

**Work Related Learning (WRL) in HE
– a scoping study**

**Helen Connor
Karen MacFarlane**

**Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning, Glasgow
Caledonian University**

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1. Introduction

This is a report on a scoping study designed to inform a major project on Work-Related Learning (WRL) at three Scottish universities (Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian and St Andrews). It was commissioned by the project team at the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRL) at Glasgow Caledonian University, and funded by the Higher Education Academy.

The 'Universities Work-Related learning Project' aims to embed work-related learning into the curricula of the three partner institutions, in a range of subjects in order to enhance the employability of their graduates. Through research and development with students, academics and employers, the project is expected to produce a strategic shift in institutional cultures and also promote a sector-wide change in approaches to work-related learning in Scotland. In particular, the universities hope to create new approaches to work-related learning which go beyond the familiar 'work placements' model, giving particular attention to students in non-vocational subjects. The Project is funded by a Scottish Funding Council (SFC) strategic change grant, and is due to run for three years.

The main purpose of the scoping work was to provide a baseline of knowledge which would feed into the feasibility stage and research of the universities' project, and also help give it an impetus at its commencement. It sought to identify

- a number of primary sources on the key issues, approaches and practices relating to work-related learning in higher education
- the range of different approaches to work-related learning being used in higher education institutions, including some illustrative examples, and
- relevant evidence on progress and trends, and effectiveness of different approaches and methods used to promote, disseminate and sustain work-related learning activities by institutions and others.

The scope of the work was not to be just Scottish institutions but to draw more widely from experience and practices across the UK.

The method adopted was primarily via desk research, identifying relevant information from various research reports, policy documents and websites and then following up specific examples and initiatives. This involved:

- a literature search, which identified a number of key sources of research evidence. It may be of interest to note that much of the literature was found under the heading 'enhancing employability' rather than 'work-related learning'. This is because the former has been given more emphasis in policy and funding in England over the last decade where much of the existing evidence was found ('enterprise' and 'work-based learning' were other headings of relevance also). Key reference and other sources of information are listed in Appendix 1.
- Further exploration of a number of the sources identified to obtain more details on examples of recent and on-going initiatives and activities. A database was set up containing 45 programmes/initiatives at universities across the UK, details of which are shown in Appendix 2 (presented in a separate document)

While attempts were made to identify as much useful Scottish material as possible, a lot of the relevant developments in WRL have been in England, and the literature reflects this. It is also worth noting that an emphasis was put on identifying examples in non-vocational subject areas and institution-wide approaches, as that was felt to be of more relevance to the project. However, as will be seen, a wide range of activities has been identified, from learning activities which are an integral part of a HE programme (eg work placements) to

those which are not (eg accrediting casual jobs/voluntary work, student progress files), and also we have included some enterprise activities. The examples (in Appendix 2) include details of contact names and locations where available for any follow-up activity.

2 Background, context and related developments

It is now increasingly being recognised that higher education (HE) has an important role in developing the competencies and capabilities of individuals so that they are well equipped for the world of work and they can successfully enter the labour market and manage their careers. As the economy is subjected to greater competitive pressures in home and international markets, so it demands a workforce which is better skilled and educated and also more self-motivated, flexible, self-reliant and adaptive to change. The recent Leitch Review on future skills in the UK economy (Leitch, 2006) has estimated that the majority of the new jobs created by 2020 will be at higher levels, and surveys by Futureskills Scotland also show that an increased number of Scottish jobs require higher level skills (see labour market reports from Futureskills Scotland, 2006)

In Scotland, there has been a tradition of providing generalist, broad-based education ‘... to nurture critical reflective thinking and a breadth of knowledge and understanding, and also vocational qualifications to provide specific knowledge and skills..’ (see Ch4 , Scottish Executive’s HE Review Phase 2, 2003). For some time now HE Institutions have been encouraged to be responsive to the changing labour market and ensure that courses are relevant to the wider needs of the economy and society, but in recent years there has been greater recognition of the need to prepare graduates better for employment in terms of giving them general (‘soft’) and specific skills and also information and guidance to help them in their career decision making and initial job search. The Dearing Report in 1997 called for the development of a more work-orientated focus in higher education across the UK (a view shared by the separate Scottish Standing Committee, and endorsed in submissions to the Dearing Review by CBI Scotland, the Scottish Council for Development and Industry and others, see Garrick report, 1997). Research for the Dearing Review showed that all students needed enhanced work-related learning opportunities (Harvey et al, 1997). The next year, the DfEE’s National Skills Task Force commented that the ‘lack of skills among graduates and young people is a key concern for employers’. Since then, various skills and enterprise reports and papers have continued to highlight the need to improve graduates’ work-preparedness and skills and the need for universities and colleges to be more responsive to employer demand (see for example Universities Scotland *Getting Ready for Work*, 2004); Scottish Funding Council’s *Learning to Work*, 2005) .

The Dearing Report helped to raise the profile of ‘employability’ in higher education in the late 1990s though there had been earlier attempts to encourage this and improve links between higher education and employers (see in particular the *Enterprise in Higher Education* (EHE) initiative which ran over 5 years in the early 1980s in over 60 institutions across the UK; in particular, it encouraged the development of personal transferable skills within the academic curriculum rather than as ‘bolt-ons’). Since Dearing, a policy focus has been on encouraging higher education to align itself more closely to the needs of employers and the labour market, and various initiatives have resulted. Many built on earlier programmes of EHE within institutions and the popularity with employers of vocational programmes, sandwich degree courses and industrial placements. These have included

- the QAA/SHEFC Quality Enhancement Theme of employability in 2003-05 which includes many initiatives associated with developing work related learning in Scotland
- the DfEE’s Higher Education Projects Fund 1998-2000 which supported numerous projects to develop strategies for skill development among students

- the introduction of Progress Files across the UK HE sector, to include transcripts of formal learning and achievements, a reflection and record of an individual's own personal development and personal education, and Personal Development Planning for all students by 2005/06
- 'employability strands' in HEFCE's £80m Innovation Fund (HEIF, 2000-03)
- the establishment by HEFCE of a coordination team (the ESECT¹ project) to help disseminate lessons learned from the various initiatives to enhance employability in HE in English universities (now under auspices of the HE Academy).
- the Higher Education Academy's continued support to academic staff and institutions across the UK to enhancing employability and enterprise, including through its subject centres network.
- a number of regional and sectoral projects to enhance employability running alongside these larger national initiatives (eg IT graduate summer schools in Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Edinburgh and Lothian; and Graduate Opportunities (GO) Wales) .

Further discussion of the need to expand the work-relevance of learning in Scottish higher and further education is given in a major paper from the Funding Council in 2004, *Learning to Work*. This showed that, although the Scottish graduate labour market was working relatively successfully, there were concerns about graduate under-employment and that *'simply increasing the volume of learning will not automatically improve economic performance'* (according to CBI Scotland in 2002). The report recommended a range of approaches to developing learners' achievements in skills and personal attributes including a range of advice to higher and further education institutions on how they can enhance employability and enterprise skills among students. It recognised though, that many HE and FE institutions are likely to be aware of these, but urged them to 'reflect on their various approaches' and make more use of 'work-related experiences outside of the classroom' and 'structured work-related experiences in vocational and non-vocational education' , as well as recommending various changes to curriculum design and teaching learning processes. The report concludes by stating that:

'...every learner should have the opportunity to benefit from their education in terms of their employability – not just those on vocational programmes or those who take the initiative', and, while it acknowledges that a lot of good work is already going on in HE and FE institutions, much more needs to be done to
'...embed employability and enterprise into the curriculum and make it explicit within the learning experience, for the benefit of all'.

Traditionally, the Higher Nationals (HNs) have been the main work-focused qualification at higher education level in Scotland. HNs play a continuing role in Scotland in meeting needs at higher technician and associate professional levels and form an important part of an alternative vocational or work related route through higher education. But while there is a strong emphasis on the vocational relevance of HN programmes, work-based learning has not been a key feature of many of them, and there are considerable variations in the extent to which it is present². The HN framework in Scotland is currently being shaped by a five year Modernisation project by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), and one of its aims is

¹ ESECT – Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team – was an initiative funded by HEFCE between 2002 and 2005. It comprised individuals with extensive experience of employability drawn from academia and a number of organisations including: National Union of Students, Association of Graduate Recruiters, Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, Centre for Recording Achievement and subsequently, the Higher Education Academy.

² Research at CRL and the Open University has reviewed recent developments in HNs in Scotland, part of a comparative research study on HNs and Foundation Degrees (see Gallacher, Ingram and Reeve, 2006)

to strengthen links with National Occupational Standards (NOS)³. But Scotland and England now have different systems of short cycle, work-related higher education. The new Foundation Degree (FD) in England has taken the place of many HNs and become a popular, higher level, work-related learning qualification (and also increasingly in Wales too). The new Foundation Degree's distinctive features are that it should have work-based learning at its core, integrated with academic learning, and involve employers in its design and delivery⁴. The introduction of the FD is generally recognised as having had a galvanising effect on the development of work-based learning in many English universities and colleges, and although there have been problems in places, it is seen as beneficial in developing new partnerships with colleges and employers and reaching out to new student markets.

Another important recent development has been the way many of the new Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) have taken on a role of encouraging HE to be more responsive to their sectors' needs. SSCs are UK-wide bodies, but many have a separate remit for Scotland or are developing a Scottish focus (see Scottish Enterprise/SSDA Review of the Skills for Business Network in Scotland, 2006). A number of Scottish Sector Skills Agreements (SSSAs) have already been agreed between the Scottish Funding Councils (SFC) and the early (pathfinder) SSCs (covering IT, manufacturing, construction, media industries) and more SSSAs are in the pipeline. The SSAScot is engaged in developing enterprise in education activities. Further details of the role of SSCs in developing and supporting lifelong learning to meet the needs of their sectors can be got from the Skills for Business Network, and the SSDA in Scotland and the Sector Skills Alliance in Scotland (SSAScot).

Many of the work-related learning developments in higher education have been subject to regulation and guidance by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which, apart from ensuring the appropriateness of new programmes and setting standards, has helped to embed them within the UK's HE system. For example, the QAA issued a code of practice 'for placement learning' in 2001 and defined what should be covered by this. 'Skill development' and 'work-related learning' are now incorporated into programme specifications of courses at many institutions and also in the qualification descriptors and benchmark statements produced by the QAA. Another recent example of how QAA has helped to encourage work-related learning is their Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark which is used by universities and colleges in the development of new FD programmes. Other on-going QAA work which supports the development of work-related learning in HE institutions has been the Personal Development Portfolios (PDPs) and Progress Files, which aim to help students record their skill development and achievements in their learning. The Centre for Recording Achievement and the HE Academy are jointly developing opportunities for all students to engage in PDP from 2005/06.

Work-related learning (WRL) has been part of the emerging employability and skills agenda in higher education, but it has also been part of other developments, such as moves towards more flexible delivery (including e-learning, part-time study, modular courses), vocational programmes, widening participation, student-centred learning approaches and employer engagement more generally. Examples can be seen in the following.

- The role of WRL in attracting more non-traditional students to HE, especially those from vocational or work-based routes who want to take study which integrates work with learning. A range of initiatives to improve the transition between HE and FE can

³ National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Learning, Development and Support Services define minimum standards of practice across occupations and provide the basis and main reference for the development of work-based practice, training, progress and qualifications across the UK (so including SVQs at levels 3 and 4). For further information visit the Standards site at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk.

⁴ For further discussion on the development of Foundation Degree, see recent publication from Foundation Degree Forward (Fdf) *Researching Foundation Degrees*, ed P. Beaney, and also visit Fdf website www.fdf.ac.uk.

be found in the Scottish Wider Access programme (SWAP), and also in publications by Universities Scotland (eg Universities Scotland, 2004).

- A major initiative to improve teaching and learning in HE has been the creation of new Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) in English institutions, several of which are focused on work-related learning.
- Collaborative activity of three Tyne and Wear universities (Newcastle, Northumbria and Sunderland), each of which has a good track record in supporting innovative work-related learning within their institutions. They are now expanding that work to develop and embed a work-related learning route into higher education across the North East. This includes developing new accreditation processes, new work-related learning opportunities aimed at people in work, and the guidance and support infrastructure for such learners.
- The new Lifelong Learning Networks in England (supported by HEFCE, now numbering 15) have been given specific tasks to expand work-based and vocational progression routes. Many of them are developing new access agreements and pathways and making curriculum changes to improve 'fit' of programmes at partner HE and FE institutions.

As can be seen from these examples, different approaches have been taken in different parts of the UK, much of it outside of Scotland. This is mainly because Scotland has not had the significant funding for promoting and developing employability in higher education which England and Wales has enjoyed for many years (via their Funding Councils). This is likely to change following the announcement by the Scottish Funding Council in December 2006 of a four year programme of strategic funding to develop graduate employability in HEIs. This will build on earlier initiatives in several Scottish HEIs, many of which developed from the sector's quality enhancement theme.

Before discussing the evidence on work-related learning and some of the examples found in our scoping work, there needs to be some consideration given to definitions and boundaries of 'work-related learning' and the range of different terms in use as this is a significant issue in its development.

3. Using the term ‘work-related learning’ – some definitional and boundary issues

Questions of scope and definition often arise in discussions about work-related learning (WRL) because there is little consistency or consensus in language used or in what kinds of learning activities might be included. Various definitions appear in policy and research literature, and there can often be some vagueness around the meaning of work-related learning. Additionally, a number of other terms which sound similar to work-related learning are widely used but can mean different things and overlap, as shown in, for example, a study on the costs of different modes of learning for HEFCE, 2003 which identified work-focused learning, workplace learning, work-based learning, work experience, experiential learning, workforce development and continuing professional development (CPD) (J M Consulting, 2003). This situation is perhaps understandable given that work-related learning (and some of these other terms) is still relatively ‘new’ in much of higher education, and still evolving. Boundaries between employment and higher education sectors are shifting. It is not surprising therefore that there is a lack of standardisation and consensus. However, not having clarity in language and definition is a handicap as it can act as a barrier to functioning effectively. It can also be a hindrance in promoting work-related learning within an institution or to other organisations if it appears rather a nebulous and confusing concept.

Inconsistency of definitions

Relatively few specific references to the term ‘work-related learning’ in higher education were found in our search of the academic and policy literature. Much of the discussion of the topic takes place within the literature on ‘employability’ (as in the Scottish Funding Council’s employability theme, discussed in section 2), or ‘work-based learning’, or in more specific literature on some of the other related terms shown above. A useful review paper produced by ESECT on work-related learning (Moreland, 2005) commented about the paucity of material specifically on work-related learning and HE at that time, and the need to specify other terms to find many references. We also found relatively few research references from doing a general e-search on the term, though we did find many examples of work-related learning programmes being offered by individual UK universities. The few relevant reports that have ‘work-related learning’ in their title illustrate the differences in scope and emphasis that can be taken.

- The remit of a DfES group, set up in 2002, was to explore ‘work-related learning’ for HE students. This focused on sandwich courses, other academically-recognised learning from work experience and learning derived from term-time and vacation employment (voluntary and paid). Work-related learning was seen a process where students could learn from their work experiences and thus improve their employability (DfES, 2002).
- A practice guide by Hills et al, 2004 on the implementation of work-related learning in HE (focusing on agriculture, forestry, environment and biosciences, but with wider application) aims to help staff who want to know more about integrating aspects of work-related learning into academic study. It starts with a very simple description of work-related learning – *...about making graduates ready and able to make transitions from education to the workplace*, and then defines it more specifically to mean: *‘learning outcomes achieved through activities which are based in, or derive from, the context of work or the workplace’*. It gives an emphasis to a student-centred approach to learning and that students should develop skills such as personal development, communication and team working as well as developing an awareness of the context and functioning of the workplace. It includes teaching done in both HE

institutions and in the workplace, work-based and non-work-based activities within degree programmes.

- Another guide on ‘work related learning’ , but produced specifically for employers, aims to inform them of the growing range of accredited work-related learning opportunities for undergraduate students outside of the academic curriculum aimed at helping improve their employability (Lang and Millar, 2003). These include for example:
 - National Union of Students’ (NUS) student officer summer training programmes
 - the CRAC (Careers Research and Advisory Centre) InsightPlus programme which accredits student learning in part-time work or volunteering
 - the Shell (STEP) Enterprises Ltd project-based placements programme in small companies
 - City and Guilds Licentiate award for industrial placement years in sandwich courses

Like the first example, this also focuses mainly on work experience and learning ‘outside of the classroom’.

- An audit of the provision of work-related learning in North East England’s universities in 2003 defined it broadly in the same way as in the second example above. It included a wide range of different categories of WRL, some specifically enterprise and employability activities, others vocational programmes which integrate work-based and academic learning. It also included Lifelong learning awards and NVQs and pre-entry and access activity (see Universities of the North East, 2003).

These examples illustrate the different definitions taken and the range of possible activities in HE that could be covered by the term work-related learning (WRL). (Further examples of such activities are discussed in Section 4 and shown in Appendix 2).

WRL may be new or still emerging in many parts of the higher education sector but it is not a new or unfamiliar concept to many students these days, as most of them will have experienced work-related activities at school or college, through undertaking a period of work experience with an employer. For example, there are new Skills for Work courses being introduced in Scottish schools as part of the Ambitious, Excellent Schools (AES) reform programme of the Scottish Executive; enterprise is also now part of the school curriculum (and being encouraged by SSAScot, see section 2); and workplace learning is being promoted in Scotland to employers in a EU funded project (by Skills for Business Network, Futureskills Scotland and others, see recent DVD launch). Although the SQA does not define the term work-related learning on its website (or at least not obviously as the emphasis is more on vocationally relevant programmes), the QCA (which has responsibility for English schools’ qualifications) has a description of work-related learning as: ‘.. *a broad range of activities for all ages. These activities help students learn about the world of work by experiencing and preparing for it...work- related learning takes place in the context of the world of work to help students develop knowledge, skills and understanding that will be useful in that world.*’. Furthermore, QCA identifies three strands of work-related learning which is helpful in gaining a better understanding of the term:

- *learning through work*: for example, placements in the community, work experience, part-time jobs, school enterprise activities, vocational contexts in subject learning

- *learning about work*: for example, vocational courses and careers education
- *learning for work*: for example, developing employer-valued key skills and career management skills

This is a very inclusive definition, and could quite easily be ‘read across’ to higher education and so given consideration by the project team. But, describing WRL this way may be considered too narrow and not sufficient for an employability curriculum within higher education. Moreland, as part of the ESECT project (Moreland, 2006) adds an emphasis on self-learning and the need to develop abilities of graduates to be responsive and adaptable to the changes expected in a working lifespan. He draws from the USEM approach to Employability, developed by Knight and Yorke in the ESECT project, defining work-related learning as: ‘*..involving students learning about themselves and the world of work in order to empower them to enter and succeed in the world of work and their wider lives*’, and identifies four inter-related areas of learning:

- learning about oneself – which he calls ‘Efficacy and metacognition’
- learning and practising skills and personal attributes of value in the world of work - ‘Skillful practices’
- experiencing the world of work (or facsimile of it) in order to get insights and learning predominantly associated with the subject of one’s HE study – ‘Understanding’
- experiencing and learning how to learn and manage oneself in a range of situations – ‘Metacognition’.

Each of these areas are discussed further by Moreland in his paper cited above.

Workplace learning, work-based learning, work-related learning

Of the various terms in use which might sound like work-related learning but seem often to have special meanings, ‘workplace learning’ and ‘work-based learning’ are the most common. To add to confusion, sometimes these two terms are subsumed within the umbrella term ‘work-related learning’.

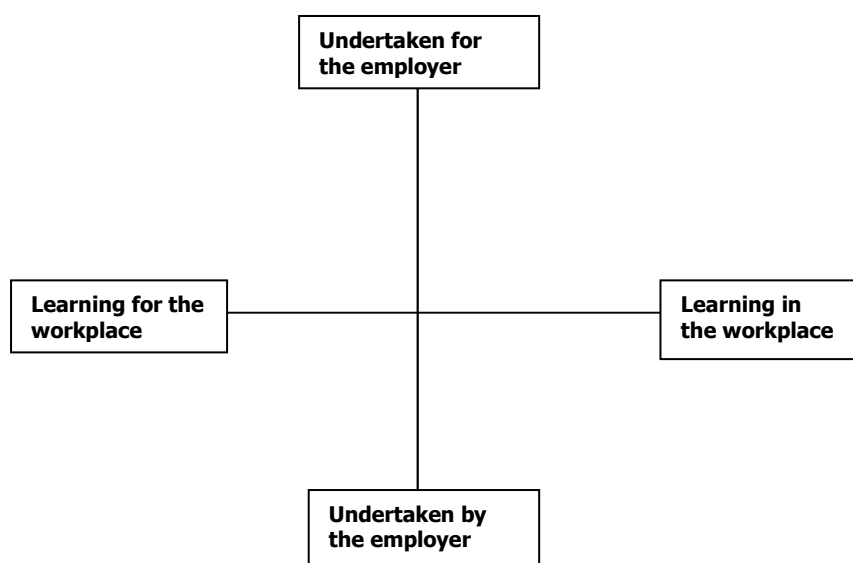
A recent HE Academy research study on work-based learning in higher education defined the scope quite narrowly as ‘*..learning which accredits or extends the workplace skills and abilities of employees..*’, and in effect was about ‘workforce development’ (Nixon et al, 2006). But in the 2003 JM Consulting study for HEFCE (JM Consulting, 2003), work-based learning was viewed as a broader concept than workplace learning. Its working definition of workplace learning was: mainly off-campus learning (but excluding e-learning), ‘*..where the majority of learning, support and assessment takes place in the workplace, through direct experience of the workplace environment, and face-to-face contact with tutorial or workplace staff*’, while ‘work based learning’ was defined to include... *projects, case studies and other techniques which base the theory in practice. This does not necessitate a project being based in the workplace (though most will be)*... The latter sounds very similar to the broadly inclusive definition of work-related learning taken by some others (shown above). Interestingly, the HEFCE 2003 study does not discuss ‘work-related learning’ as such, presumably because its focus was about learning in the workplace or in work-based projects linked to the curriculum, and so did not include paid work or volunteering, which might include work-related learning independent of a programme of study. An earlier review of work-based learning in higher education by Brennan and Little, 1996 focused on ‘*the processes whereby experience led learning in the workplace i.e. the skills and knowledge which people acquire while doing their jobs, is made ‘public’ and thus susceptible to assessment in academic terms*’. The use of the term work-based learning at that time seems

to align quite closely to the later definition of ‘workplace learning’, adding further confusion, and showing how use of language seems to change over time.

Frameworks for categorising work-related learning

The above discussion illustrates how work-related learning can have different meanings and various terms are used in different overlapping ways with boundaries subject to change; sometimes it includes certain types of activities, sometimes not according to the definition used. Simple categorisations of these activities are not easy. Gareth Parry (in an unpublished report to HEFCE in 2004) developed an inclusive framework to map all the possible activities that might be included in work-based learning, workplace learning and work-related learning (see Figure 1). This has two dimensions: a vertical one on where the learning takes place and a horizontal one on the extent of employer engagement. So, at one end of the vertical axis might sit workforce development for employees (ie undertaken by the employer), while at the other lies vocational programmes with work-based projects. On the horizontal axis, at the ‘learning in the workplace’ end, lies some work placement, internships ad hoc work experience and part-time jobs while at the other end might be student activities such as running sports clubs or some work-preparation/awareness raising activities about the world of work (which would mainly be delivered by HE but could be by an employer).

Figure 1 A framework for work-related learning



Source: Parry (2004)

It may be useful for the Scottish Universities Project to adopt a framework like this (or to adapt it) for promoting and organising the delivery across their institutions of all the different kinds of activities which could be undertaken under the work-related learning umbrella, and so help the development of their strategic thinking. However, this might be too broad a framework to work with (at least to start with), especially the end of the spectrum around ‘learning for the workplace’ as this could potentially cover a large part of a university’s provision. Figure 2 provides another example.

Brennan, Little et al (2006) in research on workplace learning for HEFCE in 2006 came up with a framework, showing the main organisational forms (see Figure 2). This is narrower and more tightly focused around workplace learning than the Parry model. Though it appears

simple, it covers a wide range of activities where workplace learning can be compulsory or optional, accredited or not, for a student or an employee, at the beginning or later in careers, etc . etc, and so it actually hides a complex mapping process. Also, the main forms of WRL shown are ones which are integrated to academic programmes and so exclude other learning in work experiences (eg in part-time and vacation employment).

Figure 2 Different organisational forms of workplace learning which can be taken within HE programmes

Organ'l form	Status within prog?	Who is learner?	How long?
Short project within workplace	Compulsory or Optional (wbl module)	student - whole range of subjects	Typically 2-6 weeks (may do more than one such module)
Sandwich placement	Compulsory or Optional	student – whole range of subjects	Typically 48 weeks (or 2x 24 weeks)
Sequence of short placements in 'practice' settings alternating with taught modules	Compulsory	student -typically in education, health and social care areas	Can amount to 40-50% overall programme
Employment-based learning programme	Compulsory (individual's work situation at heart of programme)	employee	In a sense, continuous throughout programme
Specific investigation within workplace	Compulsory (element within Continuing Professional Development programme)	employee	?? weeks??

Source: Brennan and Little et al, 2006

In a third way of classifying work-related learning activities one could take as the main focus, whether the WRL forms a major or minor part of an HE programme. This was highlighted in a recent practice guide on work-based learning (WBL) published by UVAC and sponsored by the LCCI Educational Trust (see Brennan, 2005). Here, it was suggested that this factor significantly affects the structure of the work-based learning curriculum, so for example, WBL formed a major part in sandwich degrees and some Foundation degrees and a minor part in other degrees with a short work placement or a work-based project. Other dimensions of this classification are: who/what influences the curriculum design – an employer with workplace goals ? an external professional body ? or the HEI (may be all three?) ; and who is the WBL being provided for - people in work? or for entry to work?

Employability

As we have already mentioned, a consequence of the emphasis on student employability in funding in England and Wales has been that many of the examples and reference sources on WRL found in this scoping study are located in material on 'HE and employability' (and so have an English focus). However, enhancing student employability is broader than work-related learning. Though it can be perceived as making available some learning provision which meets the specific training needs of employers and industry, arguably it is more than this, being also about developing capable people who can manage their own career development and who will be effective in their chosen work (see Scottish Funding Council, 2005). Thus, the employability agenda includes other elements, such as HE staff working in

partnership with employers to develop curriculum, personal development planning (PDP), careers guidance, use of job search materials and other tools to help prepare students for employment and find suitable jobs (see McFarlane-Dick and Roy, 2006). Some employability projects have covered several of these elements; and work-related learning usually plays a key role, being often integrated with some of these other employability elements.

The employability agenda in higher education is more advanced in different types of institutions and also been taken up differentially in different localities in the UK (see Bowers-Brown and Harvey, 2004). One HEI collaborative example is Graduate Opportunities Wales (GO Wales) where all Welsh HE institutions are encouraged to share practice and experiences and develop a more consistent approach. GO Wales is delivered by the Careers Services of all 15 HEIs in Wales in partnership. At its core is an extensive programme of work placements, but also includes developing links with local employers, providing CPD to graduates in small firms, careers modules in degree courses and giving targeted assistance to graduates with special needs (eg disabled, rural) (see http://portal.gowales.co.uk/pls/portal/gow.pkg_com.gowales_home)

A key report by Lee Harvey for Universities UK in 2002 illustrated some recent trends then, in particular how employability initiatives have become more integrated in programmes rather than being mainly delivered within careers services units. Several institutions had developed their own central or strategic approaches to employability (and by implication could have included work-related learning in this). For example, this could be:

- a single strategic aim to provide a basis for all the developing activity across the institution (as at University of Newcastle), so that it could be seen how it fitted together
- though integrating employability into their teaching and learning strategies (eg University of Central England; WEEPS at Glamorgan)
- incorporating Careers Management Skills as a standard part of a degree in all departments, as at Reading University
- developing a central institutional service, such as one-stop shops for employer and student enquiries (eg Huddersfield)
- providing help to specific groups of students to improve their employability skills (eg the Impact programme at Bradford, Leeds, Leeds Met and Huddersfield, and MERITS programme for Black and Asian students (operating at a number of other universities)
- developing employer partnership programmes, such as Graduates for Growth at the four Edinburgh HEIs' careers services, to help more graduates enter employment in small firms.

A review of the current 'state of play' of work-based learning (ie learning for employees) was recently completed by the HE Academy (Nixon et al, 2006) and included several case studies of institutional approaches. One example given was the Work-related Learning Service at Northumbria University which supports new business opportunities identified by Schools. The central Service has developed a number of WRL products for Schools to use, provides advice on strategy and develops and tests curricula.

A large body of reference material and good practice associated with the development of work-related learning in HE sits within the *Learning and Employability* Series, initially produced for HEFCE by the ESECT team (see section 2), and extended by the Higher Education Academy (can be accessed via their website: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/1434.htm>).

Learning at work (other levels)

There may also be much that the project team can learn from the wide range of work that has been undertaken on learning in the workplace and on work-related learning at lower levels, especially at level 3 work-based learning and apprenticeships. Again we felt this was beyond our scope to explore much as the volume of research and development work here is very large indeed and we were aiming to focus on the HE context. One useful source is a recent review of the academic literature on workplace learning undertaken by Judy Harris as part of the HEFCE workplace learning research (Annex A of Brennan, Little et al, 2006). It provides a review of the literature within an applied social theory context, discussing various themes on knowledge and learning. The work of Eraut (2004), Rainbird et al (2004) and Evans et al (2002) is also of potential relevance.

4 Examples of work-related learning in higher education

In this section we present further details of the spread and variety of work-related learning activities across the UK higher education sector, highlighting particular examples of programmes and initiatives found in our research, almost 50 ‘good practices’ in total (including some with a number of projects attached to them, as shown in Appendix 2).

Traditionally, work-related learning in higher education has been associated mainly with vocational programmes (in particular Higher Nationals and professional qualifications) and also vocational subjects (such as engineering or business studies where sandwich courses and industry placements have long been a feature, or health disciplines where practice-based learning is established). As mentioned at the beginning of section 1, we chose not to focus our search on this more familiar territory but on examples of WRL activities in non-vocational disciplines areas, those which covered a wide range of subjects (including the disciplines the Project plans to cover) and whole-institution approaches, as we felt this emphasis would be of more interest and benefit to the Universities’ project team.

For presentational purposes, the activities are grouped into three main clusters, see Figure 3.

- 1) those which come under the heading of enhancing employability and enterprise, which are mainly about giving individuals opportunities to learn about work or develop personal/’soft’ skills which would be useful in a work context
- 2) those which give individuals opportunities to develop specific work-relevant skills, linked to a particular occupation or employment sector
- 3) and those which provide support and help to facilitate or improve the quality of WRL for the participants.

Then the main types of activities in each cluster are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 3 Groups of work related learning activities

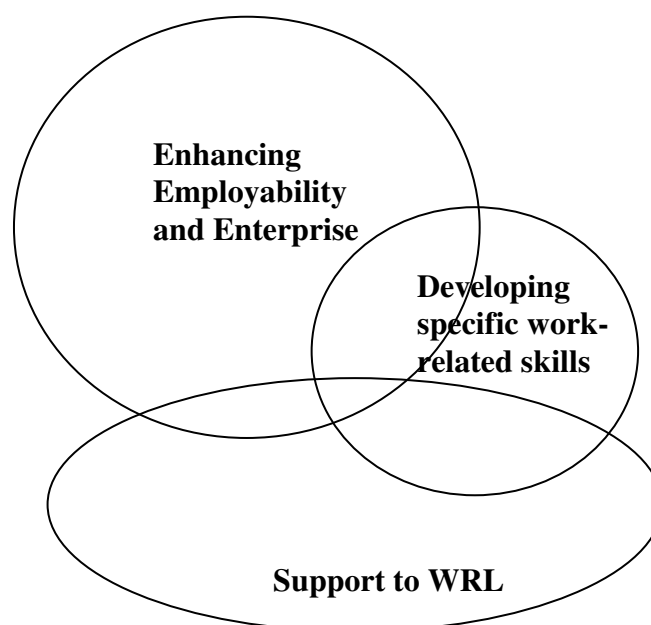


Figure 4 Types of work related learning

1.Enhancing employability and enterprise	2.Developing specific work-related skills	3. Support to, facilitating WRL
employability or enterprise modules or programmes	Foundation Degrees	Progress files and PDP
work placements	some Higher National Programmes	CETLs
enterprise workshops	some work-based Degree programmes	staff development initiatives
mentoring	CPD	careers education
running clubs or societies	summer schools	
volunteering/welfare work within institution	work-based modules	
casual/vacation jobs		
work simulation in class		
games, competitions		

Group 1. Enhancing employability and enterprise

This is the largest and most varied group. The activities range from integrated work-related learning modules taken as part of the core curriculum to optional workshops, casual work, games and competitions. As can be seen below, there are some more imaginative approaches in addition to the familiar work placements or sandwich courses. Some of them also contribute towards developing specific work-related skills so could be included in Group 2 also. They include:

- *Employability modules:* These can cover various aspects of ‘employability’ (eg career planning, personal development, labour market information, communication skills, applying for jobs). They can be delivered as part of the core curriculum on degree courses or as stand-alone programmes. They often include work experience placements; and they may be credit bearing. Several of the examples shown in Appendix 2 are being delivered in ‘not strongly vocational’ subjects – eg Glasgow University’s science faculties employability programme (no.7); a WBL module at Liverpool for sociology students who take part in volunteering (eg in care homes) (no.15); a module for molecular biology students at Aberdeen to provide guidance in securing a year-long placement (no.6); a speechwriting module for English students at St Andrews (no.2).
- *Work experience placements:* Many examples of WRL include work experience placements. They range from a few weeks to longer, 12 month placements, and can be taken as ‘thick’ or ‘thin’ sandwich placements. Some are now being called internships. Much placement activity is embedded in employability modules. We have included in Appendix 2 some examples for non-vocational students as these are less common - eg the STEP programme (no.30); Year in Employment (YES) of the University of Wales (no.31).

The National Centre for Work Experience (NCWE) provides a considerable amount of advice and resources (including resources for HE staff and practical help to students). NCWE has piloted a new kite-marked award for quality in work experience⁵. It is worth noting that nearly all students now work either in vacation or in term-time and the opportunity to experience workplaces unrelated to their studies is much greater nowadays.

- *Enterprise workshops and entrepreneurship activities*: These vary in content and scope. They are often part of employability modules but they may run separately within an institution, see for example: Glasgow's 'Inside Out Learning Programme' for creative arts students (no. 4) which also includes resources to embed creative business modules in the curriculum of the Glasgow School of Art; Future University of Surrey Entrepreneurs (FUSE) programme (example no. 32) which is aimed at any students thinking of running their own business (nb this is run by the students' union linked to Surrey County Council and Young Enterprise programme); and Graduating to Enterprise programmes (G2E) in Welsh universities which includes workshops, mentoring and some consultancy money (no. 45). Some are focused more at the SME employment market, such as the Graduates for Growth programme (no. 12), a partnership between 4 Edinburgh universities and the Chamber of Commerce, to attract high calibre graduates from any disciplines to SMEs. There are various programmes at other universities run as part of knowledge transfer activities or postgraduate research training (eg E-Sharp at Glasgow for arts and humanities graduate students (no. 10).
- *Mentoring*: These also are often part of employability programmes, but can be offered on their own, eg at Aberdeen Business School, masters HRM students are paired with experienced practitioners as mentors (No. 5); University of Wales, Bangor's peer guiding modules where second year students volunteer to act as mentors to 'freshers' in each department (and are trained and gain credit for doing it, No. 16). Specialist work-related learning needs can often be best met through mentoring, such as at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama where a mentoring scheme pairs final year student with recent graduates to help with careers advice, audition techniques and professional contacts
- *Running clubs and societies*: Various co-curriculum schemes have been developed at universities and colleges, often jointly with student unions and societies which give credit to sports clubs committee members (see No. 23 at West of England University, and similar schemes are at Strathclyde and Queen Margaret University). Another example is 'Business Start-up' at Leeds Metropolitan University which trains student officers of sports clubs in the running of a business (No. 29). Others focus on elite athletes (as at Bristol, No. 24) or provide sport coaching courses that lead to recognised qualifications for careers (No. 25, Nottingham Trent).
- *Volunteering and welfare work within university*: These also come under the co-curriculum heading, and give opportunities for students to gain skills and work experience, sometimes accredited, for volunteering or helping with student welfare, eg Napier University's elective module where students working in the community can gain credit for learning (No. 9); and Universities of Kingston and Surry's student welfare volunteers programme leading to a certificate in Advice Work skills. (no. 26). St Andrews has Support Network Volunteers (Supanet), where students who might be considering a career in care sector are trained as volunteers and take part in a PDP scheme.
- *Games, competitions*: These are often embedded in employability modules, and are part of many of examples highlighted above, but some more stand alone, eg 'Oil Business Game' which takes place on a week off campus at a residential field centre (No. 11) and

⁵ See NCWE website – www.work-experience.org (also can be seen via Prospects website)

the Student Skills Competition at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, run on an inter-departmental basis (no. 46).

- *Casual or part-time work*: At some universities, students can gain recognition or credit for developing work-based skills and attributes in part-time jobs during term-time or vacations, see for example at Napier University (No. 8) open to any student, and at University of East London where it has been in a specific area, education and community studies (No. 17)
- *Work simulation in class*: Sometimes it can be difficult to get appropriate work placements for students and so modules are provided in the 'classroom' which simulate work situations: see for example, Napier University's communication modules which give students real experience of public relations (no.3)

Group 2. Developing specific work-related skills

Many of the above activities and examples include specific skill development but there are some which are focused more on this than employability skills in general. However, relatively few of them are found in non-vocational subjects. They may be included in programmes such as:

- *Higher Nationals and new Foundation degrees*: These cover a wide range of disciplines and have already been discussed in Section 2. Further information can be obtained from the Scottish Qualifications Authority website, and also some examples have been identified as case studies in current research at CRLI (see Gallacher, Ingram and Reeve, 2006). A distinctive feature of Foundation Degrees is its work-based learning element and specific work-related skills development, which should reflect employer demand. A wide range of programmes (over 1000) have been developed in England so far, from education (especially early years), the largest single group to business and administration, creative arts, construction, social care and technology. For further information, see the Foundation Degree Forward's website (www.fdf.ac.uk), or their journal *Forward*. An example of a consortium approach to the development of a curriculum framework for Foundation Degrees across an institution is shown in Appendix 2 (example No. 21, at Bath University).
- *Work-based learning (WBL) modules or whole WBL degrees*: Several universities have developed integrated or free standing WBL modules or whole honours WBL degree programmes. At some, a framework has been developed which can be used across many disciplines. This framework may also include modules that might be described more as 'independent learning' modules. Middlesex University was one of the first to develop a generic framework which can be applied across the institution; another example is Anglia Polytechnic university's 'shell' modules with generic learning outcomes which can be applied to any subject area (no. 19). Further examples of how WBL is integrated into the curriculum of universities is shown in a recent UVAC publication (Brennan 2005).
- *A range of other programmes to meet employer needs for employees (especially CPD)*: Universities have traditionally provided short courses, workshops, seminars etc for professional and management staff (usually known as Continuing Professional Development, CPD). An increasing number are giving more emphasis to 'workforce development' programmes and developing a wider range of provision to meet specific employer demand, often locally. This is being further encouraged in England by the recently published Employer Engagement strategy by HEFCE and additional funding to

English HEIs. Currently, the extent of activity here and its emphasis within institutions varies, as the recent HEA report by Nixon et al, 2006 showed. Some examples of institutional approaches have already been given in section 3, such as the centralised support service at Northumbria University. Other institutions more active in this area include Universities of Teeside, Derby, Chester, Portsmouth and Liverpool John Moores. See also Lancaster's Centre for Training and Development (CETAD) which provides university accredited modules (example No. 20). Some of these universities also takes part in Learn Direct/Ufi's *Learning through Work* scheme. For example at Derby, the School of Flexible and Partnership learning (set up in 2005 to build a critical mass for WBL across all faculties) uses the *Learning through Work* on-line framework (which it also helped to develop) to support employees' planning of learning around their job and get it accredited towards a HE qualification. Around 800 learners take part each year across the University.

3. Support to WRL

In addition to these WRL practices, we have identified a third group, usually institution-wide activities, which help to facilitate and improve quality of the learning experience or promote WRL. Some of these have already been highlighted above (such as Derby and Northumbria's work-based learning support services and the use of *the Learning through Work* platform). Others may include the following.

- *Staff development initiatives:* Evidence gathered in the work of QAA/SFC Quality enhancement theme suggested that academics who have developed imaginative and effective ways of embedding employability in their courses would benefit from proper support and encouragement to help assist their colleagues to do so. A report aimed at academic staff includes material on WRL drawn from 12 case studies across the curriculum in Scottish institutions (QAA/SFC Quality enhancement steering committee). It also advises on other ways to engage staff more, including systematic evaluation of long term effectiveness of WRL practices. We have not identified a specific example of good practice on staff development, but many of the examples shown in Appendix 2 will have staff development benefits in them (such as engaging with employers, developing WBL programmes with employers)
- *Student recording of skill development and achievements(such a (in Progress Files and Personal Development Plans (PDPs)):* Various 'tools' to help students record learning from work experiences have been developed, including learning logs, diaries, on-line skills trackers, etc. A key development has been the introduction of Progress Files across the HE sector. These include transcripts of formal learning and achievements and are intended to support learning as a lifetime activity. Personal Development Planning (PDP) is an element of Progress Files which has now spread to all UK HEIs. There are numerous examples of PDPs, a few are included in Appendix 2: Glasgow's on-line PDP portfolio for B.Ed students (No. 44); a version of Liverpool Edge Hill University's Personal Learning File being used in the geography dept for students to record achievements which could be useful when seeking employment (No. 18). A significant source of further information and development work is the [Centre for Recording Achievement](#) (CRA), which has recently set up a partnership with the HE Academy to support PDP better. The potential for harmonising transcripts and records of achievement across the whole Scottish HE sector is being explored as part of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) development work.
- *Careers education:* As highlighted already, many universities have sought to incorporate careers education more into the curriculum as part of their enhancing employability

policies. The result is that more HE careers advisers are working with academic staff to deliver this, in addition to providing careers information, advice and guidance to students on a 1-1 basis. There is a range of practices at institutions, for example , the university-wide system at Reading (referred to earlier, see section 3, which is run in all 45 departments but modified according to discipline need, shown as example no. 14; Aberdeen University's 'Working out? Placement and career Skills module' in biology includes careers guidance to L3 students to help them get and support them in a year long placement in industry (No. 6). Other examples shown in Appendix 2 incorporate careers skills as part of employability modules, and some universities provide careers management courses on-line. The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) offers a week-long Graduate Skills programme for postgraduates; and the widely used CSU Prospects website provides a considerable amount of resources to students.

- *CETLs*: We have included some examples in Appendix 2 of newly established Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning in England (*CETLs*) which have a work focus. The aim of a CETL is to help teaching and learning within an institution or collaboratively with other institutions. Specific CETLs which might be useful to follow up in relation to work related learning developments are:
 - The 'Bridges' project at Luton University's CETL , which aims to build bridges between students' past experiences and their subject and also their outside interests, includes support for PDP (example No. 34)
 - Gloucestershire's Centre for Active learning (CEAL) in geography, environmental sciences and other related disciplines, which focuses on learning in inquiry on various contexts (field, classroom, employer, laboratory, etc (no. 35)
 - Westminster's Centre for Excellence in professional learning from the workplace, which include a focus on biosciences (no. 36)
 - Institute of Education's CETL in WBL for education professionals, includes an aim to develop new e-tools for self-evaluation of learning in the workplace (no. 37)

5. Trends, impact and effectiveness of WRL

As has become clear by now in this report, WRL is a developing area of higher education. Because of its diversity and rather fluid boundaries, it is difficult to measure well how much WRL activity in total is taking place, or its overall impact. The available evidence suggests that most UK universities and subjects have become more engaged with WRL in the last five years, but their level and nature of engagement varies. In general, it is more developed in English HEIs because there has been significant mainstream funding to promote employability, something which Scottish HEIs are now being given. In some HEIs, WRL is being embedded within the curriculum while in others it remains as an 'add-on' or provided in fairly informal ways (eg learning from work experiences in casual jobs), and given lower recognition. Most post-1992 universities have a longer tradition of providing WRL as they have a more 'vocational' mission than most pre-92s, and especially the more research-led universities. This was confirmed by a study in the North East which audited WRL in all the universities in that region (Dodgson et al, 2003) and also by Mason and Williams, 2003, in an England-wide study for HEFCE. The latter found marked differences between subjects and universities in their approaches to developing employability skills and although work experience was found to be fairly widespread, it was unevenly distributed between subjects and types of institution: for example, much less provided for history students compared with business studies students, and much less at pre-92 universities than post-92s.

The previous section has shown how WRL can take many forms, occur in various contexts and can relate to higher education programmes and awards in different ways. It can also lie outside HE programmes, via work experience in casual jobs or student participation in societies, student union or other extra-curricular activities, and some of these can lead to awards. It is unlikely that we have captured the full range of WRL that is taking place in universities and colleges but what we have aimed to do here is give an indication of its main scope, current state of development and where further information can be found. Quantitative measures of its provision in the research literature are rare because it does not lend itself easily to simple classification and measurement. Thus, it is difficult to assess trends or identify major gaps at a national or regional level. However, some institutions have audited their WRL activity in order to develop institutional strategic plans (see for example WEEPS from the Welsh Funding Council). Because much of WRL is part of the employability agenda in HE, arguably it should be measured within that context, and so be part of main stream internal processes like institutional quality assurance improvements (see SFC 'Learning to work' paper) and employability performance measures (currently based on first destination employment returns).

One of the key issues we have come across in this scoping exercise has been that much of the development of WRL activities has taken place as part of time-limited projects and comparatively little attention has been given in most of them to evaluation. Thus, relatively little evidence is available on how developments in work-related learning have impacted on individual learners or institutions, or what lessons have been learned from them. For example, how have learners changed in say their self confidence, understanding of work or work-relevant skills? What has been the employment outcomes of learners who have experienced WRL in their degree study? And what has been the impact within institutions?⁶ The need to systematically evaluate the long term effectiveness of various kinds of provision designed to enhance students' employability was suggested in the QAA/SFC Quality Enhancement Themes report as a way of increasing academic engagement. The recent HEA report on work-

⁶ The current research study at CRLI on HNs in Scotland and FDs in England should help contribute to filling this gap

based learning also highlighted the lack of evaluative evidence and recommended that it should be a future priority.

What *is* apparent, though, is that there has been greater progress in promoting and embedding WRL in HE in vocational subjects and the newer (post-92) HE institutions. This is where the bulk of work-related learning activity currently takes place though some recent evidence suggests a possible shift in this pattern over time. An analysis of students on placement years by HEFCE showed a rise in sandwich students in the late 1990s partly caused by some reclassification of thin sandwich students, but then a reduction since then. The reduction has been almost entirely at post-92 universities and thick sandwich types (ie one year placements), but that the numbers at pre-92 universities, though very much smaller in total, have held up and actually risen slightly.

A decline in sandwich course study and shift in its pattern of take-up was also found by Brennan and Little et al, 2006 in their study on workplace learning for HEFCE. It reported, from their institutional interviews, a decline in the take-up of sandwich placements, and how they were becoming more an optional element than compulsory on many courses. Several likely reasons were given including: perceived difficulties of 'fitting in' with other commitments (term-time work, family responsibilities) and the costs of extending degree courses for another year. Institutions had concerns about future effect of changes to fees on sandwich courses. There are also issues for learners going to different workplaces, which can be complex environments – eg are all workplaces suitable learning environments? Do sufficient discussions take place beforehand to negotiate a planned programme of learning? How is assessment to be undertaken? and what kind of support is needed? (nb some of our identified examples of good practice have sought to address these issues, (see Appendix 2), but Brennan and Little comment about the lack of research evidence here). A study at London Metropolitan University in 2004 showed that some student groups were less likely to take up work placement opportunities available because of personal circumstances (clashes with part-time work or family responsibilities, problems if unpaid, transport costs) or because the offer was not flexible enough to fit with needs (eg came at wrong time in course) or not seeing the value of taking it. The barriers to greater participation in work placements were more evident among lower socio-economic groups, mature and black and minority ethnic groups of students. That study also highlighted a lower awareness among students of the short accredited placement modules available than of 'sandwich' placements.

Issues around quality assurance and accreditation are often mentioned as 'getting in the way' of facilitating the development of WRL within institutions. The current QAA codes of practice are predicated on the 'norms' of 'in-classroom' design and delivery. Providers of innovative WRL often comment about having to 'jump through additional hoops' or that the investment in WRL might be seen as a risky development for an institution because it takes time to gain acceptance. Workforce development initiatives at more traditional universities have faced particular problems of being accepted as part of mainstream learning strategy. Staff attitudes towards the Government's employability and vocational policy agenda generally, which has not been universally welcomed within the higher education community, may also act as a barrier to WRL developments. Many staff still view it as inconsistent with the purpose and values of higher education, and reluctant to shift too far towards what might be seen as skills training. However, as we have seen from this brief scoping study, a great deal of employability activities has been developed at various institutions, and many more staff are now involved in developing work-related learning in higher education. Less negative views generally within academia are likely to be developing (Harvey, 2002).

We also sought evaluative evidence on the different approaches to WRL, but little was found of relevance here also. The whole area is mainly populated by descriptive case studies. No comparative research has been undertaken on the effectiveness of one approach over another at an institutional or course level, and little available to show that that one type of activity or

learning experience has been particularly successful. The research that has been undertaken tends to focus on specific activities, mostly sandwich study and work placements. These tend to show positive outcomes, in particular that work experience in general is valuable to students in their early careers (see Purcell and Elias, 2005). Respondents in On-Track Sweep 2 survey of Scottish students cited 'work experience' and 'work shadowing opportunities' as among the most important areas of help provided by HE or FE institutions (Ipsos Mori et al, 2006). Also, employers tend to look favourably on graduates who have experienced work placements and can demonstrate acquisition of skills for success at work. A recent study on learning through work placements (Little and Harvey 2006) for the HE Academy's Learning Organisations Forum, showed that students continue to draw very tangible learning benefits from work experiences planned as part of overall programmes. Some students choose to do programmes like this for that very reason. Personal development, increased self-awareness, intellectual skill development, knowledge of business and finance, and help to inform future career intentions, were all seen as positive benefits of a work placement, but to varying extents among the students interviewed. Not all students in that study though felt they have successful work experiences, though this was a minority, and for many, the personal and intellectual development they could derive from the work experience depended on the opportunities they were given by the employer and on how much they were prepared to put into it themselves. But the overwhelming messages from the study were positive ones from students.

A key concern highlighted by several studies has been the problems of engaging employers in work-based learning provision in HE, especially the large number of small businesses. A few programmes have been specifically aimed at encouraging more links with SMEs and more graduates to enter employment in small firms (see earlier example mentioned in section 4 of Graduates for Growth in Edinburgh, involving the local Chamber of Commerce). Brokerage, currently being developed in England through the 'Train2Gain' (T2G, employer-based training scheme), is being extended to higher levels on a pilot basis in three pathfinder regions (see www.dfes.gov.uk for further details). The models being developed may be something which some Scottish HEIs will be interested in. Providing affordable learning attractive to employees in small firms is a challenge for many HE institutions. One solution to this has been an on-line CPD training resource developed by Robert Gordon University, in collaboration with Applied Arts Scotland and Scottish Enterprise Grampian, for Scotland's craft-based industries. The new SSCs have a responsibility for promoting employment-related learning including work to develop curriculum and qualifications from school to HE, and these are likely to be an important vehicle for HEI-employer engagement in the future (see Review of Skills for Business Network in Scotland, (GHK Consulting, 2006)). A few of the early SSCs are working with HE on several initiatives, for example: piloting by Skillset (audio-visual industries) of a UK-wide accreditation scheme of degree animation courses as a direct result of employers concerns about basic technical skills displayed by recent graduates; and the new IT for Business Management degree developed with employers and led by e-skills (the SSC for the IT sector). E-skills also aims to 'kitemark' specific degree programmes which meet employer needs and coordinate a range of HEI-employer engagement activities to improve linkages.

Challenges of sustaining employability projects (and new WRL approaches) beyond the development phase (the area is full of initiatives so practice is in pockets within institutions) is another key issue. Sustainability needs commitment and encouragement from senior management and appropriate staff rewards. It also needs better evaluative evidence, as indicated by the Scottish Quality enhancement report, (and also indicators of successful WRL outcomes).

The lack of inter-connectedness of various WRL activities within institutions has been highlighted (see Brennan and Little et al, 2006; Harvey, 2004). It can be a consequence of the practicalities of WRL and employer engagement being worked out at course or department

level with links to specific sectors, and also the various funding streams (eg Innovation, Enterprise, Employability, Community Fund, Widening access, etc). Some institutions have developed their own systems to help co-ordinate employability or work experience programmes within their institution, or given institutional-wide responsibility for WRL and PDP to a curriculum development team or lifelong learning unit (and some of the CETLs are working across their institution). An example of successful subject coordination across the HE sector is where the HEA network of subject centres has been involved in developing employability initiatives for their own subjects, as in the recently published Student Employability Profiles for 24 Subjects. It is also expected that the new Scottish HE Employability network, SHEEN (set up jointly by the HE Academy, Universities Scotland, QAA and the SFC) will help institutions to share experiences more and integrate activities better in the future. This should also help to get a better, more comprehensive picture of WRL across Scottish HEIs.

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b) Other useful sources of information:

Association for Sandwich Education and Training (ASET) , a body which promotes the integration of work and learning in HE programmes and the development of best practice, see www.asetonline.org

Universities Vocational Awards Council , www.uvac.ac.uk, a membership body of mainly colleges and universities, promotes work related learning

Centres for Excellence in Teaching and learning (CETLs), see www.hefce.ac.uk (also the HE Academy)

Foundation Degree Forward, www.fdf.ac.uk (see also issues of 'Forward' the FDF journal)

LearnDirect - Learning through Work, offers a range of university qualifications, www.learn-direct-ltw.co.uk (also **Learndirect Scotland** provides information on courses and other learning opportunities in Scotland)

The National Council for Work Experience (NCWE) at : www.work-experience.org

The Centre for Recording achievement (CRA), at www.recording-achievement.org

Promoting Workplace Learning, a collaborative project in Scotland to encourage greater investment by employers in workplace learning, funded by the EU, involving Sector Skills Councils, SSAScot, Learndirect Scotland and Future Skills Scotland . A promotional video has been launched, see www.pwl.org.uk

Scottish Centre for Work Based Learning:
<http://www.learningservices.gcal.ac.uk/scwbl/index.html>

Sector Skills Alliance Scotland (SSAScot)
<http://www.ssascot.org.uk>

SURF (based at Staffordshire University) , on-line resource centre on work-based learning , available nationally via JISC X4L Phase 2, at www.staffs.ac.uk/COSE/SURFWBL