from around the world signed up to RUL's '12 apps of Christmas' MOOC, which introduces new mobile apps for use in teaching. The course won the 2015 Credo Reference Digital Award for Information Literacy.
- The use of business consultancy projects as an alternative to the traditional dissertation is being expanded across a wider range of degree programmes. Students work in small but diverse teams to carry out a consultancy project for an industry partner, identified using staff and student contacts, with many returning clients.

- Employability is now included in the six themes within RUL's new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2015-2020, evidencing high-level buy in to the importance of embedding employability both within the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.
- The work undertaken through the Strategic Enhancement Programme also fed into the RUL International Partners Conference in January 2015, for which the theme was 'The impact of international education on employability.'

*“Projects such as these can have a full spectrum of impact, from localised modular curriculum application to institutional-wide policy and practice, and can help bring together and harness the expertise of academic and professional staff to enhance the student experience.”*

Dr Simon O'Leary, Principal Lecturer, Regent's University London.

*The case study is based on the HEA SEP [“Embedding employability into the curriculum”](#)*