



Scottish Funding Council

External summative evaluation
of an investment in
Learning to Work 2

**Rocket Science UK Ltd with
Blake Stevenson Ltd**

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Executive Summary

Rocket Science with Blake Stevenson were commissioned to evaluate Learning To Work 2 (LTW2) which was made up of four work placement¹ projects:

- Education into Enterprise (EiE)
- E-Placement Scotland (EPS)
- Making Most of Masters (MMM)
- Third Sector Internships Scotland (TSIS).

LTW2 was completed by the SFC's financial support for the Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum and we have explored in our interviews the contribution of this Forum.

LTW2 succeeded the initial Learning to Work programme – both focused on the objective of enhancing student employability. The original programme had focused on increasing the capacity of institutions to take forward the employability agenda – mainly through the appointment of employability coordinators. Learning to Work 2 focused specifically on exploring different models of student placements in the workplace.

We have carried out detailed interviews with the project managers, reviews of their own evaluation material and reports, and telephone interviews with stakeholders and with students and employers. We completed an electronic survey of students and employers across the four projects. In December 2013 we presented our initial findings and conclusions to a workshop made up of staff from the 4 projects and key stakeholders.

The 4 projects have provided an opportunity to test different approaches to enhancing employability through work placements in terms of:

- Different models of management
- Different targets in terms of employer type, student stage, skills and sectors
- Different types of project.

All four projects were well resourced and have been professionally and effectively managed. They have therefore provided a valid basis for testing these different models and approaches and for drawing conclusions about whether and how to take the approach forward.

¹ We use the phrase 'work placement' throughout the report – it includes a range of projects including internships and research projects.

They have provided insights into:

- The scale and nature of demand from both employers and students and what underpins this demand
- The difference made to the employability of the students who gained placements
- The difference made to the employability of other students in terms of:
 - Providing insights into the demands of employment/applying for employment
 - Forging new kinds of relationships between institutions and employers
 - Influencing course content and design
 - Changing culture within universities regarding the significance placed on work placements.
- The difference made to employers.

Our main conclusions are:

- There is **demand for work placements** from both students and employers – at a scale which means that work placements can be an important strand in efforts to enhance student employability.
- There is **scope to continue and scale up the approaches** pioneered under Learning to Work 2 – and for building on the up-front investment to realise their full potential to bring returns.
- At the heart of the approach must lie a **determination to understand and respond to employer needs**: without the enthusiastic support of employers the approach can't succeed.
- The **more employable students gain placements** – but most felt it had helped them become even more employable. We don't view the success of the more employable students as a problem but as a necessary consequence of putting business needs at the centre of the approach. However, it does mean that it is important to **maximise the wider employability benefits of the approach**. This would include providing a 'live experience' of applying for jobs, ensuring that successful students are given opportunities to discuss their experience and its lessons with other students and maximising institutional learning about the skills, behaviours and attitudes valued by employers. It also suggests a need to increase the number of placements so that students other than the more employable can gain work placement opportunities.
- There are **considerable gains for students, employers and institutions**:
 - Students gain in confidence, and communication and self-management skills.
 - Employers get a valuable task done that can contribute to business success
 - There can be important benefits for institutions and we have identified ways in which they can further enhance the benefits they have seen to date.
- **The approach should be continued** to ensure these benefits are sustained and to maximise return from the significant up-front investment. There is scope to reduce costs, share resources and expand the range of the approach.

- Drawing on the lessons from SHEEN and SHEEF, ***there should be an actively managed learning network*** across institutions to meet staff needs for sharing, learning and enhancing the success and impact of work placements and student employability.

In the rest of this summary we describe these conclusions in more detail under the following headings:

- Demand and appeal
- Benefits to students, businesses and institutions
- The support required for students and employers
- The lessons for institutions
- The lessons about how to organise placements
- Our recommendations.

Demand and appeal

- 1 The projects have shown there is a demand for work placements from both students and employers – with significant scope for scaling up and applying some of the approaches to other sectors. The response from employers in particular has exceeded expectations with projects experiencing far fewer challenges recruiting employers to the programmes than was initially anticipated. This is notable particularly because the projects have, on the whole, sought to engage with smaller businesses.
- 2 There is evidence that the value of undertaking a work placement is not fully appreciated by many students. However, for those who have taken advantage of a placement, the main factors underpinning the appeal to students have been:
 - The placements are paid (with the exception of MMM)
 - Academic credit (in the case of MMM the students get academic credit, not payment – although expenses such as travel are met - but we have had no negative feedback about this)
 - An opportunity to enhance their employability skills and gain experience that will help them get a job
 - A range of interesting and practical opportunities
 - A ready source of information about opportunities
 - Support with learning from the process so that they can enhance the quality and impact of their applications and interviews
 - Work experience to cite on their CVs
 - Exposure to employment opportunities they may not otherwise have considered.
- 3 It was clear from our feedback from students and institutions that either paid placements or placements given academic credit are the ideal to be working towards in terms of work placements.

- 4 There has been considerable reticence among many students about applying. Some of this seems to be about confidence (eg students focus on the small part of the job they don't feel they can do) but it also seems to be about a continued lack of appreciation of the importance of work placements and the benefits that can be gained. Students were by described by several stakeholders as 'risk-averse', and MMM, for example, noted that it took a few years to embed the concept of work placements in the student body.
- 5 Other issues were noted that were thought to have reduced demand from students. These included:
 - Reliance on income from other part-time jobs to cover living costs making it difficult to take up full-time placements
 - The curriculum does not have space in it for placements – so they need to be carried out on top of course work
 - In the case of Making the Most of Masters (MMM - where academic credit is awarded for completion of a successful placement) students prefer to gain the credit in the conventional way because they see it as a safer route to securing the academic credit
 - Overseas students see placements as a 'challenge too far' when they have already had to overcome significant challenges to undertake a Masters programme in the UK
 - Lack of encouragement by some tutors as weaker students may threaten their relationship with important employer contacts.
- 6 The main factors underpinning the appeal to employers have been:
 - Students with skills and expertise that can be applied to a practical and current business issue
 - Placement organisations which are able to make the placement as easy as possible in terms of helping them specify the task, offering selection support, and providing support around HR systems
 - Some employers consider it to be a good route for finding talented graduates to "trial-run" before offering them employment. EPS, for example, provided businesses in the computer industry with a way of recruiting graduates that they were keen to attract into their workforces. Related to this, smaller employers gained access to students at an earlier stage, and before they are 'creamed off' by the 'milk round' undertaken by larger companies
 - Creating an easy route in to academia for employers, which has previously been difficult to establish for many.

- 7 The main beneficiaries in business terms have been smaller businesses employing fewer than 50 people (which, for example, make up over 80% of TSIS's host organisations). These businesses – whether in the private or the third sector – have much in common. Notably (in terms of this programme), they have specialised short term tasks they need to do but lack both the specialist skills and the management/HR staff resources to organise a response.
- 8 Three of the four projects faced the issue of having more placements/opportunities than students seeking them. Where this was the case, projects tried to ensure that the opportunities were offered to other faculties, or to students in other years in the universities. In the case of MMM and EIE they acknowledged that they had had some opportunities which were not taken up by students, and that they had lost some employers from the programme as a result.
- 9 In TSIS in particular, but latterly in some of the other projects too, the demand from students for placements has significantly exceeded the supply of placements and there has been strong competition for places. In these circumstances it is neither reasonable nor appropriate to ask employers to do other than choose the best student for the job. This may mean that they are choosing highly employable students. This helps to build employer confidence and raise awareness of what students and graduates can offer – but it also means that the wider benefits of the programme need to be fully realised. Our interviews reveal that even the most employable students feel that the experience further enhances their employability.
- 10 TSIS is distinctive in a number of ways – not least because of the large number of students it attracted (nearly 6,500 for 270 opportunities). It is important to try and understand the reasons for this, which may include:
 - A reported 'ethical shift' in the opportunities and careers sought by students
 - The creation of a high profile, strongly promoted brand supported by a comprehensive and well-designed website and application system
 - The development of strong and supportive relationships with some University careers services
 - The active development of a Scotland-wide service in terms of opportunities and students.
- 11 Most of the opportunities across the projects were in similar areas: marketing and market research, research and evaluation, project development and feasibility, IT (eg websites or social media development), and communications. This suggests that there may be a need to help students outside obviously related vocational areas to get a sense of the skills that they can transfer to business and organisation needs.

Benefits to students, businesses and institutions

The benefit to students: enhancing employability

- 12 In the widest sense, FE and University provision is all about employability – providing the knowledge, skills, insights and intellectual tools and curiosity that will help students thrive and contribute over their career rather than just get a job. Job placements seem to have provided students with three main benefits in terms of employability: confidence (*"because it showed me that I can do a practical task"*); communication skills (engaging with partners or customers, other staff, giving presentations); and working independently (becoming better organised and managing a project). And students felt that they had gained a valuable reference which would make a difference when applying for jobs.
- 13 In a narrower sense there is a practical requirement to ensure that students are able to describe their skills and potential contribution persuasively in application forms and interviews. Our assessment is that many students have entered the application process for work placements with practical application skills below those that they need. LTW2 is an expensive way of developing some of the basic employability skills around applications and interviews. Work placement projects should provide an opportunity to test these skills in a 'real world' situation rather than providing an opportunity for students to learn the basics, and this means there should be more focus on this by schools and universities.
- 14 The selection process for the projects meant that on the whole more employable students were selected by employers. While most of the students we interviewed felt that it had further enhanced their employability, it is important to ensure maximum benefit is gained from the process as a whole. These opportunities include:
- Providing guidance and feedback to those not gaining placements and helping students respond to this. This has included the provision of detailed feedback on application forms and interviews, and there is evidence that this has enhanced the likelihood of gaining a placement at the second attempt.
 - Ensuring high quality communications between employers and institutions about how students skills can be more aligned with their needs (we identified a need for more transparency for employers)
 - Ensuring that students are given opportunities to discuss their experience of a workplace with their peers and what it means for their skills and behaviours.

There were some notable exceptions, but on the whole the potential for realising the full range of benefits has not been realised.

Benefits to employers

- 15 We have had overwhelmingly positive feedback from employers about the value of the placements. While employers emphasised the time needed to get a student 'up to speed', this investment (which was in the case of some projects a cost additional to the cost of paying for the placement) nearly always brought a return which the business recognised.
- 16 There has been a significant business development benefit from the projects. This applies in particular to smaller businesses and third sector businesses. However, there is no business development funding behind it, nor are Business Gateway or the Third Sector Interfaces significant partners. They are well placed to act as routes to market for the projects and they could work with their clients to identify business projects which could be carried out by students.
- 17 Employers seem to have benefited most from students at a later stage in their studies – because of their greater skills, knowledge and maturity.
- 18 Related to this, there is evidence that employers appreciate the value of the work that students have done – to the extent that some are willing to pay a significant proportion (and sometimes all) of the costs. The amount varies by employer and some (for example, smaller and more financially fragile third sector organisations) may find it harder to do this.
- 19 Evaluation evidence shows that for some projects the perceived value of the work exceeds the living wage cost of the work in nearly all cases – so there is a strong case for investment by the business and this should be used in promoting any successor programme.

Benefits to institutions

- 20 The flow of information between students who have had a work placement experience and their peers has been weak and some of the benefit the programme could provide to institutions and non-placement students has drained away because of this. We have come across examples of work placement students sharing their experience and lessons with their peers but these are rare.
- 21 Similarly there have been missed opportunities in gaining insights from employers about how curricula – and how they are taught – can be refined so that students are subsequently better able to thrive in work and contribute effectively. MMM has recruited two employers from the programme to participate on their Employers' Forum, through which they contribute their views on what assets students need which is then fed back into the curriculum, and Scotland IS (a partner in E-placement Scotland) has an advisory board with industry representatives on it. However these mechanisms did not seem to be sufficiently visible to the employers we consulted.

The support required for students and employers

- 22 Most projects needed to work closely with employers to help them have reasonable expectations of the students, and to help them specify a clearly defined task which was realistic and do-able in the time available. This then helped in attracting the right students.
- 23 Employers emphasised the length of time and amount of staff support it takes to get a student up to speed and noted that they had underestimated the time required - some said that it takes three months to get the student to a point where they can work independently on a project, and emphasised a strong preference for longer placements.

Lessons for institutions

- 24 There is an important role for institutions to play in transforming the proportion of students who are aware of the benefit of work placements and how to learn about and apply for them.
- 25 University and College careers services have a major role to play both in promoting work placements and in creating opportunities for those returning from work placements to share their insights and experience with other students and so spread the 'employability' benefits.
- 26 Tutors also – potentially – have an important role to play, both in terms of promoting the value of work placements and in creating informal opportunities for students to feed their experience and the lessons they have taken from it back to other students in their departments.
- 27 Some IT companies involved in E-placement Scotland noted their concern that universities are setting students' sights too low – *"In this industry there is so much potential and so many companies in Scotland are genuinely innovating, that students should be encouraged to reach for more"*. They cited America where students are *"encouraged to change the world"*.
- 28 Students' communication skills were cited frequently as a weakness, as were problem solving skills. Some institutions (such as Fife College) are explicitly embedding the development of the soft skills valued by employers across their curriculum².

² Drawing on the Fife Employer Standard (Rocket Science for Fife Council, 2013)

- 29 Many students have quite basic skills in terms of applying and interviewing. These projects represent an expensive way of instilling these and there are more cost effective ways that should be available to all students in terms of an understanding of:
- How to understand from a job description and person specification what an employer is looking for
 - How to relate this to their own skills and experience and describe this clearly and appealingly in a way that responds to the specific needs of an employer
 - How to convey in the round what they might bring to the workplace
 - How to prepare for interview
 - How to engage effectively at interview and communicate their skills and the wider contribution they could make.
- 30 Employers are very willing to engage with teaching staff on curriculum issues, and contribute feedback on the skills/attributes which are required by their industry. The mechanisms to enable them to do this do seem to exist already in some form in most/all of the participating institutions, but these need to become more visible to employers, and employers need to be helped to understand how they might best engage with them.
- 31 We received a number of comments about the poor quality of some academic references and there appears to be an opportunity for institutions to convey clearly their expectations in this area.
- 32 In most institutions work placements have to *fit around* everything else in the curriculum rather than *fit into it*. There are issues about timing (later in a course is better for employers – as students have more skills, knowledge and maturity); creating space in the curriculum; ensuring appropriate feedback opportunities; the need for placements to be flexible to allow students to, for example, keep on part-time employment that they rely on to cover living costs. All this suggests that, if institutions are serious about the significance of work placements and how to encourage and support them, there is a need for some quite careful thinking about how to create a coherent and integrated response which suits both students and employers.

Lessons about how to organise placements

- 33 The programme raises a number of questions about how best to organise work placements:
- By each institutions – which will help to promote geographical relationships in each institution's catchment area (but of course much wider for universities)
 - By groups of institutions
 - By sector – like TSIS and E-Placement Scotland.

34 Each of these has their advantages and disadvantages. However, Scotland is a small country and there seem to be benefits to be gained from creating a Scottish wide infrastructure for work placements which build on the systems and structures created through Learning to Work 2.

Recommendations

- The approaches tested in LTW2 have shown both the existence of significant demand from both employers and students and significant benefits to students, employers and institutions. SFC should therefore work with others to take forward a new national model for student work placements which builds on the momentum that has been built. This model should cover opportunities for both FE and HE students.
- There is a case for continuation funding at a lower level and for a bridging period for some of the projects to ensure that the models that have been developed can be sustained. This should be linked to a clear decision to integrate these approaches into a national model.
- The SFC should work with other potential funders to put together a sustainably funded national work placement intermediary. These discussions should take into account the contribution of work placements to young people's employability and small business development, and the significance of positive outcomes to Scotland's Universities and Colleges.
- The model should consist of a central administrative hub which will maintain a website and common application system and provide support to a number of 'spokes' which will have a specialist focus on key sectors of the business market, initially continuing the work of TSIS for the third sector and EPS for the IT sector.
- Each of the specialist hubs should be linked to a related trade organisation (eg TSIS with SCVO, IT with Scotland IS, micro-business with FSB) to help with service design and routes to market.
- The resources (support, services and money) for this should be spread between institutions, employers (through paying at least the living wage) and business support organisations, in addition to the SFC.
- Business Gateway and the Third Sector Interfaces should be active partners in any future approach - to ensure that a business development focus can be maintained, and to ensure that more joined-up approaches to delivering work placement programmes occurs.

- MMM has established a sustainable approach; nevertheless, we recommend that MMM explores the potential to link to any future model taken forward by SFC, particularly where sectoral overlap occurs.
- Scaling up in a sustainable way will depend on the ability and preparedness of employers to pay for placements and for institutions to pay for the support needed. LTW2 has played a vital role in helping a wide range of employers appreciate the value that a student can bring and it will be important to build on this in promoting examples of this value and widening the range of employers involved. We therefore recommend that any approach is based on employers paying for placements and institutions contributing to the support needed. It is not realistic to expect employers to pay more than placement costs.
- SFC should explore with potential partners the opportunity to create a small flexible fund to cover part of the student wage costs for financially fragile third sector organisations and micro-businesses employing less than 5 people.
- Employers need to be the focus for the future approach to work placements. If they are not getting a contribution that they value they will not be inclined to provide more opportunities and it is important that they gain a positive view of what students can contribute. The Learning to Work 2 projects have all provided high quality support to businesses and this should remain a key component of any model going forward, though there are a range of possible sources for this.
- Most of the businesses which offered opportunities were micro- and small-businesses employing less than 50, and it is these that find it hardest to organise work placements and associated systems. We therefore recommend that smaller businesses should be the main – but not exclusive – focus for any future model.
- Because of the small scale, distinctive features and dispersed nature of the third sector organisations it would be appropriate to maintain a specialised third sector focus as part of the proposed model. Given that smaller third sector organisations share many characteristics with other micro-businesses it may be appropriate over time to offer a shared service for third sector organisations and micro-businesses.
- There is a need to ensure a greater level of awareness of application and interview skills among students and to more effectively promote the value of work placements. It may be appropriate to use the SFC outcome agreement process with individual institutions to describe the ways in which each institution will help more students take advantage of the benefits of work placements. This needs to be embedded in a clearer sense of fulfilling futures related to personal aspirations and areas of study: the development of this 'sense of the future' needs to start in schools and be built upon in

FE/HE. We recommend early talks with Education Scotland to share learning from this evaluation.

- Similarly, there may be a need to help students across a wide range of subject areas and disciplines to gain a sense of the transferable skills they have gained and how these could be used in a business or third sector context. This should be part of a wider career guidance and advice service and will be supported by the structure of the proposed website for the national work placement service as it should allow a search by required skill sets.

Specific recommendations for the Scottish Funding Council

- There is a case for continuation funding at a lower level and for a bridging period for some of the projects to ensure that the models that have been developed, and which have proved to work, can be sustained. This should be linked to a decision to integrate these approaches into a national model.
- The SFC should work with other potential funders to put together a sustainably funded national work placement intermediary. These discussions should take into account the contribution of work placements to young people's employability and small business development, and the significance of positive outcomes to Scotland's Universities and Colleges.
- We recommend that SFC considers developing a guide for employers to provide guidance and advice on the scope and scale of work placement opportunities across FE and HE, and on the costs and resources involved in participating. Edinburgh Napier University has developed a guide for employers related to the IT sector and this could be built on/used as model for a wider guidance document. This may also be an area that SFC wishes to involve NCUB in given its wider, nation-wide remit in relation to research into work placements.
- SFC should consider funding an actively managed network of those involved in the practical delivery of work placements and wider employability initiatives to accelerate the flow of learning and meet the learning needs identified by these practitioners.

Recommendations for institutions

- Institutions should ensure clear and transparent mechanisms for companies to contribute to curriculum development and to continue to feedback on work placements.



- Institutions should recognise the significance of their careers services in promoting work placements and helping returning students share their experience and learning with other students.
- Institutions should help and support tutors in playing a full role in the work placement process.
- Where possible, the curriculum should be designed to provide opportunities for students to carry out work placements where they can apply what they are learning.

1 Introduction and background

Learning to Work 2 was introduced against the background of a stagnating economy, increased difficulties in many graduates of FE and HE institutions finding work commensurate with their skills and qualifications and a strengthening focus of the Scottish Government on jobs and employability, particularly for young people. The Government's focus has a number of strands:

- Encouraging a stronger link between economic development and employability/skills work, by helping Local Employability Partnerships (and associated Community Planning Partnerships) to broaden their scope and their membership (often, to include FE Colleges)
- Promoting a much stronger demand-led approach to employability and skills by creating a greater understanding of current and emerging recruitment and skills needs of employers. The current development of Regional Skills Assessments (pioneered in the Highlands and Islands) is part of this and they will be used to develop the outcome agreements. But this increased focus on demand is taking other forms, for example the Certificate of Work Readiness and the piloting in Fife of the Employer Standard. The current development of a national framework for employer engagement with schools is another example of efforts being made to create and strengthen constructive working relationships between employers and educational institutions, part of which is much more flexible and bespoke approaches to work placements for pupils.
- This is reflected at the UK level by the UKCES's Employer Ownership of Skills pilots which have attracted a wide range of employer led bids focusing on skill development sectors or themes or areas. Early evaluation has suggested that the successful bids have attracted £2 of employer funding for each £1 of UKCES funding and they may in time provide a powerful model for using public investment effectively to support skills investment in areas of current and emerging need.
- Reflecting all these is the significantly growing emphasis on Modern Apprenticeships and their take up over the last 5 years has been one of the key transformations in the skills investment landscape across the UK.

The growing interest in finding ways of blurring the edges around learning and employment and engaging employers in the work of schools, Colleges and Universities is therefore taking a wide range of forms – but one of the more powerful appears to be in the area of work placement, the area that the Work Placement Project of Learning to Work 2 focused upon.

The brief for this study posed a wide range of questions: these can be summarised in the following 6 questions:

- Have work placements helped students to gain sustainable work related to their skills and interests?
- Have they helped employers gain more effective contributors to their business success and understand better the contribution that a new graduate can make?
- Have the projects strengthened the working relationship between employers and FE/HE institutions and created a deeper mutual understanding of needs and how to meet them?
- Have the projects identified approaches and practices which can be used to refine curriculum design and help FE/HE institutions provide graduates who are better able to contribute to business success.
- Have the projects identified approaches which can be scaled up significantly?
- Have the projects created habits and perceptions of value that will ensure that the approaches will be sustained without SFC funding?

In addition there is a question about the contribution and difference made by SHEEF:

- What impact has SHEEF made, and what has been learnt about the most effective ways of promoting effective approaches to employability across the HE network?

Learning to Work 2 involved 4 different work placement projects:

- Education into Enterprise (EiE) which involved both FE and HE institutions and focused on smaller businesses through a close working relationship with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and developed a specific (though not exclusive) focus on placing FE students for whom work placement was part of vocational course work.
- E-Placement Scotland (EPS)
- Making Most of Masters (MMM)
- Third Sector Internships Scotland (TSIS) which worked closely with SCVO to offer a wide range of work placement opportunities across Scotland in third sector organisations – focusing on tasks related to current business imperatives. Because of the scale of the appeal of these placements large numbers of students were not able to gain placements and TSIS had a strong focus on helping them gain full benefit from the application process to strengthen their work search skills.

Our work has involved:

- Detailed interviews with staff involved with each of the projects and the leaders of key partner organisations, and reviews of project documentation and reporting.
- An online survey of employers and students involved in each project. A total of 74 employers and 146 students provided detailed survey responses.
- Interviews with employers and students involved in each project who volunteered (through the survey) to take part in a more in-depth discussion.
- The presentation of our interim findings and conclusions to a workshop of projects, institutions and key stakeholders in December 2013.

Each project has different and distinctive features – in terms of the employers it was targeting, the nature of the work placement, the way it was managed, and the relationships each sought to create. While we have sought to identify common issues and learning points from across the 4 projects, some of the most important learning has been about what made each project successful.

2 The four projects: introduction

In this Chapter we present the main features of each project together with the main aspects of their performance and the challenges that they have faced. These sections have been drawn together from information and reports from the projects. This provides a quick overview of each project. In the following Chapter we look in more detail about the performance of each project which draws on feedback from employers and students and our detailed discussions with each project.

Education Into Enterprise (EIE)

Education Into Enterprise (EIE) was a three-year, business-led work placement programme offering unpaid placements to HE students studying at participating educational institutions (EIs). The project aimed to address key issues raised by the SFC around employability and employer engagement by means of the following objectives:

- Improve students' employability skills through the completion of real work projects that put their learning into practice
- Benefit participating employers by providing access to interns capable of contributing to business goals and development
- Encourage constructive working relationships between consortium partners around employability themes
- Increase sustained engagement of employers with EIs, and emphasise the benefits to businesses of hosting student work placements
- Increase the number and range of available placements
- Pilot revision of HE curriculum in Scotland to create wider scope for work placement opportunities
- Enhance knowledge of, and support, for graduate opportunities in SMEs, micro companies, and the Third Sector

Key project outcomes

Key outcomes for EIE were outlined in the project plan submitted by the EIE consortium:

- Promotion of partnership through the sharing of knowledge regarding employability skills and approach, employer engagement and knowledge transfer, curriculum development, student support and outcome-based work placement practices
- Increase in the number of employers engaging with colleges and universities, and strengthening of new and existing engagements
- Adaptation of curricula to accommodate student work placements and to reflect industry needs
- Development and testing of an on-line resource with the potential to be used by other Scottish EIs to promote placement opportunities nationally
- Promotion of collaboration between EI business development and curriculum staff
- Change in the nature and depth of engagement of EIs with business
- Enhancement of graduate skills and employability
- Increase in the awareness of graduate opportunities outside of large public and private sector organisations

Key features of approach/method

- Use of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce business network to maximise business engagement with EIE
- Use of the on-line resource to promote and distribute placements
- Placements assigned according to student skill, employer requirements, and the potential for skills development
- Student assigned real and valuable piece of work by employer
- Ongoing support and monitoring of placement student by Work Placement Coordinator and trained employer mentor
- Ongoing support for employers through contact with Work Placement Coordinator
- Implementation of learning support technologies by EIs to enable students to complete placements alongside academic studies
- Student expenses paid by employer
- Flexible placement duration and timing to suit student and employer.

Specific target employers/students (e.g. sector, subject, FE/HE)

Employers

While participation in the project was open to employers from all sectors, emphasis was placed on sectors predicted to experience economic growth and a consequent increase in employment opportunities.

According to EIE data, placements took in the following sectors³:

- Oil & Gas (<1% of filled placements)
- Life Sciences (<1%)
- Construction (1%)
- Renewables (1%)
- Digital Media (2%)
- Technology (2%)
- Engineering (3%)
- Hospitality and Tourism (8%)
- Social Enterprise (12%)
- Other sectors (61%)

Whilst not exclusively, the project particularly aimed to target SMEs and micro organisations, as these are a main focus of the Government's plans to drive growth within the Scottish economy.

³ Sector information was not available for 74 placements (9%).

According to EIE data 96% of employers were SMEs (defined by EIE as organisations with up to 249 employees), and 4% of employers were large organisations (250 or more employees).

The project aimed to create 250 new placements in 2011/12 and 350 new placements in 2012/13. According to EIE data, 176 new placements and 255 new placements were created in 2011/12 and 2012/13, respectively.

Students

The EIE consortium comprised Adam Smith College, Dundee College, Elmwood College, Forth Valley College, James Watt College, West Lothian College and the University of Abertay Dundee, in partnership with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and supported by the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils.

Placements were available to students studying at HN, degree, or postgraduate level at one of the partner institutions, and particularly to students on courses without a compulsory work placement component. These included: Business and Administration, Computing, Engineering, Sciences, Visual Communication, and Event Management, among others.

Over the 2 project delivery years, 800 placements were expected to be completed. According to EIE data, a total of 1,441 students engaged with the project and of these, 817 were placed. The characteristics of placed students are as follows:

- 59% were male and 41% were female
- 6% were 17-19, 47% were 19-20, 16% were 21-22, 5% were 23-24, and 26% were 25 or over
- 76% were in their first or second year of study (47% and 29%, respectively)
- 92% were full-time students
- 20% were from HE and 80% were from FE.

Key features of performance

The mid programme review of EiE, and the summary produced by the EiE consortium following the conclusion of the project, suggested that, overall, the programme delivered effectively on its success criteria. The following performance features were highlighted as key strengths and successes of the EiE programme:

- EIE successfully mediated useful work placements for HE students on study courses without compulsory work placement components
- The number of completed placements exceeded initial targets, despite a failure to meet mid-term targets – overall, over 800 placements were completed
- Placements enabled students to improve their employability and professional skills and become better prepared for entering work after college or university
- The collegiate approach of EIE encouraged and enhanced working relationships across a range of institutions, and providing a model for future cross-institutional working initiatives

- EIE placements were business-led and outcome-focussed, and considered the requirements of both the business and the student
- EIE improved connectivity between EIs and local business communities, creating opportunities for sustained partnership working
- EIE encouraged the development of flexible models of curriculum delivery and the incorporation of EIE projects into curricula.

In addition, the EIE Steering Group reported feedback from employers that Work Placement Coordinators had been excellent at matching students to suitable placements.

The mid programme review also reported receipt of excellent feedback from employers and students, supported by testimonials published in a recent report proposing an imbedded work placement model based on EIE practices at West Lothian College. Employer testimonials, specifically those from SMEs, highlighted tangible benefits to their businesses of hosting student work placements, and eagerness for sustaining partnership working with the college. Complementing these, feedback and testimonials from students highlighted that work placements had, in particular, allowed them to gain confidence, enhance their 'soft' skills, improve their CV, and access further work opportunities. Testimonials provided by academic staff also reported enthusiasm for formally incorporating the EIE work placement model into college courses.

Particular challenges/issues and how they were dealt with

Challenges facing the EIE project were outlined in the SCC/SFC update on EIE of July 2011 and the EIE mid programme review. Example issues raised were:

- Low initial employer engagement
- Inconsistency in offer to employers across EIE consortium partners
- Low student uptake in the first year of project delivery and withdrawal of unfilled projects
- Delay in online resource development and difficulties with data capture and data management.

Low initial employer engagement

Low initial levels of employer engagement reported in the SCC/SFC update of EIE of July 2011 were addressed by the development of targeted Marketing and Engagement plans by EIE consortium partners, and active engagement of business networks.

Inconsistency in offer to employers across EIE consortium partners

Inconsistency in the offer made to employers across the various partnership institutions was addressed by implementation of a Quality system to ensure all placements met standardised criteria. Monthly Quality spot checks on advertised placements also assessed whether placements fit the programme scope.

Low student uptake in the first year of project delivery and withdrawal of unfilled projects

A key issue highlighted in the mid programme review was the failure to achieve the mid-term target for delivery of filled placements, despite revision of the target from 400 to 320 placements. While EIs observed high rates of student registration for the programme, there was a low rate of application for placements. Improvement of marketing material (e.g. greater use of positive testimonials) and increased staff buy-in were recommended as key measures to address this issue. The EIE consortium also proposed to open work placements to students at other educational institutions if suitable applicants could not be sourced from the consortium partners. In the second year of project delivery, targets for filled placements were exceeded.

Delays with online resource, and difficulties with data capture and data management

While the SCC/SFC update on EIE of July 2011 reported delays in the development of the online resource, the mid programme review highlighted successful standardisation of the placement reporting process, with all sourced and filled placements being recorded in a single database. However, it also noted that the methods used for data recording and management were time-consuming, and suggested a streamlining of the process to reduce the administrative activity of Work Placement Coordinators.

e-Placement Scotland**Project objectives**

e-Placement Scotland (EPS) was an industry-backed four-year placement programme for IT and computing students from Scottish universities and colleges. The project's objectives, as stated in the project plan, were as follows:

- "Promote an employer-endorsed IT professional placement scheme improving skills utilisation of graduates through industry investment in work placements;
- Define a set of best practices, business and learning outcomes to maximise the potential of student placement opportunities;
- Support brokering of relationships between students and employers, both large and small;
- Promote paid placements, typically between three and 12 months, to students and employers, and to provide appropriate placement administration for supporting all stakeholders through an integrated website;
- Establish 750 employer supported placements which will continue beyond the lifetime of the project without the need for further financial support".

The project aimed to help organisations in the software, telecoms and IT sectors to gain access to graduates and to help undergraduates to develop greater business awareness and more effective interpersonal skills. It also aimed to develop stronger relations between SME businesses and universities, and help SMEs to provide meaningful and valuable placements.

The project received funding of £795,809 from the Scottish Funding Council.

Critical success factors

The project plan identified the following factors as critical to the success of the project:

- The programme must be fully responsive to employer needs in order to maintain their commitment to sign up students for placements
- The programme must be fully responsive to university/college requirements in order to maintain their commitment to support students on placements
- The programme must be fully responsive to student needs as will be reflected by a significant increase in student participation. This will address a number of areas under consideration including academic accreditation, and recruitment simplification
- The feedback provided through the pilot must be acted upon to retain employer and university/college engagement throughout the pilot and beyond
- Risks and issues must be identified early and managed proactively throughout the programme
- All partners must work together highly effectively with trusting, collaborative relationships and excellent communications
- The business processes and technology infrastructure underpinning them must be robust, cost-effective and provide excellent service to customers.

Key features of approach/method

- Partnership between Edinburgh Napier University, e-skills UK and ScotlandIS with input from universities and colleges, employers and students.
- Flexible placement duration and timing but most placements (58%) were full-time for three months over summer.
- All placements were at least three months full-time equivalent. The average length of placements increased over time: in 2010-11 the average was 71.33 full time days, in 2011-12 it was 81.27 days, in 2012-13 it was 88 days and in 2013-14 (up to 1 December 2013) it was 150 days.
- All placements were paid by the employer, with salaries ranging from £12,500 to £21,000 pro-rata.
- Use of online resource to advertise placements and facilitate applications.
- Support for employers in advertising placements and short-listing was available if required.
- Students who registered with the service received emails with placement adverts, CV tips and interview advice.
- The project's matching service directly encouraged students with the appropriate skills set to apply for newly advertised placements.
- Employers could search the database for registered students with relevant skills and contact the students directly.
- Students were assigned real pieces of work of value to the employer and student.
- Students were based at the employer's workplace for the entirety of the placement.
- Employer engagement was facilitated by working with the ScotlandIS ICT industry membership body and other industry contacts through mail shots, meetings and events to promote the benefits of placements. A series of short training courses in colleges was delivered to businesses with the aim of building connections. A speed networking event in March 2013 aimed to increase connections between employers, students and universities/colleges.

Specific target employers/students (e.g. sector, subject, FE/HE)

Students

Participation in placements was open to students from any field of study, as long as they were studying at a Scottish university or college and planned to return to study after the placement.

However, placements were generally IT-focused with opportunities spanning a range of different disciplines including software development, software testing, web development, digital marketing, business analysis, and IT support/testing. The Executive Summary May 2013 reported that placed students were studying the following, mostly IT-focused, courses:

- Computer Science (21% of placed students)
- Computing (19%)
- Software Engineering (19%)
- Business Management (18%)
- Web Development (13%)
- Networking (6%)
- Other courses (4%).

Students who took part in a placement studied at a range of universities. Most (24%) came from Edinburgh Napier. Only 7% of students who took part in a placement came from an FE college.

2,169 students had engaged with the project by 1 December 2013. There were 5,939 applications for placements and 318 students were placed. The characteristics of placed students are as follows (statistics are from the Executive Summary May 2013 unless stated otherwise):

- 81% were male and 19% were female (proforma submitted by project)⁴
- 91% were white
- 20% were 21-23, 39% were 23-25, and 37% were over 25
- 74% were in third year of an undergraduate degree
- 98% were full-time students
- 95% were from Scotland
- Nearly all students were from HE (proforma).

⁴ This is in line with the UK average for computing courses in HE: 83% male and 17% female.

Employers

Similarly, placements were open to employers across all sectors but were primarily targeted at the IT/technology sector. According to the Executive Summary May 2013:

- 70% of placements were in the IT/technology sector
- 18% were in higher education
- 6% were in finance
- 5% were in another sector.

Placements were targeted mainly at SMEs in Scotland and 53% of placements (according to the Executive Summary May 2013) took place with SMEs. 26% of placements involved large national employers and 21% involved multinational organisations.

The project aimed to create 750 placements. By 1 December 2013, it had exceeded this target and created 755 placements.

Key features of performance

The mid programme review of EPS in April 2012 and the executive summary in May 2013 suggested that the project has been successful. The following performance features were highlighted as key strengths and successes of EPS:

- The number of placements created exceeded initial targets. 755 placements were created by 1 December 2013, compared with the initial target of 750.
- Over 2000 students registered with the project and created online CVs and profiles.
- The project established good relationships with placement employers.
- EPS encouraged links between HE/FE institutions and employers, promoting sustainability of placement activity and allowing for knowledge exchange and two-way discussions on course provision.
- EPS was a well-established brand with good relationships with employers, particularly in the ICT sector, benefitting from referrals and repeat business.
- Placements enabled students to enhance their skills, experience and employability. The mid-project review (April 2012) reported that EPS had tracked the current status of half of the students who had taken part in a placement. Of these, 52% were still studying, 43% were in graduate employment and 4% were unemployed.
- Employers benefitted from placements by having valuable tasks completed and by gaining access to talented students and potential future employees.
- The project has had a positive economic impact. The mid-project review (April 2012) states that each placement delivers an economic return of at least £3,000. The projected economic impact of the 214 placements in the pipeline at the time was £642,000, representing a return on investment of 140% (compared with SFC funding of £455,712 at 21 months).
- EPS benefitted from effective support from SFC, advisory board and steering group, SHEEF and useful collaboration with other Learning to Work 2 projects.

Feedback from students reported in the Executive Summary in May 2013 emphasised that placements provided invaluable experience of the world of work, allowing students to enhance their employability, helping them to make the transition from education to work.

Similarly, feedback from employers demonstrated the value of EPS to them in facilitating meaningful placements of value to the business.

Particular challenges/issues and how they were dealt with

Challenges identified in the mid-project review were:

- Creating more placement opportunities
- Filling placement roles
- Supporting paid work for students
- Finding suitable paid placements for HNC/HND students.

Creating more placement opportunities

The project identified the “difficult economic situation” and its impact on organisations’ ability to take on new employees, as a challenge in creating placement opportunities. To address this, EPS focused on increasing employer engagement, recruitment campaigns to focus on specific skills within specific geographical regions, building partnerships with universities and colleges, and writing case studies to illustrate the benefits of placements for organisations.

Filling placement roles

Initially, EPS received fewer applications for placements from students than expected. The project addressed this by:

- Providing advice and feedback to students on CVs and interview technique
- Working with employers to offer placements more suited to students’ needs, for example, part-time term-time placements, and timing some placements to suit particular courses in particular geographic areas
- Advertising an ‘apply by’ date with placement adverts
- Moving away from the ‘self service model’, where employers advertised placement opportunities and students were expected to apply, to a ‘matching’ process, whereby staff directly encouraged individual students with appropriate skills to apply for newly advertised positions. A new member of staff was appointed in March 2012 to lead on the matching process.

Supporting paid work for students

EPS aimed to support paid work for students. All placements were paid positions and the project rewarded employers with prizes and positive publicity. The project benefitted from the fact that there is little expectation of unpaid work in the IT/technology sector.

Finding suitable paid placements for HNC/HND students

The mid project report stated that *"the project team will continue to address the challenge of finding suitable paid placements for HNC/HND students"*. The Executive Summary in May 2013 reported that FE students took up under 7% of all placements. This is because employers in the IT industry were looking for students with IT skills at the level of a third year university student (or above). This has been fed back to FE and some FE students have subsequently upgraded their HNC/HND to degree level.

Making the Most of Masters

Project objectives

Making the Most of Masters (MMM) was a four year placement programme, funded by the Scottish Funding Council, involving the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Stirling. The aim of the project, as stated in the revised project plan (November 2011), was to "enable Scottish universities to create opportunities for masters students to undertake work-based projects as an optional alternative to a traditional dissertation." The project's main objectives were to:

- "Design, test and produce tools, resources and methodologies that will enable Scottish universities to increase opportunities for taught postgraduate students to undertake work-based dissertation projects;
- Develop systems to ensure that such projects are of benefit to host organisations while maintaining the levels of academic quality expected of postgraduate masters-level work; and
- Help build productive sustained working relationships between Scottish universities and businesses together with other Scottish-based employers (especially SMEs)."

The main focus of these objectives is on creating a low cost and easy to use package of support which could be embedded and used by institutions to offer work-based dissertation projects beyond the lifetime of SFC funding, thereby promoting the long term sustainability of work-based dissertation projects.

The Scottish Funding Council provided funding of £805,562.

Key project outcomes

The project plan lists the intended outcomes as follows.

- Improve the employability of students taught at SCQF level 11
- Improve relationships between employers and universities
- Move intellectual capital from the university into the local economy
- Respond to student surveys of this student cohort which identify a lack of access to work experience opportunities, transferable skills and career training
- Allow the development of appropriate models of dissertation for variably vocational Masters programmes.

Key features of approach/method

- The MMM staff team linked employers with masters degree programmes, students and facilities across the three partner universities (Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Stirling) and a number of other universities that became involved during the lifetime of the project.
- Networks between masters programmes and employers were developed at each of the three participating universities.
- MMM developed training resources and materials to ensure that students successfully undertook work-based projects and enhanced their employability through the experience.
- MMM developed materials to help programmes and employers plan and implement work-based projects.
- Students undertook a dedicated project, tailored to the employer's needs and the required learning outcomes of the masters programme.
- Project topics could be suggested by the employer and/or university.
- Projects could be desk, field or lab-based.
- All projects were full-time.
- MMM provided advice to programmes and employers on matching students to projects but the final decision was left to the programme and employer.
- Formal salary payment was not required and most employers did not pay students, but employers were encouraged to cover travel and any other expenses.
- Projects were co-supervised by an allocated individual from the employer and from the university.
- The project formed an integral, credit-bearing part of the student's masters programme (60 credits at level 11).
- Findings were normally written up as a scholarly but applied piece of work in the form of a dissertation or report of value to the university and employer.
- Projects lasted for 12 weeks.

Specific target employers/students (e.g. sector, subject, FE/HE)

Students on masters courses at Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Stirling Universities could take part in work-based dissertation placements through MMM.

The project aimed to work with a variety of masters programmes to ensure that it could demonstrate that "the MMM methodology can be adapted for use in diverse range of subjects" (revised project plan, November 2011). However, emphasis was placed on programmes related to Scottish Government priority sectors such as energy, environment, life sciences, tourism, finance and business. The mid-project report (July 2012) reported that students from 67 masters programmes in the following categories were involved in work-based projects through MMM:

- Technology (28% of programmes involved)
- Business/management (27%)
- Social sciences (19%)
- Science (13%)
- Humanities (12%).

The project's main priority in terms of employer engagement was to work with SMEs. It aimed to ensure that 75-80% of placements took place in collaboration with SMEs and employers with which the university did not have an existing relationship. Data submitted by MMM in December 2013 shows that there were an estimated 514 employers involved in placements up to the end of 2012-13. 216 of these (42%) were SMEs and 298 (58%) were large employers.

Detailed data is not yet available on the employer sectors.

The project aimed to create 300 work-based projects over the duration of the project. MMM exceeded this target, having created 706 placement opportunities by the end of 2012-13. In total, 503 students were placed. The project endeavoured to fill all opportunities created, and consequently placement opportunities were offered elsewhere in the university or between the partners to ensure that employers' needs were met.

Key features of performance

The mid-project report (July 2012) and data submitted by MMM to the evaluators indicate that the project has been successful. The following performance features were highlighted as key strengths and successes:

- MMM exceeded its target of creating 300 placements. 706 placements were created by the end of 2012-13 with further placements running in 2013-14 to be added to this total. 503 of these placements were filled by masters students.
- MMM developed a low cost and easy to use package of resources which is being embedded into participating institutions and used to promote the long term sustainability of work-based projects beyond the lifetime of MMM.
- Partner institutions have begun to make plans to embed work-based projects for masters programmes in a sustainable way, beyond the lifetime of MMM.
- MMM engaged successfully with a range of masters programmes at the three participating universities.
- MMM engaged with 514 employers.
- Participating masters programmes worked closely with employers to develop projects that were tailored to the needs of employers.
- MMM developed a range of resources and materials to support students to maximise the benefits gained from their placement, and to help masters programmes and employers plan and implement placements.
- Intended benefits for participating employers include access to university expertise and resources, access to a recruitment pool of masters students, completion of a task that the employer lacked the time or resources to complete, and knowledge transfer through links with academic establishments.
- Benefits for students include development of new skills, a greater understanding of working relationships and workplace practice, an opportunity to apply academic knowledge in a work context, and increased awareness that skills learned in employment are just as relevant as those learned at university.
- MMM has disseminated learning on how to facilitate and sustain programmes of work-based dissertation projects by engaging with universities and other organisations.

- The resources created by MMM can also be adapted to suit the needs of other masters programmes that do not have work-based dissertation projects but have smaller non-dissertation projects or part-time internships.

Particular challenges/issues and how they were dealt with

Challenges faced by the project include:

- Delayed start of the project
- Ensuring sustainability.

Delayed start of the project

It was intended that the project would begin in 2010-11 but the start of the project was delayed by issues including a budget cut and delays in recruiting project staff. Therefore, 2010-11 was focused on design and planning and the first full operational year of the project was 2011-12. As a result, the project submitted a request in August 2013 to continue the project into 2013-14 to ensure it ran for three full academic years.

Ensuring sustainability

The project aimed to create and test approaches to embedding work-based dissertation projects in participating institutions, with the aim of promoting the long term sustainability of work-based dissertation projects beyond the lifetime of the SFC funding. In August 2013 the project reported that "significant progress has been made in academic years 2011-12 and 2012-13 and we are seeing encouraging signs towards long term embedding and sustainability". All three participating institutions have been making plans to embed support for work-based dissertation projects for masters students into institutional budgets, with a shift away from the SFC-funded MMM support.

To sustain the work of MMM beyond the three participating institutions, the project plans to develop nodal networks based on interest from other institutions and cross-institutional organisations. "Each node would have its own areas of activity and expertise, and would use MMM resources, networks and advice to implement work-based dissertation placements (and other related practice) within its sphere of influence".

Third Sector Internships Scotland

Project objectives

The Third Sector Internships Scotland (TSIS) initiative is a national programme of student internships in the Third Sector, informed by Third Sector pilot work carried out by the Scottish Higher Education Network (SHEEN). The project aims to meet the following objectives over its 4 year implementation period (October 2010 – September 2014):

- Offer a minimum of 250 internships in the Third Sector within Scotland for which students from all Scottish universities, at any level of study, can apply
- Focus on building support and Third Sector capacity by funding an initial tranche of internships, then implement a phased increase in Third Sector contribution to ensure project sustainability
- Encourage applications from a diverse range of students by offering internships of varied types, lengths and geographical locations
- Emphasise reflective practice and learning during internships, and highlight means of accreditation and recognition of achievement
- Develop a national framework and embedded infrastructure for internship management and support
- Develop lasting internship support materials for Third Sector organisations and interns, and actively share experience and learning to support sustainability of the initiative
- Promote, and act as a platform for, engagement, partnership working and exchange of knowledge between universities and the Third Sector
- Collaborate with other, similar placement initiatives, and develop the partnerships and culture for cross-sector collaboration established during the SHEEN pilot work

Intended project outcomes

As outlined in the TSIS project plan of October 2010, the TSIS programme aims to achieve the following key outcomes:

- Increase in the awareness of career opportunities in the Third Sector
- An established framework for communication, engagement, and knowledge transfer between the Third Sector and Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- Greater appreciation within the HE sector of the:
 - Support required to ensure internships promote reflective practice and successfully improve students' employability
 - Value in helping students get access to the experience of working on practical tasks in a third sector organisation
 - Variety of needs of the Third Sector with respect to internship development, in particular the specific needs of small and micro organisations
 - Social and economic benefits of internships for Scottish society.

Key features of approach/method

The TSIS programme comprises 3 main areas of activity as outlined in the project plan: Internship Development and Intern Support; Recognising Achievement, Promoting Reflective Practice; and Employer Engagement and Support. The following highlight key features of the TSIS project approach:

- A dual focus on implementation and research/evaluation/development in all activities
- Close working with careers services across Universities to maximise the support available to students
- Ongoing evaluation of the initiative, including students' internship experiences and post-internship study/careers
- Flexibility to adapt to meet the needs of key stakeholders throughout programme duration
- Development of internships to address employer demand and the particular skills requirements of the Third Sector
- Development of internships diverse in format, length and skills requirements to suit a variety of students and organisations
- Tailoring of placements to the skills, and skills needs, of a diverse student body
- Provision of open source support materials for interns and employers, and active support by the TSIS team
- Tailored support for each host organisation and student
- A focus on, and contribution to developments in, links to academic courses and the accreditation of placement experiences
- A focus on cross-institutional/cross-sector working, in particular through the sharing and collating of data
- Build on and extend existing Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) networks to promote internships
- Payment of all interns for their work
- Provision of feedback and guidance for unsuccessful candidates

Specific target employers/students (e.g. sector, subject, FE/HE)

Employers

TSIS targeted employers within the Third Sector, including voluntary and community organisations, charities and social enterprises.

According to TSIS data, by October 2013:

193 organisations had started internships. 93% of host organisations had fewer than 250 employees (regarded as micro, or small and medium enterprises (SMEs)) and 6% had 250 or more employees⁵. Of the host organisations, 86% offered one placement, 13% offered 2 placements, and one (<1%) offered 3 placements. In the first 2 years of the

⁵ Organisation employee headcount data was not known for 3 host organisations.

internship delivery period (2010-12), all placements offered were new placements, and in the third year of delivery (2012-12), all but one of the offered placements were new.

In the first year of the internship delivery period, employers contributed to the funding of 11% of placements. 7% and 16% of internships received an employer funding contribution in the second and third years of the delivery period, respectively.

Students

The TSIS programme is managed by core staff from Queen Margaret University, SCVO, and The Open University, supported by representatives from Glasgow Caledonian University, University of Aberdeen, University of the West of Scotland, University of Dundee, University of Stirling, Heriot Watt University (from 2012) and Student Volunteering Scotland. However, the programme is not limited to students from the partner institutions: internships are available to all students, full-time and part-time, studying at any Scottish university, and at any level of study.

According to TSIS data, by October 2013, 3,269 students had submitted applications for internships and of these, 221 were placed. At October 2013, the characteristics of placed students are as follows:

- 66% were female and 36% were male (self-declared)⁶
- 6% were 18-19, 53% were 20-22, 19% were 23-34 and 19% were 25 and over⁷
- 31% were in third year of an undergraduate degree, 31% were in fourth or fifth year of an undergraduate degree, and 22% were postgraduates
- 93% were full-time students
- All students were from HE (TSIS is available only to university students).

Key features of performance from figures

Reports from TSIS Steering Group meetings, and a recently published overview of data collected since the initiation of the programme (data covers internships from March 2011 – September 2013) highlight key features of the project's performance in relation to the initial proposed outputs and outcomes:

Encompassing March 2011 – September 2013:

- The initial target of 180 internships by the end of year 3 has been exceeded (276 placements have been filled), despite a cut in funding for the year 2011/2012
- The target of 15 part-funded internships by the end of year 3 has been exceeded, with 40 placements being part-funded by Third Sector hosts
- The project has exceeded its target of 5 fully funded internships by the end of year 3, with only c12 placements being fully funded by Third Sector hosts
- 98% of internships have been successfully completed

⁶ 5 interns (2%) preferred not to say, and data was not supplied or invalid for 1 intern (<1%).

⁷ Age data was not supplied or invalid for 5 interns (2%).

- Internships have been distributed across Scotland, with a large proportion located in Edinburgh and the Lothians, and a smaller proportion located particularly in each of Aberdeenshire, Lanarkshire, Tayside and Ayrshire. Notably, 16% of internships were in the Highlands and Islands, offering students an unusual opportunity to work in more rural and remote areas.
- Applications have been received from students from all HEIs in Scotland, although almost half of all applications came from students from 3 universities (University of Edinburgh, University of Stirling and University of Glasgow)
- Applications have been received from students at all levels of study, but the majority of applications have been from later stage undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Although applicants have come from a range of study subject areas, a notably high number of applications have been received from students studying subjects related to social sciences, the humanities, and business, media and communications
- Internships have covered a diverse range of activities, with marketing, policy and research, and campaigns and media being the areas of work in highest demand from employers
- Examples have emerged of internship projects receiving academic credit and contributing directly to academic work such as dissertations.

The TSIS mid-point review and recent data overview also report feedback of internships being highly valued by both interns and host organisations:

- The vast majority of host organisations rated internships as having 'high value' for their organisation, and reported that the financial value of the work done exceeded the cost of the internship
- Interns have been assigned 'real life' tasks of benefit to their employers, with high levels of responsibility
- Employers have particularly valued the project output-oriented approach to the internships
- Some organisations have incorporated internships into their strategic plans or funding bids, informed by their experience with TSIS
- Internships have benefitted students' confidence, skills development, and understanding of the Third Sector and its career opportunities
- Examples have emerged of working relationships outlasting internships, with many interns staying in touch with their host organisations, some as volunteers, paid employees, and consultants.

Particular challenges/issues and how they were dealt with

The updated TSIS project plan of November 2011 and the mid-point project review highlighted three key challenges facing the TSIS project:

- Demand from both students and – particularly – employers exceeding expectations
- Ensuring a wide geographical distribution of internships
- Funding/financial stability.

The emerging scale of demand

In light of a 10% cut in project funding, it was predicted that TSIS would not be capable of meeting employer demand for interns in the 2011/2012 financial year. The policy of limiting funding to organisations without an internship scheme already in place was made clearer, and funding per internship position was limited to 10 weeks FTE paid at Living Wage in order to maximise the number of students and organisations able to take part.

In the spring-summer internship period of 2012, a notable increase in employer demand meant that TSIS was not able to fulfil all internship requests and there was a strong focus on ensuring that unsuccessful applicants were able to benefit fully from thorough feedback to enhance their application and interview skills for future opportunities.

Ensuring a wide geographical distribution of internships

The initial period of the TSIS project saw internships located primarily in the central belt, particularly on the east coast/Edinburgh. This reflected the location of many of the students applying and the number of third sector organisations based in Edinburgh. TSIS were keen to broaden the geographical spread of opportunities and held joint awareness sessions for local Third Sector organisations, universities and student associations in the North East, Angus, and Highlands and Islands, and generally emphasising further local targeting and engagement of the Third Sector in these areas.

Funding/financial stability

As noted above, the TSIS programme along with the other LTW2 projects, experienced a 10% cut in funding for the financial year 2011/2012. Despite this cut, the project reached its annual target for the number of internships, and did not revise the overall target of 250 internships by programme completion in September 2014. However, largely due to the acute financial challenges currently facing the Third Sector, but also due to the long time period associated with applying for external funding, only a limited number of host organisations have been able to fully fund internships, despite many expressing an interest to do so.

The nature of the sector suggests that, while it may be realistic to expect more third sector organisations may be in a position to at least contribute part of the costs of an internship, particularly in the light of TSIS's own evidence of the value the host organisations put on the work done by interns (which nearly always exceeds the cost – and often by a significant margin) there may be a need to sustain partial financial support for internships in smaller third sector organisations. And it is clear that there is a need for some form of intermediary with its associated support to be maintained.

Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum

The Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum (SHEEF) was formed in 2010-11 as part of LTW2. It succeeded the Scottish Higher Education Employability Network which as part of LTW1 had provided a forum for the exchange of practical learning and experience by those coordinating employability approaches in each of the institutions.

SHEEF had a wider remit 'to provide leadership, support and policy advice for the development of employability, employer engagement, and entrepreneurship across the Scottish HE sector'. The main difference between SHEEF and SHEEN was that the former was conceived as a strategic partnership rather than a practical learning network. It was led by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and involved the Scottish Funding Council (SFC); Universities Scotland (US); the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland; the National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland; the Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE); and the Associate of Graduate Careers Advisory Service Scotland (AGCAS).

The aims of SHEEF were describe as set out below:

- *To foster and support institutional collaboration to develop and share good practice across the sector*
- *To promote effective dialogue at a strategic level with student and employer bodies*
- *To provide an open forum to support and facilitate sharing of work-in-progress between the Learning to Work Two Horizon funded projects.*

In practice this means that they have focused on four roles:

- *Supporting Scottish HEIs' employability strategies and the four LTW2 projects*
- *Facilitating sector workshops and events*
- *Disseminating information, resources and case studies*
- *Developing sector employability intelligence to inform and influence policy.*

To achieve these aims SHEEF commissioned research and organised a number of workshops and seminars – some focused on sharing learning from the LTW2 projects. These have included⁸:

Supporting Scottish HEIs' employability strategies and the four LTW2 projects

- Creating opportunities for the four projects to present and share their progress and learning to a wide audience of those interested in student employability
- Contributing to a wide range of stakeholder groups including:
 - QAA Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee
 - Scottish Government Cross Party Group on Skills
 - Project Board of MMM
 - Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee
 - Universities Scotland International Committee.

⁸ Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum:
End of Year Report 2012-13

- Contributing to a range of conferences and seminars

Facilitating sector workshops and events

- SHEEF/Abertay University co-hosted event: 'Learning in the Workplace: Initiatives through Learning to Work 2, Placements and Internships', including presentation of commissioned research.

Disseminating information, resources and case studies

- Developing the SHEEF website as a key source of relevant publications, research and events, including the case studies and reports commissioned by SHEEF
- Developing case studies (eg from the LTW2 projects).

Developing sector employability intelligence to inform and influence policy.

- Creating and supporting an online community of practice through a JISCmail and LinkedIn presence.

3 Findings

In this Chapter we present the findings from three aspects of our work:

- Our survey of students and employers
- Our interviews with students and employers
- Our detailed discussions with project staff.

For each project we discuss our findings under the following headings:

- How students found out about the project
- The reasons for getting involved in the project
- Matching students with placements
- Support provided during placements
- The benefits of taking part in the project for students and employers
- Any scope for improving the project
- Lessons for universities about how they prepare students for employment.

Education into Enterprise

Our findings are based on an online survey with 33 students and 2 employers who took part in EIE, telephone interviews with 5 students and face to face interviews with 4 students and one employer. While the views of all 9 students contribute to the findings below, some of the points raised were only informed by the more in-depth telephone interviews. Only one of the 5 students with whom telephone interviews were conducted was in the 16-24 age bracket during their placement – the remaining 4 were mature students.

Please note that the percentages quoted in relation to survey responses are based on the number of respondents who answered each individual question. Each question received a varying level of responses, i.e. some respondents did not answer every question. We provide full details of the response rate for each question in Appendix 2.

Finding out about EIE

University and college staff played a key role in raising awareness of EIE among students. The majority of EIE students who responded to our survey (29, 88%) found out about the placement opportunity from university or college staff. Both employers who took part in our survey found out about EIE through being approached by EIE staff.

Reasons for getting involved in EIE - students

The main reasons for getting involved in EIE given by student survey respondents revolved around the opportunity to improve their future employment prospects. 26 respondents (79%) said they got involved to develop their skills in the workplace, while 15 respondents (45%) stated they got involved to help them find a job. 14 respondents (42%) stated they thought it would help them to find out more about what they are interested in.

One student commented that they got involved *"to help a local charity."*

Reasons for getting involved in EIE - employers

While the 2 employers who responded to our survey stated different reasons for why they got involved in EIE, both said that they became involved because they were keen to develop a stronger relationship with a college or university. The other motivations behind the employers becoming involved in EIE were:

- They regarded offering placements as part of being a responsible organisation (one employer)
- To get a specific task done (one employer)
- To try out potential employees (one employer)
- To get some fresh ideas and insight (one employer)
- *"To assist the students in their portfolio experience"* (one employer)

Matching students with placements

Our survey results suggest that EIE has been generally successful in offering students placements that match their skills and interests. Most students (30, 90%) agreed that the placement offered a good match with their skills and interests, and just over four-fifths (27, 82%) felt that the organisation they worked at offered a good match in terms of what they could offer and what they were interested in.

Our overview of employers' perceptions of whether EIE was successful in matching the skills and interests of students with the needs of employers is more restricted. Of the 2 employers that responded to our survey, only one successfully recruited a student – the other advertised an internship post, but did not receive any applications. However, the one employer who did successfully recruit a placement student agreed that the student was a good match in terms of their aptitude, skills and application.

The employer who was interviewed face to face did not specifically comment on whether he felt the students' skills were well matched to the placements he offered (this employer offered 4 student placements). However, this employer did state that while he was *"very happy"* with 2 of the placement students (both photography students), he stated that the remaining 2 students (both marketing students) *"lacked enthusiasm at the start – but this built up over time"*. This employer was surprised at how much management and direction he had to give these students, noting that their performance only improved after he had set them *"very specific goals"*.

Support provided to students during placements

EIE students were overall very positive about the support that they received from their college or university. Nearly all survey respondents (31, 94%) felt that their college or university had offered all of the support they needed during their placement. One survey respondent provided an additional comment:

"I found the staff member who organised my placement from the college very helpful and supportive."

This view was supported by evidence gathered from the telephone interviews, which showed that all but one of the 5 students who were interviewed had a positive experience in terms of support from their college EIE coordinator and course tutors.

"The key to good support from the EIE coordinator is guidance without intervention. We always had that."

"The support was brilliant from [the EIE co-ordinator at West Lothian College]...for her to have that database and business knowledge was amazing and really important. She knows so many people. The course tutors (department head and others) were also very keen for us to get involved. They saw that it would make our lives much easier in terms of meeting coursework demands too, so were very proactive."

"[The EIE coordinator] drove me to location a couple of times to save me getting the bus. My course tutor was involved in terms of pushing me into it; other lecturers offered their help and advice along the way when I went to them"

"Staff in department and EIE staff were great...they were flexible so that I could sit in on other classes if there was a clash with placement timings."

The one student interviewee that had a negative experience in terms of support from their college reported a reluctance of the college to incorporate the EIE placement into the curriculum:

"We have a work placement module and for that there isn't a list of projects to choose from - it's up to us to find them. I found a work placement through EIE and asked for authorised absence but it wasn't part of the course so it wasn't possible. I took the time off anyway because I thought it was worth it but I had to miss courses. I was on top of things so that was ok for me but I think others might have struggled. That was the main difficulty with the EIE placement. I didn't seek help from the EIE staff on this, and I couldn't say whether they could have helped me."

2 of the 5 students who were interviewed by telephone felt that they could have been given greater support to make a more significant contribution to the organisation in which they were working, with one student mentioning specifically that more interaction from course tutors would have been beneficial.

"Yes, I think so. The people running their business had their own things to do. A sit down with EIE to discuss options and help my progress would have helped. It was just me."

"I would have liked tutors to have been more involved. They just wanted to make sure that we got the college work done. A bit more encouragement would have been good."

Students were mostly positive about the support from their host organisation: nearly four-fifths of survey respondents (26, 78%) felt that the business/organisation in which they worked supported and guided them well during their placement. Almost all survey

respondents (32, 97%) stated that they had been clear about what they were doing during their placement and what was expected of them.

This was also generally the view of the students who were interviewed by telephone – 4 of the 5 students deemed the support they received as appropriate, and stated that their host organisation had been clear on what they wanted them to do.

"Once in the placement the staff there directed me. It was very clear what was required. They gave us training too."

"The [EIE] coordinators told us what was expected so we knew before starting the placement. The businesses were also clear in what we needed to do, and that was important for the placement being a success."

However, from the telephone and face to face interviews it seemed that employers rarely gave precise and detailed direction, and expected the student to guide the work. 2 students specifically mentioned welcoming this autonomy, while one student (who was the youngest student interviewed) felt hindered by the lack of direction.

"The host business was clear in what they wanted to achieve, but it was then our role to say how to get there, or look at alternative ways."

"I was given free reign. But they were clear in what I was to do - I was to come and produce a podcast. I came in and did that."

"At the start it was very blurry - I wasn't expecting freedom. They said 'We're struggling and we need help'. I thought 'Where do I start?'... The biggest problem was defining the problem. I would have preferred to have been told what to do."

In addition, one survey respondent also noted that *"more guidance would be helpful"*, and students who were interviewed face to face stated that they were surprised by the extent of project management expected of them in terms of directing clients' expectations and *"guiding them to better ideas"*. One of the mature students felt that *"some younger students would have found this difficult"*. However, while the younger student quoted above was initially disappointed by the lack of clear direction from their employer, they later stated that the placement had taught them to work independently and to take initiative.

Support provided to employers during placements

Both EIE employers who responded to our survey felt that they received the support they needed from the college and university. The employer who went on to successfully recruit a student agreed that it was easy to accommodate the student's other commitments during the placement.

The employer who was interviewed by telephone was also very positive about the support offered during the placement.

"The support of the [EIE] coordinator was really important for me – she offered lots of support and guidance. Communication was really good and that was a real benefit."

This employer also noted that he had to be flexible in order to work around the students' college hours, and sometimes *"even picked up the students from college."*

Benefits of taking part in EIE for students

Students reported a wide range of benefits from taking part in EIE. Commonly cited benefits were:

- Improving existing skills, and gaining new skills and subject-specific knowledge
- Gaining an insight into the industry and working life
- Improving their working practice and employability.

Improving existing skills, and gaining new skills and subject-specific knowledge

23 respondents (70%) to our survey said that they had developed their existing skills during their placement, while 17 respondents (52%) reported gaining new skills. 18 survey respondents (56%) specifically stated that they had learned about how to deal effectively with clients/customers; a further 2 telephone interviewees stated that they had improved their people skills through dealing with clients, and at least 2 students who were interviewed face to face also reported learning how to deal with clients' sparse or difficult demands through their placement. One interviewee also felt that the placement had allowed them to *"learn the technical skills a lot faster than through college courses"*.

Gaining an insight into the industry and working life

One telephone interviewee stated that the placement had increased their awareness of the challenges of working in the sector and role in which they did their placement, and specifically the challenge of *"doing something from scratch"*. In addition, 19 survey respondents (58%) stated that the placement allowed them to learn more about the kind of job they wanted to do.

Improving their working practice and employability

Most students who responded to our survey (26, 78%) agreed that the placement provided them with a range of skills and experience that will help them find a job. 19 respondents (59%) felt that the placement had allowed them to learn how to perform effectively at work. This was supported by evidence from telephone interviews, in which all students interviewed shared the view that the experience had made them more employable.

"Going into a work placement really helped me to understand what skills I need to get a job in my chosen career."

"The experience has definitely made me enthused to start my own business. I was always really keen but this really enhanced it."

"If applying for jobs this is really good experience to put on my CV."

"I am more employable because I've changed career and now have experience with large businesses [in that role]. However, a disadvantage is that the internship does not give enough experience for a change of career - 5 days for one placement and 1 day per week over 8 weeks for another placement. That's my main recommendation for change. "

In addition, students who were interviewed by telephone reported developing a range of employability-related skills. One student reported learning to take initiative, while another said the placement allowed them to become more focused in their work. A further student stated becoming more open-minded as a result of completing the placement, and one student reported a benefit of the placement being that it increased their self-confidence. In addition, 17 survey respondents (53%) reported learning about how to work with others as part of a team as a result of the placement.

Benefits of taking part in EIE for employers

The 2 employers who successfully recruited placement students stated a variety of benefits from taking part in EIE. Both employers mentioned the benefit of having valuable tasks done, with one stating *"I have a much more professional website now"*. The employer who responded to the survey mentioned a number of other benefits of hosting a placement student, including:

- Enhancing the organisation's social/community impact
- Strengthening the organisation's relationship with a college/university
- Identifying skills that the organisation needs to have
- Helping the organisation to influence what students learn as part of their curriculum.

This employer also stated that the EIE experience had helped them to see the benefits a student could bring to their organisation.

Improving EIE

Nearly all (30, 93%) of the EIE students who responded to our survey stated that they would encourage other students to take part in a similar project. When asked whether all students would benefit from a placement like the one they had been on, 3 of the 5 students interviewed by telephone were also very clear in their recommendations:

"Anyone that wants to work in this career should. If they don't want to do it then they're on the wrong course."

"Hands down - absolute no-brainer."

"Definitely. It would give them better job prospects."

In addition, the 2 employers who successfully hosted placements both strongly agreed that they would recommend to other organisations that they should take part in similar schemes. The employer who was interviewed by telephone stated

"Yes, I would recommend this to other businesses – there are no obligations for the business and it's free – what have you got to lose? Just give it a try."

However, students and employers made a number of suggestions for improvements to the scheme:

- Make clearer to students the expectations of EIE placements – namely that students are very much in control of the work beyond being provided with the initial aims (one student interviewee)
- Increase the number and variety of placement opportunities, for example by raising awareness of EIE among local businesses (2 student interviewees)
- Having a more defined, appropriate, and consistent timescale for placements (3 student interviewees; one student stated that it was unhelpful that their placement had an *"indefinite timescale"*, while another felt that their placement was too short, saying that it would have been better if it had been at least *"2-3 days per week"*.)
- Encourage more students to get involved, for example through better promotion of the scheme by colleges and universities (one student interviewee)
- Encourage host organisations to be more 'available' to support students (2 student interviewees)
- Greater direction with regards to project aims and delivery (2 student interviewees)
- Align college timetables with the needs of the project, i.e. improve the flexibility of students' timetables to make it easier to take part in the placement (one student interviewee and one employer interviewee)
- Establish accreditation/certification of the scheme (one student interviewee)
- More regular support for students from EIE staff (one student interviewee)
- Formal opportunities to tell other students about their experience in order to encourage them to take part (2 student interviewees).

Lessons for universities/colleges about how they prepare students for employment

Evidence from EIE students about how well their course/academic experience prepared them for the world of work is conflicting. 94% (31) of the students who responded to our survey agreed that their course/academic experience prepared them well for a work environment. However, none of the students who were interviewed by telephone cited any positive examples of their college/university preparing them for work outside of their EIE placement.

"We had a module on work experience - some of these placements are not good. EIE placements were good, though; proper companies, proper tasks, so on the practical side much better."

"I don't think my peers are equipped through the college course... All the theory at college is great but you don't learn until you're at work....I don't think the college course linked very well to EIE."

"EIE was central to my experience. I would imagine if it wasn't there then I don't know if the contacts would be possible."

Unfortunately, neither the 2 employers who responded to our survey, nor the employer who was interviewed, offered their views on whether students had been well prepared for the work environment.

Opportunities for employers to influence universities' and colleges' curricula

We were unable to gain much information from employers about whether they had had, or would value, the opportunity to provide feedback to colleges/universities about the relevance of their curricula to industry/the world of work in general. The one employer who was interviewed by telephone stated that they went to their placement students' college to get an impression of their working environment, and that this was *"beneficial to some extent"*. However, the employer did not specify whether they had been, or would like to have been, involved in refining the college curricula, other than to say that *"All businesses should show interest in young people in their area."*

e-Placement Scotland

Our findings are based on an online survey with 44 students and 17 employers who took part in EPS, and telephone interviews with 9 students and 7 employers.

Please note that the percentages quoted in relation to survey responses are based on the number of respondents who answered each individual question. Each question received a varying level of responses, ie some respondents did not answer every question. We provide full details of the response rate for each question in Appendix 2.

Finding out about EPS

Information provided by university/college staff (19, 44%) and material available online (19, 44%) were the main ways in which students found out about EPS. Careers services were another important source of information identified by just over a quarter of EPS student survey respondents (11, 26%).

Direct contact from EPS staff was the most common way for EPS employers to hear about the opportunity (6, 38%). Four (25%) said they heard about the opportunity by word of mouth from sources such as ScotlandIS, contacts at universities/colleges and contacts at other IT businesses.

Reasons for getting involved in EPS - students

The main reason for students getting involved in EPS was to improve their employment prospects. Most students said they got involved to help them get a job (identified by 39 survey respondents (89%)) and/or to develop their skills in the workplace (35, 80%).

Another reason for applying, identified by two interviewees, was the opportunity to gain insight into what it would be like to work in a particular sector, role or organisation. One interviewee said that he applied for his placement because *"I wanted to find out if I wanted a job in this sector"*. Another said that he applied because, although he had

substantial work experience, he wanted to find out what it would be like to work at the organisation in which the placement was based.

Reasons for getting involved in EPS - employers

The opportunity to try out potential employees was a common reason which encouraged employers to get involved in EPS. Nine survey respondents (53%) identified this as a reason. Other reasons for getting involved include:

- To get a specific task done (7, 41%)
- A desire to offer placements because the organisation perceives this as part of being a responsible organisation (6, 35%)
- To develop a stronger relationship with a college/university (6, 35%)
- To get some fresh ideas and insight (5, 29%)
- To get some new skills applied to their issues (4, 24%).

Matching students with placements

EPS appears to have been successful in matching the skills and interests of students with the needs of employers. Nearly all students who responded to our survey (42, 95%) agreed that the placement offered a good match with their skills and interests, and 41 (93%) felt that the organisation they worked at offered a good match in terms of what they could offer and what they were interested in. Employers agreed: all except one (16, 94%) said that their student(s) provided a good match in terms of aptitude, skills and application.

Support provided to students during placements

EPS students felt that their university or college provided sufficient support during their placement. Over four-fifths of EPS students (37, 86%) agreed that their college or university offered all the support they needed during their placement. For example, one interviewee noted that his lecturer provided "*advice and support*" during the placement.

However, evidence from interviews with students indicates that, in general, students did not require a great deal of support from their university or college. Eight of our nine interviewees reported that they did not require any support from their university or college during the placement.

EPS students were satisfied that their host organisation provided sufficient support and guidance. Nearly all EPS students (42, 95%) agreed that the business/organisation supported and guided them well during the placement. Forty (93%) felt that they were clear about what they were expected to do during their placement. One said the organisation was "*supportive, understanding and encouraged high quality work.*" Other comments from students include:

"It was very clear from the first interview. They knew they wanted a database but just didn't know how to create it."

"It was very clear. I was made to feel part of the team."

Support provided to employers during placements

All EPS employers except one (16, 94%) felt that the college or university offered them all the support they needed.

However, discussion with interviewees found that employers had limited contact with universities/colleges during their placement and the EPS team provided most of the support that employers received.

Employers were highly positive about the support that EPS provided during placements for a number of reasons:

- EPS provided employers with valuable support throughout the placement process, from designing the job description to selecting students and providing support during the placement. Employers described the EPS team as *"fantastic, very supportive."* Other comments from employers include:

"EPS did a good job of getting us good candidates and in supporting the whole process."

"It's a really great programme – I can't say enough good things about it."

- Employers emphasised the importance of EPS support for small organisations with limited time and resources. Employers noted that small organisations do not always have the time or resources to devote to recruitment so the support from EPS was crucial to allow them to organise placements.
- Interviewees compared EPS favourably with private recruitment services in terms of cost and quality:

"All round the service provided was streets ahead of any commercial recruitment company I've worked with in the past."

"It provided an inexpensive way to recruit a junior member of staff – a significant cost saving [compared with other recruitment methods]."

"It helped to employ a new member of staff much more cheaply than using a private recruitment organisation."

Benefits of taking part in EPS for students

Students reported a wide range of benefits from taking part in EPS. These include:

- Improved skills, experience and employment prospects
- Gaining an insight into industry and working life
- Informing their future career plans.

Improved skills, experience and employment prospects

EPS students reported developing skills through their placements. Thirty-eight survey respondents (86%) said they gained new skills and the same proportion felt they had developed existing skills. In particular, 35 (80%) said they had learned about how to work with others as part of a team and 34 (77%) said they learned about how to perform effectively at work. Students also described gaining skills such as independent working, presentation skills and improved technical skills relevant to the IT sector. Comments from students include:

"I have been on a fair few placements – this was the longest and provided the most soft skills, especially working in a proper team and working on individual projects at the same time."

"I learned more than I expected... product cycle, technicalities of how the technology works."

"It gave me relevant skills and experience to do with my degree which I didn't have before."

"I'm a better software developer and all round software engineering has improved with regard to looking at things from a customer perspective."

"I would not have been able to gain the skills I have without taking on a placement... the skills I gained cannot be taught in university, they have to be gained through hands on experience."

A very high percentage (42, 95%) agreed that the placement provided them with a range of skills and experience that will help them find a job. Students felt that this experience will be valued by potential employers, thereby increasing their chances of getting a job. As one said, the placement *"has given me something for my portfolio to show potential employers"* and another said *"I learned a lot and it looks great on the CV."*

Many EPS students managed to get a job following the placement (30, 68%). These students told us that their placement was an important contributory factor in their success in finding a job. Students commented that the skills and experience they gained during their placement impressed their new employer and one said that contacts he made while on placement helped him to get a job after the placement. For example:

"I believe that I wouldn't be working in the job I am now without having completed my placement."

"Without this placement, this [new job] would never have happened."

"[Following a placement] I'm now the IT manager. e-Placement Scotland enabled me to chase this opportunity and develop myself as an IT professional. I am extremely grateful!"

"The experience from my summer work through e-Placement is the sole reason I am now doing a full year internship at another company. The skills learned really set my CV apart from other students who have not done a placement."

Gaining an insight into industry and working life

EPS provided students with an important insight into industry and working life. Responses to our survey show that:

- 35 students (80%) learned about how a specific sector works
- 36 (82%) gained insights into how businesses/organisations work.

Students commented that their placement gave them an insight into working life in a particular organisation, sector or role. For example, one student is interested in software development as a career and the placement gave him an opportunity to gain experience of that role.

Other comments from students include:

"I had no experience in the field of computing or security but doing this placement allowed me to get this experience and to learn more about the IT sector."

"I learned more than I expected... how a medium sized company operates."

"It was good to be exposed to the smaller companies that you wouldn't otherwise have been exposed to."

"It was an eye opening placement in terms of what industry is compared with what I perceived it to be... I had the view that you do certain tasks at certain times and you turn up at a certain time but the organisation was looser... as long as we did our hours, we could do them when it suited us."

Future career plans

Students felt that their placement experience helped them to make decisions about their future career. Thirty-three students (75%) said they learned more about the kind of job they want to do.

Students told us that, in most cases, rather than changing their mind about their future plans, their experience confirmed that they wanted to do something related to their placement. Twenty-seven survey respondents (61%) reported this and it was a common theme raised by interviewees. Comments include:

"It confirmed I'm on the right path."

"It confirmed I wanted to be a software developer."

There is one example of a student whose experience of a placement in an academic institution changed his mind about his career plans. He is now interested in doing a PhD as a direct result of working on the placement.

Benefits of taking part in EPS for employers

Employers reported several benefits of taking part in EPS placements, including:

- Accessing and assessing potential new employees
- Developing relationships with universities/colleges
- Having valuable tasks completed
- Contributing to organisational learning
- Promoting a positive working atmosphere.

Accessing and assessing potential new employees

Interviewees identified the opportunity to access and assess potential future employees as one of the main benefits of taking part in EPS.

Employers noted that EPS provides access to a targeted pool of students with skills relevant to organisations in the IT/technology sector. This is an advantage that EPS enjoys over other, less targeted methods of recruiting students for placements. One interviewee commented that EPS *“offered a targeted pool of students with the skills the organisation needs.”*

Employers also noted that EPS allowed them to assess students as potential future employees. One employer which took on six placements said that EPS provided *“access to a pipeline [of potential employees] for the future”* and allowed the organisation to evaluate the students as potential employees without any commitment to employ them. Another employer noted that the placement let them *“see how someone fitted into the organisation without having to commit to that person... it was a good way of seeing if someone was suitable.”* Other comments include:

“It allowed us to work with somebody and shape them and assess their potential.”

“We feel we have a future avenue for more recruits - it's a tough market for tech companies because those skills are in high demand - so one more avenue is a good thing.”

Most survey respondents (13, 81%) employed at least one placement student after the placement.

“We were very impressed with the whole process and the quality of the students that were introduced to us. We are delighted to have the student as a valued part of our team on a permanent basis.”

Developing relationships with universities/colleges

EPS gave employers a chance to develop relationships with universities and/or colleges. Ten (67%) agreed that the relationship helped them to forge what they hope is a lasting relationship with a college or university and six (35%) reported that the experience helped them to strengthen a relationship with a university or college.

Having valuable tasks completed

The opportunity to have valuable tasks completed by a placement student was an important benefit for employers. Thirteen survey respondents (76%) identified this as a benefit and interviewees commented that it was helpful to have a student to complete tasks that they did not have the resources and/or the skills to complete. As one employer said, *"we needed someone with specific skills."*

A small number of interviewees (two) commented that placements gave them access to resources in a cost-effective way. One said that the placements *"provided access to resources fairly cheaply"* and another said EPS *"gives you a chance to create a role on a lower salary than perhaps you would do otherwise."*

Organisational learning

Some employers reported that their placement experience helped their organisation to learn and develop. Eight (47%) said that the experience helped them to gain new insights and ideas which they have since acted on, and six (35%) said it helped them to identify skills that the organisation needs. One interviewee said that the placement allowed her organisation to learn about how to support employees: *"[the placement was] a great learning curve for our team and our management team... gave us a chance to learn about helping junior employees to develop and learn."*

Promoting a positive working atmosphere

Nearly two-thirds of employers (11, 65%) felt that hiring a student to complete a placement contributed to developing a positive atmosphere at work.

Improving EPS

The vast majority of students and employers reported a very positive experience of EPS, but some made suggestions for improvement, including the following.

- More mentor support from EPS or the university/college to help the student with technical tasks (two student interviewees suggested this).
- More hands-on employer guidance and support (one student interviewee).
- Ensuring that the brief for the placement is clear at the outset (one student interviewee).
- Providing a pre-placement briefing for the student so that he/she can do any necessary preparation before the start of the placement (one student interviewee).
- Ensuring that placements provide a suitable variety of tasks (one student interviewee).
- Improving the platform for posting job adverts so that it is easier to use (one employer interviewee).

Lessons for universities/colleges about how they prepare students for employment

Most students (41, 93%) felt that their course and academic experiences prepared them well for a work environment. Interviewees spoke about the importance of the practical component of their courses in providing technical skills for working in the technology sector. One said *"I would not have been able to contribute as effectively [on the placement] if I had not obtained the skills necessary from university."* Students also emphasised the importance of team assignments at university/college in providing experience of team work: *"They definitely prepared us well in terms of working in teams."*

However, one interviewee felt that their course did not prepare them well. This student commented that his university did not teach all the relevant skills needed for a career in the sector and that the technology that the university used was out of date.

Some students noted that, no matter how far a course provides students with technical skills for the world of work, universities/colleges should encourage students to take up placement opportunities. One student felt that *"Work experience is important to gain soft skills like team work – this can't be taught"* and another pointed out that *"Universities could perhaps do more to tell students about the importance of gaining work experience before graduation."*

Employers agreed that universities/colleges could do more to prepare students for work. One commented that universities/colleges need to ensure their curricula are relevant to industry but they are often too slow to change – *"It takes five years to change a course but IT industry changes at lightning pace."*

Another interviewee commented that universities need to do more to encourage students to do work placements by, for example, making placements mandatory.

Opportunities for employers to influence universities' and colleges' curricula

EPS employers do not appear to have had the opportunity to provide feedback to universities/colleges on curriculum content - only two survey respondents (12%) said the experience helped them to influence what students learn about as part of their curriculum. However, interviews with employers showed that they would value the opportunity to provide this feedback.

Making the Most of Masters

Our findings are based on an online survey with 20 students and six employers who took part in MMM, and telephone interviews with three students and five employers.

Please note that the percentages quoted in relation to survey responses are based on the number of respondents who answered each individual question. Each question received a varying level of responses, ie some respondents did not answer every question. We provide full details of the response rate for each question in Appendix 2.

Finding out about MMM

University staff had an important role in raising awareness of MMM among students and employers. Most MMM students who took part in our survey (17, 85%) were informed about MMM by university staff and three employers (50%) found out through existing relationships with a university.

Reasons for getting involved in MMM - students

The opportunity to improve their future employment prospects was the main reason why students decided to take part in MMM placements. Fourteen survey respondents (70%) said they got involved to help them get a job.

The credit-bearing nature of MMM placements was another important factor in attracting students to take part. Eleven survey respondents (55%) said they got involved so that the placement could contribute to their course achievements. As one said, he undertook a placement to "*pursue more information for my masters thesis.*"

Reasons for getting involved in MMM - employers

The main reason why employers got involved in MMM was to develop a stronger relationship with a university. All six survey respondents said this was a reason why they signed up. Other reasons which motivated employers to get involved were:

- The opportunity to get a specific task done (5, 83%)
- A desire to offer placements because they regard this as part of being a responsible organisation (4, 67%)
- To try out potential new employees (2, 33%).

Matching students with placements

MMM appears to have been successful in matching the skills and interests of students with the needs of employers. Eighteen students (90%) agreed that the placement offered a good match with their skills and interests, and four-fifths (16, 80%) felt that the organisation they worked at offered a good match in terms of what they could offer and what they were interested in. Employers were similarly positive. All five who provided

student placements said that their student(s) provided a good match in terms of aptitude, skills and application⁹.

Support provided to students during placements

In general, MMM students were positive about the support that was available from their university during their placement. Three-quarters (15, 75%) agreed that their university provided a sufficient level of support. One commented that they received *“very good support from my academic supervisor.”*

Students were mostly positive about the support and guidance that the host organisation provided during their placement. Fourteen (70%) agreed that the organisation supported and guided them well during the placement, and 14 (70%) felt that there was clarity about what they were expected to do during the placement.

While most students reported a positive experience, there are a few examples where students reported insufficient support and guidance from the employer and/or university. Survey responses indicate that a sizeable minority (6, 30%) were not clear about what was expected of them, six (30%) felt that the organisation did not support or guide them well and five (25%) felt that the university did not provide a sufficient level of support.

Comments that illustrate this include:

“Whilst my organisation was interested in my dissertation topic and its relevance to their work, I was slightly disappointed in the lack of interest/support towards the end of the project.”

“By the end of my first month (of a three month project), I still did not know what my research topic was. The situation was highly stressful and it seemed like I would not even be getting my masters. The company was not supportive in any way... my supervisor sometimes seemed more interested in pleasing the company than progressing my project.”

Support provided to employers during placements

MMM employers appear to be satisfied about the support that the university offered to them during their placement. Most (5, 83%) said that the university offered all the support they needed.

Benefits of taking part in MMM for students

Students reported a wide range of benefits from taking part in MMM. These include:

- Improved skills, experience and employment prospects
- Gaining an insight into industry and working life.

⁹ Please note that the one other MMM respondent to the survey did not actually offer any student placements.

Improved skills, experience and employment prospects

Placements helped students to develop new and existing skills. Thirteen (65%) said they gained new skills through MMM and 12 (60%) said they developed existing skills. These include technical skills and soft skills. For example, one student said she gained new skills in scientific research and another gained skills in time management and priority-setting. In addition:

- Six (32%) said they learned about how to perform effectively at work
- Six (32%) learned about team working skills
- Six (32%) learned about management and leadership skills and approaches.

Fifteen students (75%) agreed that the placement provided them with a range of skills and experience that will help them find a job. Indeed, five (25%) said they have found a job after the placement.

Students who went on to find employment after their placement said that their MMM placement helped them to find their current job. For instance, a student who secured a permanent job with his placement organisation said *"the placement was definitely important in getting the job"* for two main reasons: firstly, it gave him experience to talk about during the interview; secondly, the placement gave him an advantage because it had allowed him to get to know the organisation's staff, including the people on the interview panel.

Other comments from students include:

"After my placement I applied for a job role in the same part of the organisation as my project was based in, and was successful. Without this opportunity I would not have had a full time job straight out of university."

"The opportunity to work within this company once I graduated was offered and I readily accepted. I am now working as a graduate safety engineer."

Gaining an insight into industry and working life

Gaining first hand experience of working life and the operation of a particular industry was another important benefit reported by students. Thirteen (68%) said they learned about how a specific sector works. For instance, a student reported that his placement allowed him to find out about the variety of job roles available in industry and this helped him to decide which type of job he wanted to do.

Benefits of taking part in MMM for employers

Employers reported several benefits of taking part in MMM placements, including:

- Developing relationships with universities
- Having valuable tasks completed.

Developing relationships with universities

MMM was valuable for employers in helping them to develop and strengthen relationships with universities. Five employers (83%) felt the experience helped them in this respect. For example, one organisation reported that MMM helped them to make "*really good connections*" with universities, which was something they had found difficult before.

Having valuable tasks completed

A major benefit of placements for employers is the opportunity to have valuable tasks completed. Five survey respondents (83%) reported this benefit. Employers described the importance of the student being able to complete tasks which were important to the organisation but which the organisation lacked the time or resources to complete. This is particularly important for programmes such as MMM which target SMEs, which are more likely than larger organisations to experience a lack of time and/or resources. Comments from employers include:

"Organisations have ideas but not the time or skills to implement them... students brought expertise which was hugely beneficial."

"We had a project important to our start-up company but just couldn't justify taking any employees' time... the student completed a task of value to us and moved us forward."

Improving MMM

Most students and employers reported a positive experience of MMM. However, comments from a few students and employers raise a few learning points and potential improvements for MMM to consider.

- It is important that the university and the employer have a sufficient level of dialogue throughout the placement process, particularly in the early stages so that a research topic is agreed before the student begins working on a placement. One student reported that his research topic was still not agreed one month into his three month project, and this made him fear that he may not complete his masters. An employer also commented that it would be beneficial to "*set up meetings with the MSc supervisor at early stage in process*" and to have on-going dialogue throughout the placement to ensure that the employer's and university's expectations are being met.
- If a student wishes to learn more about and gain experience of industry through a placement, it is important that he/she has contact with staff in industry. This did not happen in one example we are aware of, where a student did not learn as much about industry as she hoped to because she undertook the work for her placement mainly at a field research station with university staff, and had very limited contact with the employer.

- An employer who attended a speed networking event arranged by MMM felt that the group he was allocated to did not match his sector. He suggested that the event would have been more helpful for him if he had been allocated a group with other people more relevant to his sector.
- One employer suggested that there should be more contact between the university and the employer at the completion stage of MMM projects. This employer had four placements but reported that only one tutor has arranged a debrief meeting. He felt this should be compulsory for all placements.
- An organisation that arranged placements for students in developing countries experienced a high level of unfilled placements. To improve this, they would have valued more contact with students at the beginning of the programme to find out what they wanted from a placement and to allay any fears they may have about doing a placement abroad.

Lessons for universities about how they prepare students for employment

Most students (16, 80%) felt that their course and academic experiences prepared them well for a work environment.

However, students and employers agree that it is important for students to gain work experience before graduation. As one student said, *"Qualifications from university are important, but from what I have witnessed experience always means more"* and an employer said *"Students have to experience the world of work directly – it can't be taught."*

Interviewees felt that universities have an important role to encourage students to take up work experience opportunities. Comments from employers include:

"Universities could do more to help students undertake short placements during their summer vacations."

"Perhaps universities need to link placements in more with existing modules."

"[Universities should] sell them [placements] less as opportunities and more as necessities... having a degree alone isn't good enough."

Some students commented that more could be done to ensure their course prepared them well for employment. One commented that university courses should be less theoretical and *"more applied"* while another said that universities should provide more information about job opportunities available in industry.

Opportunities for employers to influence universities' curricula

Employers value the opportunity to provide feedback to universities to influence what students learn as part of the curriculum but this opportunity is not always available. Only two survey respondents (33%) said they had this opportunity. One employer commented that he works in an emerging field which universities have only just begun to offer

courses in. He would like the opportunity to provide feedback on these courses once the first cohorts of graduates from these courses begin to enter the labour market.

Third Sector Internships Scotland

Our findings are based on an online survey with 50 students and 47 employers who took part in TSIS, and telephone interviews with 18 students and 19 employers.

Please note that the percentages quoted in relation to survey responses are based on the number of respondents who answered each individual question. Each question received a varying level of responses, i.e. some respondents did not answer every question. We provide full details of the response rate for each question in Appendix 2.

Finding out about TSIS

The most common routes through which students found out about TSIS were careers services (22, 44%) and material available online (19, 38%). Information provided by university or college staff was noted as another important route, identified by just over a quarter of TSIS student survey respondents (13, 26%).

3 of the students who completed telephone interviews suggested that a greater level of engagement of TSIS with universities could help more students find out about the programme.

The most common ways in which TSIS employers heard about the opportunity was by reading about TSIS in promotional materials (20, 43%), or by word of mouth (16, 35%).

Reasons for getting involved in TSIS - students

Improvement of employment prospects was the main reason stated by students for getting involved in TSIS. 84% of students (42 respondents) said they got involved to develop their skills in the workplace, while 76% (38 respondents) stated getting involved to help them find a job.

In addition, just under half of TSIS students (23, 46%) said they got involved with TSIS so they could find out more about what they are interested in.

Reasons for getting involved in TSIS - employers

It appears that the main motivation behind employers' involvement in TSIS was to get a specific task done. 79% of employers (37) who responded to our survey stated this as a reason for getting involved, and the employers who were interviewed by telephone were unanimous in stating that a key reason why they were interested in the TSIS programme was because it was a good opportunity to get a piece of work done that they had wanted to do for a while, but hadn't had the resources for.

"We recognised that we needed a piece of work done, and recognised that we had no money to employ someone to do it."

"It just seemed like a win-win situation – it really did. And it turned out that way. We got the funding to get someone in to do something that we needed. It does what it says on the tin, you know? It was a great experience for us."

"It seemed to us to be an opportunity to get a job done that we'd wanted to do for a while but hadn't had the resources to do."

"It was to fill a gap. We just don't enough bodies in our organisation to do all work that is needed, so it was to help us build capacity."

In addition, 27 employer survey respondents (57%) stated that the opportunity to get some fresh ideas and insight was a reason for why they became involved in TSIS.

A small number of employer telephone interviewees stated that they were attracted to the programme because they wanted to help build student employability/experience. For one, supporting young people fitted its charitable objectives ("live our values").

"We run a lot of employability programmes, and this was one that came to our attention. We knew that we needed this [piece of work] done and it seemed like an ideal fit, getting someone in to do it and also for them to get practical experience."

One employer who was interviewed by telephone stated that she wanted to take part in the programme because she thought it was a good way to inform students about careers in the third sector, from which the sector could benefit.

[When asked why she got involved in the programme] "Because I think it's good, because it's a way to allow people to understand the third sector. We need that, because a lot of people think the third sector's voluntary and that we don't get paid. We really need students thinking about careers in third sector."

Matching students with placements

Results from both the survey and telephone interviews suggest that TSIS has been successful in assigning students to placements relevant to their skills and interests, and at matching the skills of students with the needs of employers. All of the students who responded to our survey, and all but one of the students who completed a telephone interview, agreed that the placement offered a good match with their skills and interests. A common view among the students that were interviewed, however, was that having a 'good match' in terms of skills did not necessarily mean having skills in, or prior experience of, all elements of the delivery of the internship project.

"A good match for skill set. Perfect because it both matched to things I'd done before but also completely new so could push in directions I wanted. For example, the plan for consultation with young people [that the student produced] was outwith the remit of initial discussion. I could take it in that direction but didn't have experience of that."

The one student who felt that the placement was not necessarily the best match in terms of skills did not necessarily highlight this as a problem:

"The fundraising and appeals aspect - you know, you need quite a business head for that, and my degree is in acting. It did teach me a lot of skills...but it wasn't a perfect match totally."

In addition, almost all students who responded to the survey (45, 92%) felt that the business/organisation they worked at was a really good match in terms of what they could offer and what they were interested in.

Employers were in agreement with students: almost all employers (45, 98%) said that their student(s) provided a really good match in terms of aptitude, skills and application.

In relation to this, employers who were interviewed by telephone were asked whether they had chosen the candidate with the most relevant skills for the task in question, or the candidate that they felt would benefit most from the placement. Most employers were quite surprised by the question, and all respondents stated that they chose the best candidate, although this was not always the most qualified, but the person they thought would best fulfil the placement role (for example they may have chosen a more personable or flexible or open minded candidate).

"We chose the best candidate...we're a small organisation...so we wanted someone who could come in and use [their] own initiative and be a bit of a self-starter. We wanted someone confident who could come and deliver, otherwise it would have been a waste of time for him [the intern] and for us."

"Of those [candidates interviewed], we felt that all of them could have done the job - but this particular candidate showed an ability to get on with it on her own, learn new things very quickly, and she had done research into the background of the society, so she was already very knowledgeable. She was definitely the best candidate, otherwise we wouldn't have hired her!"

"From our point of view it was about getting someone who was best for the job. That was more important than how much it would benefit them. Of course, it was great to help someone develop their skills...But we wanted someone who would fill the brief; we wanted the best person for the job."

"We went for the person who had the least experience of social media - (one of the others had lots of experience in social media and we felt she would come in and set up the social media and would have done it for us) taking on Jack we knew he would go through a learning curve too so we would learn together and he would leave a bank of knowledge and his supervisor would be able to take that on."

2 employers were less clear on why they had chosen the candidate, saying that it was a 'bit of both' (i.e. being the best candidate/the candidate that would develop most) that influenced their decision:

"I think their [the staffing committee's] focus was on who would fit into the organisation and who would do the job. That was certainly what the shortlist was about – to fit the person specification that they'd drawn up. Whether they felt the intern was the best, well I mean certainly in terms of best [at] fitting into the organisation in terms of engagement. We needed someone that had [the 'right'] communication skills, and also the knowledge."

[When asked whether chose candidate because he was the best, or because he had potential for development] "I think a bit of both – the reason he came up over other people was because he had set up a learning scheme at his own school, getting students to work together and learn about each other's religions and things. We work mainly with elderly people with disabilities, so I felt that he could recognise and empathise with that...So although he wasn't doing marketing at uni [it was a marketing internship] when some of the other candidates were, we still chose him."

In almost all cases, employers who were interviewed by telephone stated that the interns fulfilled their expectations in terms of aptitude and application, with some stating that they had exceeded expectations:

*"I had very clear expectations and they were matched exactly."
"As far as she [the intern] was concerned, she fulfilled all of what I expected of her."*

"We got a lot more information than we expected as the intern eventually pulled together a response to a government bill and ended up doing more than we expected as she was so good."

"Well, we hoped we would have 3 websites, and he exceeded our expectations...he was able to deliver at a good pace, but his design was also really good, so he was able to do lots of things on his own initiative and use his own ideas. He was really good at taking his own ideas and running with it."

"It was interesting, we didn't really have expectations as such – we knew we wanted to get a questionnaire out to our members. The intern did deliver that, but also exceeded that in many ways, in more detail than we'd thought. She contributed to strategy around the work that she did, and did [a] whole series of other things which we hadn't counted on. So yes, she [the intern] delivered, but also exceeded our expectations in many ways."

Support provided to students during placements

While 94% (46) of survey respondents felt that their college, university or TSIS provided all the support they needed during their placement, evidence from interviews with students suggested that, in general, students did not require a great deal of support from their university or college. 13 of the 18 students who were interviewed stated that they did not have any significant interaction with their university regarding, or during, their internship. In fact, interviewees rarely highlighted any association between their internship and their university.

"I was doing this on my own. Uni is not the real world. For students it's good to go somewhere outside from campus - this is a good thing, being detached from University."

"I did the internship just after I had finished the MSc. I found it independently of uni, had no support from uni and didn't need it."

A minority of student interviewees specifically mentioned that having a reference from their university had helped them in their application for their internship, and only 3 students referred to having had a greater level of support from their university:

"I did get some support at the beginning. One of my tutors had a similar interest, we were in touch throughout it. He helped me with the case study (prep for interview). We didn't meet but he was very supportive. I passed on details for future opportunities at the organisation to him to pass on to other students."

"I was in contact with the University during my placement - they were really good, gave my support with studies, additional lecture materials, answered any questions I had, were supportive of the internship. I didn't feel they really needed to support me in the internship - I had enough support from employer and TSIS."

Support received from TSIS was regarded generally very positively by students, both in the survey and in telephone interviews.

"I really appreciated the support and monitoring received from TSIS, for example the phone calls and emails to see how you are getting on helped me feel more settled in and knowing that if there were any issues, I would have people to discuss them with."

"TSIS made it clear that they were there to support me if needed, but this wasn't necessary."

"TSIS were great - if I had an issue I would email them and they would help. There were only a couple of times I needed them. We had a meeting half way through to go through progress. The training was very good too - lots of interns were there so it was good to meet them. We had workshops on CV skills, interviews, job prospects etc and networking time too."

"[A member of TSIS staff] did a midway interview with me – I had various emails from him and knew I could contact him - again I didn't need to."

One student who was interviewed mentioned that support from TSIS had been offered only quite late in the internship, while another said that, while they were aware of the support from TSIS available, TSIS could have been more proactive in this:

"A guy from TSIS also came but nearly at the end of the internship. I was very happy so I didn't have any problems. If I'd had problems I would have contacted them."

"Good to know that there was a support [from TSIS] if we needed it. I don't think it would be a bad thing if they got in touch more often. Just an email saying "how are things going?" There was very little contact with them apart from an initial phone call and final sign off...then lots of surveys!"

It is of note that 3 student interviewees specifically cited the TSIS training day sessions as being very valuable, in particular the training that they provided, and the opportunity to meet and discuss their experiences with other interns. However, 2 further interviewees suggested that training opportunities would have been useful, indicating that either not all students were aware of the TSIS training days, or that they had not yet been, or were not, made available to all students during their internship.

Nearly all student survey respondents (47, 96%) agreed that the business/organisation in which they worked supported and guided them well during the placement. Most (43, 88%) felt they were really clear about what they did during the placement and what was expected of them.

A similar impression was obtained from the telephone interviews, namely that most host organisations provided sufficient support and direction. Views were, however, varied: while most students appreciated having a clear aim/objective coupled with the freedom to guide their project, a small number of students preferred very detailed guidance.

"There was direction in terms of "this is what we need", but lots of freedom for using my time to do whatever is reasonable. I would go to trustee meetings and present a plan - as long as reasonable then backed. I was gently believed in. It was a clear set up and lines of communications were clear, but I also managed my own work plan. I was in control but there was always somewhere to go if I needed to."

"There wasn't a tight bound plan/goal, but the overall aims were clear... Deciding what to do was part of the project. If I was told exactly what to do I would've enjoyed it less. Because I had some experience I was looking to be given the responsibility to manage the project."

"I felt I had absolutely great guidance on what I was supposed to be doing. I'm all about clarity and congruence, i.e. tell me exactly what you want me to do and I'll do that. And I was lucky with the girl who was in charge of fundraising - she was brilliant, really nice, very clear and totally on the same page as me, for example, thinking 'if I make it clear what I want from you, you'll do it, rather than being elusive and then wondering why you didn't get done what you wanted'."

However, one survey respondent said that *"unfortunately the organisation I went to was not fully sure of what it wanted from me and due to their staffing it was often hard to complete things."*

In addition, a third of interviewees said either that the goals given to them had not been clear, or that they would have benefitted from clearer direction, with one interviewee stating:

"I think that the organisation needs to be fully aware of what they want. I don't think my experience was similar to other people's. They needed a clearer plan and some deadlines. My contract was supposed to be over in May/June - in August I said I have to leave now. I could have done more hours but the work was not always there for me to do. Other placements I've done were more structured...I think they wanted more advice and I wasn't sure where I stood in giving them advice. I didn't feel it was my place to tell them what to do."

Support provided to employers during placements

Almost all TSIS employers who responded to our survey (44, 96%) felt that the college, university or TSIS had offered them all the support they needed. However, of the employers who were interviewed by telephone, none stated having any contact with the student's college/university.

When asked whether they felt this would have been beneficial, the general consensus was that it wasn't really seen as necessary, and actually not something that employers would have wanted. None of the employers stated that this was something they felt was particularly lacking from the internship experience, although it was noted by 2 employers that this contact may have been helpful had the intern not been so good.

"No [we didn't have any contact with the university]. Honestly, I didn't really feel that it was necessary."

[When asked whether would have benefitted from relationship with interns' university] "I don't know if we would have benefitted. [It was] Not something that was majorly lacking. The way that TSIS was set up was that you had to have a very specific role and job set up, so it was very much an internal thing within the organisation. So I don't see how it would have helped really, unless we were offering a task that was in collaboration with the university."

[When asked whether they would have found contact with the university useful] "I think because he [the intern] was so good, then no. If it hadn't worked out so well then perhaps...If we'd had someone who was struggling then we could have ended up having to speak to their key lecturer or something."

One employer stated that it would have been nice to have the opportunity to give the tutors some positive feedback on how well the intern had performed.

"I think it would have been nice to meet some of her [the intern's] tutors to express feedback...she had skills, and she obviously learned those skills from someone else, and I'm guessing it was from university. It would be nice if we were able to share that with some of her lecturers...It would be good to give feedback that it is of benefit to her [the intern's] future."

Employers who were interviewed by telephone were, in general, very positive about the level and quality of support they had received from TSIS during the internships.

"TSIS supported the whole process...it was all very smooth."

"The actual process, the interaction with TSIS, was fantastic. They were very easy to work with, we had no complaints at all."

"TSIS were excellent. It was great knowing that someone was there all the time."

"The TSIS programme was exceptionally well organised, making it easy as an employer to facilitate an internship."

Results from our survey and telephone interviews suggest that employers from small and new organisations in particular welcomed especially the interview support and the support in crafting a suitable placement opportunity that TSIS offered:

"TSIS took care of the headache of recruitment...all we had to do was come up with [a] person specification and an advert, and they did all the really hard work. That makes a huge difference especially to small organisations like us...We didn't need them, but I'm sure they would have been happy to support us if we had needed any further support or guidance; they were very approachable. When we had queries about writing the job description, they were very helpful in providing guidance and talking through the proposal with us. So I'd say it was added value from TSIS staff. I don't [think] there was any kind of downside, overall."

"We could not have appointed and engaged an intern without the support of TSIS. We are a very small charitable company with limited resources and budget. A clear remit and a specific project for the student were very important in our case."

"TSIS have revolutionised the way that work placements are organised with the third sector. The process is very efficient and has enabled us to get quality placements that have been excellent for us and the students."

"It was an extremely worthwhile experience for us, especially as a new organisation, the assistance with the recruitment and employment of the intern was very beneficial."

While most of the employers interviewed by telephone were very enthusiastic about the ease of being involved in the programme and the effective way in which it was managed, comments by some survey respondents and a small number of telephone interviewees indicate that they felt that managing the internships took up a lot of time, and in some

cases, more time than expected. However, of the employers in this category who were interviewed by telephone, most went on to say that the time was well spent.

"Well, it [the internship] took a bit of management and supervision time, but we expected that. We went into it with our eyes open. But because the work that the intern did proved to be so crucial and critical, it was time well spent."

"Took up a lot more of our time than we anticipated."

"Far too bureaucratic."

"The administration surrounding the employment of a temporary member of staff was onerous."

"I think it took me a little by surprise – I guess in our collective heads we'd imagined someone who would just get on with the work, but that was probably naïve of us. The demands that the intern made – rightly I think – required much more day-to-day direction than we'd anticipated. But we adapted and I understood that this was our mistake. It was time well spent."

Most TSIS employers (44, 93%) agreed that it was easy to accommodate the student's other commitments during the placement. However, one survey respondent said that *"the student underestimated the effect of a full time placement on their studies and other university commitments."*

Benefits of taking part in TSIS for students

Overall, students reported a wide range of benefits from taking part in TSIS. These include:

- Developing existing skills, gaining new skills and improving employment prospects
- Gaining confidence
- Gaining an insight into how Third Sector organisations work, and learning more about the job they wanted to do.

Developing existing skills, gaining new skills and improving employment prospects

TSIS students reported developing both new and existing skills during their placements. 45 survey respondents (92%) felt they had developed existing skills, while 37 (76%) stated having learnt new skills. Students described learning, among other things, about how to perform effectively at work (35, 71%), how to work with others in a team (33, 67%), about management and leadership skills and approaches (28, 57%), and improving their communication skills, subject-specific skills, and ability to work independently.

A main learning outcome stated by more than a quarter of students who were interviewed (6 of 18) was in time management and learning to plan and organise their work.

"I think I realised that I wasn't always very good at organising myself - I thought after my degree that I was quite good at having a plan and getting things done."

Nearly all TSIS students that responded to the survey (47, 96%), and nearly all students who were interviewed, agreed that the placement provided them with a range of skills and experience that would make them more employable. A common reason given for this was that students felt that having a demonstrable experience of work/the workplace would be valued by potential employers, and would set them apart from other candidates in the job market. Although the full extent of the impact of the internships on students' ability to gain employment is difficult to assess, a number of students reported that the internship had either directly or indirectly impacted on them finding a job.

"[Without the internship I] don't think I would have been in as strong a position – it gave me things to talk about in interview that I wouldn't have a chance to talk about. I would have been a strong contender anyway but maybe not "clinched the deal". Having a project outside uni to talk about was different to other contenders. I saw the others at the assessment centre and others that I was up against had PhDs or masters and I only had undergrad - I got the job over them so can only presume that was through this placement."

"These internships gave me much needed experience and confidence and I now feel I am properly on the career ladder at last."

"Thanks to my work [on the placement], I was offered another important opportunity which then allowed me to apply for the internship at the United Nations. I am currently employed by the UN as well as work as a Community Manager on a digital initiative... I strongly believe that my experience with Third Sector significantly improved my chances of getting employed."

"My internship with TSIS was by far the most beneficial part of my entire university experience. If it wasn't for TSIS I wouldn't be in the position I'm in now and would probably still be looking for a job."

"I learnt a lot about myself and the sector I was working in... I now have a full time permanent job in a similar field. The internship definitely helped me to do that."

Gaining confidence

The most frequently cited benefit or insight from the internship noted by students in telephone interviews was an increase in their confidence, or being able to prove that they could do a job. This was mentioned by 7 of the 18 interviewees.

"One of reasons I did the internship was to prove to myself and others that I could do that kind of work. At uni I've not done that kind of work, so it's about proving to yourself that you can do it. That gave me confidence."

Gaining an insight into how Third Sector organisations work and learning more about the job they wanted to do

TSIS provided students with an important insight into the workings of organisations in the Third Sector. 84% of survey respondents (41 respondents) stated that the placement had allowed them to gain insight into how businesses and organisations work. Furthermore, a commonly cited response in telephone interviews with TSIS students was that they had learnt about Third Sector organisations, both in terms of the impact of their work, and also the practicalities involved in their working, for example, their board structures and the challenges they face.

"I was surprised and impressed by the time they spend on supporting others, including their free time. An amazing service to community."

"The internship gave me a more realistic understanding of how third sector businesses work. A lot of students are very idealistic before working and don't know about the realities third sector organisations face, for example with funding and reputation. My boss spent so much energy maintaining relationships with local community."

"Learned about the charitable arm and commercial arm of [host organisation] - learned about politics and conflict."

Furthermore, 33 survey respondents (67%) said that, through the placement, they had learnt more about the kind of job they want to do, and 23 respondents (47%) felt the experience confirmed that they wanted to do something related to their placement.

However, while many students stated learning about the Third Sector (as described above), evidence from telephone interviews suggested that there was no consistently held viewpoint among students that the placement had changed their opinion regarding working in the Third Sector. A variety of examples were given, from a student whose placement dissuaded them from working in the Third Sector, to a student who felt the experience opened their eyes to working in this sector.

"At the beginning I really wanted to work in the third sector. Now I think I should go into private work and do this in free time. I would have probably been applying for third sector now if I had not done the internship. I don't think I can handle the stress of that just now at this point of my life. I would really like to do something but for me, at the start of my career, I realise that the uncertainty of not knowing whether I'd get paid would be too hard. I need to earn first, so maybe I would get involved as a board member."

"It's not really changed my perspective. They [the host organisation] said I could get more involved in rural transport but I'm more interested in other parts of transport, not rural."

"It changed my view of third sector work – the pace was slower than at uni and I didn't expect that. It was interesting work, but I felt that I could relax too much. It taught me that I would prefer to have a fast paced working life."

"I think it's really confirmed my view. The third sector had always been close to my heart, and had considered working there, so the internship confirmed it for me"
"I had never thought much about third sector...TSIS opened my eyes to possibilities."

Benefits of taking part in TSIS for employers

A wide range of benefits of taking part in TSIS were reported by employers in response to our survey and in telephone interviews. These included the following:

- Having a valuable task completed
- Bringing a new perspective to the organisation and their work, and identifying skills that the organisation needs
- Enhancing the organisation's social/community impact.

Having a valuable task completed

Almost all of the employers (41, 93%) who responded to our survey stated having a valuable work completed as the main benefit of taking part in TSIS.

"We have completed tasks and projects that would not have happened otherwise."

"We had a highly skilled and very competent intern who made a valuable contribution to the work of our charity."

"We were fortunate to have a terrific student with verve and creativity, who was able to bring something special to the work."

"Our intern was excellent and set up social media and improved our website use."

This was corroborated by employers who were interviewed by telephone, who highlighted the capacity that the intern could add to a small organisation in doing work that was needed, but might otherwise never have been achieved.

"We're a small organisation, so I'm actually the only member of staff. It was a massive benefit to take someone on board to do the task."

"Decided last year that this would be valuable, was going to do it myself, decided we didn't have capacity."

"It means that things have been able to get done quicker and in some cases more material. I would have been doing it myself."

"The work she did was critical to what we were doing. We've been suffering from a fall in the number of members... this was a piece of analysis that was critical to ensuring that we understood how we would tackle that issue."

"It was valuable in a lot of ways, but even if you want to look at it in just a financial way – it was £8000 we wouldn't have had otherwise, and a project that we couldn't have done. So we can put a monetary value on it!"

"For a small charity like ours, just having people around is a benefit"

"Benefit to us was having an extra resource that was dedicated to creating a specific document that meant that we could have a higher quality document and that document was used as a basis for a business plan that has now been approved and the transfer is due next year."

Some of these employers were also able to put in a funding proposal on the basis of the interns' work:

"While she was here she started an application to the Heritage Lottery fund to help us deliver on the outcomes of the questionnaire [that the intern designed/deployed/reviewed]."

"It was over and above what we expected – one of the things that came out of the report [that the intern completed] was the issue to tackle social isolation [of older residents]. So the intern actually filled out a funding application...[which] came directly from the results of his report. And it was actually successful, although he didn't find that out during his internship!"

Bringing a new perspective to the organisation and their work, and identifying skills that the organisation needs

Some of the employers interviewed by telephone stated that they enjoyed having the interns as young, new eyes in their organisations and as individuals who were able to offer a lot to the organisation personally.

"We have only 3 members of staff, no graduates, it was a benefit to the other staff in a social sense and educational sense."

"Whenever you bring someone new into your business they have a fresh pair of eyes to ask questions."

"As a charity this is a good way to bring in a younger perspective – this is a way to bring in fresh thinking. This is also a good opportunity to fulfil our mission for helping young people."

"I think the best aspects [aspect] were [was] getting a fresh pair of eyes, somebody who's coming in without baggage, not of the sector. And that is kind of quite refreshing, and makes us think again."

In support of this, 66% (31) of employer survey respondents stated a benefit of hosting a TSIS student was that they contributed to a positive atmosphere at work, while 74% (35) felt that the student brought new insights and ideas upon which the organisation was able to act.

One employer from a small organisation who was interviewed by telephone also stated that her organisation “*learnt a huge amount from having the intern*”, because until then she felt they had just been “*muddling along*”. She stated that the support from TSIS on how to prepare for and manage an intern allowed her to become more structured in her own working/reporting.

In addition, 22 (47%) survey respondents stated that hosting the internship had allowed them to identify the skills that their organisation needs. 2 employers who were interviewed by telephone specifically stated that they hoped the internship would be a means to draw students into the Third Sector with their specialist skills in future.

Enhancing the organisation’s social/community impact

18 employers (38%) stated in our survey that interns’ work enhanced their organisation’s social/community impact. Many of the employers who were interviewed by telephone supported this in stating a main benefit of hosting the intern was raising awareness of their organisation and developing their audience, for example directly through improved marketing/revamped websites/events/making contacts with clients, or indirectly through research. Some of the employers elaborated on this theme by outlining the specific ways in which the work done by interns had been important for the profile of organisations both nationally and in the local community:

“[The research and consultation] has been very valuable to us in our negotiation with the council conditions for new community centre location”

“This new [online community network] benefits the communities – puts them in touch with each other and experts. [Also, we] can now call on people in the communities when we need to do research about investment or impact.”

“Our expectation was that we would produce this history [of advocacy], but we had no huge expectation after that. We didn’t realise that it would have such an impact on our profile and the profile of advocacy.”

While most employers were overwhelmingly positive about the internship experience, a small number of examples were identified in telephone interviews in which employers were disappointed with the work of the intern:

“...the work from the intern was brilliant for the first 6-7 weeks, but then there was conflict with other jobs and not being able to spend time enough time on the work for us, and then in the end, he never appeared back...There were still other hours he was supposed to be doing to finish off the project. So it was actually quite disappointing, because we actually needed that information that he was supposed to be finding out. To be honest with you, I think it just became too much [for the intern]”

“First student role was about developing policy roles and thinking – not a lot of initiative and she didn’t quite grasp the opportunity.”

"The person we took interviewed very well; throughout, she was confident that she was progressing the task of writing a marketing plan. We met once and put some key stages. For the final product she disappeared saying was going to put it in the post but never did! It was about my supervision."

Improving TSIS

Overall, the vast majority of students and employers reported having a very positive experience with TSIS. Nearly all of the students who responded to our survey or who were interviewed said that they would recommend the experience to other students, with most interviewees being emphatic in their endorsement of the programme. Furthermore, 90% of student survey respondents felt that the work they carried out during their internship was valuable to the organisation in which they were working. This trend was also confirmed during the student telephone interviews, in which the majority were very enthusiastic about having delivered a genuinely positive contribution to their employer.

"I did all they wanted and more - I made a manual so they could do it themselves, and if they needed more from me they could come to me. They learned from me as I explained to them the reasons that I was doing things, so it was good for them."

"Yeah, they were very complimentary - they were probably pleased because they are a very small charity! They felt that the charity was a lot more engaged with the community, especially in Glasgow...they had had no real presence in Glasgow before."

"There was no formal feedback when I left but verbal feedback throughout was always positive."

Additionally, almost all employers stated they would be willing to take on interns in future (although not all were financially capable of doing so), and said either that they would recommend, or had already recommended, to other organisations that they take part in a similar project. Many stated that they would like to see the scheme continue and would choose to be part of it (although many of these were talking as employers who had only taken on a fully funded intern).

Furthermore, the employers who were interviewed by telephone were almost unanimous in their opinion that there was either no downside to the internship or that the only downside was that the internship had to come to an end and that no more internships were being offered.

"I wouldn't say there was anything that was less good...it would have been nice to have her [the intern] longer, that would be the only thing."

"Negatives...that is quite challenging, because we did genuinely find it a positive experience...the only negative would be, it would be lovely if we could do it again, but we can't!"

"I don't think there's anything I would want to point the negative finger at...I think we were very lucky that we got an individual that was very energetic, committed to her work, and very personable."

Those employers with more negative experiences stated that this was mainly down to the individual or the support from the employer, rather than a result of the design of the TSIS programme.

However, students made some suggestions for improvement to the programme, including:

- Clearer direction/goals from host organisations (6 student interviewees)
- Greater responsibility in the internship projects (one student interviewee)
- More formal feedback about their progress from their host organisation during the internship (one student interviewee)
- More frequent/proactive contact with/support from TSIS (one student interviewee)
- More opportunities to interact with other interns through more (or greater awareness made of) courses/training days/networking events run by TSIS (3 student interviewees)
- Opportunities for specific skills training (one student interviewee)
- More guidance from TSIS about how to use the internship experience in future and how to maximize its impact in job applications, perhaps through one-to-one advice sessions (2 student interviewees)
- More opportunities to learn about the practicalities of working, for example, how to pay taxes (one student interviewee)
- Opportunities to share what they have learnt with other students, for example, through organised talks at college/university (majority of student interviewees).

Lessons for universities/colleges about how they prepare students for employment

Of the 50 students who responded to our survey, the majority (35, 84%) felt that their course and academic experiences prepared them well for a work environment. However, we gained a slightly different impression during our telephone interviews with students. Only 2 interviewees were overtly positive about how well their college/university experience had prepared them for work, one making reference to a university internship scheme, and the other stating that they had appreciated being given clear career guidance by course tutors. The remaining interviewees generally felt that their college/university had not prepared them well for the world of work. However, they differed in their views on the extent to which preparing students for the world of work is the responsibility of the college/university.

Some interviewees gave quite measured responses when discussing how far colleges/universities should take responsibility for preparing students for work compared to students taking responsibility for this themselves:

"Uni? Hmmm. It's difficult to say what they could do more. What unis do they do well – the theoretical side. It depends on us [students] to get experience. On one hand I think uni could prepare us better with practice and internships organised from within uni but in reality I know it's very difficult to arrange that for students."

What unis do with their resources is ok. And it's beneficial that my internship is not related to uni; as students we're quite protected and need to understand the real world. Placements like this [TSIS] are the way to do it. It helps me in the way I approach study now – I'm more systematic with a more organised approach. I used to get things done in a more chaotic way."

"I think that what you need is to get involved in extra-curricular activities and societies and they'll prepare you more for entering work. I think you need to engage with other opportunities, and those were provided by the university. e.g. I volunteered for the Fair Trade Forum with Edinburgh Uni Volunteer Centre."

"In the first few years of uni I wasn't the most engaged student academically...but alongside my course I was doing a lot of work managing accounts, projects, charity governance for student groups and other semi-professional groups...the practical experiences and freelance development work were far more useful for experience building than what I ever did in the lecture theatre.... but this is partly in the way that I chose not to engage with the more academic side of university."

However, other students felt that colleges/universities definitely did need to do more to prepare students for work. Of these, 3 students specifically mentioned that colleges/universities could fulfil this responsibility simply by tying in better with TSIS, and there was generally an emphasis put on the importance of work experience/internships.

"There are placements [through university] but none of them were really for me. They were preparing students for working in massive corporations and that's not somewhere I'd want to work. For some other placements there were I think only 13 for 80 people and that was putting people off. The careers service is pretty poor – there is information about big corporations only, not really small businesses."

"Courses could put more emphasis on internships/experience for those groups of people that maybe don't know about it. Link within the course to careers - e.g. "this is the kind of thing you should be looking for". You don't realise the level of competition until you're out of uni."

"There was no information about TSIS at Napier when I was there. I would recommend that they have sessions at uni on TSIS and what exactly is expected of students, then students can go to careers centres to find out more. It would support people that have not had a job before. I found out about TSIS by going to an event in Edinburgh myself – went along and talked to them and then applied for the placement. They [TSIS] should come to unis and tell students what would be expected of them. It's an amazing programme, so people should know about it."

"I found that TSIS was separate from uni – wasn't connecting with what uni was offering. Maybe the uni was offering something around TSIS, but I think they could do more."

One interviewee stated having to go as far as taking on the responsibility themselves of arranging careers guidance for students in light of the absence of much, or useful, activity in this respect on the part of their university:

"I actually gave a lot of feedback about this in my last year of uni. I was President of the School and did a lot of organisation for careers talks, about careers that are not specifically to do with the degree themselves to highlight alternative career pathways. I felt that, in the School itself, there wasn't a lot of organisation of these types of events."

An interesting theme emerged in our telephone interviews with employers as to their views on whether students were well prepared for the work environment. Many employers suggested that their intern had been well prepared for the world of work, but in many of these cases, specifically stated that this was probably because the intern had already had a job before.

"Some individuals are better prepared than others. The guy we had worked a lot, he had had a lot of jobs and studied too, so he was very prepared for the world of work."

"Our intern was a mature student and had a job anyway, so she [the intern] knew the world of work."

"To give an idea of her calibre, someone senior in the organisation offered her a job during the work."

"She [the intern] was a postgrad student, so she wasn't in an undergraduate course, so I would expect her to have a better understanding of the world of work. But I'd say we were pleasantly surprised."

4 employer interviewees specifically stated that they felt students were not at all well prepared for the world of work. This included 2 employers from the above category who said that, while their intern had been work ready, from the applications of the other candidates, it was clear that most were not well prepared.

"They're not prepared for work at all. They don't have a commercial brain, they have an academic brain, and they don't understand how in a commercial world decisions are made and what's important."

"Well, going by some of the applications, some of them are really badly prepared for the world of work. You don't expect someone to get to the age of 21 and not have had a job."

"A lot of people are not prepared. Looking at the quality of the applications and the interviews, some applications were very poor...We had quite a lot of weeding out to do because the applications were so atrocious. Their interview skills were also not great – like asking odd questions, or questioning what we were saying."

One employer stated that, while the student worked well and came in with a good attitude, she hadn't necessarily been 'work ready', as they hadn't known how to do "basic things" like fill in an invoice or a tax form.

Employers were generally split on their view of whether or not it is the responsibility of universities to prepare students for the world of work. Of the 9 interviewees who offered an opinion on this, 4 clearly felt that colleges/universities could do more within the remit of academic courses to enhance student employability, and gave some suggestions as to how this could be achieved:

- Organising talks for students by employers about different career paths and what they expect on applications and at interview (2 interviewees)
- Giving students better advice on CV/application writing and interview techniques (one interviewee)
- Offering a 'work ready' course to teach students the basics about being in the work place, e.g. how to fill in an invoice, what procedures to go through when you're ill and have to take time off, etc (one interviewee)
- Encouraging students to think about how the skills they learn at college/university can be applied to the workplace (to help with applications/interviews) (one interviewee).

"The other thing universities could do practically is show them [students] how to write a CV and also how to actually interview, and understand that it's really important to tailor the CV to the job. This would go a long way to helping people get a job. I mean, the amount of CVs we saw that just weren't good..."

"Why not get employers in to say: this is what we expect, here is the application form, and this is the quality we expect, and here is a mock interview. It would be great if you could get people from the sector to come into uni, and it would also be good for setting up links between students and employers."

However, 4 interviewees felt that getting work experience is the best way for students to enhance their employability. Of these, 2 were strongly of the opinion that little can be done by colleges/universities to prepare students for the work environment, and that gaining work experience is much more important. Furthermore, one employer specifically stated that, while universities do have a role to play, in the current competitive circumstances, students must be willing to put in effort beyond their university course work if they want to become more employable.

"Through our experience with placement students, we've come to believe that this [employability] isn't something for universities to do. Most students that come to us are either ready or are not. They could both be on the same course, but quite often some students will have had previous work experience or life experience that means they are more reliable, accountable, can follow direction, and know they have to fulfil their contracts. I know that there is a point of view that unis should take greater responsibility [for making students employable], but we would see it from another direction – there are many, many students that are highly

employable without any input [from the university]; it doesn't just come from there."

[When asked whether universities could do more to enhance student employability] "No. I don't think an academic telling you that this is how business works makes you do that...It can only be done in work placements. They're very valuable for the student"

"Now it's so competitive...If you actually want to get somewhere afterwards [after university] and get a job the way things are now with the recession and everything, students have to be prepared to put in extra work to boost their skill set and make them more employable...More students are going over and above what's in their course work now because they have to now [compared with] when maybe when there were fewer people at university. It used to be that if you had a degree you were guaranteed a job, but now it's not."

Opportunities for employers to influence universities' and colleges' curricula

Results from both our survey and telephone interviews with employers suggest that, in general, TSIS does not appear to have encouraged greater engagement of employers with colleges/universities. Of the employers that responded to our survey, only 6 (13%) felt that the experience strengthened an existing relationship with a university or college, and only 16 survey respondents (35%) and one telephone interviewee agreed that the relationship helped them to forge what they hope is a lasting relationship with a college or university.

Furthermore, TSIS employers do not appear to have been given, or taken, the opportunity to provide feedback to colleges/universities regarding their academic curricula: none of the employers we interviewed stated having the opportunity to help refine curricula to make them more relevant to the sector/the working world. When asked whether they would have liked to have had this opportunity, the employers we interviewed gave a variety of responses. While 5 employers said they would have been happy to become involved, 2 interviewees were clearly opposed to the suggestion, albeit for different reasons. One employer felt that it wasn't the responsibility of businesses to make decisions on academic curricula, while the other felt that it was the responsibility of students to drive change in the curriculum. Furthermore, one employer stated that, while they thought that greater engagement between universities and employers would be beneficial, they doubted whether employers would have enough scope to maintain this.

"I would be happy to speak to the relevant people to give them some pointers and advice."

"I would be interested in engaging them [colleges/universities]. I just think though that most people are too busy delivering their own services so they wouldn't have much time. But it would be beneficial. It would be good for them to get an insight into the third sector."

[When asked whether would have liked to have had the opportunity to help refine the university curriculum] "No. I think it's a monumental task, and I think that the curriculum is not for us to decide on. I think they [universities/tutors] have to know what their values are and then sort out curriculum. (...) we probably would have had more of a connection with a vocational university."

"I don't think it's my place to go back [to the college/university] and say: change your curriculum. What I would hope for [the intern] is that he would go back and say: this is what I did and this is what I learnt; I think the student should be the drive [to change the curriculum]."

Scottish Higher Education Employability Forum (SHEEF)

Our discussions with those involved directly with SHEEF and with LTW project staff have identified both strengths and weaknesses around the work and approach of SHEEF:

- SHEEF had a different focus from SHEEN and had a different structure. In important senses they were not comparable – SHEEF had a stronger focus on strategic leadership and influence with an ambition to sensitise HEIs to the significance of the employability agenda and to strengthen a critical awareness of what the agenda might mean for them, while SHEEN had a clear focus on the sharing of practical lessons from action on enhancing student employability.
- The Leadership agenda proved quite hard to pursue successfully, in part because of the autonomy of HEIs, in part because of the range of organisations and groupings around related topics, and in part because the multi-agency structure of the Forum brought together a number of different interests and agendas.
- There is a consistent view that the practically focused network that preceded SHEEF (SHEEN) provided a valuable role in helping projects share and learn from each other. This is reinforced by a view that the stronger focus of SHEEF on Higher Education meant that part of SHEEN's engagement with both Colleges and Universities led to the FE sector feeling they had lost something of value.
- While SHEEN provided opportunities for this practical sharing and dissemination to continue (eg the joint SHEEF/Abertay University event focusing on the learning from the 4 LTW projects) the projects missed the practical focus of SHEEF.
- There is some satisfaction that there were opportunities through SHEEF to promote the significance of the employability agenda around a number of key groupings and to support HEIs in taking forward their own employability activities. But there is also frustration about the fact that, particularly in quite a complex landscape, it was likely to take time to develop its roles and presence, and in retrospect it may have been better to have a shorter sharper effort to create a more focused approach.

- Overall, there is a view that SHEEF fell between two stools: despite sustained efforts and energy it became neither a influential strategic forum nor an effective way of sharing practice through its work on research, information, signposting and events.

There is no doubt that SHEEF's work on creating a network (with some efficient ways of sharing across this network), a source of research and information, and a greater sensitivity to the employability agenda among HEIs provides something to build on. We have been struck by the strength of feeling about the value of the practical networking events organised by SHEEF – and the fact that these built on the practical value that SHEEN seemed to offer.

We have therefore recommended that SFC consider how best to take forward a practical sharing network of employability practitioners – not just those involved in work placement initiatives – which builds on the valuable components of a sharing and learning infrastructure that SHEEF put in place and reinforced.

4 Issues

Our interviews and survey results have helped us identify a range of issues raised by LTW2. In this Chapter we explore these before drawing out our conclusions about whether and how to sustain the approach in the next Chapter.

Work placements as part of a wider approach to student employability

It is clear from our work that work placements can provide benefits to students, employers and institutions. But we recognise that we have focused on one component of the much wider agenda of student employability. We have articulated the benefits of work placements and the success of the LTW2 projects in bringing these benefits alive, but it is important to place the significance of work placements in context. They can make a significant contribution to employability but they will not be right for every student and they need to be placed in a wider context of employability activities including:

- Course content more closely aligned to the technical skills valued by employers
- 'Soft skill' development built into courses and modelled by lecturers
- Students able to explore work and career options in the light of an appreciation of what they know and the skills they have gained and how this can be applied in the workplace
- Opportunities to 'think laterally' about career options and business start-up ideas
- Access to business mentors to help them think thoroughly about future options.

Conclusion: Any successor to LTW2 needs to be placed clearly in the wider context of action on employability by Universities and Colleges.

Focus on providing a great service to employers

One of the central features of the success of LTW2 was a strong emphasis – across all four projects – on understanding the specific needs of each employer and putting in place a brief/task which responded to their specific needs and a process which – on the whole – produced a good match with a student. It is clear from our interviews that employers sought the best candidate and we regard this as a strength of the approach rather than an issue (ie employers are selecting the most employable of the candidates). Without a clear focus on understanding and meeting the specific needs and situation of each employer any effort on work placements will struggle, and building a trusting relationship with employers in this way will encourage return offers from employers and encourage them to spread the work about the value of placements to their peers.

While the most employable students (of those who apply) are appointed, our research shows that these students feel the opportunity has further enhanced their employability.

But the issue goes beyond ensuring a good match of student with task. Each of the projects, and many of the stakeholders involved in the research, have emphasised to us the need for significant work with employers to stimulate and sustain their interest and involvement in offering work placements to students. Central to their success has been

ensuring that the task of taking on a student placement has been made as easy as possible, and specifically that help is available to create clear, focused briefs for practical work of direct current value to the employer, and which is realistic for a student to carry out in a relatively short time.

It is clear from our research that this has been a significant focus of resources, and will remain so as the projects and the services they offer move forward. It is also an essential component of the models developed, and one of the key elements of the success of these models.

Some of the projects trialled “self-service” models where employers posted and students searched for opportunities themselves, however this model did not attract the number of applications expected and the projects converted to a model which involved support to employers to develop the opportunities to attract students, and support to students to identify and apply for appropriate placements. Whilst more resource-heavy, it was considered essential to attracting employers and students, and importantly contributed to ensuring a quality experience for employers.

Conclusion: Focusing on providing a high quality service to employers is essential to the success of the models. A consequence of this is that employers should be encouraged to employ the student who can do the best job for them.

Addressing employer expectations

Employers’ expectations can be too high and an important part of the work that the projects undertook was support to employers to ensure that their expectations were realistic, and to help them to develop a job specification for the placement that resonated with and was attractive to students. This took time and resource, but was considered by the participating institutions to be a vital component of the model, and one of the reasons the models required non-academic staff to deliver them.

E-placement Scotland helped the partners involved to reach into other industries, eg financial services is a big employer of IT students in Scotland.

Conclusion: Any successor to LTW2 will need to incorporate a capacity to work with employers (particularly smaller organisations) to create a practical and appropriate brief for work by students.

Feedback mechanisms from employers to institutions

Each of the projects, and SFC, noted the importance of employer feedback within the model. We identified some opportunities for this to happen, but a number of employers fed back to us that they would like to contribute in this way, but did not know how to go about it or what the routes were for doing so.

Each institution was able to identify existing opportunities for employers to contribute to curriculum development, including industry advisory boards, business networks etc. However, these do not appear to be visible to smaller companies, nor do they allow for less formal feedback.

These projects have certainly created an easy route in to academia for employers, which smaller companies have reported as being difficult to establish/identify historically.

However, at the outset, SFC was keen that the projects would develop models which used employer feedback to inform development of the projects, but also encouraged and gave opportunities for input to the curriculum. Feedback through the projects has been reasonable, but we found few concrete examples of feedback beyond this, despite companies willing to contribute in this way.

Conclusion: Institutions should ensure that opportunities for companies to contribute to curriculum development are in place, and that the routes for being involved in these are clear and transparent to companies across a broad spectrum.

Helping employers understand the 'landscape' of Scottish and UK wide placement and internship programmes

Just as there is a need to place work placements in the wider context of other action on employability, so there is a need to place the LTW2 projects – and their successors – in the wider context of other placement and internship programmes. According to feedback, some organisations/employers, particularly those in which the range and number of placement/internship opportunities are growing, are starting to develop their own internal strategies on how best to prioritise and manage requests from HE, FE and elsewhere.

During our research a need was identified for a guide for employers on different types of placements/internships, what the costs and benefits of the different options are to employers and case studies from employers on how they are getting involved and making judgements on these different types of initiatives. There may be a role for SFC in co-ordinating such a guide, or for the NCUB who we know are currently involved in research related to work placements. Napier University has produced an excellent guide for employer in the computing industry and this would be an good example to build on.

Conclusion: It would be helpful for SFC to facilitate development of an employer guide on range of placement programmes and opportunities for employers.

The implications of a labour market focus

What our work has made clear is the appeal for students of having a wide range of opportunities across Scotland – and for employers of being able to draw on a wide range of students. There are outstanding examples elsewhere (eg Waterloo University) of individual institutions taking forward significant work placement approaches within their labour market area. However, unlike Canada, Scotland is a small country with a dense transport network and it is clear that Universities work at a Scottish, UK and international labour market level. Although Colleges are more strongly linked to locally resident students and local employers it is clear that they can also benefit from wider connections.

Conclusion: Future work placement models should operate at a Scotland wide scale to bring the most significant returns.

Encouraging student engagement

Against expectations, some of the projects have found that their available placement opportunities have exceeded the number of students applying. Stakeholders – and some students – identified student reluctance to pursue these opportunities. A number of reasons for this were suggested, which included:

- Outside the 'comfort zone' of students
- Easier and more reliable to win academic credits in the conventional way
- No space in the curriculum for the opportunity – so hard to fit around other demands
- Some students find it hard to relate their discipline to the practical needs of employers
- Lack of awareness of the value that can be gained in terms of enhancing understanding about the world of work and how to contribute in the workplace
- Lack of awareness of the tight job market and the value of having work experience and an employer referee.
- Lack of student awareness of the need to consider routes to employment early in their degree – the focus on this for many does not kick in until final year.

These reasons – which would be worth exploring in more detail with students who choose not to seek work placements – suggest that there is more work to be done to help students appreciate the value of work placements. This could be done in a variety of ways, for example:

- More opportunities for students returning from work placements to discuss their experience, lessons and value with other students
- Raising awareness of the benefits of work placements and an employer reference, and this happening earlier
- Integrating work placements and the insights gained from them in more courses.

Conclusion: LTW2 has identified a number of ways in which institutions can tackle student reluctance and they should consider and act on these as part of their focus on student employability.

Cultural Shift

We noted in our introduction that the starting point for each of the projects was different. Historically, newer universities and colleges have been quick to respond to the employability agenda whilst research-intensive universities have generally been perceived as being less good at recognising the need for soft skills such as communication skills, although this has started to shift in the last few years. Our sense is that LTW 2 has had a significant impact on culture and attitudes towards work placements and their role within employability provision.

Getting academics on board has been challenging for some of the projects – one participant in the evaluation described it as the biggest challenge. Another participant described the project as an opportunity to ‘challenge and shake up’ academia. From what we have been told, many academics see the benefit of these programmes but do not see it as their priority or responsibility to deliver – and this is reinforced by the significance of key aspects of academic life such as the Research Assessment Exercise.

Projects approached this need for a cultural shift in a variety of ways:

- In the case of Stirling University (a partner in MMM), the project was initially set up with a project manager based in central services, however they quickly realised that this was making it difficult to engage with academic staff and after a year realised that focusing efforts on one school with a support staff member based in the school to support academics and employers was key. Although it was a reasonably diverse school, this still made a huge difference. Having support staff to drive this was key – they are clear that it would not have happened on this scale if it had been just academics driving it.
- Similarly, in Aberdeen (another partner in MMM), targets were made more easily achievable because the lead person had worked in a particular school, and was subsequently based within this school and knew how the academics there worked. Project staff believe this was a critical success factor.
- Some contributors to our evaluation have a concern that universities’ focus on university rankings can have a negative impact on programmes of this nature. Academic staff who undertake research impact positively on university rankings (ie they are credit-bearing). Justifying non-academic posts (such as the staff posts put in place to deliver the Learning to Work 2 projects) which are non-credit bearing is more difficult as a result, and can affect the sustainability of programmes. We recognise this as a potential threat to sustaining these kinds of programmes longer-term, however an interesting and contrasting view on this, however, was Napier University’s, which was that the graduate employment rate (another factor which impacts on rankings) can offset the loss of credit for non-academic staff, and that consequently programme leaders’ ownership of graduate employment rates was key.
- Some contributors identified the significant role of tutors in providing references for employers about students as part of the application process and it is clear that many take a minimalist approach to this which may not be helpful for a student’s chances. It is important for tutors to recognise the importance of this role and the way that it will help employers respond and support the student in an appropriate way.
- Finally, there were (rare) examples of tutors taking advantage of the experience of a returning student and creating opportunities to reflect with other students about perceptions, lessons and insights. There is clearly scope for tutors to do more of this.

Conclusion: LTW2 has raised some challenging issues about how to engage academic tutors in supporting and encouraging work placements, and in creating opportunities to use the experience as part of subsequent course work. It is important for institutions to recognise the significance of the role that tutors can play, encourage them to do so, and recognise effective behaviour.

Effectiveness of the project partnerships

There is clear evidence that the partnerships put in place to develop and deliver the Learning to Work 2 models have been very successful, and a key component of the projects. Much valuable learning has occurred between partner organisations. For example, Scotland IS (a partner in E-placement Scotland) would have struggled to engage with the HE sector in the way that Napier University has eg the work involved in keeping departments, tutors up to date, speaking to students and promoting this through universities and colleges. They would have been unable to fill the placement opportunities available without the partnership model.

Aberdeen University (a partner in MMM) valued the opportunity for its Careers Service (which took the lead in Aberdeen) to work with the Institute for Academic Development, the lead at Edinburgh University, and to explore and contrast differences in delivering the projects through different parts of the university. In MMM partners also shared a database to ensure that contacts and opportunities could be shared between the participating institutions to maximise the benefit of the project.

The relationship between TSIS and SCVO was regarded as important for its success – both in terms of creating access to third sector organisations and as a key national supporter.

Similarly, the relationship between EiE and the Scottish Chambers of Commerce was seen as central to the success of the project – with the SCoC playing important roles in project design (eg advising on how the offer should be presented to employers) and in spreading the word about the opportunity. As a corollary, the SCoC gained insights into what FE students were able to contribute to small businesses.

All stakeholders in the projects agreed that it was important to build on the partnership working that has happened through the projects in future and we would endorse this strongly.

Conclusion: Partnerships with employer organisations have been central to success and will need to be built into any future model.

Assets

The projects have created a significant bank of assets in the form of learning materials, guides etc. In MMM somebody was brought in to create careers education materials (mainly e-learning materials) across the three partner organisations which have started to bed in, and which are transferable to other universities and will be disseminated. E-placement Scotland has recently published a guide “Defining the Placement Landscape for Computing” – which provides information on work placement opportunities for employers at universities across Scotland.

Conclusion: It will be important to build on the resources created by the LTW2 projects and in particular learn from what has proved particularly helpful to students or employers.

Impact on employer attitudes to work placements

There is no doubt that the projects have had a positive impact on employer perceptions of the value of work placements. In Aberdeen, companies involved are now seeing an internship as part of a pipeline to employment and some companies now only recruit through this route. Participating institutions all provided evidence of significantly more links to employers than previously particularly SMEs, and to having more “friendly employers” to work with than previously. The projects have engaged with “new” employers – ie employers with whom the participating institutions did not have an existing relationship. The majority of placements have been with SMEs, which are less visible to students and so the projects have opened up opportunities they may not have considered.

The policy trend for work-related learning is strengthening but some universities and students have not bought into this fully yet. There remains a need to disseminate learning from these projects across Scotland to ensure that the benefits are understood.

Conclusion: A key feature of the success of the projects was their relationship with a body closely engaged with the target sector which was able both to inform project design and presentation and provide routes to market. Any successor approach should build on this.

5 Models for sustainability

In this Chapter we explore the issues around the sustainability of each project before developing ideas and recommendations about the options for SFC and its partners in supporting future approaches. However, LTW2 has created clear momentum and interest and it is important to put together a response – even if it is an interim response – quickly or there is a risk that much of the benefit gained will drain away.

Education into Enterprise

There have been some significant achievements from this project and it is distinctive in its focus on both FE and HE students and on building a successful relationship with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and, through their help and support, working with smaller businesses across a wide area. Another distinctive feature is the development of a strong working relationship between universities and colleges.

These are features which it is important to retain in any future model. EIE have been clear that part of their success has been on helping small businesses differentiate between the different student markets and designing and presenting projects in ways that can respond to their different skill sets.

Starting from a business perspective it is clear that a national work placement service should include both Colleges and Universities if it is to respond to the range of opportunities and tasks they can offer. Indeed it would be unhelpful if employers were not presented with a single door for both College and University students – and any alternative would fail to recognise the blurring of the lines between FE and HE and the scale of progression from FE to HE.

We have therefore developed our thinking on future models on the basis that it should present employers with FE and HE options.

E-Placement Scotland

It is unlikely that the participating universities will contribute to the costs of maintaining E-placement Scotland and project staff expect that some level of external funding will remain essential for the foreseeable future, whilst recognising that this is likely to be a smaller budget than has been available for the Learning to Work 2 project.

E-placement has explored various options going forward, including generating revenue to fund the project through charging a finding fee to employers but having mooted the idea to industry, they found employers would be reluctant to pay because they feel that they already invest time and energy in the person, in addition to paying them whilst on the placement.

Current thinking is that the most effective and efficient approach going forward is to build a hub and spoke model with an E-placement Scotland function at the centre, with each spoke being dedicated to a sector. The proposal is to continue to operate a “spoke” providing support to the IT industry, and joining forces with TSIS to provide support to the Third Sector. Ultimately this would involve a merging of the websites being used to support the model, and sharing of resources to support the students and companies involved. Furthermore, staff involved believe that the model is transferable to other sectors, including, for example, each of Scottish Enterprise’s key growth sectors eg tourism, the oil and gas industry and others. Project staff emphasised the importance and buy-in of a sector body which has strong links to employers.

Staff believe that the current branding should be maintained as it has become a widely recognised brand within the sector.

Napier University now has a placement office, and a Director of Graduate Employability. All learning is embedded at Napier and they are encouraging other institutions to do the same and to use E-placement Scotland to do so.

We accept the practical appeal and logic of the national hub and spokes model which has been developed by EPS and TSIS and this forms the basis for our recommended way forward.

Making the Most of Masters

From the outset, MMM aimed to create resources that would enable HE institutions to expand provision of their work-based taught post-graduate projects using a model that was sustainable long term and MMM was seen very much as a pilot for the way forward. There has been a clear focus on ensuring that programmes take ownership of the processes involved with support initially from the MMM project staff. Resources have been developed to be easily adapted and delivered by university staff and are able to be tailored to the needs of individual programmes.

Each of the three partners is currently involved in ensuring that the MMM model features in university strategic plans meaning that it will no longer be treated as a project, but as a service and fully integrated into university provision, ensuring its longevity. They are looking to see whether there is interest elsewhere in Scotland and some other universities are already involved through disciplinary-based research pools, enabling several universities to have access to project opportunities. The advantage of this model will be to enable a bigger pool of students to apply for opportunities, and give employers a larger pool to select appropriate students from. The thinking is to develop the project model as a network without a central hub – a number of hubs would link together. They are already working on programmes with Edinburgh Napier University and Strathclyde University and are in discussion with a number of others, with a focus on specific disciplines. Discussions with Strathclyde are exploring the potential to take a whole institution approach to the model.

In Edinburgh University there is commitment to maintaining the project with the intention to grow the project in future. There is a commitment to the costs because the university can clearly see the value of the project.

Stirling University is involved in a planning round just now and hoping that the project manager post will become permanent in the new year. They aim to grow the project beyond the one school in which it is currently based but are clear that for this to happen it needs someone to lead and drive it.

In Aberdeen University there is also a commitment to taking this forward, independent of SFC funding.

Third Sector Internships Scotland

TSIS are very clear about the distinctive nature of their employer market and its needs – and also about the distinctively high level of demand from students for the work placement experience in this market. Their main concern is not to lose the significant momentum and interest they have built. While they could continue their current model and build on this with a more streamlined (and lower cost) structure, they can see the benefits of being part of a larger national system with a number of specialist ‘spokes’ of which a third sector focus would be one.

As noted above they have been thinking through such an approach with EPS and we accept the key aspects of their model as an appropriate way forward. We also accept the distinctive market that they operate in. In looking ahead we don’t believe it is realistic to expect full funding for placements as occurred in LTW2, and we note the steady increase over time in the number of third sector organisations paying at least part of the placement wage.

TSIS’s own very thorough evaluation data includes powerful evidence of the value to them of work done on placements by students – in nearly all cases exceeding the cost of the placement (in most cases this cost in LTW2 was met by SFC). While in principle this means that there should be a greater preparedness to invest their own money in paying the wages of a student for a work placement, we recognise that there may be many smaller third sector organisations which will not be able to proceed with an opportunity if some funding is not available. This is likely to apply to some micro-businesses as well.

We think there is a need to look into the possibility of a small flexible fund for third sector organisations and other businesses employing less than 5 people. This should involve discussions with Business Gateway and others about sources of small business consultancy funding and how this could be used for well-focused assignments which contributed to business health and growth. There may be scope for SFC to devote a relatively small sum to this if it is matched by others.

Towards a sustainable future

We have identified a number of features that any future model for work placements needs to have – based on the lessons from LTW2:

- It should be a national approach and offer opportunities for both FE and HE students
- It should minimise overheads by having a centralised administration service and IT – which will include a national website and common application process

- The central website will allow a search of opportunities by sector, area, project focus, project timing/duration and skill set. In this way it will help students seek a match with an opportunity in a range of ways – and provide a valuable way in particular of helping those students without technical vocational skills find a way into the opportunities.
- It should have a number of specialised ‘arms’ or ‘spokes’ which will focus on the specific needs of distinctive parts of the employer market – for example, IT, third sector, micro-businesses, and other technically specialist areas (TSIS/EPS have suggested renewables and energy as a priority).
- These spokes will be responsible for extending the reach of the service into businesses in their sector, for ensuring a source of support for the development of briefs and for clarifying whether the work placement is appropriate for FE or HE students and at what level and stage.
- The business development benefits of the approach should be recognised by engagement with Business Gateway and also with the 32 Third Sector Interfaces – both these will provide a route to market in terms of business awareness, and Business Gateway will also be in a position to provide support in helping businesses to refine their briefs for work placement tasks.
- There should be strong working relationships between this model and the careers services of all Scotland’s Colleges and Universities, and we see careers services as being central to the promotion of these opportunities in each of the institutions.
- Employers need to be able to get help to develop their brief and gain ready access through the employer part of the central website, to help about managing students and dealing with common problems. The centre should offer an employer helpline.
- While the support that has been offered to both employers and students by the LTW2 projects has been of high quality and very effective (eg attending all interviews and providing detailed feedback to students) we don’t believe this should be continued – partly because it is difficult to fund in a sustainable way, partly because we believe it should fall to the institutions to support students in developing application and interview skills, and to Chambers, FSB and Business Gateway to advise businesses on interview skills.

6 Recommendations

- The approaches tested in LTW2 have shown both the existence of significant demand from both employers and students and significant benefits to students, employers and institutions. SFC should therefore work with others to take forward a new national model for student work placements which builds on the momentum that has been built. This model will cover opportunities for both FE and HE students.
- The model should consist of a central administrative hub which will maintain a website and common application system and provide support to a number of spokes which will have a specialist focus on key sectors of the business market, initially continuing the work of TSIS for the third sector and EPS for the IT sector.
- Each of the specialist hubs should be linked to a related trade organisation (eg TSIS with SCVO, IT with Scotland IS, micro-business with FSB) to help with service design and routes to market.
- The resources (support, services and money) for this should be spread between institutions, employers (through paying at least the living wage) and business support organisations, in addition to the SFC.
- Business Gateway and the Third Sector Interfaces should be active partners in any future approach - to ensure that a business development focus can be maintained, and to ensure that more joined-up approaches to delivering work placement programmes occurs.
- MMM has established a sustainable approach going forward, nevertheless we recommend that MMM explores the potential to link to any future model taken forward by SFC, particularly where sectoral overlap occurs.
- Scaling up in a sustainable way will depend on the ability and preparedness of employers to pay for placements and for institutions to pay for the support needed. LTW2 has played a vital role in helping a wide range of employers appreciate the value that a student can bring and it will be important to build on this in promoting examples of this value and widening the range of employers involved. It is not realistic to expect employers to pay more than placement costs.
- SFC should explore with potential partners the opportunity to create a small flexible fund to cover part of the student wage costs for financially fragile third sector organisations and micro-businesses employing less than 5 people.
- Employers need to be the focus for the future approach to work placements. If they are not getting a contribution that they value they will not be inclined to provide more opportunities and it is important that they gain a positive view of what students can contribute. The Learning to Work 2 projects have all provided high quality support to businesses and this should remain a key component of any model going forward, though there are a range of possible sources for this.

Most of the businesses which offered opportunities were micro- and small-businesses employing less than 50, and it is these that find it hardest to organise work placements and associated systems. We therefore recommend that smaller businesses should be the main – but not exclusive – focus for any future model.

- Because of the small scale, distinctive features and dispersed nature of the third sector organisations it would be appropriate to maintain a specialised third sector focus as part of the proposed model. Given that smaller third sector organisations share many characteristics with other micro-businesses it may be appropriate over time to offer a shared service for third sector and micro-businesses.
- There is a need to ensure a greater level of awareness of application and interview skills among students and to more accurately promote the value of work placements. It may be appropriate to use the SFC outcome agreement process with individual institutions to describe the ways in which each institution will help more students take advantage of the benefits of work placements. This needs to be embedded in a clearer sense of fulfilling futures related to personal aspirations and areas of study: the development of this 'sense of the future' needs to start in schools and be built upon in FE/HE. We recommend early talks with Education Scotland to share learning from this evaluation.
- Similarly, there may be a need to help students across a wide range of subject areas and disciplines to gain a sense of the transferable skills they have gained and how these could be used in a business or third sector context. This should be part of a wider career guidance and advice service and will be supported by the structure of the proposed website for the national work placement service as it will allow a search by required skill sets.

Specific recommendations for the Scottish Funding Council

- There is a case for continuation funding at a lower level and for a bridging period for some of the projects to ensure that the models that have been developed, and which have worked, can be sustained. This should be linked to a clear decision to integrate these approaches into a national model.
- The SFC should work with other potential funders to put together a sustainably funded national work placement intermediary. These discussions should take into account the contribution of work placements to young people's employability and small business development, and the significance of positive outcomes to Scotland's Universities and Colleges.
- The SFC should consider developing a guide for employers to provide guidance and advice on the scope and scale of work placement opportunities across FE and HE, and on the costs and resources involved in participating. Edinburgh Napier University has developed a guide for employers related to the IT sector and this could be built on/used as model for a wider guidance document. This may also be an area that SFC wishes to involve NCUB in given its wider, nation-wide remit in relation to research into work placements.

- The SFC should consider funding an actively managed network of those involved in the practical delivery of work placements and other approaches to enhancing student employability to accelerate the flow of learning and meet the learning needs identified by these practitioners.

Recommendations for institutions

- Institutions should ensure clear and transparent mechanisms for companies to contribute to curriculum development and to continue to feedback on work placements
- Institutions should recognise the significance of their careers services in promoting work placements and helping returning students share their experience and learning with other students
- Institutions should help and support tutors in playing a full role in the work placement process.
- Where possible, the curriculum should be designed to provide opportunities for students to carry out work placements where they can apply what they are learning.

Appendix 1 Interviews

SFC Stakeholder and Project Manager Interviews

Name
Dee Bird, Research Intensive and Small Specialist Institutions team
Joe Marshall and Olivia Jones, NCUB
Martin McGuire, Principal, Motherwell College
Sue Rigby, Vice Principal, University of Edinburgh
Peter Fantom, Head of Careers Service, University of Aberdeen
Alistair Sambell, Vice Principal, Edinburgh Napier University
Pamela Crawford, University of Stirling
Lesley Greyburn, University of Stirling
Sally Smith and Colin Smith, Edinburgh Napier University
Jon Turner, University of Edinburgh
Neill Lent, University of Edinburgh
Polly Purvis, Director, Scotland IS
Michael Kowbel, E-skills Scotland
Allan Gilloran, Depute Principal, Queen Margaret University
Fiona Boyle, Co-Director (Partnerships and Learning), Third Sector Internships Scotland
Margaret Wallace, SCVO
Dr Martha Caddell, Learning and Teaching Coordinator, The Open University in Scotland
Anne Gillen, Research and Staff Development Manager, Fife College
Carol Humbert, former EiE lead, Fife College
Rosemary Allford, Academic Development Officer (SHEEF)
Fiona McCann, Operations Director, Scottish Chambers of Commerce
Professor Steve Olivier, Vice Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor, Abertay University (Chair, SHEEF)
Dr Alastair Robertson, Director of Quality Enhancement, Abertay University and formerly Assistant Director (Scotland) of the Higher Education Academy (HEA)

Appendix 2 Survey results

Student Survey

Table 1: Age of students at time of placement

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	147	33	44	20	50
What age were you at the time of your placement?					
16-24	86 59%	20 61%	24 55%	7 35%	35 70%
25-34	48 33%	6 18%	18 41%	13 65%	11 22%
35-44	11 7%	6 18%	2 5%	-	3 6%
45-54	1 1%	1 3%	-	-	-
55-64	-	-	-	-	-
65+	-	-	-	-	-
Prefer not to say	1 1%	-	-	-	1 2%

Table 2: University or college attended by students at time of placement

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	146	33	43	20	50
Which university or college did you attend at the time of the placement?					
Ayrshire College (previously Ayr College, Kilmarnock College, and James Watt College, North Ayrshire Campus)	2 1%	2 6%	-	-	-
Dundee College	11 8%	11 33%	-	-	-
Edinburgh Napier University	16 11%	-	12 28%	-	4 8%
Fife College (previously Carnegie College and Adam Smith College)	6 4%	6 18%	-	-	-
Forth Valley College	2 1%	2 6%	-	-	-
Glasgow Caledonian University	4 3%	-	3 7%	-	1 2%
Glasgow Clyde College (previously Cardonald College, Anniesland College and Langside College)	1 1%	-	1 2%	-	-
Glasgow School of Art	3 2%	-	-	-	3 6%
Heriot-Watt University	11 8%	-	8 19%	-	3 6%
Moray College UHI	1 1%	-	-	-	1 2%
Motherwell College	1 1%	-	1 2%	-	-
Queen Margaret University	7 5%	-	-	-	7 14%
Robert Gordon University	1 1%	-	1 2%	-	-
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI	1 1%	-	-	-	1 2%
The Open University in Scotland	2 1%	-	-	-	2 4%
University of Aberdeen	10 7%	-	1 2%	5 25%	4 8%
University of Abertay Dundee	7 5%	4 12%	1 2%	2 10%	-
University of Dundee	5 3%	-	-	-	5 10%
University of Edinburgh	25 17%	-	2 5%	9 45%	14 28%
University of Glasgow	3 2%	-	3 7%	-	-
University of Stirling	5 3%	-	1 2%	4 20%	-
University of Strathclyde	5 3%	-	4 9%	-	1 2%
University of the Highlands and Islands	1 1%	-	-	-	1 2%
University of the West of Scotland	9 6%	1 3%	5 12%	-	3 6%
West College Scotland (previously Clydebank College, Reid Kerr College and James Watt College, Inverclyde Campus)	3 2%	3 9%	-	-	-
West Lothian College	4 3%	4 12%	-	-	-

Table 3: Gender of students

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	147	33	44	20	50
What is your gender?					
Male	89 61%	22 67%	34 77%	12 60%	21 42%
Female	58 39%	11 33%	10 23%	8 40%	29 58%
Prefer not to say	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -

Table 4: How students found out about the opportunity

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	146	33	43	20	50
How did you hear about the opportunity? Please tick all that apply					
Careers Service	39 27%	3 9%	11 26%	3 15%	22 44%
Leaflet/poster	14 10%	5 15%	4 9%	3 15%	2 4%
Press article	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Web	45 31%	2 6%	19 44%	5 25%	19 38%
Friends/Peers	13 9%	1 3%	2 5%	1 5%	9 18%
University or College staff	78 53%	29 88%	19 44%	17 85%	13 26%
Other (please tick box and specify below)	8 5%	1 3%	4 9%	1 5%	2 4%

Table 5: Why students became involved in the project

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	147	33	44	20	50
Why did you become involved in the project? Please tick all that apply					
To help me get a job	106 72%	15 45%	39 89%	14 70%	38 76%
To find out more about what I am interested in	54 37%	14 42%	13 30%	4 20%	23 46%
To develop my skills in the workplace	112 76%	26 79%	35 80%	9 45%	42 84%
To contribute to my course achievements (eg dissertation topic)	36 24%	11 33%	8 18%	11 55%	6 12%
Other (please tick box and specify below)	8 5%	1 3%	1 2%	1 5%	5 10%

Table 6: Did students have a range of placements to choose from?

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	147	33	44	20	50
Did you have a range of placements to choose from?					
Yes	112 76%	21 64%	37 84%	17 85%	37 74%
No	35 24%	12 36%	7 16%	3 15%	13 26%

Table 7: Did students get their first choice of placement?

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	146	33	44	20	49
Did you get your first choice of placement?					
Yes	117 80%	27 82%	31 70%	17 85%	42 86%
No	29 20%	6 18%	13 30%	3 15%	7 14%

Table 8: "My placement offered a good match with my skills and interests"

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	147	33	44	20	50
"My placement offered a good match with my skills and interests"					
Strongly agree	82 56%	15 45%	31 70%	10 50%	26 52%
Agree	58 39%	15 45%	11 25%	8 40%	24 48%
Disagree	5 3%	2 6%	1 2%	2 10%	- -
Strongly disagree	2 1%	1 3%	1 2%	- -	- -

Table 9: Duration of placement

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	145	31	44	20	50
How long was your placement?					
1-4 weeks	9 6%	7 23%	- -	2 10%	- -
5-8 weeks	21 14%	7 23%	3 7%	1 5%	10 20%
9-12 weeks	57 39%	7 23%	14 32%	13 65%	23 46%
More than 12 weeks	58 40%	10 32%	27 61%	4 20%	17 34%

Table 10: Were placements full time or part time?

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	144	31	44	20	49
Was it full time or part time?					
Full time	75 52%	7 23%	31 70%	13 65%	24 49%
Part time	69 48%	24 77%	13 30%	7 35%	25 51%

Table 11: Location of placement

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	145	32	44	20	49
Location of placement					
Onsite (at the business/organisation)	101 70%	12 38%	40 91%	4 20%	45 92%
Virtual	7 5%	1 3%	1 2%	2 10%	3 6%
Largely university-based	12 8%	4 13%	1 2%	7 35%	- -
A mixture of the above	20 14%	12 38%	2 5%	5 25%	1 2%
Other	5 3%	3 9%	- -	2 10%	- -

Table 12: Was the placement paid?

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	144	31	43	20	50
Was it a paid internship? Please tick all that apply.					
Yes	94 65%	2 6%	41 95%	1 5%	50 100%
No	41 28%	22 71%	2 5%	17 85%	- -
Expenses only	12 8%	8 26%	- -	4 20%	- -

Table 13: Benefits for students

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	146	33	44	20	49
What benefits did you gain from your placement? Please tick all that apply					
Got a job?	58 40%	2 6%	30 68%	5 25%	21 43%
Got a referee from a business/organisation?	81 55%	14 42%	28 64%	8 40%	31 63%
Learnt more about the kind of job I want to do?	93 64%	19 58%	33 75%	8 40%	33 67%
Helped to confirm that I wanted to do something related to my placement	75 51%	16 48%	27 61%	9 45%	23 47%
Helped me to decide not to pursue something related to my placement	26 18%	4 12%	7 16%	2 10%	13 27%
Gained new skills?	105 72%	17 52%	38 86%	13 65%	37 76%
Developed existing skills?	118 81%	23 70%	38 86%	12 60%	45 92%
Gained insights into how businesses/organisations work?	103 71%	16 48%	36 82%	10 50%	41 84%
Helped me understand what it would be like to start and run a business?	25 17%	4 12%	8 18%	3 15%	10 20%
None	3 2%	2 6%	-	1 5%	-
Other (please tick box and specify below)	3 2%	-	-	1 5%	2 4%

Table 14: "My course/academic experiences to date prepared me well for a work environment"

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	144	33	44	20	47
"My course/academic experiences to date prepared me well for a work environment"					
Strongly agree	36 25%	9 27%	11 25%	5 25%	11 23%
Agree	87 60%	22 67%	30 68%	11 55%	24 51%
Disagree	20 14%	2 6%	3 7%	4 20%	11 23%
Strongly disagree	1 1%	- -	- -	- -	1 2%

Table 15: "My college/university/TSIS offered me all the support I needed"

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	145	33	43	20	49
"My college/university/TSIS offered me all the support I needed"					
Strongly agree	59 41%	18 55%	16 37%	4 20%	21 43%
Agree	70 48%	13 39%	21 49%	11 55%	25 51%
Disagree	14 10%	1 3%	5 12%	5 25%	3 6%
Strongly disagree	2 1%	1 3%	1 2%	- -	- -

Table 16: "The business/organisation was a really good match in terms of what I could offer and what I was interested in"

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	146	33	44	20	49
"The business/organisation was a really good match in terms of what I could offer and what I was interested in"					
Strongly agree	57 39%	9 27%	23 52%	5 25%	20 41%
Agree	72 49%	18 55%	18 41%	11 55%	25 51%
Disagree	15 10%	6 18%	1 2%	4 20%	4 8%
Strongly disagree	2 1%	- -	2 5%	- -	- -

Table 17: "The business/organisation supported and guided me well during the experience"

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	146	33	44	20	49
"The business/organisation supported and guided me well during the experience"					
Strongly agree	72 49%	11 33%	23 52%	5 25%	33 67%
Agree	57 39%	15 45%	19 43%	9 45%	14 29%
Disagree	14 10%	6 18%	1 2%	5 25%	2 4%
Strongly disagree	3 2%	1 3%	1 2%	1 5%	- -

Table 18: "I was really clear about what I was doing and what was expected of me"

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	145	33	43	20	49
"I was really clear about what I was doing and what was expected of me"					
Strongly agree	58 40%	13 39%	23 53%	3 15%	19 39%
Agree	71 49%	19 58%	17 40%	11 55%	24 49%
Disagree	14 10%	1 3%	3 7%	4 20%	6 12%
Strongly disagree	2 1%	- -	- -	2 10%	- -

Table 19: "I felt I did a task that was really valuable to the business/organisation"

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	146	33	44	20	49
"I felt I did a task that was really valuable to the business/organisation"					
Strongly agree	80 55%	16 48%	28 64%	5 25%	31 63%
Agree	47 32%	10 30%	14 32%	10 50%	13 27%
Disagree	18 12%	7 21%	2 5%	4 20%	5 10%
Strongly disagree	1 1%	- -	- -	1 5%	- -

Table 20: Students' learning from the experience

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	144	32	44	19	49
The experience helped me to learn about: (please tick all that apply)					
How a specific sector works	110 76%	15 47%	35 80%	13 68%	47 96%
How to perform effectively at work	94 65%	19 59%	34 77%	6 32%	35 71%
How to work with others as part of a team	91 63%	17 53%	35 80%	6 32%	33 67%
How to work effectively with customers/clients	60 42%	18 56%	19 43%	4 21%	19 39%
Management and leadership skills and approaches	64 44%	13 41%	17 39%	6 32%	28 57%
How to construct an effective CV	24 17%	4 13%	13 30%	2 11%	5 10%
How to perform well at interviews	55 38%	8 25%	19 43%	4 21%	24 49%

Table 21: "The experience has provided me with a range of skills and experience that will help me find a job"

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	146	33	44	20	49
"The experience has provided me with a range of skills and experience that will help me find a job"					
Strongly agree	74 51%	11 33%	31 70%	4 20%	28 57%
Agree	56 38%	15 45%	11 25%	11 55%	19 39%
Disagree	13 9%	7 21%	1 2%	4 20%	1 2%
Strongly disagree	3 2%	-	1 2%	1 5%	1 2%

Table 22: "I would encourage other students to take part in a similar project"

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	144	32	44	19	49
"I would encourage other students to take part in a similar project"					
Strongly agree	116 81%	19 59%	41 93%	10 53%	46 94%
Agree	22 15%	11 34%	3 7%	6 32%	2 4%
Disagree	5 3%	2 6%	-	3 16%	-
Strongly disagree	1 1%	-	-	-	1 2%

Table 23: Students' previous participation in work placements

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	145	32	44	20	49
Have you taken part in any other work placements in the past?					
Yes	42 29%	8 25%	10 23%	5 25%	19 39%
No	103 71%	24 75%	34 77%	15 75%	30 61%

Table 24: Comparison with previous placements

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	42	8	10	5	19
If yes, how would you rate your experience of this placement compared to your previous placement(s)?					
This placement was better than my previous placement(s)	20 48%	5 63%	5 50%	3 60%	7 37%
This placement was about the same as my previous placement(s)	15 36%	2 25%	3 30%	1 20%	9 47%
This placement was not as good as my previous placement(s)	7 17%	1 13%	2 20%	1 20%	3 16%

Employer Survey

Table 25: Number of employees

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	78	6	2	17	6	47
How many employees does your organisation have?						
0-9	42 54%	4 67%	2 100%	8 47%	4 67%	24 51%
10-49	16 21%	-	-	4 24%	-	12 26%
50-249	10 13%	-	-	2 12%	1 17%	7 15%
250+	10 13%	2 33%	-	3 18%	1 17%	4 9%

Table 26: Employers' sector

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	74	6	2	17	5	44
Which sector is your organisation in?						
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1 1%	-	-	-	-	1 2%
Mining and quarrying	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manufacturing	2 3%	-	-	2 12%	-	-
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	-	-	-	-	-	-
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Construction	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wholesale and retail trade; including repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1 1%	-	1 50%	-	-	-
Transportation and storage	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accommodation and food service activities	1 1%	-	-	1 6%	-	-
Information and communication	6 8%	-	-	6 35%	-	-
Financial and insurance activities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Real estate activities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional, scientific and technical activities	8 11%	-	-	3 18%	4 80%	1 2%
Administrative and support service activities	2 3%	1 17%	-	-	1 20%	-
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education	7 9%	2 33%	-	2 12%	-	3 7%
Human health and social work activities	15 20%	1 17%	-	-	-	14 32%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4 5%	-	1 50%	-	-	3 7%
Other service activities	26 35%	2 33%	-	2 12%	-	22 50%
Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use	-	-	-	-	-	-
Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	1 1%	-	-	1 6%	-	-

Table 27: Number of placements offered by employer

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	77	6	2	17	5	47
How many work placements have you offered through this programme?						
1	50 65%	3 50%	1 50%	8 47%	3 60%	35 74%
2	15 19%	3 50%	-	4 24%	-	8 17%
3	7 9%	-	-	4 24%	-	3 6%
4	3 4%	-	1 50%	-	1 20%	1 2%
5	1 1%	-	-	1 6%	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-
More than 10	1 1%	-	-	-	1 20%	-

Table 28: Employers' previous participation in placements

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	77	6	2	17	5	47
Had your organisation offered work placements before this programme?						
Yes	30 39%	2 33%	-	5 29%	3 60%	20 43%
No	39 51%	3 50%	2 100%	9 53%	2 40%	23 49%
Not sure	8 10%	1 17%	-	3 18%	-	4 9%

Table 29: Colleges and universities that employers worked with

	Total	Which programme did you take part in?				
		Missing Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	71	6	2	16	6	41
Which college/university did you work with on this programme?						
Aberdeen College	1 1%	-	-	-	1 17%	-
Ayrshire College (previously Ayr College, Kilmarnock College, and James Watt College, North Ayrshire Campus)	1 1%	-	-	1 6%	-	-
Cumbernauld College	1 1%	-	-	1 6%	-	-
Edinburgh College	1 1%	-	-	-	-	1 2%
Edinburgh Napier University	7 10%	-	-	6 38%	-	1 2%
E-Placement Scotland	5 7%	-	-	5 31%	-	-
Fife College (previously Carnegie College and Adam Smith College)	1 1%	1 17%	-	-	-	-
Forth Valley College	1 1%	-	-	1 6%	-	-
Glasgow Caledonian University	4 6%	-	-	1 6%	-	3 7%
Glasgow School of Art	3 4%	-	-	-	-	3 7%
Heriot-Watt University	2 3%	-	-	1 6%	-	1 2%
Moray College UHI	1 1%	1 17%	-	-	-	-
Queen Margaret University	12 17%	-	-	-	-	12 29%
Stow College	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Open University in Scotland	2 3%	-	-	-	-	2 5%
TSIS	16 23%	-	-	-	-	16 39%
University of Aberdeen	3 4%	-	-	1 6%	-	2 5%
University of Abertay Dundee	3 4%	-	-	2 13%	-	1 2%
University of Dundee	4 6%	-	-	2 13%	-	2 5%
University of Edinburgh	11 15%	2 33%	-	-	6 100%	3 7%
University of Glasgow	4 6%	-	-	1 6%	-	3 7%
University of St Andrews	2 3%	-	-	2 13%	-	-
University of Stirling	2 3%	-	-	-	1 17%	1 2%
University of Strathclyde	7 10%	1 17%	-	4 25%	-	2 5%
University of the Highlands and Islands	1 1%	1 17%	-	-	-	-
University of the West of Scotland	3 4%	-	-	1 6%	-	2 5%
West Lothian College	2 3%	-	2 100%	-	-	-

Table 30: How employers became involved

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	75	5	2	16	6	46
How did you become involved? Please tick all that apply.						
Approached by one of the projects	14 19%	1 20%	2 100%	6 38%	1 17%	4 9%
Read about the opportunity in promotional materials	23 31%	2 40%	-	1 6%	-	20 43%
Heard about it by word of mouth	22 29%	1 20%	-	4 25%	1 17%	16 35%
Existing partnership-/relationship with College/University	6 8%	-	-	2 13%	3 50%	1 2%
Other (please tick box and specify below)	12 16%	1 20%	-	5 31%	1 17%	5 11%

Table 31: Why employers became involved

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	78	6	2	17	6	47
Why did you become involved in the project? Please tick all that apply						
Part of being a responsible business/organisation	22 28%	1 17%	1 50%	6 35%	4 67%	10 21%
To get a specific task done	54 69%	4 67%	1 50%	7 41%	5 83%	37 79%
To try out potential employees	13 17%	-	1 50%	9 53%	2 33%	1 2%
Wanted to get some fresh ideas and insights	35 45%	2 33%	1 50%	5 29%	-	27 57%
Wanted to get some new skills applied to our issues	24 31%	1 17%	-	4 24%	-	19 40%
Keen to develop a stronger relationship with a College/University	21 27%	1 17%	2 100%	6 35%	6 100%	6 13%
Other (please tick box and specify below)	8 10%	-	1 50%	1 6%	-	6 13%

Table 32: Were employers in a position to offer a student a job after the placement?

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	77	6	1	17	6	47
Were you in a position to offer a student a job after the placement?						
Yes	27 35%	1 17%	- -	15 88%	2 33%	9 19%
No	50 65%	5 83%	1 100%	2 12%	4 67%	38 81%

Table 33: Did employers offer a student a job?

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	76	6	1	16	6	47
Did you offer a student a job after the placement?						
Yes	21 28%	1 17%	- -	13 81%	1 17%	6 13%
No	55 72%	5 83%	1 100%	3 19%	5 83%	41 87%

Table 34: How many students did employers offer a job to?

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	21	1	-	13	1	6
If yes, how many students did you offer a job to?						
1	17 81%	1 100%	- -	9 69%	1 100%	6 100%
2	2 10%	- -	- -	2 15%	- -	- -
3	1 5%	- -	- -	1 8%	- -	- -
4	1 5%	- -	- -	1 8%	- -	- -
5	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-
More than 10	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 35: How many students accepted the job?

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	21	1	-	13	1	6
How many accepted the job?						
1	17 81%	1 100%	- -	9 69%	1 100%	6 100%
2	3 14%	-	-	3 23%	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	1 5%	-	-	1 8%	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-
More than 10	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 36: Types of jobs offered

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	21	1	-	13	1	6
What type(s) of job did you offer? Please tick all that apply						
Full time permanent	10 48%	-	-	9 69%	1 100%	-
Full time temporary	3 14%	-	-	2 15%	-	1 17%
Part time permanent	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part time temporary	10 48%	1 100%	-	4 31%	-	5 83%

Table 37: Benefits for organisations

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	77	6	1	17	6	47
What benefits did you actually gain as a business/organisation from the placement? Please tick all that apply.						
Valuable task completed?	67 87%	5 83%	1 100%	13 76%	5 83%	43 91%
New insights and ideas that you have acted on?	49 64%	4 67%	-	8 47%	2 33%	35 74%
Contributed to a positive atmosphere at work?	44 57%	-	-	11 65%	2 33%	31 66%
Enhanced our social/community impact?	27 35%	1 17%	1 100%	5 29%	2 33%	18 38%
Strengthened our relationship with College/University?	19 25%	1 17%	1 100%	6 35%	5 83%	6 13%
Identified skills that we need to have?	32 42%	2 33%	1 100%	6 35%	1 17%	22 47%
Helped us influence what students learn about as part of their curriculum?	9 12%	1 17%	1 100%	2 12%	2 33%	3 6%
None?	2 3%	-	-	1 6%	1 17%	-
Other (please tick box and specify below)	2 3%	-	-	1 6%	-	1 2%

Table 38: "The college/university/TSIS offered me all the support I needed"

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	77	6	2	17	6	46
"The college/university/TSIS offered me all the support I needed"						
Strongly agree	47 61%	3 50%	1 50%	7 41%	3 50%	33 72%
Agree	26 34%	3 50%	1 50%	9 53%	2 33%	11 24%
Disagree	3 4%	-	-	-	1 17%	2 4%
Strongly disagree	1 1%	-	-	1 6%	-	-

Table 39: "The student provided a really good match in terms of aptitude, skills and application"

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	76	6	1	17	6	46
"The student provided a really good match in terms of aptitudes, skills and application"						
Strongly agree	50 66%	4 67%	- -	9 53%	2 33%	35 76%
Agree	23 30%	2 33%	1 100%	7 41%	3 50%	10 22%
Disagree	2 3%	- -	- -	- -	1 17%	1 2%
Strongly disagree	1 1%	- -	- -	1 6%	- -	- -

Table 40: "The experience helped me to see the benefits a graduate could bring to my business/organisation"

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	75	5	1	16	6	47
"The experience helped me see the benefits a graduate could bring to my business/organisation"						
Strongly agree	34 45%	4 80%	- -	5 31%	- -	25 53%
Agree	36 48%	- -	1 100%	10 63%	6 100%	19 40%
Disagree	4 5%	1 20%	- -	- -	- -	3 6%
Strongly disagree	1 1%	- -	- -	1 6%	- -	- -

Table 41: "The experience has helped me to forge what I hope is a lasting relationship with a college/university"

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	73	5	1	15	6	46
"The experience has helped me forge what I hope is a lasting relationship with a College/University"						
Strongly agree	12 16%	1 20%	- -	4 27%	2 33%	5 11%
Agree	23 32%	2 40%	1 100%	6 40%	3 50%	11 24%
Disagree	31 42%	2 40%	- -	2 13%	1 17%	26 57%
Strongly disagree	7 10%	- -	- -	3 20%	- -	4 9%

Table 42: "It was easy to accommodate the student's other commitments"

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	75	5	1	16	6	47
"It was easy to accommodate the student's other commitments"						
Strongly agree	26 35%	2 40%	- -	5 31%	- -	19 40%
Agree	44 59%	3 60%	1 100%	10 63%	5 83%	25 53%
Disagree	4 5%	- -	- -	- -	1 17%	3 6%
Strongly disagree	1 1%	- -	- -	1 6%	- -	- -

Table 43: "I would enter into such an arrangement again"

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	77	6	1	17	6	47
"I would enter into such an arrangement again"						
Strongly agree	44 57%	3 50%	1 100%	8 47%	4 67%	28 60%
Agree	30 39%	3 50%	- -	8 47%	2 33%	17 36%
Disagree	2 3%	- -	- -	- -	- -	2 4%
Strongly disagree	1 1%	- -	- -	1 6%	- -	- -

Table 44: "I would recommend to other businesses/organisations that they should take part in a similar project"

	Total	Missing	Which programme did you take part in?			
		Unspecified programme	Education into Enterprise	e-Placement Scotland	Making the Most of Masters	Third Sector Internships Scotland
Total	76	5	1	17	6	47
"I would recommend to other businesses/organisations that they should take part in a similar project"						
Strongly agree	49 64%	2 40%	1 100%	10 59%	4 67%	32 68%
Agree	24 32%	3 60%	- -	6 35%	2 33%	13 28%
Disagree	2 3%	- -	- -	- -	- -	2 4%
Strongly disagree	1 1%	- -	- -	1 6%	- -	- -