

Employability Strategy

Document Summary

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1: Aims of the Employability Strategy

The aim of this strategy is to develop the qualities and skills of students relevant to the current labour market and to help ensure each student is work-ready.

In addition, we aim to provide effective support for students – increasing employability provision is expected to improve student support through an enhanced focus on developing skills and personal qualities demanded by the labour market, including a propensity to lifelong learning. Increasing employability provision is also expected to positively affect student outcomes through an increase in student engagement.

2: Background

The strategy seeks to take forward activities relating to the development of the employability of our students, including self-employment. In the context of this strategy, employability is used to describe the achievements and capability, for each student, which are formed through the integration of knowledge, skills, experiences and attributes from the academic curriculum and co-curricular activities needed to gain employment and successful career options.

The strategy uses as a measure of success improvements in the employment of our students but it is recognised that wider career options are equally important for some students and therefore improvements in the rates of employment following certification should not be seen as the only valuable outcome.

The College aims to integrate the academic curricular with the co-curricular as the whole student experience developing each students' skills and attributes. This model is followed in this strategy, involving both academic and pastoral elements, ensuring that employability is the responsibility of the College as a whole. This means that everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the development of our students' employability, be that through the support for individual students, provision of information and awareness raising, the provision of opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge and the practice of skills or through the engagement by students with the range of opportunities provided.

3: The student journey

The strategy is organised around the student journey in considering their career options.

Students must:

- **Decide** - what is it I want to do?
- **Plan** - how can I secure the skills and attributes to secure the career path I've decided upon?
- **Compete** - how can I compete to make sure I get the career I've planned for (or develop alternative pathways)?

4: To deliver this strategy we will:

- Foster a culture in which work-related skills and experience are highly valued by all
- Offer a curriculum with opportunities for work-related skills to be developed
- Offer a curriculum with opportunities for work experience where appropriate
- Continually develop best practice in teaching and learning which enables the development of work-related skills for all
- Provide opportunities for developing personal skills, confidence and experience vital for future employment
- Work closely with employers in curriculum development and establishing work experience opportunities.

5: Foundations (adapted from the BTEC HNs Level 4/5 Business Specifications Issue 2 June 2021 by Pearson – latest version found here:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/business-2021.html>. The foundation for employability at The City College is to deliver units with strong employability skills within each programme. This provides all students with the opportunity to acquire honed employability skills required for effective employment.

All students require honed employability skills as a prerequisite to entering the job market. This unit gives learners an opportunity to assess and develop an understanding of their own responsibilities and performance in, or when entering, the workplace.

It considers the skills required for general employment, such as interpersonal and transferable skills, and the dynamics of working with others in teams or groups including leadership and communication skills.

It also deals with the everyday working requirement of problem solving, which includes the identification or specification of the 'problem', strategies for its solution and then evaluation of the results through reflective practices.

On successful completion of this our students will:

5.1: Be able to determine own responsibilities and performance.

This covers:

- Own responsibilities: personal responsibility; direct and indirect relationships and adaptability, decision-making processes and skills; ability to learn and develop within the work role; employment legislation, ethics, employment rights and responsibilities
- Performance objectives: setting and monitoring performance objectives
- Individual appraisal systems: uses of performance appraisals e.g. salary levels and bonus payments, promotion strengths and weaknesses, training needs; communication; appraisal criteria e.g. production data, personnel data, judgemental data; rating methods e.g. ranking, paired comparison, checklist, management by objectives
- Motivation and performance: application and appraisal of motivational theories and techniques, rewards and incentives, manager's role, self-motivational factors.

Students will be able to:

- develop a set of own responsibilities and performance objectives
- evaluate own effectiveness against defined objectives
- make recommendations for improvement
- review how motivational techniques can be used to improve quality of performance.

5.2: Be able to develop interpersonal and transferable skills

This covers:

- Effective communication: verbal and non-verbal – awareness and use of body language, openness and responsiveness, formal and informal feedback to and from colleagues; ICT as an effective communication medium; team meetings
- Interpersonal skills: personal effectiveness; working with others; use of initiative; negotiating skills; assertiveness skills; social skills
- Time management: prioritising workload; setting work objectives; making and keeping appointments; working steadily rather than erratically; time for learning; reliable estimate of task time
- Problem solving: problem analysis; researching changes in the workplace; generating solutions; choosing a solution.

Students will be able to:

- develop solutions to work-based problems
- communicate in a variety of styles and appropriate manner at various levels and identify effective time-management strategies.

5.3: Understand the dynamics of working with others

This covers:

- Working with others: nature and dynamics of team and group work; informal and formal settings, purpose of teams and groups e.g. long-term corporate objectives/strategy; problem solving and short-term development projects; flexibility/adaptability; team player
- Teams and team building: selecting team members e.g. specialist roles, skill and style/approach mixes; identification of team/work group roles; stages in team development e.g. team building, identity, loyalty, commitment to shared beliefs, team health evaluation; action planning; monitoring and feedback; coaching skills; ethics; effective leadership skills, e.g. setting direction, setting standards, motivating, innovative, responsive, effective communicator, reliability, consistency.

Students will be able to:

- explain the roles people play in a team and how they can work together to achieve shared goals
- analyse team dynamics
- suggest alternative ways to complete tasks and achieve team goals.

5.4: Be able to develop strategies for problem solving.

This covers:

- Specification of the problem: definition of the problem; analysis and clarification
- Identification of possible outcomes: identification and assessment of various alternative outcomes
- Tools and methods: problem-solving methods and tools
- Plan and implement: sources of information; solution methodologies; selection and implementation of the best corrective action e.g. timescale, stages, resources, critical path analysis
- Evaluation: evaluation of whether the problem was solved or not; measurement of solution against specification and desired outcomes; sustainability.

Students will be able to:

- evaluate tools and methods for developing solutions to problems
- develop an appropriate strategy for resolving a particular problem
- evaluate the potential impact on the business of implementing the strategy.

6: Study Skills support

This is integrated into the programme and designed to help the students achieve their employment goals. During this period the students are expected to actively participate and develop their confidence. The activities include:

- Public speaking
- Role-play for mock interview
- Where and how to look for work (we do signpost to NCAS)
- How to write CVs
- How to write effective covering letters
- How to address people during the interview
- What to wear at an interview.

The above are some of the important and most useful activities but the College also holds one-to-one meetings with students to help make sure their particular requirements are catered for in developing their career opportunities.

7: Themes – Employability and Careers provision

Three themes have been identified as the current focus in the College's Employability Strategy and will be delivered by a series of guest speakers/ experts:

- Working in Your Sector – The Possibilities and the Pitfalls
- Building a Career in Your Sector
- Ethics: The Balance of Professional and Personal Considerations in the Workplace.

8: Opportunities for Employability and Careers

These are identified in the Employability and Careers Events which are held at the College.