

#### **4A Modern Languages Careers Week: A School-owned Employability Initiative**

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The crucial role of Careers Services for higher education institutions is well documented, as are the difficulties of such services in reaching out to certain groups of students, e.g. Arts undergraduates (Watts 2006). Experience at the University of Glasgow reflects this; it would seem that the conventional approach of employability initiatives being organised by the Careers Service alone poses a particular challenge when it comes to engaging these students.

Butcher et al (2011) highlight the importance of academic disciplines taking ownership of employability initiatives and working in partnership with students, services and employers in order to make employability a prominent component of students' university experience. In October 2013 the School of Modern Languages and Cultures (SMLC) organised a week of careers events for its undergraduate students. The SMLC Careers Week initiative was organised in close partnership with the Careers Service and other stakeholders, but was placed firmly under the ownership and management of the School.

This paper will introduce SMLC Careers Week as a best practice example of a school-owned employability initiative. We will place particular emphasis on how events were promoted using a number of channels including social media to reach as wide an audience as possible, as well as on aspects of sustainability of the project for future years. We will also focus on the challenge of securing academic staff buy-in, and demonstrate how the initiative has contributed not only to an increase in students' confidence in their employability, but also to greater staff engagement with employability and graduate attributes.

Many of the aspects discussed will be transferable to other subject areas.

#### **References**

Butcher, V., Smith, J., Kettle, J. & Burton, L., (2011) Review of Good Practice in Employability and Enterprise Development by Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. [pdf]. York: Higher Education Academy.

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Watts, A.G., (2006) Career Development Learning and Employability. [pdf]. York: Higher Education Academy.

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