What is this guide for?

This guide has been put together to support personal tutors discuss and promote their tutees employability development. It highlights the key messages for each year group and provides relevant links and resources for their own information and to share with their tutees as required.

There is more information on employability and how it relates to both staff and students at www.stir.ac.uk/employability

Introduction

What is employability?

The definition of employability that is used at Stirling, and that is accepted most widely across the sector, is that it is a “a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen careers, which benefit themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.” (Yorke, LTSN Generic Centre et al. 2004). So simply put employability is about the skills, attributes and achievements that make individuals more likely to gain employment, find success, and to be able to move between jobs and remain employable throughout their working life.

Why is it important, and what influence can personal tutors have?

In increasingly competitive and complex labour markets, in addition to a sound academic record, employers value candidates who bring skills such as communication, team working and problem solving. Graduates who can demonstrate that they have developed these types of skills have a real advantage

A range of factors impact on a student’s employability, from what takes places in the curriculum to the co and extra-curricular activities that students engage with. Encouraging students to make the most of their university experience by getting involved in, for example, clubs and societies, work experience opportunities, volunteering, study abroad, engaging with the Careers and Employability Service, and attending events will all aid the student’s personal development. Personal Tutors have a key role in encouraging their tutees to make the most of the wide range of opportunities available to them. Tutors can also play a part in facilitating a student’s reflection on their experiences and considering how they would articulate this learning.
What are the Key Messages?

**Year One: Getting the most out of university: maximise the student experience**

First year students are mainly concerned with settling in, getting to grips with their studies and making the most of their new life. Lots of them may not be ready to think about future, but it is important that they do, at least, recognise the employability potential to be gained from engaging fully with the student experience.

In meetings with tutors students should be encouraged to take action on, and to discuss:

1. Getting involved in university life, developing skills, and starting to build experience for their CV:
   - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlO0hSjURQTA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlO0hSjURQTA)
   - [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/activities/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/activities/)

2. Gaining work experience and starting to explore the options with their degree:
   - [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/)
   - [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/your_degree_what_next/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/your_degree_what_next/)

3. Starting to use the Careers and Employability Service and registering with its online vacancy and events system. Consider a taking a module in career management skills or work experience.
   - [www.stir.ac.uk/careers](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers)
   - [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/modules/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/modules/)

4. Recording their experiences, and reflecting/articulating on what they have gained and learned through them.
Year Two: Getting the most out of university: developing the CV

In second year the focus should be on encouraging students to start gaining relevant work experience, to consciously identify and articulate their skills and to be proactive in their career planning.

In meetings with tutors students should be encouraged to take action on, and to discuss:

1. **Keeping up their involvement in university life**, further developing skills, and experience for their CV. Consider taking on roles of responsibility in clubs and societies. Encourage involvement with the My Stirling Award.
   
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/activities/
   
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/employability/mystirlingaward/

2. **Looking out for other opportunities on campus** such as STEER mentoring, becoming a student ambassador or getting involved with student enterprise
   
   http://www.steer.stir.ac.uk/
   
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/research/working-with-business-and-industry/student-enterprise/

3. **Speaking to the Careers and Employability Service** about their career plans
   
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/advice/

4. **Using the resources available** to start exploring career ideas
   
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/your_degree_what_next/

5. **Starting to put a CV together**
   
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/applying/cvs_letters/

6. **Attending Careers Events**—employer presentations, fairs and other activities. Members of staff can also sign up to get regular updates on forthcoming events.
   
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/events/
7. Looking at the options for studying abroad
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/exchange/

8. Trying to set up some relevant work experience for over the summer period
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/

**Year Three: Finding the right career path**

The penultimate year of a degree is critical in terms of employability and most students will need to be encouraged to be forward thinking in their career planning over this period. Many activities and opportunities such as internships and work placements are targeted at this year group.

In meetings with tutors students should be encouraged to take action on, and to discuss:

1. **Plans for their penultimate year** - where are the gaps in skills and experience and how can this be solved. Consider making a guidance appointment with the Careers and Employability Service to discuss further.
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/advice/

2. **Attend Careers Events** – these events are extremely useful in helping students explore their options and in deciding who they may like to work for, by speaking face-to-face with employers and alumni.
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/events/

3. **Postgraduate study** - if students are considering this as an option now is the time to start researching and discussing it with the Careers and Employability Service.
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/furtherstudy/
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/advice/

4. **Networking** – consider looking for a mentor, create or develop a LinkedIn profile and think about how networking could help progress and explore career plans and direction.
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/jobsearch/networking/

5. **Build relevant work experience and/or voluntary work** to develop those skills employers are looking for and to gain examples of relevant experience for the CV. Be aware of the
deadlines for applications for summer work. Encourage involvement in the My Stirling Award.
http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/
http://www.stir.ac.uk/employability/mystirlingaward/

6. Reflection and articulation on what they have gained and learned through their experiences – this will help to give clarity on career direction and on what they can highlight in CVs and interviews.

**Year Four: Your career: taking action**

Start early and get the right job

Take action – set out a strategy

Set out a project plan – timelines and dates for applications

Be proactive and take the initiative in job hunting

The final year of study brings lots of challenges for students as they try and juggle achieving a strong academic result with job search or further study applications. While a lot of recruitment deadlines do fall in the autumn semester, recruitment is now much more of a year round event and students should check with the Careers and Employability Service on their own individual situation. The key is to start early and have a clear plan and strategy for that final year. The Careers and Employability Service has a lifelong commitment to Stirling students and they can continue to use the service after graduation.

In meetings with tutors students should be encouraged to take action on, and to discuss:

1. **Finalising their career plans** – knowing early in semester what the goal is gives a clear focus for the year ahead, so arrange to speak to the Careers and Employability Service early in the year.
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/advice/
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/your_degree_what_next/

2. The events and networking events available and to encourage students to sign up
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/events/

3. **Getting ready for the recruitment cycle** with an updated CV, help with application forms, practice interviews and advice on assessment centres.
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/applying/
4. **Knowing where to find the vacancies** – there are lots of free directories and information and advice is always available.
   [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/jobsearch/grad_vacancies/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/jobsearch/grad_vacancies/)

5. **Options other than employment** – lots of students will look at postgraduate study, self-employment, travel and other gap year options and there is lots of information and advice available.
   [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/furtherstudy/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/furtherstudy/)
   [http://www.stir.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-study/student-enterprise/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-study/student-enterprise/)
   [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/abroad/gapyear/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/abroad/gapyear/)
   [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/jobsearch/types_jobs/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/students/jobsearch/types_jobs/)
Further Information and Contact Details

Personal Tutors are welcome to contact the Career Development Centre for information, advice and referral.

The Career Development Centre is based in the Cottrell Building, 3A1, and is open Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm.

**Phone:** 01786 467070

**Email:** careers@stir.ac.uk

**Social Media:** Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn

Drop in hours for general careers queries: Monday to Thursday 11am – 3pm

A general introduction to the service can be found at [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/about-us/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/about-us/)

Key staff contacts can be found at [http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/about-us/team/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/about-us/team/)