

**SUMMER
2010**



**DEVELOPING A GRADUATE
RETENTION STRATEGY:
EMPLOYER SURVEY AND
GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES IN
WARWICK DISTRICT**



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Executive Summary

Background and Research Objectives

This report describes the findings of research carried out between July and September 2010. The aims and objectives of this research were:

- To compile a database of all major employers in the local area, highlighting the opportunities they have for graduate and undergraduate students.
- To provide information to local businesses about the various schemes available to aid the recruitment of graduates by distributing an employer information pack.
- To improve student engagement through the Warwick District Council website, taking on board suggestions for improvement from students themselves.
- To identify successful case studies of university alumni who have chosen to live and work in the area.

The overall results of this research were very positive, indicating that there are numerous employers offering graduate opportunities across many different sectors within Warwick District.

Employer's survey

Following a poor take-up of the online employer's survey, the research was conducted largely through telephone and face to face interviews. Out of the 100+ interviews a database of approximately 90 companies was created. Of these 90, 26% had graduate training schemes available while about 50% had no training scheme but occasionally had jobs that suited graduates. Of the 90 companies included on the database 82% are able to offer work experience or internships, mostly on an ad hoc basis.

Employer Information Pack

The Employer Information Pack is comprised of information from JobCentre Plus and the University of Warwick and Coventry University Careers Services. The Pack details the various schemes available to employers to help them recruit students and graduates. 65% of the businesses spoken to requested the information pack, and much positive feedback was received.

Student Focus Group

The student focus group highlighted a need for the Warwick District Council website to have a section specifically targeted at students. Students want to have information about rubbish collection, council tax exemptions, accredited landlords, emergency contacts and local events all in one place on the website. The focus group also

indicated that there is a need to raise awareness among students about the website and what it can be used for.

Alumni Survey

The interviews with local alumni raised an altogether positive response from alumni who felt that Warwick District was a good area to work and live, with excellent transport links often highlighted. Common themes from the alumni interviews included the need for better links between local businesses and the universities and the important role a local authority can play in providing accessible local employment information. The employers' database was generally welcomed, although the need for it to be effectively publicised was seen as especially important.

Recommendations for the Future:

1. The employers' database and Employer Information Pack collated in the summer of 2010 needs to be regularly updated to reflect changing circumstances in Warwick District
2. In order for the WDC website to be at its most effective when interfacing with students, and to spread information about local employment opportunities capably, that there should be a 'Student Portal' created on the website where all student-related issues would be located in one place.
3. For there to be significant improvements for Warwick District in graduate retention rates, there needs to be effective publicity both of the employers' database and the WDC website.
4. There should be an improved relationship between the universities and local business, and WDC can play a key role as a facilitator in this relationship.
5. WDC and the wider public sector should lead by example by taking on more interns into their organisations and providing them with varied, challenging work experiences
6. The employers' database put together in the summer of 2010 for Warwick District should be rolled out across Warwickshire.

INTRODUCTION

Background

A survey carried out by Grad Central [*gradcentral.co.uk*, November 2009] on 1053 students from universities within the West Midlands showed that approximately 80% of students in the West Midlands plan to leave the region after graduation in search of better career prospects. In order to minimise the impact on the Local Authority Warwick District Council commissioned a study which was carried out in summer 2009 by a Coventry University Business School Postgraduate student into the views of students about living and working in Warwick District. It also looked at ways to help keep talented graduates in the local area. The main aim of the study was to propose a Graduate Retention Strategy and Action Plan for Warwick District Council.

The 2009 study found that students want to find work that is “interesting, challenging and utilises their graduate skills”. It was also found that students consider the affordability of the location when deciding where to look for employment after graduation. 92% of students surveyed were looking for careers in professional services and the public sector, with a minority interested in Arts & Theatre and Media/Journalist. The study revealed that students consider the local area to be a “safe place to live with a vibrant social and entertainment scene”. Students were generally unconcerned about the cost of living in the District. However students ranked it lower than London and Birmingham with regards to career prospects and employment opportunities.

When asked what Warwick District Council could do to encourage them stay and work in local area after graduation, students offered suggestions such as giving them access to a detailed online database of employers in the district, increased placement and internship opportunities within interesting and challenging environments, provision of business planning and advisory services for those that want to go into self employment and provision of tuition rebates and tax waivers for those that remain in the district after graduation.

Acting on the recommendations from last summer’s study, Warwick District Council set up a steering group comprising of representatives from Coventry University and the University of Warwick and also members of Warwick District Council’s Economic Development team. It is the responsibility of the steering group to oversee the implementation of the proposed Graduate Retention Strategy.

Project Outline

This 2010 project was commissioned by Warwick District Council under the guidance of the steering group to investigate the availability of graduate job opportunities and undergraduate work experience opportunities in the local area. The main objective of this research is to compile a student friendly information resource highlighting a representative sample of the major employers in the area and the graduate opportunities they have to offer, this will include work experience/internship opportunities for undergraduates. This information bank will be made available to students through their respective careers services and the Warwick District Council website.

Warwick District Council aims to educate local businesses about the various schemes (both governmental and non-governmental) available to encourage employment, placements and undergraduate work experience by providing an information pack about the various schemes.

Another focus of the project is to ensure that Warwick District Council website is as student friendly as it can be, with accessible information dealing with all student-related issues. The objective is to establish better communication between students and the District Council to ensure that students who are also residents are fully aware of all that the local area has to offer in terms of employment possibilities, entertainment, quality of life, rubbish disposal, council tax exemptions etc.

Recommendations on how best to improve graduate retention will be made from the conclusions drawn from this research. We hope that these recommendations will form the centrepiece of how to take forward a graduate retention strategy beyond summer 2010.

METHODOLOGY (Full report on this section can be seen in Appendix H)**Methods used to conduct summer project:**

- 1) **To begin the research, the team had to agree upon the criteria by which it was to target businesses.**
 - Action plan drawn up which listed sectors the team thought to be most appropriate for career-minded students and graduates (i.e. professional services, public sector, creative industries etc.) and those that were less so (i.e. retail).
 - Advice was sought from a number of stakeholders which provided the team with good knowledge on businesses in Warwick District.
 - The team used Warwick District Council's Business Rates Database which outlined key businesses which paid business rates in the local area.
 - The team believed that national/multi-national businesses with a significant local presence would also be worthy of inclusion.

- 2) **After agreeing upon the criteria of what businesses were to be targeted, the team moved onto deciding what resources it should use to target local business.**
 - Warwick District Council's Business Rates Database.
 - Coventry University Careers Service kindly presented the team with a database of businesses from Warwick District who had advertised vacancies with them.
 - Applegate and iWarwickshire internet databases.
 - Warwickshire Investment Partnership's website and recommendations.
 - General internet research was also conducted when plentiful information was provided on a company's own website.
 - Signposting during interviews to other relevant businesses the interviewee thought worthy of inclusion in our project.

- 3) **After a list of specific businesses was compiled, the team then worked on how best to approach the businesses it had identified and extrapolate the information needed for the summer research project. This threw up a number of challenges.**
 - Online survey for employers. The survey included the key questions the team intended to ask businesses; including what schemes (if any) they had available for recruiting students and graduates. (NOTE APPENDIX)
 - Letter from Warwick District Council Chief Executive (see Appendix B for full letter) and an effectively worded email cover.
 - Liaison with Warwick District Council Website Manager, who placed the survey onto the WDC Website.

- Distribution of online survey electronically. A reminder email was then sent to businesses one week after the initial approach.
 - The online survey produced a limited take-up (explanation of possible reason can be viewed in Appendix H).
 - The team learnt that it needed to be much more pro-active with businesses if it was to receive the information needed for the research, and therefore it was decided that emphasis would be placed on the direct telephone and face to face interviews.
 - 15 companies were chosen from the team's listing for face-to-face interview, of which 6 were conducted face-to-face, the rest via telephone. During the project, general agreement emerged within the team over the effectiveness of telephone interviews. Approximately 90 telephone interviews were undertaken, lasting an average of 10-15 minutes.
 - For the face to face and telephone interviews, a set of core questions for all were put together which centred on whether the company has graduate schemes, internships or paid/unpaid work experience, and if not, whether they would consider doing so in the future.
 - A number of companies provided answers to all of our core questions via email in response to our initial enquiries.
- 4) **After receiving the information needed, the team began work on the employers' database.**
- The companies interviewed are ordered in the database by sector and an explanation is given as to what schemes (if any) that company has available to students/graduates, and if not, whether that company has been signposted to services.
 - The employers' database (Appendix A) is to be shared with Coventry and Warwick Careers Services and potentially Job Centre Plus, alongside publication in an accessible format on the WDC website.
- 5) **The team believed the best way to inform companies about the various schemes they can tap into to help them recruit a student or graduate was to collate all of these schemes into a single, accessible document named the Employer Information Pack.**
- The Pack includes information provided by both Coventry and Warwick Careers Services, and JobCentre Plus.
 - Employers were asked during interview whether they would like a copy. Over 50% of companies interviewed agreed to receive the pack; some companies have stated how useful the Pack has been to them.
 - A number of companies have also approached the team enquiring about how they can recruit a student/graduate. In such instances, the Employer Information Pack has been provided.

6) The team conducted a number of media activities in order to raise awareness for the summer project.

- The importance of spreading our message to local businesses and raising awareness of our work was seen as vital during our research.
- To achieve this team collaborated with Communication and Marketing Officers at both WDC and WCC.
- The team also helped with the preparation for a press release, gave an audio interview and had a number of pictures taken for the press release.
- As a result of this work, the team appeared in various press releases including the Friday 13 August edition of the Leamington Courier, a number of radio appearances, a WCC website article with audio attachment (which can be viewed in full in the appendix) and on the WDC and WCC Twitter pages.

KEY FINDINGS

The bulk of the data used was collected from the results of a telephone survey with 89 businesses chosen from several contacts lists e.g. the business rates database, town centre manager's contacts, Warwickshire Investment Partnership contacts and also contacts provided by the Coventry University careers office. These businesses were chosen to provide a sample that represents all the various sectors and also different types and sizes of companies within the district. Data from an online survey (appendix B) which was sent out to over 500 businesses via email has also been used.

Telephone and Face to Face Interviews

Businesses in Warwick District

During July-August 2010 89 telephone and face to face interviews were conducted with businesses operating in various sectors within Warwick District. For the purposes of this study the businesses are divided into ten different sectors as follows:

- Construction.
- Creative (including software designers, graphic designers, games designers, performing arts and media companies).
- Engineering.
- Manufacturing.
- Pharmaceutical.
- Professional services (including law firms, accountancy firms, IT firms, consultancy firms, estate agents, architects).
- Public Sector
- Retail
- Transport
- Voluntary sectors.

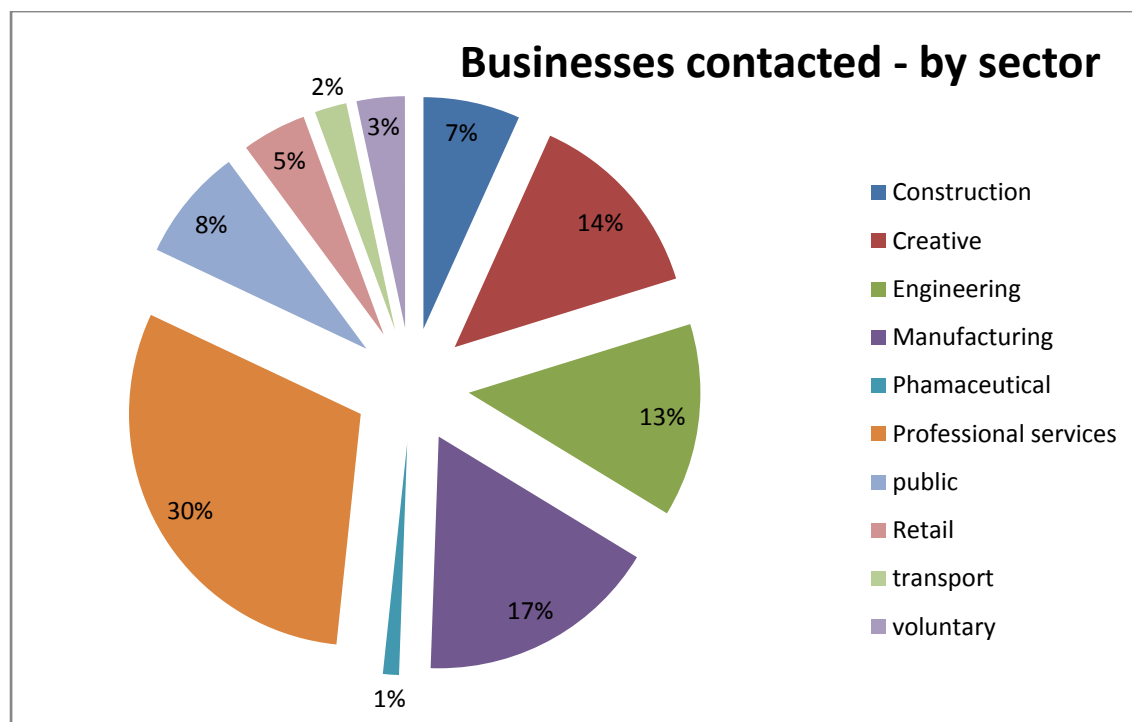


Figure 1

Of the 89 businesses interviewed, a significant 30% are within the professional services sector. The data shows that there is also quite a large number of manufacturing firms which make up about 17% of the sample, coming very close to that are engineering and creative industries at 13%. The telephone interviews revealed that many businesses within the Warwick district are quite small organisations with few employees. This is mainly in the professional services sector where there are a large number of accountancy or consultancy firms that operate as partnerships on a small scale. Some of these companies indicated that although they are small at the moment, they are expanding quickly.

“We are quite a small company but we are growing quite fast, we are currently double the size we were last year. It is very likely that we will have a formal graduate training scheme in the future.”

INTERGR8

On the other hand other companies indicated that they had made redundancies or were looking to downsize and make savings.

Graduate training schemes

From the telephone interviews it was found that approximately 26% of the businesses interviewed have a graduate training scheme in place. These tend to be the larger, long established businesses in the district. However over 50% of businesses interviewed indicated that although they have no set graduate training scheme, they sometimes have jobs that would suit graduates. The other 24% stated that they could not accommodate graduates due to their size or nature of business.

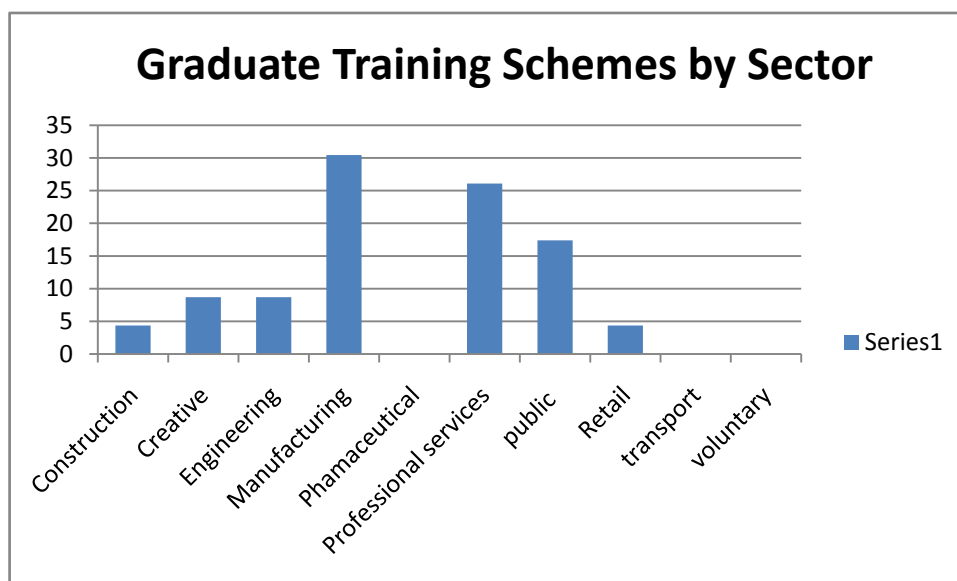


Figure 2

Fig. 2 shows that the largest proportion of training schemes are within the manufacturing sector (30%) followed closely by the professional services sector (26%) and the public sector (17%). These are very interesting findings because the study carried out in 2009 showed that the majority of students were interested in finding jobs within the professional services sector, public sector and voluntary sector. It was also found that students were interested in employment within the creative arts and academia and research sectors. It is quite clear from both pieces of research, that opportunities on offer within the district closely match student preferences.

Work Experience Opportunities

The survey undertaken in July-August 2009 revealed that students believed that gaining some work experience while at University would help them become more employable after graduation. 87% of respondents to a student survey ranked job skills and experience as the most important factor in finding employment after graduation.

The interviews with local businesses undertaken in 2010 show that work experience opportunities are readily available within the district across all sectors. Of the 89 businesses interviewed, 82% were able to offer work experience/ internships to students, mostly on an ad hoc basis, and were open to speculative applications for work experience.

Interviews with local businesses revealed that a student or graduate has to be proactive when seeking work experience, as very few businesses advertised any such opportunities. Many students are taken on after showing initiative and approaching the company personally.

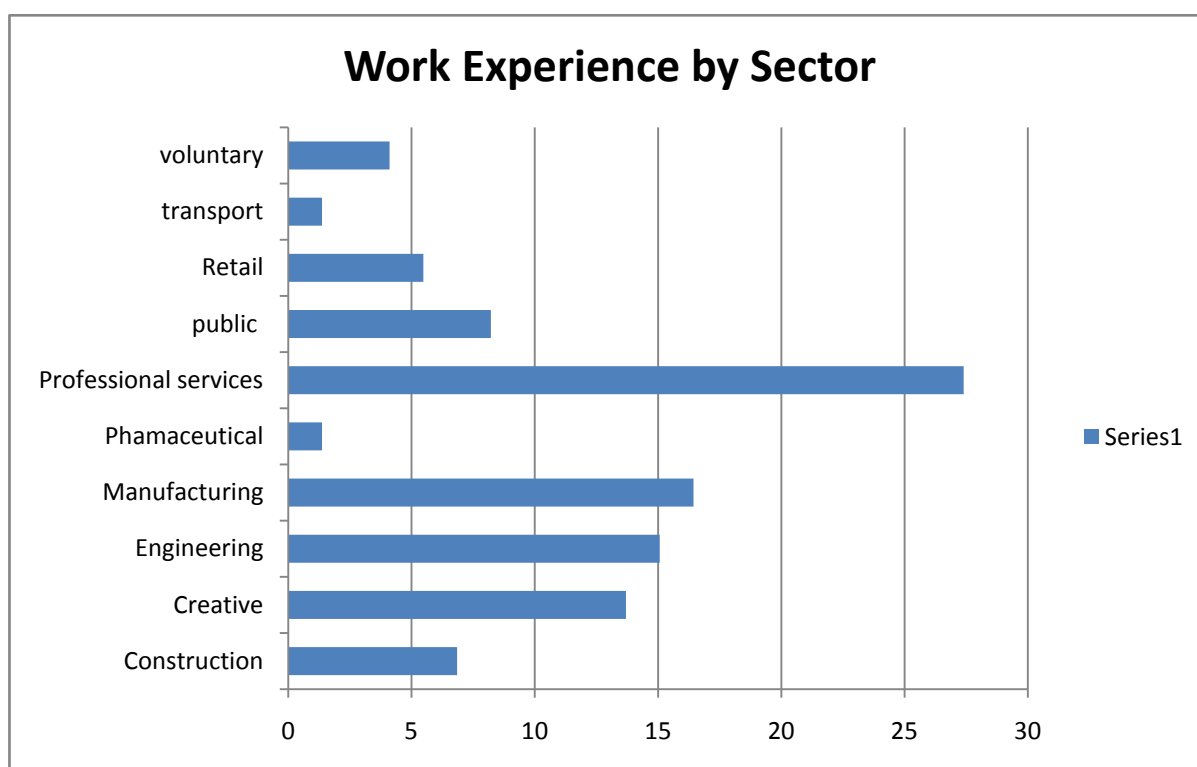


Figure 3

The majority of work experience opportunities available are within professional services (28%), manufacturing (16%), engineering (15%) and creative arts industries (14%).

Employer Information Pack

An overwhelmingly large proportion of all the businesses contacted were not aware of any of the government schemes available to help them take on a student/graduate intern for example the INPlace graduate internship scheme. 65% of businesses across all sectors requested information about the various schemes they can tap into to help cover the cost of taking on interns. An Employer Information Pack (appendix C) containing information from Coventry University, University of Warwick and JobCentre Plus graduate talent pool was sent to all 58 businesses who requested it.

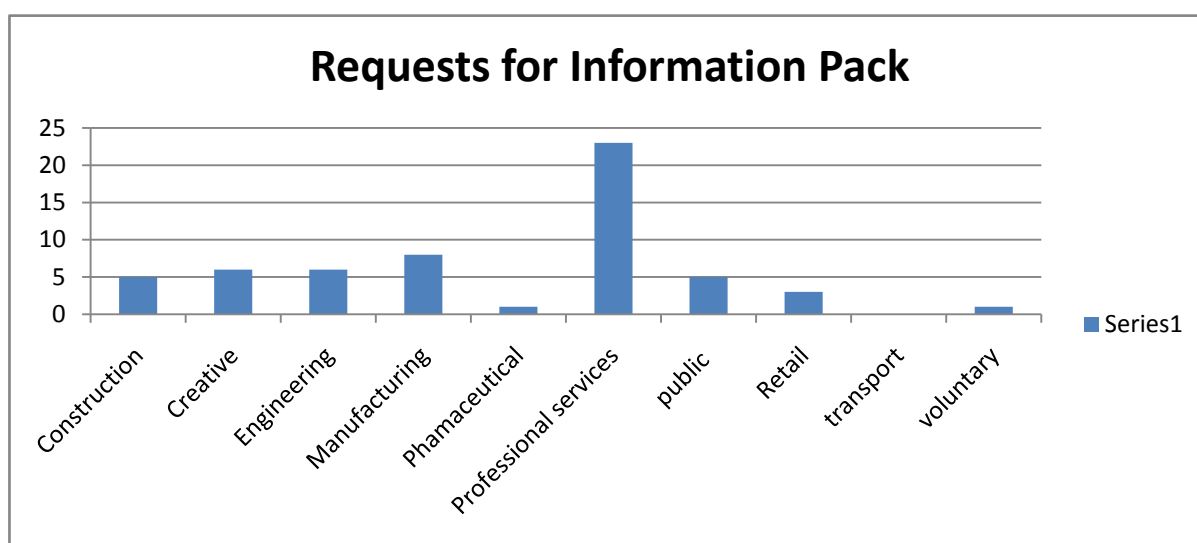


Figure 4

Most of the businesses within the Professional services, engineering and manufacturing sectors requested the Information Pack and showed an interest in using the schemes available.

Many businesses indicated that lack of awareness of funding schemes was one of the main barriers to graduate and undergraduate work experience opportunities, as they felt that they could not afford to bear the costs associated with taking on interns. The information pack is one of the tools that the local council can use to encourage student and graduate recruitment within the area. Good feedback already starting to come through is a sign that it is effective.

Online Survey

An on-line survey (appendix B) was compiled and sent by email to over 100 businesses to complete. The link to the survey was also sent to a mailing list of over 500 Leamington Spa town centre businesses provided by the Town Centre Manager. Additionally, the Warwickshire Investment Partnership also assisted by mailing the link to the survey to a further 100 businesses. However the response was very poor and the data cannot be considered to be statistically viable. A number of indicative responses are reported here:

What barriers do you currently face in recruiting graduates?

Of those responding,

- Over half believed that “Fresh graduates lack job specific skills and experience” which was a barrier to employing new graduates.
- Nearly half agreed or strongly agreed that there was little contact or links with the higher education institutions.
- More than half cited the current economic climate as being a barrier to graduate recruitment,
- While 60% said that they had no appropriate entry level jobs for graduates.
- The response suggested that another barrier to graduate recruitment is the lack of awareness of graduate recruitment schemes.

When asked “What would encourage you to recruit students/graduates in future?” comments included:

“Business growth, so opportunities would arise”

“The resource to contact someone who has that pool of information.”

“Better systems of co- operation with FE / HE institutions”

“More stable business environment. Improved support from financial Institutions for investment in new products”

“The fact we have good staff members that are graduates!”

Please rank what you consider to be the most important qualities for successful employment (1= least important; 5 = most important)

- 66% of respondents thought that Job specific skills & experience were important or very important;
- 69% rated transferable skills as important or very important;
- 40% rated placement/experience in a related industry important or very important,
- Two –thirds stated that the degree classification was not an important factor.

Interestingly this shows that a good degree is not enough to secure a job, employers value transferable skills and work experience more than degree classification and degree subject. However the findings from this online survey are not conclusive as it is a very small sample that does not show a reliable cross section of businesses.

When asked “How do you think Warwick District Council could improve the availability of information about job opportunities to students/graduates?” comments included:

“Use of social media e.g. Facebook. Twitter”

“By having a point of contact for local businesses from which the initial contact can be made and a requirement matched business to available student”

“Mailing lists, rss feeds in the appropriate area”

“Provide access through student recruitment websites e.g. milkround.com etc.”

“Construct company profiles and match them with enquiries”

Alumni Survey

A short survey (appendix F) of alumni from Coventry University and the University of Warwick who have stayed or returned to the local area after graduation was carried out via email. A small number of alumni were selected for telephone interviews with a view to including interesting case studies on the proposed student portal on the Warwick District Council Website.

Six telephone interviews and one face to face interview were carried out.[See Warwick District Council Website Review section below for overview of alumni case studies.]

- The alumni surveyed had graduated between 1984 -and 2009.
- There were various reasons for staying in the local area after graduation of which the most common was gaining employment in the area.
- Some people had personal reasons for staying in the area for example being in a relationship with someone in the area or having family in the area.

“When I graduated in 1998 I had a boyfriend at Warwick Uni who was staying on to do a PGCE. I spent a year ‘back home’ while I applied for my place on a Masters Course at Warwick. My boyfriend got a teaching job in Coventry and we moved in together. Warwick was ‘neutral’ territory for us both.”

- When asked how easy/hard it had been to find a job in the local area, the majority said it had been quite easy.

“Finding a job in the area was relatively easy for me. Most graduates assume that working in the West Midlands automatically means working

in Birmingham but that is not the case, there are many opportunities for graduates within Warwick District.”

- Only one respondent was self employed and he indicated that he had not had any significant problems in setting up a business.

“It is no more difficult to set up a business in Warwick District than elsewhere”

- Most of the respondents to the survey were employed by companies within big companies such as Millward, Dennis Eagle, JaguarLandrover and IBM which are the top graduate employers within the district. Over 70% of respondents said that their employer had graduate training schemes in place.
- All the respondents indicated that they liked living in the district

“. . . by keeping my eyes and ears open I found local opportunities. I was then encouraged to stay in Leamington partly because of setting up home with my now-wife (another Warwick graduate), partly because of the job opportunities and partly because the town and wider area is an attractive place to live. Ten years on I'm still happy to live in Warwick District, enjoying a cycle commute to work and a vibrant couple of towns in Leamington and Warwick.”

- However some indicated that it was a relatively expensive part of the country to live in.

“Warwick is an expensive part of the country to live in though – admittedly not as much as the south-east, but we have found it prohibitively expensive and are unable to purchase a house in the current climate.”

- When asked “What do you think Warwick District Council could do to provide better support for graduates in terms of employment/self employment in the local area?” suggestions included:

“I think the local authority could better support graduates in finding work in the local area by promoting more courses. Universities and employers should work closer together to ensure courses are better linked to the working world, and the local authority can play a role here as facilitator by ensuring information to this end is available and accessible.”

“I think that local authorities have an important role in helping graduates find employment in their area by signposting their services and working closely with Higher Education Institutes. Ensuring information is available and that people know where that information can be located

would be very helpful for any graduate looking for work in the local area.”

“In terms of what the local authority could do to support for job-seekers I'm not entirely sure what extra help could be provided to help good graduates apart from providing a sound environment for businesses to exist.”

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL WEBSITE**Section 1: Student Focus Group (Full report on this section can be seen as Appendix E)****Aims and objectives:**

A key component of our summer project was to review the Warwick District Council (WDC) web pages and to recommend a number of proposals to improve student and graduate engagement with the website, including better access to local work opportunities.

Methodology:

To attain our aims and objectives we established a Focus Group from Warwick Students' Union who would provide feedback on the Council's website and recommend improvements. This took place on July 26, 2010 at Warwick University.

Following on from best practice in previous website Focus Groups and given the student-orientated nature of this work we decided that 5 core questions would form the structure of our discussion:

- 1) What information would you want on a council's website?
- 2) Where would you expect to find the information you want i.e. in what sections?
- 3) Do you use the WDC website? If so, what would you use it for?
- 4) How can the WDC website be improved? Can anything be learned from other websites?
- 5) Is there anything missing from the WDC website that you would like to see?

Key findings: The key recommendations to come out of the Focus Group were varied but all agreed on the need for a dedicated 'Student Portal' on the website in which all matters relating to students are centred.

A summary of the discussion around each question is provided below.

Question 1: What information would you want on a council's website?

- Bin collection/recycling, council tax exemption information, local events to the housing accreditation scheme, student calendar of local events.
- Calls for simplification across the website.
- Jobs section targeting students and graduates highlighting the various work opportunities in Warwick District.'
- The WDC website was highlighted as a good platform for local businesses and the University of Warwick to work more closely together.

Question 2: Where would you expect to find the information you want i.e. in what sections?

- Current categorisation on the WDC website was sensible, but stressed the need to use clear language at all times.
- Importance of highlighting any student information on the main page
- The need to create a 'Student Portal', in which all student-related information was located in one place, was concurred by all.'

Question 3: Do you use the WDC website? If so, what would you use it for?

- Bin collection/recycling issues and the landlord accreditation page but for little else.
- Publicity it was agreed would be the way to ensure wider use of the website. All agreed that Warwick Students' Union could play a role in promoting the WDC website to University of Warwick students.
- One respondent highlighted the crucial role the website can play in improving the community engagement of students in Warwick District.
- All agreed that promoting a 'Student Portal' in the first few weeks of term was vital, and that Warwick Students' Union could play a major role here.

Question 4: How can the WDC website be improved? Can anything be learned from other websites?

- WDC could review the Warwick Careers Service and Unitemps web pages as good guides for structuring student employment information.
- Any marked improvement in employment information would be widely welcomed and would increase student use of the website as there is much demand for work experience.
- All welcomed the proposed inclusion of case studies of alumni who are enjoying successful careers in Warwick District.
- A database of local employers which included work opportunities would be very well received by students.

Question 5: Is there anything missing from the WDC website that you would like to see?

- WDC website should not be overloaded with information as the respondents had found with other local authority websites, as this only caused confusion.
- Creating portals for other users beyond students (for example a council house tenant's portal, an elderly person's portal etc.).
- Dedicated page which illustrated all of WDC's important partners such as Warwickshire Police and the safer neighbourhood team.

- Better links between the University and Student Union websites and the WDC websites. All agreed that a joined-up approach would increase the use of the WDC website among students.
- Warwick Students' Union should be included as a stakeholder in any website improvement.

Next steps:

The findings of the Student Focus Group were presented to the WDC Website Manager in the form of a report (Appendix E), with a view to considering its findings in the run-up to the 2010/2011 academic year. A new page bringing together information for students living in the District has been created on the Warwick District Council website.

Section 2: Alumni Case Studies

Aims and objectives:

Following on from engagement Warwick District Council (WDC) has had with university alumni prior to the summer of 2010, we decided that as part of our graduate retention strategy it would be useful for students and graduates to view examples of alumni on the WDC website who are enjoying a successful career living and working in Warwick District. One respondent at the Student Focus Group stated that the case studies 'would effectively reinforce the employers' database by providing concrete examples of local success stories.' [See Survey Findings above for analysis of alumni questionnaire.]

Methodology:

The case studies were compiled as follows:

- 1) Using a database collated in May 2010 of University of Warwick alumni who had contacted WDC expressing their interest in taking part in an interview discussing their career in the local area, we chose 6 alumni who we thought were most relevant to this exercise. We then put together a number of questions which we would put to all of the alumni during the interview (see appendix). Telephone interviews were then arranged for 5 alumni, which lasted between 10-15 minutes. 1 alumnus was interview in a face-to-face format. The information gathered during the interview was then typed up and shown to the alumni for approval. This information was then passed on to the WDC Website Manager for proposed inclusion on the WDC website.
- 2) We emailed the Alumni Relations Officer at Coventry University requesting an email message to be sent to alumni explaining our work and our desire to capture 'success stories' for the WDC website. A number of alumni requested a copy of our structured questions, which they populated electronically. We then typed up this information in a website-friendly manner and then passed the information on to the WDC website manager for proposed inclusion on the WDC website.

Outcome:

The interviews raised an altogether positive response from alumni who felt that Warwick District was a good area to work and live, with excellent transport links often highlighted. Common themes from the alumni interviews included the need for better links between local businesses and the universities and the important role a local authority can play in providing accessible local employment information. The employers' database was generally welcomed, although the need for it to be effectively publicised was seen as especially important.

Next steps:

It is intended that the alumni case studies will prove a helpful piece of information for students and graduates who are interested/looking for work and/or work experience in Warwick District. The case studies would be an important element of the proposed 'Student Portal' on the WDC website.

It is also worth considering if any alumni may be willing to take part in any proposed events between the universities and local businesses, as we believe that they would be helpful in illustrating living and working in Warwick District to current students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This report builds upon 2009 research findings by illustrating that there are numerous and diverse work opportunities for students and graduates to access in Warwick District. The 2009 and 2010 summer projects show that students and graduates have a demand for work and work experience opportunities, and that Warwick District is an area that has opportunities to meet that demand across many sectors. From the interviews conducted and the information gathered, it is clear that Warwick District has the potential to be an area where students and graduates can enjoy long and successful careers.

This report has discovered that graduate employment schemes are mainly limited to the larger companies of the area, there are a number of SME's expanding quickly and therefore much room for student and graduate recruitment in the future as Warwick District emerges from the recent economic downturn.

There is much interest among the companies of Warwick District in recruiting students and graduates but financial and size issues often get in the way. This is why we believe it is important that such companies are effectively signposted to the key providers when attempting to recruit a student/graduate and that when they need information it is clear and easily accessible.

There are many opportunities in Warwick District for students and graduates to gain valuable work experience and opportunities for internships. To improve the numbers completing work experience with local businesses, awareness of what Warwick District companies can offer needs to be raised. We hope the employers' database can be an effective tool here in increasing students and graduates understanding of how they can obtain work experience and internships in the local area. This is especially important given the ad-hoc nature of paid/unpaid/vacation time work experience. Pro-activeness on the part of providers, including Warwick District Council, in communicating this message to students is vital.

We have received very positive feedback over the summer for our Employer Information Pack. The importance of collating material on how employers can obtain help in recruiting students and graduates into one single, easily accessible document is clear. We feel that such information is invaluable for businesses, and that this way of communicating with businesses should be further explored.

Companies have highlighted a number of barriers which impact on the recruitment of students, with the key barrier being that students do not possess enough work-related skills. We think that by taking on board our recommendations, especially with an enhanced local business-universities relationship, students and graduates will be able to be more involved in the working world and thus remedy some of the key

concerns local businesses highlight. Above all, partnership working between the universities and local business is paramount.

The alumni interviewed during the summer research threw up some interesting and positive feedback. The general consensus among graduates who have remained/returned to Warwick District to work has been that the area is an excellent one to work and live, with good transport links to the rest of the country often recited. The alumni case studies also showed that many graduates were working for some of the major companies in Warwick District, such as Jaguar Land Rover and Millward Brown. All of the alumni recognised the importance of pro-active co-operation on local employment issues between the universities, public sector providers and local businesses.

The Student Focus Group discussion shows that if students are presented with simple, accessible information on local businesses and the key contacts/providers therein, there would be greater student involvement in the local economy. The employers' database can certainly play a big role here. Publicity is essential, and this is an area where WDC/wider public sector, the Students' Unions and universities can work together. The Focus Group also makes clear how well received the employers' database would be among students, reinforcing the need for the database to be regularly updated to ensure it remains an active document for future cohorts of students.

Recommendations

This section of the report will bring together our findings and explore ways in which we think Warwick District Council (WDC) and other key partners should go forward in their efforts to improve graduate retention rates in Warwick District Council. We hope that these recommendations, building upon the summer project into student and graduate employment in 2009, will help form a graduate retention action plan beyond the summer of 2010.

- 1) **The employers' database and Employer Information Pack collated in the summer of 2010 needs to be regularly updated to reflect changing circumstances in Warwick District.**

"The advice I would give to improve the support for graduates seeking employment and self-employment is for a list of key contacts to be created in a unified document (or website).

Justin Richards, Self-Employed Writer

- We see it as important that Coventry and Warwick Careers Services play a major role with the employers' database beyond the summer of 2010. We believe that the database should not only be shared with both Coventry and Warwick Careers Services, but that both organisations should take active steps to ensure that it is updated to reflect changing student and graduate work opportunities in Warwick District. For this to work, all individuals who are stakeholders in the database should be constantly collaborating to ensure the database remains a cohesive document for all.
- A suggestion to achieve this would be the establishment of a steering group of all stakeholders who would meet regularly. If all these organisations play a stake in updating and monitoring the database, we believe that it will remain a robust tool for students and graduates to utilise. Perhaps even current students themselves could help these organisations update the database, gaining valuable work experience themselves in the process.
- Furthermore, businesses should be free to add or remove any inserts on the database, thus ensuring that the database is an evolving, active document rather than a snapshot in time of work opportunities during the summer of 2010.
- We also think that the employers' database should be shared with JobCentre Plus, which could potentially bring in graduates from universities further afield.
- The Employer Information Pack should also be updated regularly by all relevant stakeholders to reflect changing services and providers.

2) **In order for the WDC website to be at its most effective when interfacing with students, and to spread information about local employment opportunities capably, that there should be a ‘Student Portal’ created on the website where all student-related issues would be located in one place.**

- This reflects the key recommendation that came out of the Student Focus Group into the WDC website. There should also be clear signposting to the Portal from the home page.
- The Student Portal’s target audience should be made clear. An introductory paragraph stating that the Portal is for university students living in Warwick District would be helpful.
- The alumni case studies should also be included in any student portal.
- Website links between WDC, the Universities and the Students’ Unions could be greatly improved via the Student Portal. The Portal could also contain links to the local Town Centre Partnership and the ‘Beyond the Bubble’ Facebook Page which is aimed at Warwick University students living off-campus.
- WDC should look into who should take ownership of establishing, regularly updating and monitoring the Portal.

3) **For there to be significant improvements for Warwick District in graduate retention rates, there needs to be effective publicity both of the employers’ database and the WDC website.**

“I feel improvements in information and communication between students/graduates and businesses are crucial. I think the Council can play an important role here as a facilitator. A Warwick District employers’ database which students/graduates can easily access is certainly a good idea. It is important that the database is given wide publicity.”

Adrian Clayton, Dennis Eagle

- We deem it important for WDC, Coventry and Warwick Universities and Warwick Students’ Union to work closely together to ensure the database is effectively marketed to students and graduates. This could be done for example by marketing the database and local employment on all the listed organisations web pages, and for better inter-linking of information across the websites. For example, multi-agency flyer campaigns targeted at students making clear where to find all relevant local employment would be welcomed.
- The employers’ database needs to be effectively located on WDC and Warwick and Coventry Careers Services websites.

- The database could be presented in document form and/or a search engine could be added to improve accessibility.
 - We believe partnership working across the named organisations would be the best way to attain the aims and objectives set out in this report.
- 4) **There should be an improved relationship between the universities and local business, and WDC can play a key role as a facilitator in this relationship.**

“In terms of what I think can be done to improve graduate employment in Warwick District, attempts should be made to foster better links between the universities and SMEs. This would be highly beneficial especially for companies involved in design and technology. It is important for all sides to be proactive if this is to be achieved.”

Adam Robertson, Apteco LTC.

“I think the local authority could better support graduates in finding work in the local area by promoting more courses. Universities and employers should work closer together to ensure courses are better linked to the working world, and the local authority can play a role here as facilitator by ensuring information to this end is available and accessible.”

Gerard Dillon, Coventry Primary Care Trust (NHS)

“I think that local authorities have an important role in helping graduates find employment in their area by signposting their services and working closely with Higher Education Institutes. Ensuring information is available and that people know where that information can be located would be very helpful for any graduate looking for work in the local area.”

Ross Keefe, Warwickshire County Council

- Local businesses should be encouraged to have a more active role on university campuses, for example by attending University Careers Fairs, by hosting a ‘local employers’ information session or by taking part in any proposed ‘Welcome to Leamington Day’ for students.
- It is equally important for the universities to take an active interest in local business, and take steps to include local business in their own events.
- We believe alumni who are enjoying successful careers in Warwick District would be very helpful to the success of these events.
- WDC could also ensure that it promotes the Employer Information Pack at every opportunity, which is a good tool to bring the universities and local business closer together.

- We think that with better dialogue between these organisations, information available to students and graduates around local employment opportunities and the key providers therein will be easier to attain. An improved relationship will help to raise the profile of local business among the universities' students and graduates. This can only be of benefit to the local economy.
- 5) **WDC and the wider public sector should lead by example by taking on more interns into their organisations and providing them with varied, challenging work experiences.**
- This would provide local businesses with real-life examples of students and graduates working in the local economy, whilst also showing the beneficial impact of recruiting a student or graduate.
 - This will also act to show how the various schemes that can help businesses recruit a student or graduate operate in the working world.
- 6) **The employers' database put together in the summer of 2010 for Warwick District should be rolled out across Warwickshire.**
- Warwickshire County Council could sponsor a review of all the major employers in the county, perhaps to be carried out by the district/borough councils in the county. This Warwickshire-wide database of student and graduate opportunities would be hugely beneficial to the county's economy, and set Warwickshire as the model for other counties intending to develop a graduate retention strategy.
 - Moreover, the employers' database should be widened to incorporate Further Education institutions (such as Warwickshire College) and their corresponding Careers Services, so that the database does not become the preserve of just university students and graduates.
 - The employers' database could also form part of the agenda of any emerging Local Enterprise Partnership.

APPENDIX B - Letter from Warwick District Council Chief Executive to local employers.

Chris Elliott
Chief Executive

Warwick District Council, Riverside House
Milverton Hill, Royal Leamington Spa, CV32 5HZ

direct line: 01926 456000

switchboard: 01926 410410

fax: 01926 456026

email: chris.elliott@warwickdc.gov.uk

web: www.warwickdc.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to ask for a moment of your time to contribute to a survey we are conducting among the key employers in Warwick District.

The loss of skilled graduates to other areas of the country is an issue that Warwick District Council seeks to address. Good graduates possess a range of skills that are beneficial to local businesses and to the local economy, and we are eager to retain some of these valuable skills within the local area. Research recently carried out among students living in our area showed that many graduates leave after graduation often because they are unaware of the opportunities available in Warwick District for placements, internships and employment.

The Enterprise Team at Warwick District Council intends to create a centralised local employer database, which will identify the skills local businesses look for in potential recruits, what graduate-level employment opportunities are available and whether employers are aware of current schemes to encourage recruitment, such as the government-funded IN-Place programme.

Working with both Coventry and Warwick University Student Careers Services, we hope that the information you provide will contribute towards creating a valuable information bank of opportunities in our area. Please ensure within your response that you are happy for us to place your company's details on the database.

Additionally, over the course of the summer the Enterprise Team will be making contact with a selection of key employers with a view to improving the quality of information on offer and to better understand the needs of employers.

I hope you will take the time to complete our on-line survey—this should only take 10 minutes at most. The link to the online questionnaire is within the email and is also accessible via the Council's website at www.warwickdc.gov.uk.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Elliott

Chief Executive

Appendix C - Employer Information Pack**Employer Information Pack**

Advice on schemes available to help companies recruit graduates

Includes information provided by:

- **Coventry University Careers Service.**
- **Warwick University Careers & Skills.**
- **The Graduate Talent Pool**

Material collated and distributed by the Enterprise Team, Warwick District Council – Summer 2010

Information for Employers – Coventry University Careers Service

Why recruit at Coventry?

Coventry University has a strong and dedicated Careers & Employability Service where people from different backgrounds such as recruitment, marketing, customer service or education - to name a few - form a vibrant and a professional support team. The programmes which have been developed with their contribution changed the way the University is perceived today and they keep on making a real difference to the employability of its students and to the prosperity of local and national businesses. Two of Coventry's Careers & Employability most successful projects have been the unique Add+vantage scheme and the robust Mobility Programmes.

The Add+vantage Scheme

In September 2006 Coventry University launched the Add+vantage scheme of mandatory employability modules designed to help students develop more of the practical skills and capabilities sought-after by employers. In 2009 over 8 000 undergraduates will be taking Add+vantage modules. Coventry University students will therefore be more and better prepared to “hit the ground running” contributing to organisations from day one as a result of taking their range of Add+vantage employability modules. This initiative is an added value to students' higher education experience, enhancing their employability and complementing the skills and knowledge acquired through degree subjects. The development of Add+vantage involved planning and consultation with a range of stakeholder groups and employers. As a result, the University has augmented the Scheme with many new modules, including among others: “Sales and Negotiation Skills”, “Management and Team-working”, “Winning and Keeping Customers”, “Law and Workplace”, “Financing an Enterprise” and many more.

The European Mobility Programmes

The Careers & Employability Service at Coventry University runs two European Union mobility programmes for Home and EU students and recent graduates to undertake work placements in EU countries. Duration of placements abroad range for between 3 months - 1 year for undergraduates (Erasmus Programme) and for up to 6 months for recent graduates (Leonardo da Vinci Programme). Erasmus Work Placements (for undergraduates) and Leonardo Da Vinci (for recent graduates, postgraduates and summer placements) are part of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013). This programme is a European initiative which, since 1994, has helped higher education institutions sponsor both undergraduate students and young graduates to gain professional experience.

Since 2007, Coventry University has been the largest Leonardo da Vinci promoter amongst UK universities sending more than 200 students across 10 EU countries. We currently work with an ever-growing group of organisations including

multinationals such as Airbus, Bertrandt, BNP Paribas, Commerzbank, the Fiat Group, Audi, Maserati, Kuoni DMC and Unilever as well as a large number of Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises across IT, engineering, business and design sectors. Our trainees return to the UK labour market with valuable international skills and experiences including:

- Hands-on experience in an area they wish to work in
- Improved existing and new
- employability skills
- Practical use of degree-based
- learning
- Business and social skills and
- contacts in an EU organisation

The Careers & Employability Service can therefore help you develop projects with an international dimension, expand your market in Europe or recruit highly adaptable, multilingual graduates. If you would like to find out more how you can benefit from a student with this type of experience please contact eu.placements@coventry.ac.uk or call 024 76152067.

Services for Employers

Coventry University has a long and established relationship with industry and has always encouraged academia and industry to collaborate for mutual benefits. The University has worked with companies from all sectors locally, nationally and internationally. In addition, it has accumulated a vast amount of experience and knowledge of European Mobility Programmes.

The University's commercial work has enabled it to build a good network of clients and it has gained a reputation for providing 'real business solutions' while taking an innovative and enterprising approach to today's changing business environment.

As a University we value the commercial knowledge and relationships we build, as this enables us to combine practical business knowledge with theory taught to our students.

A team of experienced staff within Careers & Employability work closely with employers, businesses and external partners to offer them a wide range of free services that will meet their recruitment and development needs. Our aim is to provide a supply of motivated students for placements and graduate jobs. To that end, the Careers & Employability Service run a number of programmes and initiatives that will reduce the cost of recruiting an intern or an employee for your company.

All the services available to employers are listed and presented in detail at <http://www.coventry.ac.uk>

Access to Funding

Coventry University can help you access a number of funding schemes designed for you get the most out of your business. This section highlights the current schemes to which the University can provide access, assist in applications and guide you through the funding process.

It is also possible to claim Tax Credits on Research and Development work undertaken with universities. For further information please see the HMRC website - <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/randd/>

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)

Short

KTPs are intended to assist Small- and Medium-sized (SMEs), which have the potential for growth and have a project requiring expertise not available within the organisation. The Shorter KTP is a great way for micro-sized organisations and SMEs that have not previously engaged with a university to employ a student or a graduate at a fraction of the actual cost. Key facts about the shorter KTP:

- Deliver projects to address short-term business issues (10 to 40 weeks)
- A partnership between a local company, a regional university and a qualified associate (normally a graduate of the university)
- 40% - 60% of the funding for the project is provided by the government

The Shorter KTP Programme in the West Midlands will be managed by Coventry University and delivered in partnership with the Technology Strategy Board and Wolverhampton University, with collaboration from other universities across the region.

Classic

Coventry University also offers companies the chance to become involved in Classic Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, funded by the Technology Strategy Board. A Classic KTP provides access to one or more graduates (known as KTP Associates) who will work full-time within your company on a project central to your needs. The KTP Associates are jointly supervised by company personnel and a senior academic.

The Classic KTP attracts a government grant of up to 60% of the total cost of the project which includes the salary paid to the Associates, academic expertise and the administrative support provided by the University. The typical duration of a Coventry University Classic KTP is two years. More information is available from the KPT website at www.ktponline.org.uk

Innovation Networks

The Innovation Networks Programme offers grant support of up to £15,000 to groups of at least three SMEs who are working together on the development of an innovative product, process or service. The programme, which is run by Coventry University and funded by Advantage West Midlands and the European Regional Development Fund, encourages collaboration between small and medium sized companies. Collaboration can be essential for small businesses to gain access to skills that are not available in-house and over 90% of previous Innovation Networks respondents reported finding their partners useful or essential to their projects. The project has already assisted 280 networks resulting in nearly 300 jobs being created or safeguarded and over £14m of new sales. Owing to its success over the last six years, the Innovation Networks project has been awarded additional funding to run until March 2011.

Knowledge Transfer Enterprise Grants

The Knowledge Transfer Enterprise Grant (KTEG) scheme is unique to Coventry University and offers external organisations the chance to work with University staff on a short project, of up to three months, aimed at improving the effectiveness of the external organisation's operation. We offer grants of up to £3000, which are match-funded by your company, allowing you to draw upon the experience and expertise of members of University staff and students in a cost effective way to solve a real business problem.

For further information on available funding or for a no obligations discussion please contact The Corporate Partnership Unit on 024 76 236364 or email them at cpu.cad@coventry.ac.uk

Advertising Vacancies

The Careers & Employability Service is uniquely placed to reach motivated, job-seeking students and recent graduates. We can advertise your vacancies all year round on the University website and on departmental subpages free-of-charge. Our searchable online vacancy databases use interactive technology to email registered users with appropriate vacancies. We will place your advertisement in a weekly Vacancy Bulletin which is distributed throughout the campus. We can also carry out a targeted e-mail campaign to a specific group of students on your behalf.

Please note that the content of advertisements is at all times the responsibility of the Careers & Employability Service and the received material may be edited.

What to do next to advertise your vacancy and find the best candidates...

Please e-mail details of your vacancies to careers.ss@coventry.ac.uk. Each vacancy should include the following information:

- whether it is a full-time or fixed-term appointment
- closing date for applications (please note: jobs are removed from the website two months after publication if no closing date is given)
- start date
- any essential requirements e.g. degree discipline or experience, specific skills and competences required
- description of duties
- salary (this can be disclosed at a later date if desired)
- location of the appointment
- explanation of application procedure (company application form, CV and covering letter, online application)

We do accept paper vacancies but to help us process your vacancies more quickly our preference is to receive them by email (Word document if possible).

Please phone us on 024 7615 2033 if you have any queries regarding placing an advertisement.

Work Placements

Taking a Coventry University student on a placement has never been easier. Our dedicated and experienced staff will assist you in the entire process from the advertising of your opportunity up to the end of student's contract.

It is a very attractive form of employment for both employers and students and it yields significant benefits to your company:

- It is a cost-effective form of recruitment
- Students bring new ideas and up-to-date knowledge
- You will have the opportunity to assess their potential for future employment
- They can work on projects which staffs have previously been unable to devote time to
- There is a possibility for your staff to gain experience supervising students
- Good public relations, as your organisation is seen to be investing in the future
- You create an opportunity to forge stronger partnership links with Coventry University

Advertising your placement opportunities

The Careers & Employability Service is happy to promote your placement opportunities. You can do this by either: filling in our online form at <http://www.coventry.ac.uk> , sending your details directly to Careers & Employability, e-mailing full details of your placement to careers.ss@coventry.ac.uk

Recruitments of placement students

Work placements for students will vary from full-year placements as part of a traditional 4-year “sandwich” course degree (i.e. where the third year is spent in industry) to short placements either in the summer or done on an ongoing basis through the year.

Students will often be looking for experience that is directly connected to their course and for which they can ultimately receive credit points towards their degree as part of their project, thesis or as part of their Add+vantage module.

Many of them will be seeking a paid placement but the University recognizes the importance of volunteering and is therefore actively involved in a number of initiatives where students can make a significant contribution to different projects at no cost to the employer. Please contact us for more information regarding these forms of cooperation.

As regards typical application procedures, candidates will provide you with a copy of their CV and a covering letter and/or a completed application form. You will then need to invite them for an interview and appoint the student who best matches your placement opportunity.

We can provide interview space as well as other facilities. Please e-mail us to discuss your requirements at careers.ss@coventry.ac.uk

Work Experience Placements - Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I consider offering a placement?

Offering a student the opportunity to work at your organisation allows you to work in partnership with Coventry University.

You will have a student dedicated to undertaking a workplace project for you. The student is not part of your usual staffing levels and can therefore work on a project where allocating time with current resources could be a challenge.

The placement should be relevant to issues within your organisation, so that the student’s project can impact on your organisation in a positive and meaningful way.

Students will have completed a competitive selection process before joining the University and will be committed to making the placement work.

How long is a placement?

Anywhere from 2-3 months during the summer break to a full academic year. Students could work with you full-time during the summer or when undertaking a “sandwich” placement. On other occasions they may be able to come for 1 or 2 days a week throughout their placement.

Can I have more than one student?

Yes. If you have a need for a number of students to work in a number of different departments and on a number of different projects you may take several students at one time. There are no limits.

What sort of project would the student work on?

The project should centre on a core activity in your organisation. Typical projects might include:

- Designing websites
- Research and development of new products
- Setting up IT systems
- Analysing manufacturing methods
- Environmental audits

How much should I pay the student?

Employers would normally be expected to pay the student at least the National Minimum Wage, although some employers opt to pay more. Paying a student will normally lead to more applications arriving afterwards but as previously mentioned some projects lend themselves more to students doing voluntary placements.

What about Intellectual Property and Confidentiality?

Copyright, design rights and all IPR-related elements produced for your company by the student during their placement will belong to your company. Employers can ask students to sign a confidentiality agreement before starting their placement if required.

Can I interview applicants?

The University can undertake screening and selection on behalf of the employer, or the employer can choose to interview the students following an initial screening process, in order to make a selection.

How do I apply?

In the first instance, you will need to contact the Employer Liaison Team at the following e-mail address: careers.ss@coventry.ac.uk. An Adviser will contact you to discuss it further, where appropriate. Once a project and a timescale have been agreed, the opportunity will be advertised to students and applicants will be screened for suitability. A shortlist of students will then be drawn up: employers can then choose to interview these students themselves and make a final decision, or the University can recommend the most suitable candidate for the project.

Once the student has started a placement, an Adviser will contact you to go over any questions you or the student may have.

What is expected of me?

The University expects employers to provide the students with the necessary training and equipment to undertake the project. We also ask that, if the student is to be based on the employer's premises, they are given an induction including all necessary Health and Safety information.

You would be expected to alert the University if there were any issues arising from the placement that the University needed to be aware of.

What is expected of the students?

The University expects the students to conduct themselves in a professional manner whilst working for the employer, and to undertake the agreed project identified by them.

Contact: For more information contact careers.ss@coventry.ac.uk or call our Placement Adviser on 024 7615 2032.

Events on Campus

The Employer Liaison Team organises many different events throughout the year, both in the Faculties and centrally in the Careers & Employability Service:

- Careers Fairs
- Employer Presentation
- Employer Workshops

All these services are free-of-charge to all employers and the Service seeks to build and maintain effective and lasting relationships for the mutual benefit of our employer partners and the students.

We have a programme of general and course/faculty based career events that you are welcome to attend.

Careers Fairs

Once a year we hold an Employer Fair - a highly publicised, two-day event located in a friendly and dedicated space where you can meet the students face-to-face and promote your company to a whole range of recipients. Last year the event attracted companies such as: AIRBUS, BNP PARIBAS, ERICSSON, FIAT GROUP, GE AVIATION, TESCO and BERTRANDT as well as 30+ other local, national and international companies.

Employer presentations and workshops

At Coventry University we value the skills and experiences that employers can share with students. Employer-led sessions provide an opportunity for you to market your company and promote your sector whilst giving students a valuable insight into careers that may be available. Depending on the numbers we expect to attend, we can organise your presentation in a room or a lecture theatre. All rooms are equipped with high-tech multimedia facilities for PowerPoint, slide shows or video recordings. We will also try to make sure that you have a carefully selected, well-informed and keen audience on the day. In order to book your presentation e-mail careersevents.ss@coventry.ac.uk or call the Employer Liaison Team directly on 024 7615 2243.

Follow-up on Employer Visits– The Quality Commitment to our Partners

We will follow up your visit to the University by providing you with the feedback on your presentation, by communicating with the students who attended as well as by contacting those who could not come but expressed interest in becoming involved. If you require, we will arrange for an interview room where you can talk to potential candidates in private and at your convenience either in the Faculties or in the Careers Service building.

Warwick University Student Careers and Skills: our services to local businesses

The Employer Connect team within Careers and Skills assists the entire range of employers from SMEs to multinationals and across all sectors, from commercial to public sector and not-for-profit, to connect with the exceptional talents and potential of Warwick students.

From simply marketing vacancies to students, to major profile-raising events, online and face to face; whether the need is for a single internship recruit or volunteer, or a high volume, long term graduate campaign, we can help. Our knowledge of the Warwick campus and our long experience in working with students mean we are uniquely placed to act as your point of access to the entire range of connections on campus.

According to your need, budget and circumstances, we can advise, and can also connect you with other colleagues on campus (including specific academic departments, student societies, and research programmes) as necessary. Some of our services are free; others attract a charge to cover our costs in offering them. Any surplus is used to support the costs of providing Careers and Skills support services for Warwick students.

We offer:

- **Vacancy advertising** (free of charge)
Make opportunities available to Warwick's 22,000 students, and targetable by students' academic department. Registering your organisation on our IT system myAdvantage is the first step, allowing you to add a short company description, a link to your website, and to manage your vacancies online.

The following services are priced;

(In all cases, substantial concessions are available for SMEs, not-for-profit and public sector organisations).

- **Targeting specific students**
 - Web banner advertising, displayed on the myAdvantage student home page as they log in, and targetable to those studying in specific departments.
 - Emails targeted to those studying specified courses, or to given departments and year groups to highlight vacancies, events or other opportunities.
- **Profile raising/brand development**
 - Develop your own microsite within myAdvantage, featuring information, links to your own website, listed vacancies and on- and off-campus activity.
 - Sponsorship of activities, information resources, events and societies.
 - Films and videos featuring information for students, or case studies to showcase your organisation.

- **Campus Activities**

- Our Careers Fair programme attracted some 7500 student visits at 5 fairs in 2009-10, and is constantly evolving.
- Over 100 employer presentation opportunities each year, alongside sector-specific and alumni events, some held in specific academic departments.
- Use of on-campus meeting rooms either for follow up meetings after a careers event, or for interviews both formal and informal.
- Webinars and online presentations offer the opportunity to connect at a particular time; with students either in a group or singly; this is especially valuable if on-campus presence is not practical.

- **Recruiters' Club**

A membership package including a range of benefits for employers wishing to work closely with Warwick.

Throughout the year the University bids for additional funding through a variety of government initiatives and funding streams. We use this funding to work more closely with SMEs and local businesses to enable all to experience first hand the benefits a Warwick Graduate may bring to the organisation.

This year Employer Connect is running two programmes that encourage active engagement with both Warwick graduates and undergraduates through internship placements.

In-Place – the graduate internship programme, offers employers the opportunity to engage the services of a Warwick graduate for a period of up to 4 weeks with no costs incurred whatsoever. Graduates are typically offered short term assignments or project based work where they can be of immediate benefit to an employer with a high proportion of placements leading to ongoing or permanent recruitment.

We have also recently launched the new In-Place + programme, which offers undergraduate internships across the professional sector. The programme is aimed at those students eligible to join through the widening participation initiative. The scheme finances the engagement of an undergraduate with an employer and pays students for 120 hours work. This ensures employers do not incur costs in offering an internship.

Whilst funding for these programmes is limited and now drawing to an end for this academic year, we hope to offer further initiatives in the future and continue to work successfully with many more local businesses and SMEs. We are also increasingly working with Coventry City Council and Warwick District Council to link graduates with local opportunities.



IN-Place

Feedback - Employers

Rachel Franklin – Head of Communications at global architectural practice **Broadway Malyan**

We have recently recruited a graduate to work as an assistant within our busy marketing and communications team. The skill set I required was very specific and after placing the position with a number of recruitment agencies I was struggling to find a suitable candidate. IN-Place listened to my requirements and carefully matched cvs, sending me a number of excellent candidates for interview. Although initially nervous that I would be taking on someone with limited work experience, this has been more than compensated by the candidate's eagerness and motivation to hit the ground running. Being a graduate with a good academic background and a sound understanding of the sector, she has been able to very quickly pick up on tasks and is already proving a valuable member of the team.

I would highly recommend the IN-Place programme to any employer in the West Midlands looking to recruit talented graduates.”

Richard Lomax - Head of Consultancy Support at Consulting **INPlace**

At this stage the internship hasn't started but as yet but I am supportive of the scheme - I think it is an excellent idea, we could think of numerous projects an intern could do. I have also found the process of hiring the intern so far, a pleasant one. I am particularly impressed that I didn't have to arrange the interviews of the interns and that was all done for us, so (so far) this has been a good experience for us as an employer.

Lorraine Heath - **Midven Limited**

The In-Place graduate programme is an excellent programme. It gives the graduate a real insight into business working life as well as the Company seeing what a graduate can offer the Business. Sometimes the lengthy process of recruitment distracts you from the talent these individuals have to offer. Interviews can never really show either party what is required within the Company and this scheme gives a real opportunity for both parties to see where a graduate can fit in with the business offering a huge benefit. This makes it hassle free as there is no long list of candidates to interview and the fact that they can start almost immediately means they can be slotted into tasks and projects very quickly. They can showcase their enthusiasm for tasks given to them and get a real opportunity to be involved. The extra resource benefits the Company and can free up other staff to do other tasks. The fact that they are paid for the work is also excellent for the graduate without putting a burden on the Company.

Tim Beaumont - **Commercial Director Powershift Television**

We are still at an early in the process, but have to say the internships seems to be going very well. The first intern has been here for 5 days. On the first day, we covered Health & Safety and then an introduction to the business and products. We then agreed what we were going to achieve over the month internship and laid out what was expected. Adam [the Intern] has responded well getting really involved in the initial research project. We have a meeting every 2 days to see how he is doing and assess the results to-date. The process of recruitment, selecting suitable candidates and interviewing went smoothly and we look forward to second graduate starting on Monday.

Need further information?

See our web pages at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/careers/employers> or call us on 024 7657 4087 to find out more.

For SMEs particularly, see the following:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/careers/employers/smes/>

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/careers/employers/smes/additionalservicesforsmes/>

The Graduate Talent Pool

TO CREATE AN ACCOUNT VISIT: <http://graduatetalentpool.bis.gov.uk/>

The Graduate Talent Pool is a partnership between Government and employers, designed to help new and recent graduates gain real work experience.

This is a new service, designed to help match the skills businesses require with those offered by new and recent graduates. On this website you can advertise internship opportunities for free, directly to graduates. You can also register up to 10 sifting questions so that only the most suitable graduates apply for your vacancies.

Graduates can apply provided they graduated in 2008, 2009 or 2010 from a UK university with at least a degree or foundation degree.

Offering internships

We know that all organisations are different and employers have different needs. So the Graduate Talent Pool will offer maximum flexibility to enable you to shape your internship offering to maximise the benefit to your organisation.

The key to developing a successful internship and recruiting the right candidate is to ensure you have a clear picture of what you are offering and what you expect from prospective interns.

You need to:

- think through what you need the graduate to do - this could be a task requiring specialist knowledge or skills that are not currently present within your organisation
- state your needs upfront
- be clear about the objectives of the job – and use these when discussing the role at any interviews you hold
- put prospective interns through the same selection process as any other potential employee

Remember, your internship should offer a genuine work experience opportunity, giving graduates the chance to enhance their employability and career prospects as well as providing clear benefits for your business. Internships are not a substitute for permanent jobs.

What are the benefits to my organisation?

By offering graduate internships, you can gain access to a talented and ambitious workforce that is well-prepared for work. Graduates on internships can help you to build your business by bringing new skills and a flexible resource into your company. In this way, internships can help you make better use of time, reduce your costs and be more profitable.

A graduate can help develop your business by bringing:

- new ideas and fresh enthusiasm
- additional skills not currently present in your organisation, such as knowledge of new technologies
- an extra resource to tackle projects otherwise put on the 'backburner'
- a cost-effective and flexible solution to your recruitment needs

By taking on a graduate internship, your organisation will have the opportunity to promote itself as an employer of choice with a diverse talent pool. It can also allow you to assess the quality of graduates for potential long-term employment. Your intern could even be a future leader of your organisation.

At the same time, you will be helping graduates to:

- get real-life work experience soon after leaving university
- gain vital transferable work experience and 'soft skills', such as good communication
- try their hand at a profession or career path, helping them to make informed choices about their futures
- prove themselves to an employer and perhaps get a permanent job

A wide variety of organisations are committed to offering internships through Graduate Talent Pool: from international companies such as Microsoft and Marks and Spencer to public bodies such as the Police Service. Many other government partners in the public and higher education sectors are also offering internships.

What leading employers and recruitment experts say

Jackie Orme, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development:

"We know times are tough for business, but times are tough for graduates too and internships are a great way to meet in the middle. Internships help young people gain employability skills like team working and project management that will be invaluable in their future careers. We welcome the matching service to help bring employers looking for interns together with graduates looking for work experience."

Stephen Uden, Head of Skills and Economic Affairs, Microsoft Ltd:

"Internships are an excellent way for companies to access graduate talent and provide graduates with vital skills and experiences to support their future employment. Microsoft is extending its internship programme in 2009 to engage the graduate talent that is essential for our long-term success."

James Chalmers, Head of Strategy and Talent, PriceWaterhouseCoopers:

"Our internship programmes are an established and integral part of our talent pipelines at PricewaterhouseCooper. Typically, 92% of our interns convert to full-time positions. By providing real opportunities and insights into our organisations,

students enhance both their employability skills and business awareness while delivering value."

Creating an advert

To advertise your internship opportunity on Graduate Talent Pool, you'll first need to create an account.

Once your account is activated, select 'create new advert'. You'll then be asked to complete an online form containing details of the vacancy. This includes:

- a description of the role
- a description of the type of candidates you are looking for, and any qualifications they should have
- whether the internship is paid, unpaid, or expenses only
- the start and finish dates of the internship
- the dates you want your advert to appear
- search criteria (from a list of options), so that the right graduates can find your internship
- details of how candidates should apply for your internship.

Remember, you'll need to provide at least one way for graduates to contact you (such as an email, website or postal address) if you are to receive any applications.

You can also:

- set up to 10 'key questions' that graduates must answer correctly before they see details of how to apply for your vacancy
- preview your advert before it appears on the site

Once you've posted details of your internship, graduates will be able to search for it at <http://www.direct.gov.uk/graduatetalentpool>. Graduates must register on the site before they see details of how to apply. Once they've registered, graduates can also ask to receive email alerts when new internships are posted which interest them.

You can also remove your adverts at any time, see how many graduates have viewed your vacancies, or edit details of your organisation.

After your advert is posted

Graduate Talent Pool does not manage the application process or mediate in any way between the employer and the applicant. Applicants will apply straight to your organisation. From then on, you should liaise with them directly.

It's also a good idea to put candidates through the same selection process as you would for any other prospective employee. This is especially true if there's a chance that the intern may become a permanent member of your staff in the future.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS SCHEME PLEASE VISIT:
<http://graduatetalentpool.bis.gov.uk>

Appendix D – Media article from Warwickshire County Council website

Plugging the Brain Drain

Thursday 12th August, 2010



“

Our district has a lot to offer and will no doubt benefit if we can encourage more talented young people to settle here. This database will be a useful tool that we are confident will be popular with both graduates and businesses alike.

”

Cllr John Hammon, Portfolio Holder for Development Services

Warwick District Council has teamed up with Warwick and Coventry Universities on a project that will support graduate retention within Warwickshire.

Two students, Russell Dabb and Rumbidzai Takundwa are working with the Council's Enterprise team this summer with the task of creating a graduate recruitment database.

The database, exclusively for students, will contain detailed information on potential job and work experience vacancies on offer in the area.

The first part of the task is to approach local businesses and identify what they can offer fresh new talent who are keen to stay in the area. The following survey has been created to allow businesses to submit their information;

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QL7HR77>

The survey addresses questions such as the reasons why some businesses aren't currently recreating graduates and what the council could do to improve the availability of job information to graduates.

Cllr John Hammon, Portfolio Holder for Development Services said: "Proactive partnership working on a first hand basis with local students is positive for all involved.

"Our district has a lot to offer and will no doubt benefit if we can encourage more talented young people to settle here. This database will be a useful tool that we are confident will be popular with both graduates and businesses alike."

Appendix E – Student Focus Group ReportStudent Focus Group – Report

Focus Group subject matter: Warwick District Council website improvement.

Focus Group coordinators: Russell Dabb and Rumbidzai Takundwa.

Focus Group participants: Andrew Bradley (President – Warwick Students' Union), Sumaiya Khaku (Education Officer – Warwick Students' Union), Andy Perkins (Governance & Finance – Warwick Students' Union), Sami Wannell (Welfare Officer – Warwick Students' Union).

All of the participants are happy to take part in a short post-Focus Group test. There email addresses are as follows: Andrew Bradley – president@warwicksu.com; Sumaiya Khaku – education@warwicksu.com; Sami Wannell – welfare@warwicksu.com; Andy Perkins – andy.j.s.perkins@gmail.com.

Key Findings**Question 1: What information (if any) would you want on a council's website?**

The participants were asked about what kind of information they would want on Warwick District Council's (WDC) website. The respondents stated that the key information they would want to find on the website was bin collection/recycling issues, help and advice in dealing with crime, TV licensing, issues around council tax, employment advice, voter registration guidance, local events, the housing accreditation scheme and contact details for the police and key council departments.

Discussion from Question 1

One participant felt that advice and general tips on reducing crime was not as prevalent as it should be on the council website. There should be a section on advice to reduce/stop crime which should include the contact details of the safer neighbourhood team.

Another stated that students felt that council tax exemption issues were over-complicated, and better information on the council's web pages to deal with issues around this would be welcomed.

Sami Wannell highlighted the need for a local map of amenities covering Warwick District which would allow students to easily identify the area's cultural and social offering. A local calendar of events which included economic activities such as the farmers market and social occasions such as the Leamington Peace Festival and Warwick Folk Festival would be helpful as this would easily enable students to decide which events taking place in the local area they would like to attend. This could be in the form of a unified 'community page' area.

One respondent pointed out that they had found it difficult to extract information from the website on noise pollution, nuisance and environment health issues.

Another respondent stated that they would like to see a jobs page on the website which made clear all of the various work opportunities that are available in the Warwick District area, ranging from casual part-time work to graduate entry full-time work. Andrew Bradley mentioned an upcoming Careers Fair to take place in the autumn in Bath Place, this will include a number of local businesses and should be publicised widely on the web pages. This Careers Fair will be part of a wider 'Welcome to Leamington' day aimed at introducing off-campus students to the Leamington area.

Andy Perkins told of his concern over the WDC's web pages lack of simple, accessible information around voter registration in the run up to the 2010 General Election and that this should be addressed in any revamp of the website. Andy also stated that the hustings information provided by the WDC website during the 2010 General Election period was good and helpful.

Question 2: Where would you expect to find the information you want i.e. in what sections?

One respondent stated that the current categorisation on the website (Business and Jobs, Education, Health, Social Care and Safety etc.) was sensible and should probably not be altered. The importance of using clear language was agreed by all.

Sami Wannell stated that all of the contacts that were relevant to a given area of the council should be clearly stated on the main page of that area.

All agreed that it was vital that any information aimed at students was highlighted on the main page of the WDC website. One respondent made clear that 'the less web pages and clicks the better, simplicity is key.'

All participants concurred that a new, separate 'student portal' should be introduced on the website. All information applicable to students should be made available on this portal from employment opportunities and bin collection dates to the landlord accreditation list. This portal should be prominently advertised on the main page of the website. One respondent stated that 'if the WDC website made life as easy as possible for user, all user groups including students would be more likely to listen.'

Question 3: Do you use the WDC website? If so, what would you use it for?

One respondent stated that they used the website for recycling issues, bin collection dates and the landlord accreditation page but for nothing else.

All agreed that if the WDC website was to be used more widely than just the abovementioned issues, they would have to improve its publicity. The respondents

stated that the Warwick Students' Union could help here by promoting the WDC website amongst both home and international students.

Andrew Bradley made clear that the WDC website had a major role to play in improving the community engagement of students in Warwick District. 'Students make a choice as to whether Leamington is a place to sleep or a place to live. By promoting community events and raising the profile of local employment possibilities, the WDC website can play its part in ensuring the latter holds true.'

All agreed that website publicity is vital if the WDC website is to be used widely. The respondents agreed that WDC needed a better on-campus presence, but that this would only partially alleviate this problem. Another means of doing this is to ensure the simplicity and ease of access of the web pages. All concurred that a 'student portal' would be extremely helpful in this regard.

Publicising the portal in the first weeks of term-time is crucial, according to Sami Wannell. Sami stated that the one-day 'Welcome to Leamington' event (likely to occur in Term 1, Week 3) would be helpful here. The key contact for collaboration would be Leo Boe (Welfare Officer for 2010/2011), reachable by welfare@warwicksu.com.

When asked if a new student portal should be created on the WDC website, all agreed that it was the best way forward for engaging students as it approached them with a single message.

Further discussion pinpointed a number of other concerns regarding the content of the website. Andy Perkins stated that there should be a 'What goes in what bin' section on any student portal to help with waste management. A section on 'What can go in the landfill site' and how to get there would also be welcomed. Sami Wannell suggested links to the environmental organisation Action 21, to improve students' knowledge of volunteering in the environmental sector.

Question 4: How can the Warwick District Council website be improved? Can anything be learned from other websites?

Sumaiya Khaku stated that she thought the Warwick Careers Service and Unitemps website (for part-time jobs) were both very useful for any student finding work. Any proposed employment section should review both websites before any jobs-related information is added.

Andrew Bradley pointed out that in the current post-recession economic climate it is a good time for WDC to promote employment in its area. He said 'people were happy simply to get a job.' Therefore, any improvement in employment information would be widely welcomed and increase the use of the website by students. Andrew also highlighted the importance of personifying any employment information on the website through case studies of alumni who have been successful in finding careers in Warwick District. Andrew proposed that such individuals come onto talk about

their experiences campus or are included in any careers events taking place in Leamington.

All agreed that many students are keen to find work experience during vacation periods and after graduation. Any information on work experience opportunities within a student portal would be well received. One respondent stated that both employer and employee would benefit hugely from this.

Andrew Bradley closed the discussion on this question by stating that a database of local employers which included information on the work opportunities they offered 'would take people by surprise' as many would not expect such a high level of service when viewing the WDC website for employment information. Andrew agreed that the case studies would effectively reinforce the database.

Question 5: Is there anything missing from the Warwick District Council website that you would like to see?

All respondents stated that they thought the WDC website was satisfactory and was not as overloaded with information and web pages as other local authority websites had been in their experience.

One respondent mentioned that alongside a student portal, perhaps portals for other users could be created (for example an elderly person's portal or a disabled person's portal).

The main criticism the Focus Group gave was that the WDC website had a lot of good information but that it needed to be organised better, i.e. through a student's portal.

Sami Wannell stated that links to other important partners such as Warwickshire Police and the safer neighbourhood team on a single page would be welcomed.

Sami also mentioned of the possibility of information sharing with Warwick Students' Union to help promote the WDC website. 'There needs to be more links on the WDC web pages to the Warwick Students' Union and the University of Warwick, and both the SU and University should also help promote the WDC website better on their web pages.' All agreed that a joined-up approach in this way with both the university and the Students' Union would boost the WDC websites' publicity.

Sami also stated that WDC should make clear on their website who could be contacted for media-related issues. He thought it would be helpful if WDC and the SU worked closer together in sending out press releases, and that the inclusion of such contact details would help improve WDC's engagement with students in general.

Sami concluded the discussion by pointing out that Warwick Students' Union would be a useful organisation to consult with when any website development occurs as

they will be able to help ensure the website is as student friendly as possible. They can be contacted via welfare@warwicksu.com.

Appendix F – Alumni Survey

University of Warwick Alumni Survey

In what year did you graduate? What is your degree subject?

What do you currently do for a living?

How has your career progressed since leaving university?

Why did you decide to stay / return to the local area after graduation?

How easy/hard was it for you to find a job within the local area?

Please share with us your experience of living/working in the local area.

If you are self employed, would you say that Warwick District is a good place to set up a business? Why?

Does your current employer offer any graduate opportunities? What schemes specifically?

What do you think Warwick District Council could do to provide better support for graduates in terms of employment/self employment in the local area?

Appendix G – Example of Alumni Case Study**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK ALUMNI CASE STUDIES – TO BE INCLUDED ON WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL WEBSITE**

Adam Robertson – Apteco Ltd.

I graduated from the University of Warwick in 2000 with a degree in Computer Science. I currently work as a Software Engineer for Apteco Ltd which is a software company that provides a range of services, including marketing databases and customer marketing software that helps businesses. Before I graduated, I carried out part time work for Byzantium in Leamington, also a software company. Byzantium went on to offer me a full time job during the dot-com boom, although in the longer term the company was not successful. Through a recruitment agency I went on to work for Lloyds Pharmacy at their Head Office up until January 2004 when I began work for Apteco Ltd.

I chose to live and work in Warwick District largely because of the part time job I had attained whilst in my third year of study. Warwick District is a highly attractive area to live, with good transport links, but the jobs market was the main reason I decided to stay in Warwick District. Since then I have bought a house and settled in the area. It was not difficult for me to find work in the local area, although my attempts to find work were a decade ago and the outlook might have changed since then. In 2003 and 2004, my friends from university used recruitment agencies to find work, although it may be more difficult to find work now.

Graduate/student work opportunities within Apteco Ltd are limited at the moment but this may change in the future. We employ few graduates but are interested in exploiting better contacts with the universities. Apteco Ltd occasionally offer unpaid work experience, though this is mostly from further education colleges, the company could accommodate second and third year undergraduates. Apteco is also open to taking on people over the summer, a method of work experience which has often proved successful.

In terms of what I think can be done to improve graduate employment in Warwick District, attempts should be made to foster better links between the universities and SME's. This is would be highly beneficial especially for companies involved in design and technology such as Apteco Ltd. It is important for all sides to be proactive if this is to be achieved.

Information taken from telephone interview with Russell Dabb – July 2010

Appendix H – Methodology Full Report

Introduction

In this section, the methods used to achieve our aims and objectives will be explained. During the course of our project the team agreed thought-out criteria by which to target appropriate businesses in Warwick District. The various sources that the team went on to utilise in order to provide the employers' database with the best possible body of information into student and graduate work opportunities in Warwick District will then be addressed.

The methods used to interface with businesses is also explored, setting out how the team had to change its strategy from placing emphasis on the online survey to extract information from businesses to emphasis on direct telephone and face-to-face interviews. The structure the team put in place for its interviews with businesses will then be surveyed. How the information received was then structured and formatted in the employers' database will also be addressed.

The latter part of this section will focus on the Employer Information Pack and the teams' media activities. The Pack was put together with input from a number of key stakeholders, and formed the centrepiece of the team's role in signposting businesses to important providers. Finally, the team's varied publicity work will be explored, demonstrating how numerous media channels were exhausted in the team's efforts to raise awareness for the summer project.

Methods used to conduct summer project:

- 1) **To begin the research, the team had to agree upon the criteria by which it was to target businesses.** To attain this, various sources were utilised and much consultation with interested stakeholders took place. An action plan was drawn up which listed the sectors the team thought to be most appropriate for career-minded students and graduates (i.e. professional services, public sector, creative industries etc.) and those that were less so (i.e. retail). Advice was then sought from a number of stakeholders who discussed with the team businesses they believed should be included. Meetings/discussions were held to this end with the Town Centre Manager's, Warwickshire Investment Partnership, Coventry and Warwick Careers Service and colleagues in WDC Development Services. The team was able to tap into much local knowledge of businesses in Warwick District. This all added up to provide the team with an informed idea on businesses to contact.

The team was also made aware of WDC's Business Rates Database which listed all of the businesses based in Warwick District according to their rateable value. In descending value order, the team decided that businesses who met the aforementioned agreed criteria with a registered head office in Warwick District were worthy of inclusion. Furthermore, the team believed that

national/multi-national businesses with a significant local presence such as National Grid or Calor Gas would also be worthy of inclusion in our list of businesses to target.

- 2) **After agreeing upon the criteria of what businesses were to be targeted, the team moved onto deciding what resources it should use to target local business.** The first port of call was WDC's Business Rates Database. The team was able to extrapolate many appropriate local businesses (defined as those with head offices registered in Warwick District) from various sectors from this database. Coventry University Careers Service kindly presented the team with a database of businesses from Warwick District who had advertised vacancies with them. The team thought it worthwhile contacting such businesses, given their interest in recruiting students/graduates in the past. Local business information was also extrapolated from the Applegate and iWarwickshire internet databases, which listed by sector the key businesses in the local area. Warwickshire Investment Partnership's website and recommendations was also a useful tool in identifying specific businesses. General internet research was also conducted when information on key businesses was not forthcoming from these other resources. A companies' own website often provided plentiful information for us to then approach them with our enquiry. Also helpful was the signposting that sometimes occurred during interviews to other relevant businesses the interviewee thought worthy of inclusion in our project. As can be seen, the team tapped into numerous resources when drawing up a list of specific businesses to approach.
- 3) **After a list of specific businesses was compiled, the team then worked on how best to approach the businesses it had identified and extrapolate the information needed for the summer research project. This threw up a number of challenges.** The team began compiling the online survey for employers at an early stage. The survey included the key questions the team intended to ask businesses; including what schemes (if any) they had available for recruiting students and graduates. The full online survey can be seen in the appendix and is explored further in the 'Key Findings' section. To add further weight to our initial approach to businesses, the team drafted a letter from the WDC Chief Executive (see Appendix B for full letter) and an effectively worded email cover. Once content with the survey, the team liaised with the WDC Website Manager, who placed the survey onto the WDC Website.

The team then collated all of the relevant email addresses for the companies it had decided to contact and distributed the online survey electronically. A reminder email was then sent to businesses one week after the initial approach. To bolster our email shoot, the Leamington Town Centre Manager

and Warwickshire Investment Partnership kindly agreed to distribute our survey among relevant businesses in their own databases.

The online survey produced a limited take-up with only 16 businesses responding. The reasons for this need to be explored as some key lessons can be learned about the effectiveness of approaching businesses with an online survey. Perhaps the survey was not effectively located on the website. An argument can be made that the team should have sent out hard copies of the survey rather than conducting it electronically, although the response may have been similar. The team believed that the benefits of completing the survey was not presented clearly enough and that perhaps there was an element of potential confusion in businesses as to who should complete the survey. In summary, the key lesson the team learnt was that it needed to be much more pro-active with businesses if it was to receive the information needed for the research, and therefore it was decided that emphasis would be placed on the direct telephone and face to face interviews.

Due to the low take-up of responses to the survey, the team decided that it would not be as useful as first intended for statistical analysis. It was decided that questions 6, 7 and 9 which addresses barriers to student/graduate recruitment, activities to help businesses recruit employees and qualities for successful employment were to be the only questions in which the responses will be used for statistical analysis. All other data analysis would focus on the employers' database and our findings from telephone and face to face interviews.

The change of strategy to place emphasis on telephone and face-to-face interviews met a re-think on how best to approach the listed businesses. 15 companies were chosen from the team's listing for face-to-face interview, of which 6 were conducted face-to-face, the rest via telephone. During the project, general agreement emerged within the team over the effectiveness of telephone interviews. Approximately 90 telephone interviews were undertaken, lasting an average of 10-15 minutes.

For the face to face and telephone interviews, a set of core questions for all were put together which centred on whether the company has graduate schemes, internships or paid/unpaid work experience, and if not, whether they would consider doing so in the future. The schemes available to businesses in recruiting students/graduates were also explained during all of the teams' interviews via explanation and distribution of the Employer Information Pack. Furthermore, a number of companies provided answers to all of our core questions via email in response to our initial enquiries. The team found that this change of methodology enabled us to receive the information needed for the summer project in an effective and efficient manner.

- 4) **After receiving the information needed, the team began work on the employers' database.** The companies interviewed are ordered in the database by sector and an explanation is given as to what schemes (if any) that company has available to students/graduates, and whether that company has been signposted to services. The columns of the database around which our findings are organised are as follows: name of company, sector, telephone number, email address, website, key contact, graduate schemes available, other forms of work experience available, how best to approach the organisation and whether they had been signposted to providers. We felt that this encompassed the information we set out to find in our aims and objectives. The employers' database (Appendix A) is to be shared with Coventry and Warwick Careers Services and potentially Job Centre Plus, alongside publication in an accessible format on the WDC website.

- 5) **The team believed the best way to inform companies about the various schemes they can tap into to help them recruit a student or graduate was to collate all of these schemes into a single, accessible document named the Employer Information Pack.** The team held meetings with the important student and graduate recruitment providers in the local area and asked them to send information about their services to the team for collation into a single document. The Pack includes information provided by both Coventry and Warwick Careers Services, and JobCentre Plus. Employers were asked during interview whether they would like a copy (which was always sent electronically). Printed copies of the Pack taken to face to face meetings. Over 50% of companies interviewed agreed to receive the pack; some companies have stated how useful the Pack has been to them. The Employer Information Pack is to also be included in Leamington Town Centre Manager's 'Welcome to Business' pack. Furthermore, a number of companies have also approached the team enquiring about how they can recruit a student/graduate. In such instances, the Employer Information Pack has been provided.

- 6) **The team conducted a number of media activities in order to raise awareness for the summer project.** The importance of spreading our message to local businesses and raising awareness of our work was seen as vital during our research, so that local businesses could have a better idea of our aims and objectives. To achieve this team collaborated with Communication and Marketing Officers at both WDC and WCC. The team also helped with the preparation for a press release, gave an audio interview and had a number of pictures taken for the press release. Update meetings with the Communication and Marketing Officers were also arranged. As a result of this work, the team appeared in various press releases including the Friday 13 August edition of the Leamington Courier, a number of radio

appearances, a WCC website article with audio attachment (which can be in full in the appendix) and on the WDC and WCC Twitter pages.