

| <b>A University Process for the Auditing and Mapping of Employability Skills/Attributes</b> |   |                     |          |
|---|---|---------------------|----------|
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## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction .....  | 1  |
| 2. Requirements.....   | 2  |
| 3. What is BUE's definition of employability skills/attributes? <sup>1</sup> .....                 | 2  |
| 4. What are the components of employability skills/attributes? .....                               | 2  |
| 5. Range of employability enhancing activities within the University <sup>1</sup> .....            | 3  |
| 6. Why an Audit? <sup>2</sup> .....  | 4  |
| 7. The process and deadlines .....   | 5  |
| 8. Appendix 1: Employability Audit Tool <sup>2</sup> .....   | 6  |
| 9. Appendix 2: Employability Audit Report .....  | 9  |
| 10. Appendix 3: Employability Skills/Attributes mapped to the CIHE competencies <sup>3</sup> ..... | 10 |
| 11. Appendix 4: Programme Employability Matrix.....  | 14 |
| 12. References .....   | 15 |

## 1. Introduction

BUE's Vision commits the University to providing, *“internationally recognised quality degrees that develop the knowledge and skills to help our students shape and lead their countries.”* Moreover, its Mission is to develop, *“capable graduates, educated to the best UK academic standards, who are independent learners.”*

The University has now graduated 7 cohorts in BAEPS and ICS, 6 cohorts in Engineering and 4 cohorts in Nursing. As the University enters Phase Two of its development, the revised Strategic Plan reconfirms its Vision and Mission whilst also committing it to:

- a. The delivery of a Teaching and Learning Strategy which seeks to embed employability skills/attributes within the curriculum.
- b. The enhancement of a broad Student Experience that includes a growing emphasis on the delivery of an experience which will enhance the employability prospects of BUE graduates.
- c. The development of University wide student support services including Careers, Alumni and Student Activities.
- d. Ensuring that BUE graduates are recognised within the employment market as possessing the required skills and attributes sought by employers.

Furthermore, the University seeks to ensure the effective integration of employability skills/attributes within each of its programmes as outlined in Professor Kirby's document to the UTLC in May 2015. This is based on recognition that employability skills/attributes can be acquired, usually through practice, and which build on the principles of UK HE including:

- a. An experiential approach to learning.
- b. A requirement for students to be autonomous learners.
- c. An expectation that students will work in teams and learn to work with and through each other.

The audit and mapping process outlined in this guidance document seeks to progress the Employability Skills/Attributes agenda across the University to:

- a. Support the development of University wide understandings.
- b. Develop common approaches across programme areas and services.
- c. Identify areas of good practice.
- d. Identify areas for further development.
- e. Ensure that programme teams are able to complete the mapping of employability skills in the next iteration of programme and module changes for LSBU validated programmes.

## 2. Requirements

The University requires all programme teams to complete four actions:

- a. **Understanding:** To begin to foster common understandings of employability issues amongst staff and students as well as between programme and service teams.
- b. **Audit:** To complete a programme audit.
- c. **Report:** To produce a short 1 page report to highlight current strengths, areas for development and actions to be taken.
- d. **Mapping:** To identify how each module contributes to the development of employability skills/attributes.

## 3. What is BUE's definition of employability skills/attributes? <sup>1</sup>

Employability has many definitions and they break down into two broad groups. The first relate to the ability of the student to get (and retain and develop in) a job after graduation. The other set are concerned with enhancing the students' attributes (skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities) and ultimately with empowering the student as a critical life-long learner (Hillage and Pollard, 1998; Harvey, 2001).

Employability skills/attributes development therefore includes:

- a. Embedding and the development of employability skills/attributes within the curriculum.
- b. Provision of work experience opportunities.
- c. The development of self-promotional and career management skills.
- d. A willingness to learn and reflect on learning.

## 4. What are the components of employability skills/attributes?

Whilst there is no strict definition of employability skills/attributes they are often referred to as transferrable skills and, in the UK, enterprise skills. They include the following components:

a. **Personal attributes including:**

- Adaptability
- Self-motivation
- Self-management
- Cultural awareness
- Honesty and integrity

b. **Functional skills including:**

- Effective use of language
- Effective use of numbers
- Effective use of IT

c. **Personal skills including:**

- Problem-solving
- Working together
- Understanding the organisation
- Leadership
- Innovation

Diagram 1 summarises the different components of employability skills.<sup>1</sup>

Each of these components can be further defined to identify the underpinning skills that support their achievement. A range of generic underpinning skills have been outlined by the UK's *Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE)*\* and which reflect some of the key competencies that employers most value when recruiting. The CIHE competencies are listed in Appendix 1.

It is hoped that programme teams will find these useful when mapping employability skills/attributes to their programme and module specifications because they begin to outline the range of employability skills/attributes graduates need to demonstrate. It should be recognised that this list of employability skills/attributes is not definitive, and should be revised and updated to reflect the requirements of particular employment sectors.

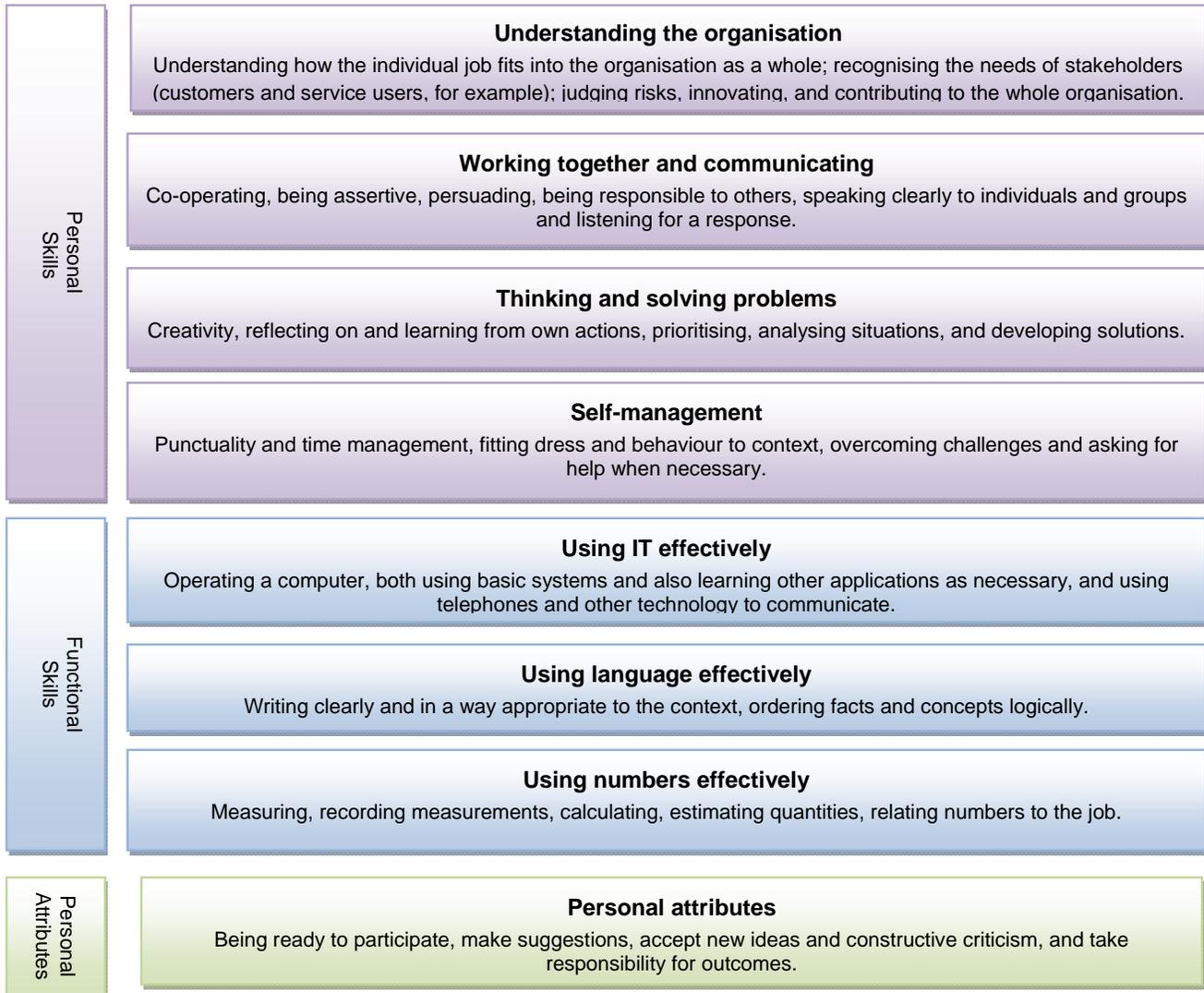
## **5. Range of employability enhancing activities within the University <sup>1</sup>**

As the University enters Phase 2 of its development, consideration needs to be given as to how employability enhancing activities will be developed. They include four broad categories:

- a. **Embedded skills/attributes development in the programme of study** - Often as the result of modifications to curricula to make skills/attribute development explicit or to accommodate employer inputs.
- b. **Provision of work experience opportunities** - Within, or external to the programme of study.
- c. **Personal Development Planning (PDP)** - Enabled reflection on and recording of experience, attribute development and achievement alongside academic abilities.

- d. **Central support** - Usually via the agency of careers services for undergraduates and graduates in their search for work.
- e. **Input from employers, alumni and stakeholders** – Usually via employer liaison groups and alumni departments.

\* The UK National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) was launched in April 2013 and builds on the twenty-five year history of predecessor body the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE).



**Diagram 1 – Components of employability skills <sup>a</sup>**

## 6. Why an Audit? <sup>2</sup>

An audit is a good way to initiate discussion and development on an issue. It enables teams to make clear the range of activities which may contribute to the issue and the process can reassure colleagues that quite a lot of work may already be developed in the area.

The process can also recognise local autonomy and priorities, within an institutional frame-work, and can:

- a. Encourage development of a strategic plan to clarify how employability can be developed in relation to a particular discipline;
- b. Identify how far and in what area development should take place;
- c. Provide recognition to existing activity which contributes effectively.

However an audit also serves broader purposes. These include to:

- a. Raise awareness by staff of practice in general and of the institution's plans.
- b. Reveal or clarify links between the aspect being audited and plans and strategies in other areas.
- c. Engage a wider constituency within the academic community and relevant stakeholders.
- d. Facilitate dialogue and development within and between teaching teams and service areas.

The purpose of this audit is developmental, not simply to come up with an overall score for the programme. It is designed to help teams to:

- a. Consider the content and design of their programme with respect to the issue of employability.
- b. Identify where they could improve the programme to better address this issue.
- c. Agree specific issues that they will take forward as part of their Teaching and Learning Plan.

## 7. The process and deadlines

- a. **December: Audit and mapping process agreed**  
Define what is meant by employability and seek to make this explicit at an institutional and at a programme level and with all students. Agree deadlines.
- b. **January: Programme audit - (Appendix 1)**  
Programme teams carry out employability audit.
- c. **February: Employability report to F/DTLC and UTLC - (Appendix 2)**  
Submission and discussion of programme teams' audit reports.
- d. **February: Mapping employability skills/attributes to the programme's modules - (Appendices 3 & 4)**  
Programme team identify which employability skills/attributes are embedded within which module.
- e. **W/b 16 April: F/DTLC Scrutiny and approval of Programme and module changes**  
2016/17 Programme and Modules approved.

## 8. Appendix 1: Employability Audit Tool <sup>2</sup>

Adapted from - <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/mapping-employability-toolkit>

### How to use the Audit

The audit should be carried out with respect to the totality of provision within a programme.

The numeric scoring system allows for the situation where an issue might be addressed but only superficially or at the wrong time. Only score 4 if you believe the programme optimally deals with the audit point.

In the various aspects of the programme score (0-4) for each of the audit points depending on how closely you believe these audit points are optimally achieved in the programme being audited. Make a judgement and score accordingly. Think about it from the student's point of view as well as that of the programme team.

| Score | Descriptor  |
|-------|---|
| 0     | Score 0 if the audit point has not been seriously considered at all.                                |
| 1     | Score 1 if the audit point has been considered but reflection indicates it is poorly satisfied.     |
| 2     | Score 2 if the audit point has been considered but reflection indicates it is partially satisfied.  |
| 3     | Score 3 if the audit point has been considered and reflection indicates it is adequately satisfied. |
| 4     | Score 4 if the audit point has been considered and reflection indicates it is optimally satisfied.  |

### Using the results of the Audit

Having completed the employability audit you should analyse each of the audit points with a score of 2 or less:

- a. What possible options could be envisaged which would satisfy the audit point?
- b. Do resource or other constraints make any of these options unrealistic?
- c. At what point in the programme could appropriate changes be made?
- d. Which changes would most benefit employability aspects of the programme?
- e. Can a realistic action plan be formulated to introduce these changes into the programme before the next intake of students?

Issues to consider:

- Are there potential quick wins? There may be something that you or your colleagues could do very easily that would not cost a lot in terms of resources or time.
- Are there changes that require longer term planning? Does the change require agreement of others/resource allocation/time to implement?
- Collect all your action points and record them in the Audit Report.
- Having instituted changes as a result of the audit the process should be repeated in 12-24 months.

## The Employability Audit <sup>2</sup>

| <b>Graduate employment</b>   | <b>Score</b> |
|--|--------------|
| Do academic staff know who actually employs your graduates?  |              |
| Has graduate employment destination data been circulated to academic staff within the last 2 years?  |              |
| Do current students know who employs graduates from this programme?                                  |              |
| Do recent graduates visit to talk about their current jobs?  |              |
| Are students made aware of where they can obtain information on graduate destinations in employment? |              |
| Are students aware at an early stage of the employment opportunities open to them?                   |              |

| <b>Career-path development</b>  | <b>Score</b> |
|---|--------------|
| Are visitors giving research talks encouraged to reveal their own career paths? |              |
| Are graduate career profiles available to students?                             |              |
| Do recent graduates visit to talk about their career paths?                     |              |
| Do more senior graduates visit to talk about their career paths?                |              |
| Are students explicitly taught career management skills?                        |              |

| <b>Relationships with employers</b>   | <b>Score</b> |
|---|--------------|
| Have you made potential employers aware of the skills your students develop?  |              |
| Is your institution/programme on the list of favoured institutions with important employers?                              |              |
| Do you know what employers perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of your students?                                  |              |
| Do students have the opportunity to visit local employers?  |              |
| Do you have good communication with major employers of your graduates?  |              |
| Do employers visit your programme to give talks about employment opportunities?   |              |
| Do employers attend any student final year project presentations?   |              |
| Do you know what skills, knowledge and attitudes your major employers see as becoming more important in the next 4 years? |              |

| <b>Options for work experience</b>  | <b>Score</b> |
|---|--------------|
| Are work experience opportunities provided/encouraged during vacations?   |              |
| Are internships provided/encouraged as part of the programme?   |              |
| Are overseas placements possible and encouraged for students?   |              |
| Are realistic simulations used to give experience of real work situations?  |              |
| Do some students carry out project work in real settings with employers?  |              |
| Are work placements available in areas not involving your specific discipline?  |              |
| What proportion of students on your programme have obtained work experience before graduation? (0=don't know; 1=<5%; 2=5 to 20%; 3=20 to 50%; 4=>50%) |              |
| Are students on work placements supported by a process which encourages reflection and emphasises breadth of learning opportunities?                  |              |

| <b>Does your curriculum promote employability?</b>                            | <b>Score</b> |
|---|--------------|
| Do you know specifically what employers are looking for in graduates?         |              |
| Have employers reviewed your curriculum and provided feedback on its content? |              |
| Are generic skills (e.g. communication, group working, IT) explicitly taught? |              |
| Are generic skills assessed?  |              |
| Is there a skills matrix which is completed by each student?                  |              |
| Are subject-specific skills taught and practiced?                             |              |
| Are subject-specific skills assessed?   |              |

| <b>Does your curriculum promote employability?</b>   | <b>Score</b> |
|--|--------------|
| Can you detect any of your students who are not numerate?  |              |
| Do you assess ability to write clear, concise, correct English?  |              |
| Are key skills and employability issues in the relevant QAA benchmarking statement incorporated in your curriculum?  |              |
| Do students have a choice of modules or choice of work areas within a module so they can tailor the content of their programme to their perceived needs/interests? |              |
| Are appropriate professional attitudes developed and discussed with students?  |              |
| Have you identified where work related learning activities take place in the programme and are these made explicit to students?                                    |              |
| Have opportunities to increase work related learning in the programme been identified and taken?   |              |
| Are all students given a basic grounding in ethics within the discipline field?  |              |

| <b>Are students helped in obtaining and developing careers?</b>                     | <b>Score</b> |
|---|--------------|
| Is a PDP portfolio maintained throughout the programme?                             |              |
| Is reflection on and review of achievements actively promoted within the programme? |              |
| Do students get help with producing/improving a CV?                                 |              |
| Do students get help with letters of application for employment?                    |              |
| Is help with module choice available in each year?                                  |              |

| <b>Extra-curricula activity</b>  | <b>Score</b> |
|--|--------------|
| Is the contribution of extra-curricula activity to CV and skills development explained to students early in the programme? |              |
| Are extra-curricula activities and responsibilities recorded by your students?   |              |
| Are extra-curricula activities known to staff (e.g. personal tutors)?  |              |
| Are arrangements in place to encourage voluntary work by students?   |              |

| <b>General</b>  | <b>Score</b> |
|---|--------------|
| Is there an effective relationship between the programme team and your Careers Service?   |              |
| Are students explicitly guided in the programme to make contact with the Careers Service?   |              |
| Do you know the name of the Careers Adviser associated with your subject?   |              |
| Are your students encouraged to have confidence and high aspirations?   |              |
| Do staff generally have access to full information about a student's programme and extra-curricula performance (e.g. student's CV) when writing references? |              |
| Have you considered employability in the context of disability?   |              |

**9. Appendix 2: Employability Audit Report**

**Programme title:**

**Date:**

**Report completed by:**

Once the Audit has been completed, please complete a short one page report that should be presented to the FTLC and UTLC.

**1. Current Strengths**

*Please list the current strengths of the programme:*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**2. Areas for development**

*Please list the areas for development that the programme has identified:*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**3. Actions to be included in the Departmental and Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategies**

*Please list the actions that the programme team will include in its Departmental and Faculty Teaching and Learning Strategies:*

| #     | Action | By who | By when | Success criteria | Progress |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|------------------|----------|
| Theme |        |        |         |                  |          |
|       |        |        |         |                  |          |
|       |        |        |         |                  |          |
|       |        |        |         |                  |          |
|       |        |        |         |                  |          |
|       |        |        |         |                  |          |
|       |        |        |         |                  |          |
|       |        |        |         |                  |          |
|       |        |        |         |                  |          |

## 10. Appendix 3: Employability Skills/Attributes mapped to the CIHE competencies <sup>3</sup>

***This module will provide opportunities for students to:***

### **A PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**

*Being ready to participate, make suggestions, accept new ideas and constructive criticism, and take responsibility for outcomes.*

#### **Adaptability and flexibility**

A1 Understand the importance of adaptability to ensure their ongoing effectiveness in an ever changing environment.

#### **Achievement orientation**

A2 Understand the importance of maintaining and inspiring a results driven approach that focuses on achieving results and critical performance.

#### **Tolerance for stress**

A3 Understand the importance of maintaining performance under pressure.

#### **Provide and respond to constructive criticism**

A4 Understand the importance of providing constructive criticism as well as responding appropriately to criticism.

#### **Self-motivation**

A5 Understand the importance of being self-motivated in order to progress the area of work.

#### **Honesty and integrity**

A6 Understand the importance of acting with honesty and integrity.

#### **Other**

A7

### **B FUNCTIONAL SKILLS**

#### **B1 USING NUMBERS EFFECTIVELY**

##### **Using numbers**

B.1.1 Apply a wide range of numerical and statistical skills to solve complex problems.

##### **Other**

B.1.2

#### **B2 USING LANGUAGE EFFECTIVELY**

##### **Written communication**

B.2.1 Express ideas effectively and convey information, appropriately and accurately.

##### **Verbal communication**

B.2.2 Develop the skills required to express their ideas clearly and confidently in speech.

## Listening

- B.2.3 Demonstrate effective listening skills and to use a range of verbal and non verbal signals to show that information is received and is understood.

## Other

B.2.4

## B3 USING IT EFFECTIVELY

### Using applications

- B.3.1 Carry out a range of complex ICT activities related to their work that involve application software.

### Accessing information

- B.3.2 Find information in different formats from a range of local or remote data sources.

## Other

B.3.3

## C PERSONAL SKILLS

### C1 SELF MANAGEMENT

*Punctuality and time management, fitting dress and behaviour to context, overcoming challenges and asking for help when necessary.*

#### Professional expertise

- C.1.1 Keep up to date with developments in own areas of professional specialisation.

#### Initiative

- C.1.2 Demonstrate initiative in order to identify opportunities and to be proactive in putting forward ideas and potential solutions.

#### Self awareness

- C.1.3 Develop self awareness including an awareness of achievements, abilities, values and weaknesses.

#### Image

- C.1.4 Understand the importance of presenting a professional and positive image to others at all times, consistent with all people (colleagues, management, peers and customers).

#### Time management

- C1.5 Demonstrate effective time management to manage time effectively so as to prioritise tasks and to work to deadlines.

#### Lifelong learning and development

- C.1.6 Recognise the importance of developing the skills and competencies of self, peers and colleagues through learning and development activities relating to current and future roles.

## Other

C.1.7

## **C2 THINKING AND SOLVING PROBLEMS**

*Creativity, reflecting on and learning from own actions, prioritising, analysing situations, and developing solutions.*

### **Creativity**

C.2.1 Generate imaginative ideas that can be applied to different situations.

### **Planning and organisation**

C.2.2 Demonstrate effective planning, prioritisation and organisation to plan activities and carry them through effectively.

### **Analysis**

C.2.3 To analyse situations by gathering information systematically to establish facts and principles and to use this to solve problems.

### **Judgement**

C.2.4 To demonstrate effective judgement by determining the most appropriate course of action and to draw conclusions that are based on logical assumptions that reflect factual information.

### **Decision making**

C.2.5 Make decisions by determining the best course of action and evaluating different options based on logic and fact in order to present solutions.

### **Decisiveness**

C.2.6 Demonstrate determination to get things done and to constantly looking for better ways of doing things.

### **Other**

C.2.7

## **C3 WORKING TOGETHER AND COMMUNICATING**

*Co-operating, being assertive, persuading, being responsible to others, speaking clearly to individuals and groups and listening for a response.*

### **Influencing**

C.3.1 Influence others by expressing self effectively in a group and in one-to-one situations.

### **Team working**

C.3.2 Demonstrate effective team working by building and developing appropriate relationships with academic staff, peers, colleagues and people within the organisation.

### **Leadership**

C.3.3 Demonstrate effective leadership by taking responsibility for the directions and actions of a team and to provide team members with motivation.

### **Interpersonal sensitivity**

C.3.4 Recognise and respect different perspectives and to appreciate the benefits of being open to the ideas and views of others.

### **Global skills**

C.3.5 Demonstrate their global awareness including an ability to speak and understand other languages as well as appreciation and understanding of other cultures.

### **Other**

C.3.6

## **C4 UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANISATION**

*Understanding how the individual job fits into the organisation as a whole; recognising the needs of stakeholders (customers and service users, for example); judging risks, innovating, and contributing to the whole organisation.*

### **Organisational understanding**

C.4.1 Understand an organisation's work environment, internal politics, business objectives and strategy.

### **Commercial awareness**

C.4.2 Understand the business benefits and commercial realities from both an organisation's and customer's perspective.

### **Financial awareness**

C.4.3 Understand basic financial terms used in organisations and to be able to construct and maintain simple financial records.

### **Organisational sensitivity**

C.4.4 Be aware the effect of his or her actions on other parts of the organisation and to adopt a mature, direct, up-front style in dealing with conflict.

### **Other**

C.4.5

**11. Appendix 4: Programme Employability Matrix**

Please use the matrix (possibly using Excel) to map employability skills/attributes for all years of the Programme.

|       |      | A                   |   |   |   |   |   |   | B1        |   | B2             |   |   |   | B3       |   |   | C1              |   |   |   |   |   |   | C2                            |   |   |   |   |   |   | C3                                 |   |   |   |   |   | C4                             |   |   |   |   |
|-------|------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|---|----------------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|       |      | Personal Attributes |   |   |   |   |   |   | Using Nos |   | Using language |   |   |   | Using IT |   |   | Self management |   |   |   |   |   |   | Thinking and solving problems |   |   |   |   |   |   | Working together and communicating |   |   |   |   |   | Understanding the organisation |   |   |   |   |
| Level | Code | 1                   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1         | 2 | 1              | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1        | 2 | 3 | 1               | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1                             | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1                                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1                              | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| P     |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |
|       |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |
|       |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |
|       |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |
|       |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |
|       |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |
|       |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |
|       |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |
|       |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |
|       |      |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |   |                |   |   |   |          |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |                                |   |   |   |   |

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University of Kent – Careers and Employability Service - <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/top-ten-skills.htm>

### Note

Sections marked <sup>1</sup> have been adapted/taken from - Employability and Diversity, Lee Harvey, Centre for Research and Evaluation, Sheffield Hallam University

Sections marked <sup>2</sup> have been adapted/taken from - *Welcome to the Toolkit for Mapping Employability.*

Sections marked <sup>3</sup> have been adapted/taken from - Student employability profiles - A guide for higher education practitioners, Claire Rees, Peter Forbes, Bianca Kubler - The Higher Education Academy – September 2006

Sections marked <sup>3</sup> have been adapted/taken from - The Employability Challenge, UK Commission for Employability and Skills, 2009