

# The Careers Service: Supporting Student Transitions

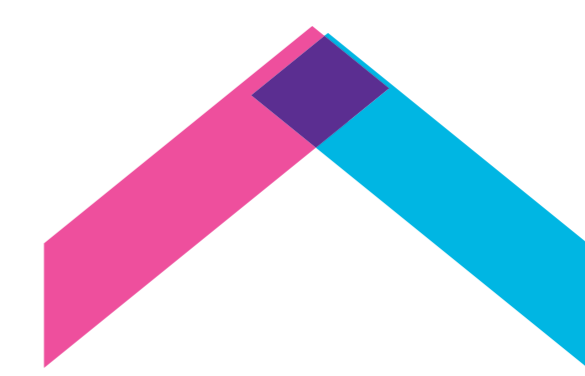
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## Background

The University of Aberdeen's Careers Service offers a broad careers and employability provision which supports students through the key stages of the University's Student Transition Model: in, through and out. Transitions **in**, **through** and **out** include:

- > **In** (starting university, experiences in the period before and after starting university)
- > **Through** (from one year to the next, one half-session to the next)
- > **Out** (undertaking taught postgraduate study, a work placement or internship, study abroad, postgraduate research, employment)

This poster maps the University's careers and employability provision against the student transition model (Fig. 1) and also captures students' views on how key transition points were experienced.



Careers  
Service

Explore. Develop. Connect.

Fig. 1: University Student Transition Model



- > New Student Guide Booklet
- > Tailored talks within academic Schools and disciplines
- > Academic Fair: Careers & co-curriculum information stalls
- > MA & BSc Applicant Day presentations

- > Advice on creating successful CVs and application forms
- > Employer presentations and skills sessions
- > STAR Award & BP Student Tutoring Scheme
- > Website-based careers resources
- > Credit-bearing careers education courses
- > Career mentoring programme
- > Enterprise & entrepreneurship events

- > Help with individual career planning and applications
- > Paid work placement opportunities
- > Advice on preparing for interviews
- > Practice psychometric tests and assessment centres
- > Work-based project opportunities
- > Careers fairs and recruitment events

## Students' Views

In April 2015 a focus group was conducted to investigate how students made specific transitions, and what format these took. Focus group participants were specifically encouraged to identify critical careers and employability incidents in the student transition journey and the support available or needed for their smooth transition. The six students who took part were second and third year undergraduates from across the three Colleges.

A summary of key themes raised by the students is presented below:

> **In:** The transition from school to university, especially the information overload in the initial transition period, was described as overwhelming. Participating in Students' Association Clubs and Societies was viewed as crucial for peer support and to develop key employability skills.

> **Through:** The need to add value to academic credentials to enhance employability (e.g. through work placements, career mentoring) and gain an advantage in the graduate market was highlighted.

> **Out:** The importance of starting career planning early, as graduation was seen as the toughest transition. Obtaining a 'good degree' was seen as vital to open up employment opportunities and provide an 'educational return' on their studies. Continued access for life to the Careers Service for alumni was welcomed.

## Some Solutions.....

Whilst the Careers Service provides initiatives and opportunities for students at all transitional levels, based on these findings further careers and employability support to offer students include:

- > Tailored careers & employability induction events and materials to cater for direct entrants and students from non-traditional backgrounds.
- > Further emphasis on early career planning and online access to appropriate careers materials to engage students with employability throughout their degree.
- > Enhanced partnership working with Personal Tutors regarding careers and co-curricular information for their tutees.



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## Reference

Improving the Student Experience: A Practical Guide for Universities and Colleges (2011) Edited by Michelle Morgan, Routledge Publishers, London.