EMBEDDING EMPLOYABILITY IN THE CURRICULUM:
Don’t we already do that?
Universities must produce graduates who are ready for any workplace

Graduates shouldn’t be pigeonholed by their degree subject, but should be able to walk confidently into a number of careers.
Our universities ........ generate the know-how and skills that fuel our growth and provide the basis for our nation’s intellectual and cultural success.
The object of universities is “not to make skilful lawyers, or physicians, or engineers, but capable and cultivated human beings”
“….universities are coming to be reshaped as centres of applied expertise and vocational training that are subordinate to a society’s economic strategy…”

Who are the spongers now?

STEFAN COLLINI, 2016
employability
What if we asked our students?
“We have really hard evidence to show that students are fairly clear about why they want to go to university – and for the vast majority, it is about getting a better job and having a successful career.”

Liam Burns
(Former NUS President)
TEF
Teaching Excellence Framework

To be replaced by............
TEaSOF

Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework

CORE METRICS:
• Teaching on my course
• Assessment and feedback
• Academic support
• Continuation
• Employment or further study
MISSION
...we develop distinctive graduates with the knowledge, creativity and skills to achieve their personal and professional ambitions and make a difference to the world.

Create an outstanding student experience that enhances employability.

Graduate employability
EMPLOYABILITY-FOCUSED CURRICULUM
We will offer a distinctive, challenging and inspiring curriculum designed to develop the capabilities our graduates need to be highly employable, effective practitioners with a global perspective in a constantly evolving professional world.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES
We will foster learning communities in which students, staff and other stakeholders work collaboratively as partners in the construction of knowledge and understanding and in the development of the curriculum.

RESEARCH, INQUIRY AND PRACTICE
We will maintain learning, teaching and assessment practices that enable students to experience learning through research and inquiry, and through engagement with disciplinary and professional practices.

INCLUSIVITY AND FLEXIBILITY
We will promote an inclusive curriculum that caters for the requirements and expectations of our diverse learning communities.

TEACHING AND SUPPORTING LEARNING
We will ensure that those involved in teaching and supporting learning are appropriately qualified, supported and rewarded, and that our learning and teaching practices are informed by scholarship and reflection.

TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE
We will integrate technologies into our learning environment to enhance learning and teaching, and we will develop an infrastructure that supports active participation in learning opportunities.
Employability means different things to different people.
Students often just want to know what they have to do to get a job.
Employers often just want assurances that graduates can do the job they have been recruited for.
What about academic staff?
EMPLOYABILITY

Employers
Employer organisations
Professional bodies
Cultural organisations

Employment placements:
- Short term
- Semester-long
- Year-long

Outward mobility:
- Studying or working abroad

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
Westminster Business Consultants
Creative Enterprise Centre

STUDENT ENTERPRISE

EXTRA-CURRICULAR
Talent Bank
Careers support
Advice
Interview guidance
Mentoring
Employer liaison

SU Activities
Sports
Volunteering

Subject-based student societies
Westminster Skills Award
HEAR
Electives

CO-CURRICULAR

POTENTIAL.LY

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

BUILD SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

CAREERS HUB
Search for opportunities and events

PLACEMENTS

EMBEDDED IN THE CORE CURRICULUM
Understanding employability

Developing “skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations”

Ensuring that employers, communities and the economy benefit from the capabilities offered by our graduates

“a lifelong process”

“..not just about getting a job”

“applies to all students, whatever their course”

“...the emphasis is less on ‘employ’ and more on ‘ability”
OK, but what does that mean in practice?
Discipline-specific knowledge, understanding and skills

- Contextualising theoretical knowledge within a practice-related domain
- Straightforward for subject areas which align with professional fields
Most of our subject areas align closely with professional fields:

Accounting, Finance and Economics
Architecture and Interiors
Art and Design
Biomedical Sciences
Biosciences
Business and Management
Business Information Systems
Complementary Medicine
Computer and Network Engineering
Computer Science and Software Engineering
Criminology
Electronic Engineering
English
Fashion
History
Human Resource Management
Journalism and Mass Communication

Journalism Digital Media & PR
Languages
Law
Linguistics
Marketing
Music
Nutrition
Photography
Planning, Housing and Urban Design
Politics and International Relations
Property and Construction
Psychology
Sociology
Television, Film and Moving Image
Tourism and Events
Transport and Logistics
Visual Culture
imagination  creativity  adaptability  flexibility  attention to detail

creativity  good oral communication  independent working  autonomy

ability to manage others  willingness to learn  entrepreneurship

enterprise  assumption of responsibility  digital capabilities

communication in writing  time management  working in a team

making decisions  ability to work under pressure  numeracy

planning, coordinating and organising
Social learning

- Collaboration
- Team work
- Shifts focus from content to learning activities and human interactions
Developing digital capabilities

Using technology to improve collaboration and communication
Field trips, visits etc.
Guest speakers
Student presentations
Practical experience
Role play Simulations
Producing artefacts, creating objects
Projects based on real-world scenarios
...but we already do all this stuff!
Yes, but...

Do our students realise?
Making the tacit explicit

• Ensuring that students recognise the wider purpose of each activity

• Students should be able to articulate their skills development.
Personal development planning

Reflection and evaluation
CURRICULUM DESIGN
Determine module learning outcomes

Devise assessment to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate learning outcomes

Design learning activities to support students

Constructive alignment
Learning outcomes

The skills and knowledge which it is intended that students should be able to demonstrate by the time the assessment processes for the course have been completed.
Graduate Attributes should be explicit in learning outcomes, at both course and module level

Critical and creative thinkers

Literate and effective communicator

Entrepreneurial

Global in outlook and community engaged

Socially, environmentally and ethically aware
LEARNING OUTCOMES
CONSTRUCTIVE ALIGNMENT

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Assessment

Learning Activities

CONSTRUCTIVE ALIGNMENT
Assessment requiring students to use the same competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes that they need to apply in professional life. (Gulikers, Bastiaens, and Kirschner, 2004)
Assessment FOR learning, rather than just assessment OF learning
DESIGN LEARNING ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT STUDENTS IN ACHIEVING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ASSESSMENT
“Constructivist (i.e. active or experiential) approaches to learning and teaching …… develop employability because they encourage exploration, provide feedback and develop reflection, motivation and engagement.”
LEARNING THROUGH RESEARCH AND INQUIRY
Developing undergraduate research and inquiry

Mick Healey and Alan Jenkins

June 2009

“...undergraduate students in all higher education institutions should experience learning through and about research and inquiry.”
A research and inquiry model

**STUDENT LED**
- Students are participants
- What is the existing answer to my question?
- How can I answer my question?

**STAFF LED**
- Students are an audience
- What is the existing answer to this question?
- How can I answer this question?

**EXPLORING AND ACQUIRING EXISTING KNOWLEDGE**
- Emphasis on content

**PARTICIPATING IN BUILDING KNOWLEDGE**
- Emphasis on research and inquiry

*(Based on Healey & Jenkins, 2009)*
A research and inquiry model

Students are participants

STUDENT LED

What is the existing answer to my question?

How can I answer my question?

Emphasis on content

EXPLORING AND ACQUIRING EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

What is the existing answer to this question?

How can I answer this question?

STAFF LED

Students are an audience

Emphasis on research and inquiry

PARTICIPATING IN BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

(Based on Healey & Jenkins, 2009)
So... do we embed employability in the curriculum?

Of course we do, but we could do it more effectively.
Learning through research and inquiry

Make the tacit explicit

Focus on curriculum design

Constructive alignment

Authentic assessment