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GENERAL INFORMATION

TITLE OF THE CASE	Making the Most of Masters: An innovative approach to employer engagement in Higher Education Institutes in Scotland
SALES PITCH	How to establish work based dissertation projects in the taught postgraduate curriculum.
ORGANISATION(S)	University of Stirling, University of Aberdeen and University of Edinburgh
COUNTRY / COUNTRIES	Scotland
DATE	April 2016
AUTHOR(S)	Eunice Atkins Wendy Rudland Frances Parry
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CASE STUDY PROFILE

1. SUMMARY

Through the agency of Making the Most of Masters (MMM), taught postgraduate students in Scotland are collaborating with business organisations, public, private and third sector, to undertake work-based projects (WBPs) as an alternative to the traditional academic dissertation. The overall aim of the initiative is to enhance Graduate Attributes so as to build capacity in the workforce while maintaining academic rigour. Projects are hence research-based and align with the research needs of employers.

MMM assists its stakeholders i.e. employers, students and taught postgraduate Programmes, by providing a framework of support, based on good practice, for the successful implementation and completion of WBPs. This support follows two main strands: operational and educational. These consider aspects from finding organisations willing to offer projects, providing appropriate support to these organisations, supporting academic staff in curriculum development through to supporting students, in their engagement and making the most of their experience.

This case study is from the three original MMM partners, the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Stirling, who were funded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). These institutions have during the time of this case, embedded the MMM approach into their institutions.

Key outcomes from the project have included:

- ▶ A thorough understanding of the process and support needed to develop WBPs as an alternative to traditional Masters dissertations using best practice models.
- ▶ A comprehensive MMM resource pack (the MMM Toolkit) that is freely available for adoption and adaption by internal Masters Programmes, other Higher Education Institute (HEIs) and organisations by emailing iad.projects@ed.ac.uk. This provides a range of activities e.g. templates, workshops, online resources, for the successful implementation of WBPs.
- ▶ More than 1000 Masters students have undertaken work-based dissertations.
- ▶ Enhanced employer engagement within all three partner universities.
- ▶ MMM has stimulated a wide range of other employability and employer engagement activities across the three partners.
- ▶ MMM materials have also been adapted for use at doctoral and undergraduate level
- ▶ The work undertaken has raised awareness and contributed to knowledge for all stakeholders with respect to the development of WBPs

Additional SFC support, until 2017 will expand the reach of the MMM partnership through a Legacy Project that will trial and pilot the MMM methodology at other Scottish universities and with Highland & Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government's economic and community development agency for the north and west of Scotland. Further information can be found on the website www.mastersprojects.ac.uk.

2. BACKGROUND

Support for Making the Most of Masters arose from Scottish Government Learning to Work 2 (LTW2) initiative that was introduced against a background of a challenging economic environment, increased difficulties in many HE graduates obtaining professional level jobs and a strengthening focus of the Scottish Government objectives on Employability, Employer Engagement and Entrepreneurship. MMM also supported the SFC's Corporate Plan that identified strengthening links and aiding dialogue between student bodies, institutions and employers as a national level strategic goal.

Traditionally in the UK Masters students undertake a 9-month period of taught classes followed by a 3-month research-based dissertation project. Developing a WBP to take the place of the dissertation, using similar assessment procedures, would simplify adoption without the need for curriculum/administrative change. From a Higher Education perspective the initiative provided an opportunity to forge new relationships with employers to address the latter's needs to develop work-ready graduates while at the same time enabling Masters students to enhance and demonstrate their employability.

3. OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of MMM were to:

- ▶ Enhance employability of Scottish PGT students by engaging with employers
- ▶ Embed WBPs as a realistic and inherent part of PGT provision
- ▶ Design, test and evaluate tools, resources and processes that would support the embedding of WBP's in the PGT curriculum, with specific resources for each stakeholder group
- ▶ Create opportunities for Masters students to undertake WBPs ensuring academic quality and benefit for the organisation
- ▶ Enhance sustainable engagement of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) with private, public and third sector organisations
- ▶ Focus on key economic sectors in Scotland including Food & Drink (including agriculture & fisheries); Creative Industries (including digital); Sustainable Tourism; Energy (including renewables)
- ▶ Evaluate the process with all stakeholders (i.e. Student, Programme staff and external organisations)

4. RESPONSIBILITY

Making the Most of Masters was managed by a Project Board comprising members from each partner institution: a MMM Project Manager, Institutional Project Coordinators, a Careers Education Developer, Project Administrator, a representative of the SFC and a student representative. The Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum (SHEEF) who, until 2014, worked to support, develop and influence HE employability agenda, policy and practices in Scotland was also represented. The overall management was through a Strategy Board consisting of HEI senior representatives, Organisations and a Member of the Scottish Parliament. At the Programme level, academic or other relevant members of staff were responsible for the operational aspects ensuring effectiveness of the student and the work-based relationship.



IMPLEMENTATION & FUNDING

5. STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

The tripartite nature of MMM means that any strategy adopted had to ensure engagement of all stakeholders i.e. students, employers and academic staff. Collaboration between the three HEIs very quickly led to the understanding that a “one-size fits all” approach would not be appropriate as each institute and indeed Master’s Programme, has differing requirements.

The MMM process map (see Fig 1), therefore follows a Programme flow, which allows development for implementation while providing flexibility for all stakeholders to “cherry pick” the process and resources to suit their needs while following good practice and maintaining academic rigour. Irrespective of choice, the use of a Project Agreement to set expectations, agree roles, responsibilities, and project outcomes ensures best practice is considered an essential component.

The main strategy was hence orientated to develop engagement of all stakeholders as if successful, the other components i.e. project development, student matching and completion occur as a natural progression.

In order to widen the reach of MMM, effort was also made to engage with various research pools (consortia of organisations funded by SFC, mainly universities and discipline specific industries) in an effort to engage industry and source projects. Thus, the Marine Alliance for Science and Technology (MASTS), the Energy Technology Partnership (ETP) and Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA) were all active partners with MMM.

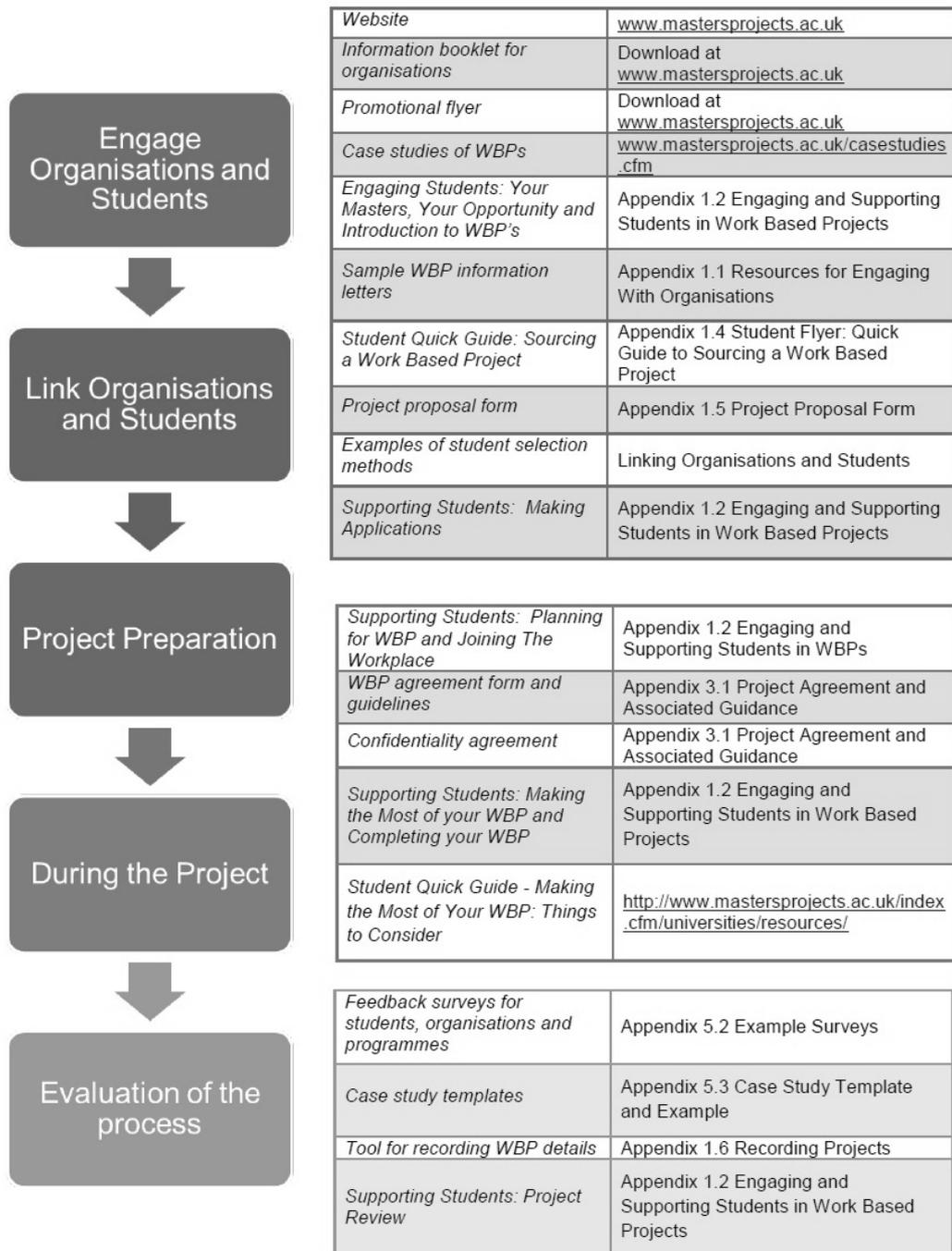


Figure 1. The Making the Most of Masters Process map and associated Resources

Learning has shown that different approaches are used in each institute in terms of the MMM process. Generally, after business contacts are realised, the local MMM Coordinator will work closely with organisations submitting projects and/or academic Programmes to provide relevant information and ensure a suitable match. The MMM Coordinator may facilitate direct discussions between an organisation and a Programme Director early in proceedings to ensure initial proposals are appropriately aligned with Programme objectives and students interest. Where projects are not taken-up, effort is made to find alternative means for their fulfillment, e.g. sharing projects with other MMM universities or exploring other options available within the institution such as undergraduate dissertation projects or (paid) work placements.

Academic staff engage for a multitude of reasons and in some cases there was a tradition of WBPs through research collaboration with external organisations to develop research and understanding as well as to gain access to field sites, specialist equipment etc. In these cases WBPs were generally undertaken on an ad hoc basis with only very low numbers of projects. MMM found that the main drivers for academic/Programme engagement was for enhancement of the student experience and recruitment onto particular Masters Programmes. Again, the different HEIs took different approaches to engage with Programmes e.g., by contacting individual Programme Directors to advertising through Flyers and specific events such as Learning and Teaching Conferences.

A wide range of methods are used for employer engagement including organising and attending local networking events, third partner contacts and social media. Awareness is achieved by providing promotional materials e.g. flyers and an "Information for Organisations" booklet, available in the MMM Toolkit, while the MMM website also provides information about the MMM process. A specific section for host organisations covers: a) "Why work with us?" b) "How it works" and c) "FAQs" (Frequently Asked Questions). A Case Study section provides examples of previous projects. Once contact is established a dedicated MMM Coordinator liaises with the organisation to determine expectations and facilitate the process from initial engagement shortly after which WBP specifications are developed in advance through project completion and final evaluation. Employers motivations for engagement are also diverse e.g. altruism (particular with their alma mater), a means of undertaking a speculative research, development project, to motivate and provide their staff with leadership experience and as a potential recruitment tool.

Student engagement typically commences from initial Programme Inductions early in the academic year which introduces the opportunity of undertaking WBPs. The MMM flyer and various "Quick Guides", again from the Toolkit, e.g. "Introduction to Work Based Projects" are useful in providing further key information and helps provide legitimacy of the MMM process. These brief information sessions are considered to be an important first step in enhancing student engagement and provide students with the luxury of time to consider their options regarding the type of Masters dissertation they wish to undertake, allowing opportunity for better choices. Student engagement is complex and is dependent on individual personalities, previous experiences in the workplace, learning and personal development needs (also see Section 4).

MMM develops projects that are suggested, and hence needed, by businesses. Businesses provide a supervisor/mentor that manage the development and running of the project. It is very different from work experience or a traditional placement because it is core to the curriculum and must fulfil the assessment criteria for a Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 11 Masters dissertation. Students are hence accredited for their final dissertations and are not paid, although, at their own discretion, some organisations do so. MMM uses a fluid definition of WBPs as students can be based full-time in the workplace, fulltime in the university or most commonly, a mixture between the two. Efforts are undertaken to ensure that employability is enhanced in projects based in the university e.g. by student involvement in business meetings and public engagement activities. MMM supports students in their journey by also offering support through workshops and online resources much of which is becoming embedded in the curriculum. More recently, as MMM became more familiar within the culture of the business and HEI, there has been an enthusiasm for businesses, students and academics to develop the proposal in partnership and indeed, some students also take the initiative to approach specific businesses to scope a

project. Assessment of WBPs generally remains solely with the Programmes typically following the same criteria as the university-based dissertation.

At each step of the process from initial stakeholder engagement, through in-depth scoping of the project, student selection (typically by a competitive application process), and to completion, documentation is available to facilitate and formalise the process with respect to good practice as collated from the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and ASET (The UK Work Based and Placement Learning Association). The MMM process also aims to instil personal responsibility in learning and encourages self-reflection so that students are equipped with the tools to undertake continual self-development.

The adaptability and flexibility of the MMM Process which reflects and permits the institutional differences in governance practices, e.g. who and how we source projects, how we engage stakeholders etc. has contributed to the success of the project within the three original partners and the belief that it can be transferred to other Masters Programmes and HEIs (see Section 16).

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

All stakeholders were evaluated after WBPs were completed on an annual basis using an on-line survey. In addition the UK-wide Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey provided additional information. In early years, the MMM Project Coordinator tended to have close interaction with all stakeholders allowing for free communication and feedback.

All LTW2 projects including MMM were evaluated through SFC commissioned work (Rocket Science UK Ltd with Blake Stevenson Ltd. (2014) that was based on the results of interviews and analysis of MMM survey results.

7. SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

One of the main agreed outcomes in the original project plan was to make the project/process sustainable by exploring and understanding the provision of WBPs in lieu of the traditional university-based dissertation and to embed this provision within the partner institutions.

This has been achieved by embedding dedicated personnel with explicit expertise in the MMM process within the core staff of all three universities. In addition, a comprehensive Toolkit has been developed which is valuable for introducing the initiative and process to new stakeholders within these institutes. The Toolkit has been disseminated to many of the learning institutes within Scotland. Whilst the availability of the flexible MMM model and resources for supporting WBPs provide a valuable and secure basis for introducing WBP provision, each new student and supervisor (University and employer) requires significant guidance and support, and effort is needed to refresh the range of employers willing to offer WBP particularly as new Masters Programmes join the scheme. Please also refer to Section 15.

8. COSTS

The majority of funds were for staffing with a Manager, a Project Coordinator at each higher education institute, a Careers Education Developer and administration support. In addition, costs were provided for marketing and promotion which included hosting events for

Programme directors, students, employers and wider dissemination. Design and printing costs were required for development of the website and production of resources, including the MMM Toolkit etc. The initial SFC funding also included an element to support projects themselves, such as providing travel or subsistence costs to enable a student to travel to an organisation.

9. FUNDING

MMM ran from January 2011 to July 2014 with £778,860 of LTW2 funding from the SFC. In addition each institution provided in-kind support. Since 2014, each institution has supported the costs from their institute. Further funding has since been received for an on-going project to disseminate the learning to other institutes in Scotland although referred to in this Case Study this does not form part of it.



OUTCOMES & IMPACT

10. OUTCOMES

MMM in its essence inspires, develops and undertakes research in collaboration with business. Outcomes include:

- ▶ A thorough understanding of the process and support needed to develop WBPs as an alternative to traditional Masters dissertations. This includes the roles, responsibilities and support needed for students, academic supervisors, Masters Programmes and employers or other external WBP hosts.
- ▶ Appropriate models for integration with University Quality Assurance requirements and approaches to the promotion of WBPs have been explored and documented.
- ▶ A comprehensive MMM resource pack (The MMM Toolkit) has been developed and was launched at an open dissemination event in June 2014. These resources are free to use and some are available from the Making the Most of Masters website (<http://www.mastersprojects.ac.uk/>) while the full Toolkit can be obtained by emailing: iad.projects.ac.uk.
- ▶ The majority of Scottish HEIs have requested and been provided with copies of the MMM Toolkit.
- ▶ More than 1000 Masters students have undertaken a work based dissertation with a wide range of businesses and other organisations from 2010 to 2015 (exceeding the project target by 10%).
- ▶ MMM engaged with 514 employers by the end of LTW2 funding in July 2014.
- ▶ MMM has stimulated a range of other employability and employer engagement activities across the three partners. This has included identification of new undergraduate employer placements, support for Work Based Projects within the coursework elements of Masters Programmes and the adaptation of MMM resources and materials for undergraduate placements.

- ▶ MMM materials have also been adapted for use at doctoral level through the EaSTBio Doctoral Training Partnership PiPS scheme (<http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/>).
- ▶ The work undertaken has had outcomes and impact for individual businesses e.g. Engineering Programmes support research projects that focus on original research which have informed their business and/or development of a new product.
- ▶ MMM staff have contributed to academic learning and development of employability through research and representation at events and conferences organised by learned societies and national bodies.
- ▶ MMM has seen an increasing number of projects being completed by students for the duration of the LTW2 funding.
- ▶ Each year saw an increasing number of Programmes involved with MMM. From initiation to academic year 2014/15 more than 150 different Masters Programmes had completed WBP while others had also used their educational resources.
- ▶ MMM WBPs are firmly embedded within the three partner institutions and are operating on a sustainable footing based upon institutional investment beyond the end of the SFC funded period.
- ▶ The SFC have provided additional funding to support the extension of the MMM model to other Scottish institutions and Highlands & Islands Enterprise to build on the legacy of the MMM project and partnership.
- ▶ Enhanced 'employer' input to the curriculum beyond taught postgraduate Programmes with organisations proposing projects going on to give guest lectures and join Programme Advisory Boards (and equivalent).

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total
Number of Projects Sourced	16	246	437	540	483	1722
Number of Projects Completed	6	120	284	328	327	1065

11. IMPACTS

- ▶ The effectiveness of MMM and its positive impact on students, employers and Masters Programmes has been documented and is demonstrated by:
- ▶ An increase in awareness by businesses of the potential of collaboration with universities through postgraduate WBPs. This is evidenced by the numbers of projects sourced and completed indicating not only awareness but also a demand for such projects within industry
- ▶ The breadth of disciplines embedding work-based projects into the curriculum, including Programmes from Life and Physical Sciences, Computing and Information Technology, Health Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences, Management, Business, Marketing and Law.

- ▶ The types of businesses that have hosted MMM projects i.e. international global private businesses to single person organisations, public and third sector organisations.
- ▶ Organisations from all sectors of the economy have engaged with MMM and provided projects, including Finance, Law, Energy, Social Enterprise and Environment.
- ▶ Projects have taken place throughout the UK and overseas in countries such as Malawi, USA, Germany and Canada.
- ▶ The vast majority of students who have completed an MMM WBP have highlighted the significant educational and employability benefits it brings. These include putting theory into practice, enhanced CVs and articulation of competencies at interviews.
- ▶ Student evaluation shows that undertaking workshops, networking events etc. delivered as part of their curriculum are of great value in helping them decide on both the type of project they wish to undertake and their personal development. Students note that undertaking MMM WBPS enhances the quality of their CVs and impact of their applications and interviews.
- ▶ Student evaluation also highlights that they value the experience they gain whilst on WBP as well as their enhanced sector knowledge.
- ▶ A commissioned economic impact study of MMM estimated a significant value contribution to the Scottish economy for academic years 2011/12 and 2012/13. Increases in the numbers of projects since then would suggest further benefit.
- ▶ These benefits, for students, employers and universities, are effectively described in a video produced by Stirling University. This and further case studies are available online at <http://www.mastersprojects.ac.uk>

12. INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES

The project aimed to provide benefits to employers, universities and postgraduate Masters students. Benefits which reflects the success of the initiative were:

- ▶ Greater Links between Industry and Universities. The MMM project offered Masters Programmes and organisations an ideal opportunity to work together, sharing knowledge and expertise. Students also provided different perspectives to problems and acted as new motivated members of the team often enthusing staff and providing managerial/supervisory opportunities for personnel within the business. University/Employer relationships were enhanced beyond that of MMM providing opportunity to increase employer engagement initiatives e.g. through provision of employer focussed lectures to both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students; student visits to employers and field sites, employer attendance at careers events etc.
- ▶ Real World Projects. External organisations were provided with the opportunity to address a real need within their organisation by proposing a project that allowed students to apply knowledge gained through their university Programme. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to address the skills gap often identified by employers. Students learn from “real-life” projects that are of relevance to their hosts resulting in increased motivation, deeper learning and enhanced sector knowledge.
- ▶ Enhanced Employability. The majority of students underwent a recruitment process which helped them develop their CV and/or interview experience. Undertaking their dissertation with an external organisation also provided

opportunities to gain valuable experience of the workplace, opportunities to refine their career plans and to gain skills relevant to the economy.

- ▶ A recruitment tool. MMM provided a recruitment tool which encouraged prospective students to apply to study for a given academic Programme while some employers used the WBP as lengthy interview process for new members of staff.
- ▶ Adaption of MMM Resources and Processes. MMM learning and resources have been adapted in the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum. Thus at both the Universities of Aberdeen and Stirling undergraduate and taught placement Programmes have adapted and adopted processes and documentation. This was also achieved for a doctoral training Programme where PhD students from the University of Edinburgh undertake research internships (see the aforementioned EastBio PIPS project).

MMM was innovative and was integrated into regional innovation (with respect to Scotland) as part of the Scottish Governments acknowledgement that a skilled, educated and creative workforce is essential to creating a more competitive and resilient economy. MMM aimed and achieved this by building productive sustained working relationships between Scottish universities and businesses so as to develop Scotland's skilled workforce.

13. AWARDS / RECOGNITION

Has there been any recognition of the case through awards or other third-party recognition of the case study?

- ▶ MMM was the winner of the 2013 Times Higher Award for Outstanding Employer Engagement.
- ▶ The SFC has funded a follow-on MMM Legacy project in order to trial and test the MMM model at a further 4 HEI institutions in Scotland and extend the project to include an economic development agency in the shape of Highlands and Islands Enterprise illustrating the success of the progenitor project.
- ▶ Evaluation of MMM has highlighted that employers use WBPs as a recruitment tool as well as a training system to develop and motivate their staff through providing opportunities for supervision/management.
- ▶ Making the Most of Masters is cited as an example of good practice in "Enhancing employability through enterprise education: examples of good practice" (2014), J. Owens and M. Tibby (eds.). Publ: Higher Education Academy. See:
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/enhancing_employability_through_enterprise_education_good_practice_guide.pdf



LESSONS LEARNED

14. PRIMARY CHALLENGES

Engagement of Masters Programmes, and associated academic staff involved in the particular section/module relevant to the dissertation can be a challenge. Findings have revealed that WBPs have developed best with enthusiastic staff who are willing to engage and provide timetable slots embedded in the curriculum to inform, support and engage students in deciding whether to do a WBP. It was found that if students show enthusiasm and knowledge about undertaking WBPs then academic supervisors (not necessarily closely associated with the teaching Programme) are typically also willing to support the process. The benefits of WBPs in a given Programme have proven a useful means to engage others. In all the HEIs involved, an increasing number of Programmes have engaged each year providing evidence for this cascading effect.

Student engagement was a major initial challenge as evidenced by the higher number of project proposals sourced than completed each year. Reasons for the disparity are complex. It partly reflects misfits between employer generated WBP and the Masters Programmes. This was also possibly associated, particularly in the earlier years, with MMM Coordinators who were less informed of the nature of specific Programmes. In addition, some employers submit more than one project proposal with an aim to stimulate student interest and choice while intending from the outset, to host only one project. Doubtlessly, it also involves the complexity of matching students who often have very specific criteria. Most significant however is a degree of risk aversion amongst some students who perceive such projects as having a high level of unpredictability and hence risk and were put off by what they considered to be a novel alternative to the more familiar academic style dissertation. The LTW2 evaluation review (Rocket Science UK Ltd with Blake Stevenson Ltd., 2014) also noted evidence that many students did not appreciate the value of undertaking a WBP.

The ratio of projects sourced: completed WBPs reduced in the initial years of the project indicating an improved level of student engagement. This is likely to be a consequence of increased familiarity of MMM and the positive impact of WBPs as it becomes embedded in practice and specific Masters Programmes locally. However, in recent years the ratio has remained relatively stable indicating a continued issue of uptake. MMM devised methods to enable sourced projects to be utilised in a variety of ways so as to fulfil employer needs. The primary method was to share projects between institutions. Secondary methods were HEI dependent with each having knowledge of other options for utilising sourced projects e.g. by developing internships, transferring proposals that were not at Masters level to undergraduate final year dissertations, to completing through consultancy work etc.

The MMM Project Agreement (PA) documentation is used to set expectations, agree roles, responsibilities, project outcomes etc. in advance of the start of the project and ensures best practice (QAA/ASET). It is hence considered as an essential component although not legally binding. It poses questions to prompt stakeholders about specific aspects of project management and has been developed as a template to be flexible as it is clear that each project has specific requirements. Despite this, there has been a reluctance by some university staff to adopt this often quoting that employers will view this a burden of unnecessary paperwork which could prevent acceptance of the student. Completion of the PA

is usually seen to be an activity for which the student is responsible and there has been a tendency for completion as a “form filling” activity with inadequate consideration of the consequences. Towards this, specific workshops or one-to-one meetings with the MMM Project Coordinator has improved the uptake and completion of the PA to a higher standard.

Further challenges have centered on the time constraints of MMM WBPs. Most take place during a specific time period (generally 3 months from May). This is compounded by the relatively long lead in time required by some Programmes ahead of students beginning projects. For example, a Programme may require projects in January in order that students can complete a literature review ahead of beginning the project in May. This requires forward planning by employers who wish to provide a project which, due to industry demands, is not always possible.

As is often the case the return rate on evaluation surveys tended to be low. Often these surveys were followed up by more in-depth interviews in order to gain a fuller picture of the organisation’s, student’s and University based supervisors experience.

15. SUCCESS FACTORS

Collaborative working by the MMM team between the three HEIs was a key factor in the success of the initiative. From the out-set, expectations were set and focussed on the development of WBPs whilst realising the needs of the individual HEIs. Teamwork focussed towards the common good with an open-ness and honesty between partners to share ideas and materials to attain the best e.g. commenting on others work to improve documentation/output without feelings of competition/criticism. The team worked to a 4-6 week schedule of face-to-face meetings adhering to tight agendas and action points working to mutually agreed and self- imposed deadlines. Team members strongly supported each other in terms of motivation and support. Our overall goals were based on the MMM process and not in terms of project numbers. Evidence of the successes are clearly outlined above.

Another important factor in the success of MMM has been engagement and encouragement from University senior management, particular Vice Principals for Learning & Teaching (and equivalent). Their engagement was key, not least to confirm to colleagues that the MMM approach can play a key role in supporting institutional aspirations and strategic priorities in learning and teaching and student experience. They have also helped in ensuring that Quality Assurance issues were dealt with appropriately and that Masters dissertation WBPs were reflected in institutional planning discussions e.g. Outcome Agreements.

Engagement of all stakeholders is also a key element to the successful implementation and completion of WBPs. The approach to encouraging uptake by Programmes was non prescriptive and open to contextualisation by the Programme. This “one size does not fit all” approach allowed a large variety of disciplines to engage with the MMM process, using a pick and adapt method (see Section 14 for other aspects concerning Programme and student engagement). Interestingly, it was anticipated that employer engagement would be most difficult to realise although this was not the case. Indeed, at some institutes e.g. Stirling, an annual employer engagement event is now firmly embedded within many employers’ calendars and HEIs now receive unsolicited project proposals from hitherto unknown employers.

16. TRANSFERABILITY

- ▶ This project was set-up so as to be tested in different environments i.e. the three HEIs. Thus, in each partner institution the processes and resources have been adapted by Programmes to meet their specific needs. This learning has resulted in a programme flow process that allows for adaption and transferability.
- ▶ The resources were developed specifically to enable transferability. The MMM Toolkit has been widely disseminated within Scotland and has also been shared more widely with the rest of the UK, Europe and further. They are freely available and provided in editable formats (Word, PowerPoint).
- ▶ The experience and knowledge base developed has been used to support Masters placements that do not have a dissertation output and have also been transferred to both undergraduate and postgraduate research (PhD) work-based learning e.g. undergraduate placement courses and doctoral training partnerships.
- ▶ The SFC funded MMM Legacy Project is now in full operation with the intention of testing further the adaptability of the MMM model and resources across a range of other HEIs and learning organisations.
- ▶ This case study is relevant to anyone who would like to embed work-based projects in the curriculum, at any level.



FURTHER INFORMATION

17. PUBLICATIONS / ARTICLES

- ▶ Case Study "Making the Most of Masters", National Centre for Universities and Business. <http://www.ncub.co.uk/placements-report/making-the-most-of-masters.html> (Accessed 1st April 2016).
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18. LINKS

- ▶ Making the Most of Masters: www.mastersprojects.ac.uk
- ▶ Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: <http://scqf.org.uk/>
- ▶ Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en>
- ▶ The Work Based and Placement Learning Association: <http://www.asetonline.org/>

19. KEYWORDS

Masters, work-based learning, dissertation, employability

20. PUBLIC CONTACT DETAILS

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