



TAMPERE UNIVERSITY  
OF APPLIED SCIENCES

# Undergraduate & graduate performance development in UK Higher Education

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Undergraduate & Graduate Performance Development in UK Higher Education

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TAMK University of Applied Science offers degree courses in English and prepares students for challenging work roles in diverse business and public service organizations. Economic and cultural development increase the diversity of learning environment challenges. Planning, aided with insight and awareness of competitor practices can achieve improved levels of performance. This work will also address themes of branding and adding value to an organization.

TAMK Floworks is the development hub for technical solutions for the university and is currently working with the Social Services & Health faculty to improve the performance pathway. Healthcare undergraduates, for example, must regularly complete supervised periods of Practical Training (PT) placement and comply with comprehensive regulatory requirements, including documenting progress and learning outcomes. This thesis provides an overview of PT practices and UK HE operations; featuring leading technical solutions that have been implemented to date.

Key words: communication, competition, partnerships, social mobility, strategy,

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## **GLOSSARY**

<b>AGR</b>	Association of Graduate Recruiters
<b>CIPD</b>	The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
<b>CRA</b>	Centre for Recording Achievement
<b>e-PDP</b>	Electronic Personal Development Program
<b>e-portfolio</b>	Electronic portfolio
<b>HE</b>	Higher education
<b>PDP</b>	Personal Development Planning
<b>PSRB</b>	Professional Standards Regulating Body
<b>RMP</b>	RateMyPlacement
<b>TAMK</b>	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
<b>THES</b>	Times Higher Educational Supplement
<b>UCU</b>	University & College Union
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose of the thesis**

The initial thesis proposal began during discussion with Mr Jussi Hannunen, TAMK Floworks, on the development potential needs in Practical Training. Evaluation of research and practical professional practices in other EU institutions was also cited as beneficial in evaluating strategy and technological development opportunities.

Practical Training (PT) is a mandatory requirement of TAMK degree courses and is therefore an integral element of degree studies; there is a high level of potential benefit for adding value to the institution via holistic development and integration. The role of technology delivering ‘needs-specific’ solutions was also elected as a key reference.

An underlying research principle originated from PEST analysis methodology, providing the frame of (Political, Economic, Social and Technological) references for analytical structure. The thesis research also reflects information used in McKinsey’s 7S model; consideration has been principally given to the three ‘hard’ elements (Strategy, Structure & Systems) that are more readily evaluated. The thesis has been written to develop awareness of United Kingdom Higher Education (HE) practices, evaluating the effects of changes at both micro and macro levels. The intention is to provide a detailed account of growth potential and benefits of building the importance of professional development structure & systems within TAMK.

## **1.2 TAMK Floworks**

Thesis commissioner TAMK Floworks is the development hub of TAMK University of Applied Sciences. Floworks is tasked with improving the efficacy and quality of educational services within TAMK.

Floworks also provide partnerships for developing digitalized teaching and learning within the institution. The development hub was awarded the European Centre of Excellence quality certificate, intended to promote use of Web 2.0 in education and work, in January 2015.

The department is keen to explore potential for developing new tech solutions to improve effectiveness of both teaching and learning.

## **1.3 Objective of the thesis**

The objective of the thesis is to provide an overview of the research and stages of development in Practical Training (professional development) from another higher education environment, to deliver an alternative perspective. The thesis aims to deliver detailed examinations via case study examples, highlighting individual institutional practices and innovation within regulated HE.

The objective has been framed within contextual frameworks; this seeks to maintain the focus of development for both individuals and groups (at both micro and macro levels).

## **2 Thesis plan**

### **2.1 Scope of the thesis**

The thesis examines the role of Practical Training from a variety of different stakeholder perspectives. Within the thesis research exists a varied nomenclature; however the focus remains upon the fundamental principles of teaching and learning the (transferable) skills that will be required in professional life. The thesis scope is on both the short and longer term objectives, the micro and macro environments, internal and external operations & communications; addressing the wide diversity and variety of challenges.

The questions addressed for the thesis commissioner are:

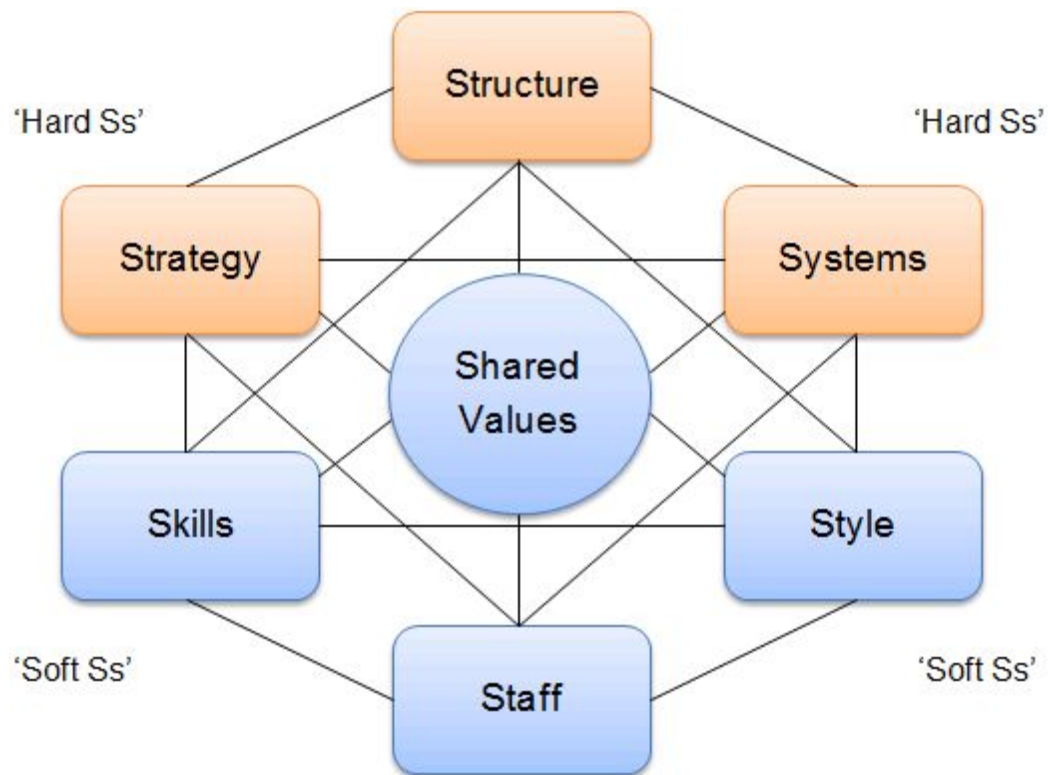
How do UK Higher Education institutions prepare students for internship?

How do UK institutions develop and strengthen internship experiences for stakeholders?

### **2.2 Concepts and theory**

The thesis evaluates UK HE and varied elements are combined to focus on a holistic concept. The theory examines achieving improved outcomes via the benefits of technological implementation(s) for stakeholders. The thesis considers both the value of education and values within education. The the reader will made aware of key developments in UK HE. Methodology for this thesis is desk-top research from secondary data sources.

### 2.2.1 McKinsey's 7S model



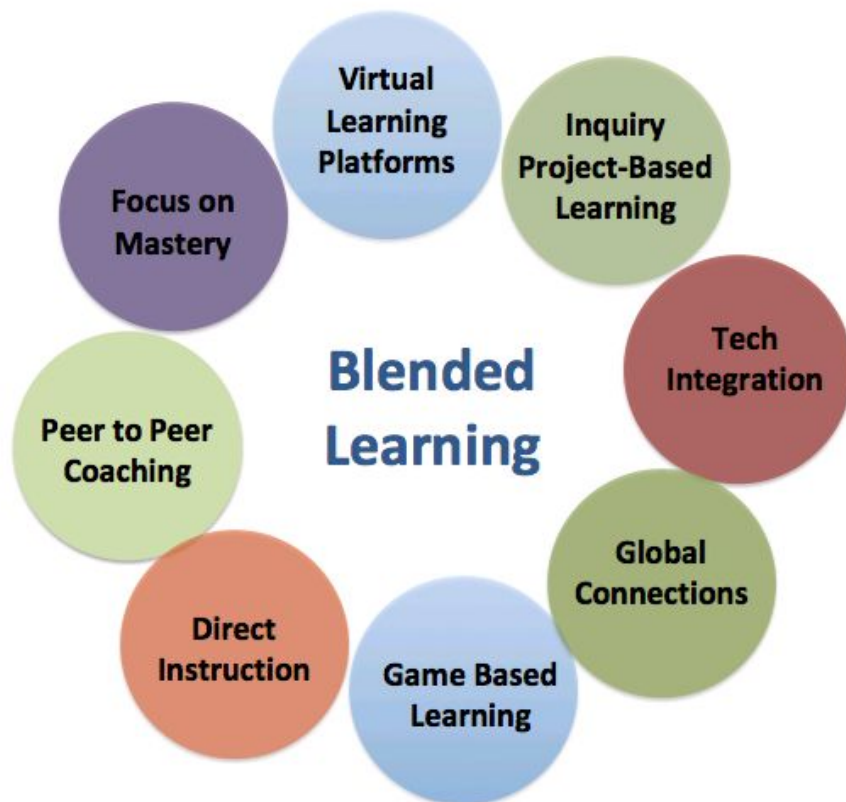
Source: [www.strategicmanagementinsight.com](http://www.strategicmanagementinsight.com) January 2016

The thesis incorporates case study examples of specific institutional practices. These examples affirm a unity of movement and progressive development in the last decade. Organisational analysis evaluates sustainability; building partnerships and communication networks that facilitate valid professional skills development for stakeholders. The case study selections also identify leading institutional strategies to improve Structure, Strategy and Systems for Practical Training.

The above organisational construction and framework is an important fundamental for this thesis.

### 2.2.2 Internship & professional development

TAMK degree courses require (mandatory) completion of a practical training period during the penultimate study year. The period is intended to require the student to apply the knowledge that has been acquired during the degree course. Barriers to professional development represent missed learning opportunities. Defining the barriers can aid development of a Blended Learning strategy that incorporates the role of technology into a broader and flexible learning platform. A fundamental difference between UK and Finnish academic practice is the extent to which Practical Training in the UK is increasingly important. The Blended Learning model is used by UK HE institutions and as a key development strategy by many leading UK companies.



Source: [www.techlearning.com](http://www.techlearning.com) January 2016

Practical training requires the student to cross a boundary between school and work into a new environment, however the experience may also be too infrequent or unsupervised. There is therefore a strong case to carefully consider the frequency, duration and supervision of training. An increase in the training will produce more learning opportunities. Research supports improved outcomes by developing environments where 'student learning be increasingly self directed and autonomous'. (Heckman R et.al. 2015, page 13)

Research and analysis of UK HE affirms strong development in the frequency of supervised training, many institutions developing a pathway concept to facilitate academic and professional growth stages. The boundary between student and professional has reduced and provides opportunities for increased professional learning opportunities. Technology can increasingly offer quicker solutions and the relevant 'just in time' compared to decreasingly relevant 'just in case' learning. (Feist L, 2003 page 34-6)

2015 has seen a major move towards growth of undergraduate development with an anticipated 8% increase; the third consecutive annual increase.

According to Martin Burchall, Managing Director at High Fliers Research, leading UK employers would be providing over 13,000 paid internships, work or placements in 2015 (Richardson H, 2015)

Currently more than 80% of leading graduate recruiters offer paid work experience programmes for undergraduates and recent graduates. Research estimates over 13,000 internships will be available during 2015.

There is also an increasing trend to develop and offer undergraduate work experience familiarization for first-year UK undergraduates and graduate recruitment is predicted to reach its highest level for a decade. The UK graduate job market is currently buoyant.

Applicants with little or no relevant work experience are however highly unlikely to secure employment in their field of expertise.

Many, including UK Universities minister Greg Clark, see increases in investment in undergraduate development essential to develop the best route into a rewarding career.

Academic and professional development progress is also important, the HE institution must deliver adult learning opportunities that directly support needs and address immediate problems/situations. (Feist L, 2003) There is a combination of factors that is prompting UK HE reforms and producing a structure that aims to deliver a lifelong learning community and culture. UK HE is a useful comparison due to belonging to the EU and sharing the culture and spirit of the commission to meet common objectives and benchmarks of ET2020, for example.

The common objectives of ET2020 also present an opportunity for HE institutions to develop systems that will accurately monitor relevant performance measurement metrics and statistics. Performance targets can be clearly defined and institutions able to plan both individual and collective objectives. Accurate monitoring and information updates are key to making progress. Visualisation can improve using technology to improve communication of objectives and develop professional focus and objectivity.

Improved understanding of UK HE practices will impart a developed picture of the landscape and the important focal points that form the picture. The blend of UK stakeholders is increasingly diverse and continues to expand; the result of increasing emphasis on internationalization and diversity.

Exploring this educational environment will also demonstrate the role that internships (practical training) are playing in UK HE and the consequences at both macro and micro levels. Other variations include the proportion of university funding from public spending - comparing UK to Finland - that is vastly different. 2011 figures show Finland spent 95.9% on tertiary institutions compared to UK 30.2%.

The potential introduction of tuition fees, for non-EU students, may have a negative impact on, among other factors, internationalization; reducing the diversity of foreign students. (yle.news *Universities follow suit* 3.2.2016) The political developments may promote deeper consideration of cost-benefit analyses and therefore arguably closer scrutiny of educational benefits on offer. Introduction of tuition fees will dictate a competitive strategy to attract fee-paying undergraduates.

UK HE continues to attract increasing numbers of foreign students, despite charging tuition fees, with a combination of development strategies that address the perceived needs for internationalization and innovative leadership. There is indeed a case to suggest that the perceived negative of charging tuition fees may be offset by delivering and marketing other measurable benefits. There is a strong argument not to overlook potential opportunities and benefit from innovative early-adoption to and from changes that may be initially perceived as negative.

### **2.2.3 Internship stakeholders**

The stakeholders may be initially conceived as the HE institution and third party (public/private sector) organisations. This simplistic model can be contextualised to interactions within international companies, where the stakeholders include: customers, consumers, societies, communities, suppliers, governments etc. The stakeholder parties include a wide range of interests, from a single undergraduate to interests of national government and economy. This overview conveys a number of examples of key UK stakeholders; also explored later in more detail.

A meaningful and mutually beneficial internship - the preferred option for all stakeholders - will rely upon mutual agreement (terms & conditions) and mutual respect (compliance). Recognition of these expectations creates a demand for governance or management to ensure good practice and compliance to defined quality control (performance) levels. This (data) communication need offers the potential for development of IT tools to communicate the data to a portal that can provide valuable and timely performance data.

#### **AGR (Association of Graduate Recruiters)**

AGR, founded in 1968, is one example of an internship stakeholder that aims to recruit and develop the best student talent for the benefit of all stakeholders (members, students & UK economy).

Operational activities are driven toward achieving AGR's vision:

"Every employer's success is maximised by full access to student talent."

(AGR Positioning paper *Recruitment of Non-EU International Students into the UK* September 2015, page 3)

AGR's corporate values, which determine professional conduct, are published as:

#### Leading edge

- Pro-active, innovative and challenging
- Engaging and inspirational

#### An independent voice

- Objective and impartial
- Transparent and even-handed
- Constructive and balanced

#### Authoritative

- Well-informed and credible
- Highly visible

#### Collaborative

- Accessible and inclusive
- Listen, respect and respond to the members' views
- Customer focused and quality driven
- Act with integrity

### **RateMyPlacement**

The outcome of an undergraduate team that identified how the needs of undergraduate students could be better served, with the aid of social-media interactions. Building on an emerging culture of peer-to-peer reviews, with business and educational institution involvement, a positive and transparent process develops a culture of mutual and ethical professional development via innovative entrepreneurship.

### **UK Universities**

Universities have responded to the changing demands from both domestic and non-domestic organisations for undergraduates with both theoretical knowledge and the skills and experience gained from work placements. HE institutions are increasingly developing co-operation with third-parties to build entities that will provide a learning culture for longer term growth and prosperity.

### **UK employers**

Businesses are net beneficiaries of closer working relationships with HE institutions and faculties that are relevant to their business operations. The UK undergraduate supply is highly valued and organisations have become increasingly aware of the benefits of creating networks to communicate with people. Many companies are encouraged to improve their presence and performance with the incentives arising from an undergraduate community that is networking strongly via peer review platforms, forums & blogs. Leading companies are securing their market position, reducing recruitment risks and expenses, to deliver future success from building closer relationships with mutual stakeholders. The growing importance of lifelong learning and professional development requires both closer professional relationships and deeper interactions with people.

## **Times Higher Education**

The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) began, in newspaper format, in 1971 and revised to a magazine edition in 2008. The growing profile and importance of THE received Professional Publishers Association recognition for Media Business Brand & Weekly Business Brand of the year, in 2011. THES also publishes a global university ranking for employment and the publication of this charted performance achievement has prompted many HE institutions to publish their achievements. Aston University, for example, enable website visitors open access to their graduate employability figures/statistics via their website landing page.

## **The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)**

The CIPD is Europe's largest HR organization with 135,000 plus members in 120 countries. The CIPD has drawn up a voluntary charter for internships that addresses six key principles.

1. Recruitment - should be a clearly communicated written process.
2. Induction - an intern should be given all possible assistance to integrate and bond.
3. Supervision - the intern should receive regular feedback from an assigned mentor.
4. Treatment - an intern should be given the same treatment as any employee.
5. Payment & duration - all relevant legislation should be observed and expenses reimbursed in full.
6. Certification reference & feedback - interns should receive a letter of reference and formal performance review together with an exit interview.

CIPD principles are a voluntary guideline of the minimum standards of conduct for members and offer a useful benchmarking example. The organization also lobbies government and works to improve matching educational skills development.

## **Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)**

HESA compiles national statistics for UK HE that provide valuable information and also illustrates the potential for data collection to perform a valuable role in institutional resource management. Approximately 75% of HE leavers (graduates) provide information about their status within six months of leaving. This information is used to compile statistics on the numbers of graduates successful in finding employment (number of employed graduates vs. unemployed graduates) for a sample of the data collected, see Appendix 2.

## **UNISTATS**

Unistats is an official UK government site, with a search and comparison capability enabling interested parties to compare the performances of institutions and their graduates. The site introduces one consequence of linking the performances of undergraduates and institutions; arguably promoting unity and co-dependency. This government site clearly reflects the importance for consideration of McKinsey's 7S model to develop organizational core strength 'Shared Values'.

The Unistats site collects information from the following HE data sources:

National Student Survey (Ipsos MORI)

Destination of Leavers from HE (DLHE) survey

How the course is taught (Using KIS - Key Information Set)

How the course is assessed

Course accreditation with PSRB

## **The Open University**

The Open University (OU) is another stakeholder in UK HE; their emphasis is placed upon developing larger-scale delivery techniques, however there are indeed many valuable insights into the suitability of technology development for professional and academic development. The OU explores the latest delivery of teaching, learning and assessment in its Innovating Pedagogy 2015 programme.

The relevance of this institution's research work is especially relevant within the modern construct of practical training & professional development. This institution also takes ownership of and responsibility for the appreciating asset that is its internship programme. A growing number of institutions are adding greater value, developing themselves as centres of professional development. The internship process is becoming a more valued asset with tangible beneficial outcomes, it is increasingly valued by companies.

The Open University Innovation Report 4, evaluates the relevancy of various pedagogic methods and the importance of innovation in education and professional development. The research places high importance on competence-based learning (highly valued by leading employers) and the challenges to develop programmes that embrace innovative systems that recognise achievement. Developing skills is arguably the key fundamental to delivering performance improvements needed for the future where 'Crossover Learning' delivers the skills which business values, (Innovating Pedagogy 2015, pages 11-13).

Developing higher performance levels in skills that business is looking to recruit will also require the institution to develop a curricula containing the right elements. The OU report highlights the importance of using IT to deliver to these needs. The role of technology can also influence the styles of both teaching and learning; especially relevant in the 'adaptive teaching' model. (Innovating Pedagogy 2015, pages 33-5)

#### **2.2.4 Internationalization: Challenges for foreign students**

Foreign students face additional challenges from the expectations of potential employers; including:

- Communication (language) skills
- ‘Fit’ into new culture
- Transferability of ‘foreign’ experience
- Quality of ‘foreign’ education
- Work permit / legality
- Long-term suitability

An institution should address the expectations of employers to build a program that will deliver the skills and qualities most required by employers. Another challenge is in developing ‘visible’ communication and marketing activities.

The internship process may be conceived as an extended interview to determine if interns will make suitable permanent employees, however foreign students require additional support in meeting a greater number of challenges and societal prejudices. Overcoming preconceived values and fostering mutually beneficial projects requires longer-term planning and strategy. The barriers to accessing internships can be substantially reduced by active institutions willing to develop new practices, intended to benefit all stakeholders.

Some academic expansion plans rely on servicing a higher number of foreign students. This practice raises a new raft of challenges. This emerging model has resulted in the formation of INTO University Partnerships Limited (INTO), a British private sector partnership that develops joint venture working with universities. This company is presently focused on developing the potential for an institution to manage a large number of foreign students and develop a specific infrastructure. The operations of this joint venture partnership began with University of East Anglia (UEA) in 2005 to provide foundation courses for foreign degree students from China. The venture realized a £35 million development of residence for up to 600 students in 2008. This organisation does not govern academic standards & methods, the university retains academic control and governance. This example demonstrates the opportunities that exist for developing a Blended Learning model for professional development of foreign students. INTO continues to have an uneasy relationship with many UK HE institutions, including UCU.

The growth and development potential from internationalization relies upon strong educational performance in specific areas. British Council statistics confirm the reasons motivating students to study abroad:

**Top 3 motivators for study abroad:**

1. Interesting and enjoyable experience
2. Broadening horizons
3. Employability

The high rating of Employability shows that overseas institutions, offering exceptional professional skills development, will be attractive study destinations. (BC outward mobility study '*Student Perspectives on going international*') Finnish HE must overcome challenges, to develop as an attractive destination offering leading education, employment opportunities and undergraduate employability. (Chand S, 2014) Challenging cultural obstacles - such as nepotism or collectivism - (Kazi, S 2016) is essential to foster progress in internationalization.

### **2.2.5 Electronic personal development plans (e-pdp) & electronic portfolio (e-portfolio)**

Technological innovation enables remote-working, remote-monitoring and evaluations to be completed. Platforms, such as Google, enable users to share their work access and enable reviewers to assist in the development processes. This development process refers to not only the academic work in questions but also the personal development from role and responsibility.

Technological developments increasingly enable forms of remote-interactions and access to review developments that are particularly useful during periods when participants are not at university campus (Gomez S, *Electronic Portfolios in Higher Education*)

Currently electronic tools offer a beneficial link between HE stakeholders and are increasingly used to develop a HE community. The pioneering work on e-portfolio development has been performed largely in professional teacher education in institutions; such as Baylor University, USA. The e-portfolio can, when correctly designed to avoid dangers, including for example Shulman's Five dangers, provide an opportunity to demonstrate more advanced technological skills and competency levels. (Shulman 1998).

Offering opportunities to learn and demonstrate the learning of skills using leading business electronic tools will offer an impressive 'pull' factor that will draw interest from people that are keen to develop their knowledge and also employability. The UK is able to attract a large number of foreign undergraduates for a variety of reasons, including personal growth, capacity building and societal development. (UK BIS Research Paper 128, 2013) The importance of viewing the bigger picture has enabled UK HE to develop the number of foreign students that want to be a part of the experience.

The Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA) is a UK membership organisation and recognised charity that promotes the following values for progression and learning in life:

- recording achievement
- reflective action planning

CRA membership consists predominantly of professionals from education, training and recruitment disciplines. CRA has developed a community with focus on supporting, promoting and communicating effective and innovative professional practices.

The relevance of electronic tools was reaffirmed in 2006, when 66 UK HE institutions were surveyed and the overwhelming response confirmed that the majority of institutions (83%) use an electronic tool for undergraduate e-pdp. (Strivens, J. , 2007)

The adoption, integration and development of electronic tools for personal development planning and portfolio development has the potential to enrich the learning experience and professional skills of undergraduates. Developing a deep learning environment that involves reflection will produce better leadership qualities by developing the individual's 'emotional intelligence' and 'self-awareness'(Boyatzis, 2003). The theory of self-directed learning will empower the individual to ask questions of themselves and of their support network. This methodology can be adapted to consideration of electronic tool development and implementation.

The electronic portfolio has evolved from a rigid prescriptive precept of 'positivism' to offer the potential to develop the user into a 'constructivist' able to document and develop personal development, learning and growth. (Paulson, P et.al. 1994, page 7)  
The continuing development of technology in professions has also begun to influence the emphasis placed upon e-pdp fostering or instilling a culture of lifelong professional development.

The use of e-development in education also delivers more tangible and meaningful benefits that directly influence motivational levels. The achievement (result) within a degree classification typifies the construct of extrinsic motivation and therefore is not concerned with either professional or personal (skills) development in the longer term. The potential is to elevate a degree program to a learner-centred, professional development culture or philosophy. (Teitel et.al., 1998)

Correct identification of both the ‘challenge’ and the ‘solution’ are necessary to ensure that electronic tools meet the needs of all HE stakeholders to perform the required functions and consider longer term strategies. (Barrett & Wilkerson, 2004).

The London School of Economics (LSE) provides undergraduates and master’s students with the facility to build a personalised summary of extra-curricular activities. The Personal Development Aide Memoire (PDAM) is useful reference for: job applications, interviews and networking.

The PDAM lists the following skills which can be developed and certified to demonstrate competences:

- Application of information skills
- Application of numeracy skills
- Commercial awareness
- Communication
- Leadership
- Problem solving
- Self-management
- Team working

The PDAM (or similar system) would also benefit from relative inputs; from personality evaluation & development to profession-specific skill sets. The development of professional skills could also pursue a specific international discipline and improve motivation and direction; peer-sharing and relationship-building might also be significantly improved.

A performance development environment can foster a learning culture that encourages, recognizes, rewards and motivates. The LSE PDAM is one example of an electronic personal development plan (e-pdp).

Development of electronic tools to develop undergraduates and provide them with a vision of their personal development direction and achievements offers opportunities for improved outcomes. The challenge is to make intangible metrics (learning opportunities) tangible, in order to measure development and achievements (learning outcomes). The e-portfolio is an emerging technological solution that allows a far more flexible means to assess student achievement in higher education, especially when the student is remote from the university, for example on work placement. The e-portfolio also serves as a means of showcasing learning achieved using multimedia evidence.

An outstanding example of the opportunity to develop a solution is apparent in the PebblePad application <http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/1/default.aspx>. The application also provides: eportfolio, competency and assessment platforms for healthcare. Solutions for healthcare studies is a substantial interest for this thesis commissioner and educational stakeholders.

### **2.2.6 The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)**

Until relatively recently UK Universities had relied upon a 200 year old degree classification system to determine the level of higher education (HE) degree classification. Higher levels of achievement are represented in a degree with honours.

In October 2007 The Burgess Group published a final (landmark) report '*Beyond the honours degree classification*'. Work began in 2004; a Scoping Group began evaluating the UK honours degree classification system. The findings of the Scoping Group informed of an honours degree system that was 'robust and highly-valued' however the degree classification system was 'no longer fit for purpose'. The Scoping Group concluded that the degree classification system 'cannot describe, and therefore does not do full justice to, the range of knowledge, skills, experience and attributes of a graduate in the 21st century.' The Scoping Group findings resulted in 7 recommendations for degree classifications; listed in Annex A of the Burgess Group final report (see Appendix 1).

The Steering Group chair, Professor Robert Burgess, placed the UK degree classification system in a negative context: 'The persistence of a system that concentrates on a single summative judgement results in a fixation on achieving a number that is considered 'good'. This drives the behaviour of academic staff and students and works to the detriment of the currency of other information. When they leave university, graduates deserve more than a single number to sum up their achievements.'

In developing a degree classification system that is 'fit for purpose in the 21st century' the Burgess Group proposed a major review of the current practices within the honours degree award classification in the context of 'needs for change'.

The report outlines proposals for development and implementation of reforms aimed to provide the foundations of a new modernized degree classification and evaluation structure:

- capture a blend of knowledge, skills and experience acquired through a wide range of higher education experiences
- measure, record and provide students with a much broader picture of their achievements than now
- ensure that employers have better information about the distinguishing qualities of different graduates
- fit into and promote a culture of lifelong learning by appearing to be less of an abrupt 'end point'
- be practical to implement, useful and used

Part 2 of the report, *'The need for change'* also includes an appraisal of the *'rapidly changing labour market'* and the *'transformed higher education experience'*

A higher education degree is often a minimum expectation or prerequisite for a wide range of UK occupations. Employers often 'sifted' applicants, purely on the criteria of degree classification, and risked overlooking potential employees with other outstanding attributes, competencies and experiences. The report brief, whilst focused on revising and updating the HE classification structure, was also aware of the requirement to include benefits for all stakeholders. The bigger picture was not overlooked. The report findings confirmed that, increasingly, UK degree classifications were incapable of evaluating and recording achievements; referred to as 'the wider competencies and skills, from professional activities at university'.

The proposals for change contained in the report are highly important for UK HE and have wider importance for the UK 'knowledge based' economy. The Burgess Report concludes that the degree classification's importance should decline and be replaced with an evaluation that provides a deeper and richer personal representation.

There is a valid argument to suggest that HEAR will also reinstate moral values back into the equation and elevate achievement to more than a numerical character. The Burgess Report recommendations (Appendix 1) should promote consideration of the 'bigger picture' where there is "No social stability without individual stability" Huxley A, *Brave New World*

Recognition and acceptance of this reformative-spread is evidenced by accountancy management business Ernst & Young; the fifth-largest recruiter of UK university graduates. Recruitment practice for the 2016 graduate programmes will entail 'numerical tests and online strength testing' to refine a recruiting system, based on grading alone, seen as 'too blunt an approach to recruitment'. (Havergal C 2015)

There is also a parallel to the development of e-portfolios and e-personal development plans and implementation in UK HE. The Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA) will run a specialist HEAR implementation initiative (HEAR Academy 2015) to aid adoption at institutional level. The project is intended to continue and develop progress into 2016.

### **2.2.7 Peer assisted learning (PAL)**

Peer assisted learning (PAL) provides capable undergraduates with opportunities to develop personal and professional skills. PAL can also develop a useful and beneficial learning environment for each university faculty.

The PAL approach has been proven to offer significantly improved results (Dixon & Gudan, 2000) for students attending peer-assisted learning communities, compared with students that received no peer-assistance in their learning and development.

PAL offers a good fit within an institute of higher education, providing challenges and rewards for holistic and heterogenous learning outcomes. Cultural diversities will (increasingly) exist within organisations. The challenge is therefore to promote a corporate learning culture and philosophy to ‘develop a sense of cultural heterogeneity’ offering a mutually beneficial ‘win-win game’ outcome (Kazi S, 2015) An institution can also scale down social and cultural isolation by developing systems that fully support a culture of collective socialization (Harding D, 2009) and promote a successful learning community ethic.

UK higher education continues to attract foreign fee-paying students; attracted by the rich benefits of social and cultural diversity that are increasingly valued. The educational environment able to prepare participants to work in a diverse operational environment will be better prepared for the future.

PAL is widely adopted in UK HE institutions and UWE Bristol provides opportunities for seasoned undergraduates to develop their professional skills and become PAL Leaders, assisting fresh undergraduates with academic development. UWE Bristol has identified the recognised qualities of a PAL Leader and offers suitable candidates opportunities to develop professional skills via training courses (including a Peer Assisted Learning module), that include academic credits to maintain motivation. The institution also offers a PAL undergraduate internship and PAL annual awards ceremony to recognise and promote achievements.

The PAL approach relies heavily upon fast and efficient communication systems that permit PAL leaders to be available and ready to respond quickly and efficiently. The UWE Bristol PAL program challenges individuals to develop strategies and improve interpersonal skills, including:

- active learning
- active listening
- developing & promoting learning
- group dynamics & diversity
- personal management
- promoting ideas
- resolution & reaching agreement
- self-development

Enabling and assisting undergraduates to provide academic support offers benefits and challenges for the institution, to develop a cohesive and efficient information management infrastructure to support success.

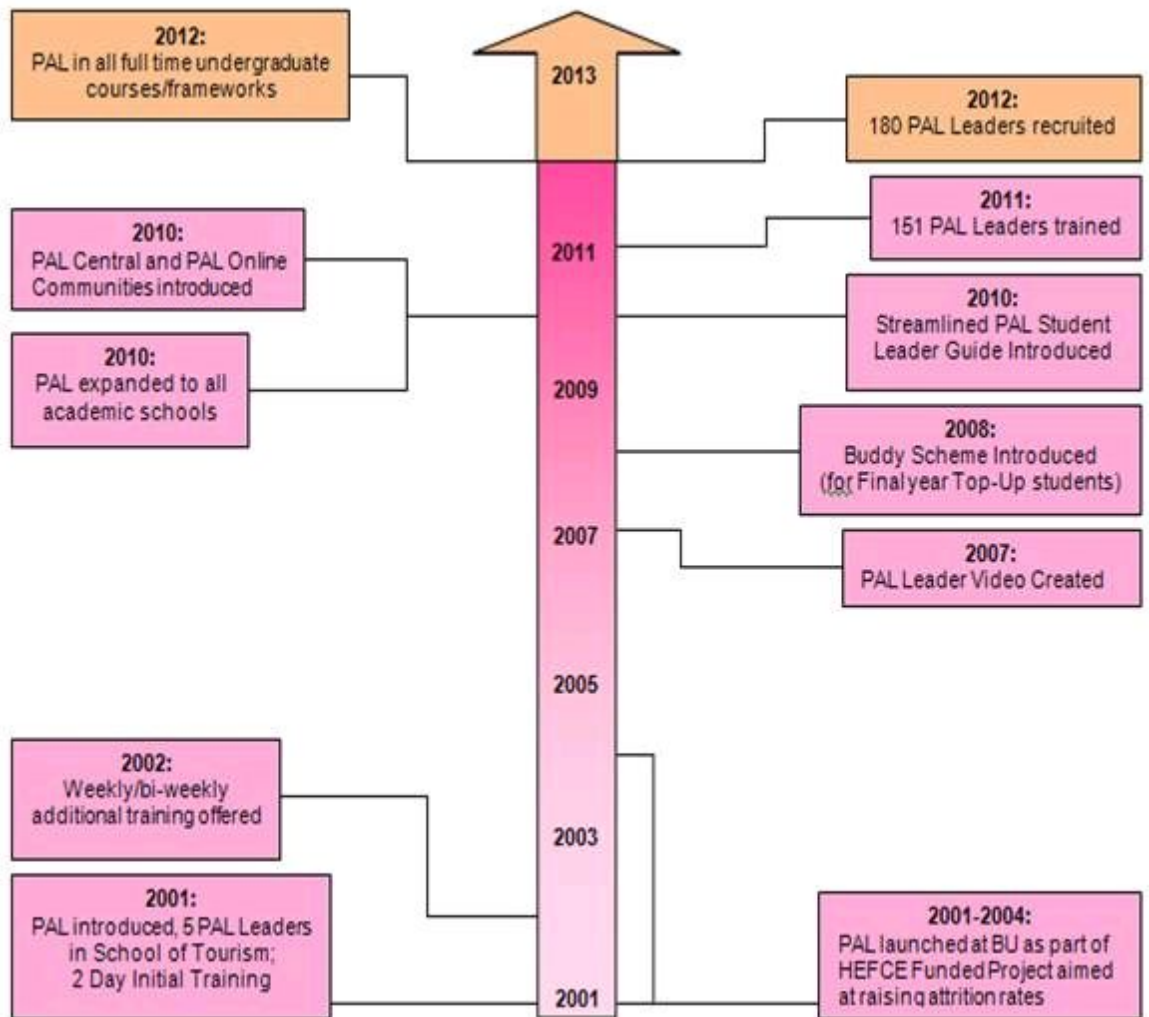
The PAL system enables the institution to collect and manage information from different performance evaluation parameters and also publish/share these findings. The PAL program of Bournemouth University (BU) has been operational since 2001 and is appraised annually, to measure performance levels and development potential. BU evaluates the feedback from PAL Leaders and PAL participants (new undergraduates) who are surveyed, to determine their opinions on a range of issues.

BU performs an annual evaluation of PAL and the report is published online and the survey results are published, The evaluation determines recommendations and key priorities for the following year. (Ford N & Thackeray C, November 2014) The PAL system, in use at BU, promotes 'student involvement in co-creating knowledge'.

Development of key skills, including: organisation & presentation skills, listening & communication skills and confidence have been identified as benefits arising from PAL, in the BU 2013-14 survey of PAL Leaders.

PAL at BU was initially introduced as a pilot project in the School of Tourism in 2001 and evaluated and developed, including filming a PAL promotional video in 2007, to implementation across all academic schools (faculties) in 2010. The development of PAL, during the period 2001-2009, also resulted in the establishment of an online PAL community in 2010.

## Timeline of PAL development at Bournemouth University



**Figure 1:** Development of PAL Leader Training since 2001

Source: Centre for Learning Excellence, Volume 3 Issue 2, 2013

Researchers have reported on the wealth of outcomes arising from PAL systems (Ginsburg-Block M et. al., 2013) that will require collaboration between program developers and teachers.

The diversity of outcomes, both academic and non-academic, presents challenges for the institution to manage both data and metadata. The potential exists for the PAL system to deliver the platform for a learning community promoting a culture of learning. Effectiveness of implementation however will be reliant upon the quality and planning of necessary IT tools.

The PAL system also has potential to deliver a performance driven management system that evaluates and responds to feedback; presenting opportunities to introduce modifications and improvements. The opportunity to develop remote apps to handle this data would also indicate potential to access feedback during academic courses/studies, enabling the institution to evaluate: teaching, performance, motivation etc. The potential is also to share the results with the (learning) community and, by responding to needs, deliver improved performances more quickly.

PAL contains the potential to develop and strengthen the quality and performance of education provided by the institution and promote these achievements socially. Creating platform that free users from restrictions imposed by curricula and exam syllabuses, opens the door to a fresher intrinsically-motivated learning experience.

The development of performance monitoring has been impelled by the expected introduction of the teaching excellence framework (TEF) green paper; with potential to pass legislation, governing uk university teaching performance. The predominant factor is producing a system that will assess results as a performance (outcome) measure. Inevitably, as the result of being a political (funding model) agenda item, there are various (political & socio-economic) arguments in the debate over the intended validities of TEF implementation. Perhaps the most convincing motivator is from a treasury dept. that wants to maximise benefits from higher education.

Regardless of differentiations between UK and elsewhere a ubiquitous metric like 'quality' can be applied, determined and developed to all HE institution organisational processes, with a win-win outcome for all stakeholders. PAL is one element that can build a quality organisation good quality leadership structure for a longer-term improvement strategy.

The PAL model has typically begun as a pilot project that can demonstrate its effectiveness and overcome internal resistance or opposition and build a model that can deliver positive learning outcomes. Research suggests that, whilst possible to introduce PAL across an institution, it is impractical and unlikely to allow time for adjustment to and development of a new community culture. (Ashwin, P (2002)

## **2.3 Case Studies - UK Practical Training stakeholder practices**

### **2.3.1 The University of Surrey**

The University of Surrey has been continuing its development and growth, becoming a leading institution via the creative approaches that continue to be key to the continued success story, despite economic challenges resulting from global recession.

This institution provides an interesting basis for evaluating the importance of establishing a holistic and cohesive model, with various different elements combined to achieve a common goal. The university has developed an international strategy to realise its ambitions and the contents of its 2012-2017 report provide the analytical foundation.

Strong and sustainable international partnerships are sought for: teaching, learning, research, enterprise and staff/student mobility. The mission is to nurture a culture that will instinctively rise to solve global challenges and instill a spirit of curiosity and ambition to improve the global human environment. The longer term ambition for management is to develop an organisation that will be an officially acknowledged international leader.

The university strategy is defined under seven strategic aims to create impact in the following areas:

1. international partnerships
2. diversity
3. international research
4. internationalization in teaching and learning
5. transnational education
6. international profile enhancement
7. international recognition

Each strategy detail is contained in the published report, each strategy detail pledges future objectives.

The second strategy (diversity) illustrates the rationale driving this organisation. The term diversity is perhaps somewhat non-specific however. The university publishes statistics that detail the diversity of international student and staff body. International relationships are included in and considered vital for providing a global citizenship experience. Development of a reputation for leading international projects for both Erasmus and non-Erasmus students is intended to attract the best students and staff, to ensure high standards of achievement. The university attracts students from around the world.

Internationalization strategy in teaching and learning also includes the Global Graduate Award (GGA), an initiative to promote mobility and learn a target language, at an appropriate level of difficulty.

The University of Surrey operates Internship Programmes and co-operates with leading educational partners in China and India. These programs are supported by British Council initiatives that bolster mutually beneficial learning experiences.

The university strategy is to work closely with a single placement partner that understands the organizational shared values. Globalplacement.com ensures free-of-charge access to over 5,000 suitable positions worldwide.

Undergraduates are also empowered to complete a year of professional training after completion of year-two studies. The professional training programme includes participation from 2,300 partner organisations, benefitting from undergraduates' soft skills, including: teamwork, communications and trust. (Ahonen M et. al. 2003) The reference to soft skills is increasingly important for supporting the mobile activities of businesses and they are therefore highly important within the curricula. The importance of measuring and evaluating intangibles, with technology, is reaffirmed.

The performance of courses is also assessed. University of Surrey operates a BSc (Hons) Business Management Studies (Entrepreneurship) degree course and the official course performance data is available via UNISTATS; a government agency offering the public access to compare performance. The statistics have particular relevance to the institution and also provide a detailed analysis of graduate activity six months post-graduation. The survey of 120 graduates provided the following insights:

Average salary	£ 25,000
Graduates in employment	80%
Graduates in further study	9%
Graduates studying & working	5%

The official data also reveals that 20% of graduates are not in a professional or managerial job up to 6 months after graduation. Graduates also provide data to rate institutional performance, shown below:

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to	95 %
The library resources and services are good enough for my needs	97 %
Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand	77 %
Feedback on my work has been prompt	90 %
Staff have made the subject interesting	93 %
Staff are good at explaining things	99 %
I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies	90 %

### **2.3.2 Aston University & Graduate Advantage**

Aston is a leading UK university and routinely achieves leading THE survey results. The university became a victim of its own success; graduates being increasingly recruited by leading employers in the London area. The university became aware that the 'brain drain' effect was impacting negatively, leading to a negative image of regional social mobility and development: in 2003 the institution began to take control of its assets.

Aston pioneered the creation of a Higher Education Institution Partnership that combined the efforts of 13 regional institutions, representing some 150,000 graduates annually. The regional target market was SME's; they represented the best potential for growth and benefit from graduate employment. The project has now been operational for over a decade, building relationships at all levels: local (City Councils) national (Institute of Directors & Chambers of Commerce) and international (European Development Fund).

The benefits of cooperation between regional institutions and the benefits of regional employment market conditions have also been measured. 96% of small high-growth businesses are prepared to be repeat-business customers after cooperating with Graduate Advantage for the first time. Statistics recorded the typical (average) company size as 22 employees. The intern was paid an average (pro-rata) salary of £15,325 over a 16-week period.

SME's working with Graduate Advantage benefit from free employment consultancy services. Other benefits include measuring business performance metrics, such as business turnover and growth, to evaluate the contributions of undergraduates.

Aston typically enable above 70% of their students to complete a placement year. Students and stakeholders are motivated to develop transferable skills and encourage completion of professionally relevant courses for career planning.

### **2.3.3 London South Bank University**

LSBU is operating a Winter Internship Programme for 2016. The institution is offering this initiative to fund (via a monthly £1000 bursary) a limited number of SME & start-up company internships; aimed at securing graduate employment.

The programme will offer the services of graduates and LSBU will be responsible for candidate selection and assessing the merits of businesses applying to register and work with the scheme.

An online enquiry form was used to collect details of what requirements were present among local SME & start-ups and evaluate compatibility and suitability. LSBU employment advisors were responsible for creating a shortlist of suitable interview candidates. Interviews, involving LSBU, were held during November 2015. The deadline for completed contracts was December 2015. Internships begin January 4th 2016. The entire process, from advertising & promotion to internship commencement, was given a four-month window.

LSBU pledged to pay each intern a monthly bursary of €1000 and partners would not be responsible for paying taxes or national insurance costs. The university also guarantees that a comprehensive training and guidance procedure will be operational, to ensure that interns are ready to make a valuable contribution. Participants in the programme will be expected to develop or agree upon performance measurement metrics that will quantify the contribution that each graduate has made during the 12-week internship.

The programme also includes a period of training and guidance intended to prepare graduate interns for positive participation within the SME business sector. The core objective of the programme is graduate development. A LSBU representative has expressed interest in cooperation and sharing the collected primary and project performance metrics evaluation data.

### **2.3.4 RateMyPlacement**

‘Rate my placement’ (RMP) is the result of vision of a small group of entrepreneurial undergraduates that identified a gap in the market and created a solution to meet the needs arising.

Three students took work placements, in 2005, during their degree courses at Loughborough University, UK. During discussions they agreed that the process of searching and finding opportunities was often highly difficult. The group had begun to identify an information gap for undergraduates looking for work experience.

The following year (2006) the group decided to make a difference and began researching the market further. Their efforts, presented at the university business plan competition, were rewarded with a financial prize and seed funding for the project to begin; RateMyPlacement.co.uk was created.

In 2007 the project was rolled out and intended to serve the students of Loughborough University. Very quickly news of the innovative website began to spread and soon after the site was receiving national interest, coverage and exposure. RMP had gone viral!

2008 was a benchmark year; RMP was a finalist at HSBC Bank’s ‘Unipreneurs’ competition. The group had the chance to pitch their business to a group of business leaders. The outcome, following the re-assurance of business specialists, convinced the group to resign from their graduate jobs and commit themselves to RMP.

2009 was a year of hard work in building relationships and working to promote their philosophy and business culture. The group began to see clear changes to culture and philosophies of UK Universities and leading UK business institutions. They hired their first employee in 2009.

2010 saw the beginning of rewarding stakeholders and the development of the philosophy to become leaders and head the forefront of major change. RMP worked with Oxford Brookes University to launch the National Placement & Internship Awards. The team had decided to elevate themselves to a platform that would be visible to all national higher educational institutions and their stakeholders.

2011 was the launch year for on-campus marketing exercises. RMP was now a team of ten employees and dedicated themselves to brand growth and development. 2011 was also a consolidation year for the on-line services were developed and improved. The team took their services to the graduate market.

Performance improvements led to creation of National Undergraduate Employability awards in 2014 which continue to raise the profile of operations and develop awareness of RMP and their stakeholders and sponsors.

“Desire amongst students for work experience has never been greater and our Awards highlight the exemplary work that goes on within organisations, universities and by students across the nation.

Competition for employment is fierce and it's essential that students are armed with the skills, tools and knowledge to increase their employability. Our Awards act as the benchmark for undergraduate successes.”

Oliver Sidwell, Co-founder of RMP

This case study demonstrates the growth potential arising from addressing the strong needs, amongst all stakeholders, for improvement and development of a modern employment information network. For 2016 RMP is providing details of:

‘The top 100 (UK) undergraduate employers’

‘The top 30 medium sized schemes’

‘The top 5 small to medium sized employers’

The service role provided by RMP is a transparent peer-based information sharing structure which at its heart is intended to strengthen the quality and performance of professional organisations. The relevance and importance of RMP - like the internship role - is part of a bigger picture of professionalism and performance development.

The emergence of RMP proves the validity of supporting development initiatives and this case study also challenges other institutions to consider their own development strategies. Loughborough University has collaborated and is now sharing the mutually beneficial rewards delivered by its graduates.

RMP also illustrates the value of assessment of relevant performance metrics and benefits that can arise from using technology as a tool for measuring and collecting key performance indicators.

### **2.3.5 Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP**

PWC provide international business consulting services, the core business services are:

Assurance

Consulting

Deals

Tax

PWC has an active strategy to attract and promote interest and build relationships with undergraduates that will become a good fit for the organization. The close relationships that PWC has with global companies enables them to provide valuable insight from an annual CEO survey that offers informative views from key business strategists. The structure and delivery of PWC's undergraduate development system is formed to deliver the talent and skills that will be needed by PWC's clientele; the world of international business.

#### **Work experience programmes:**

- 'Insight Day'

The insight day is an opportunity for students of all years to obtain information about the nature of the work and business atmosphere in a highly interactive day.

The experience happens in nationwide offices and enables participants to discover the nature of business activities. Participants are given the opportunity to learn more about career opportunities and career development; the emphasis is on determining how much potential exists for both parties.

The insight day is often the beginning of progression to both undergraduate work placements and graduate professional development programmes.

- ‘Talent academies’ (2 - 5 days)

This programme is designed for first-year undergraduates (or second years on a four-year degree) looking to advance their career development. In addition, talent academies are also operational in the following specialised disciplines:

Oil & gas academy

Tech academy

Women in business academy

Data Analytics academy

The talent academies are used to evaluate suitability for progress to summer internship, work placement or graduate roles.

- ‘Diversity in business’ (7 - 14 days)

PWC recognises that solving important problems requires diversity of talent; a vast array of backgrounds and experiences. The paid programs allow participants to spend time with divisional business leaders whilst experiencing working life in the business unit.

- ‘Summer internships’ (6 - 8 weeks)

Candidates are in the penultimate year of their degree or the final year, with a one-year postgraduate degree place confirmed. PWC delegates degree graduate level responsibility and assigns projects relevant to personal development. The intention is to offer graduate job offers to successful candidates.

- ‘Work placement’ (11 months)

Work placements are available for both undergraduates and graduates.

## **PWC Annual Global Survey**

The PWC 18th Annual Global CEO Survey imparts the views of business leaders for 2015. The views expressed in this survey have a direct impact on HE institutions educating undergraduates for employment in the business world. Reviewing this annual survey provides a detailed insight into the decisions and directions that CEOs will be leading their organizations.

The survey confirms that businesses are beginning to build collaborative networks and are trying to build diversity into their networks. 52% of CEOs are either considering or are engaged with academia to develop a strategic alliance.

The survey also charts a steady rise in CEO concern over the rising threat to obtaining personnel with the key skills as older workers retire.

Kimmo Alkio, President of Tieto, believes that ‘capability development’ and ‘leadership development’ are key skills that academia can & should be developing.  
(PWC 18th 2015 Annual Global CEO Survey)

### **2.3.6 Unpaid internships and social mobility**

Unpaid internships are cited with developing unfavourable biases between those able to work without remuneration and those unable to work without. There are potentially many UK undergraduates financially excluded from the opportunity to have a meaningful internship experience on their resume. Institutions including National Union of Students (NUS) and University & College Union (UCU) are working to overcome inequality and unfairness and promote equality of access to professional development for the benefit of society.

The UK internship scene was increasingly operating inequitably; in favour of undergraduates able to work long-term without remuneration. A paradox also existed whereby unlawful (unpaid) internships were legally defined as illegal however there was no regulation to restrict advertising of illegal (unpaid) internships.

The practice of recruiting unpaid workers, under the banner of interns, has a negative effect on employment and job creation. UK HE institutions have responded with technological solutions to overcome issues and improve the quality of practical training for stakeholders. Finnish HE also has issues that oppose development and progress that will mutually benefit stakeholders. Research has identified issues, including: racism, social exclusion, lack of professional contacts, integrational challenges and Finnish language skills. (Chand, S 2014)

Inequality has to be overcome to promote a fairer educational system and society that works to prevent social exclusion and promote equal opportunity.

“Some people can afford to work for free, but many cannot. The current system is blocking out individuals with high potential but modest financial means, from getting on the professional career ladder. If the professions are going to be truly representative of the society they serve, then they will have to do more to actively diversify their workforces.” (Grice, A,16.10.2014)

## **The proposal to end unpaid internships**

The absence of both a UK legal (employment law) definition and recognition of the term ‘internship’ represents a number of difficulties and challenges on the best method for overcoming resultant problems. The National Minimum Wage Act (NMWA) 1998, for example, was not intended to address interns.

The NMWA defines legal rights to paid employment (at a minimum rate) for those working under a contract of employment and this includes existing definitions for: find list of voluntary etc

The National Union of Students (NUS) began a campaign to discourage university career services from advertising unpaid internships, citing the inequality and unfairness that unpaid internships develop within society.

Technological data management has been used to evaluate the extent of public opinion. A 2014 Ipsos Mori poll of 1,700 UK adults revealed that 70% of respondents believed that unpaid internships are unfair and destabilize higher education. (Burns, J 2014)

In 2014 MP’s voted 181-19 in favour of an end to unpaid internships. The motion will also propose the introduction of a four week rule. The new rule will limit unpaid internships to a maximum period of four weeks (a necessary concession to both medical and legal professions with a long history of pro-bono work). Internships that continue over the four-week period will automatically entitle the intern to pay and conditions of an employee (worker).

Labour party leader Mr Ed Miliband has, this year, given his pledge to abolish the practice of unpaid internships; which he views as “a system rigged in favour of those who can afford it”. Careers in prized professions, including fashion, finance & law, are referred to by Miliband as, “out of reach for huge numbers of highly able young people”

## **Technology offers solutions**

Advising and communicating legal rights for undergraduates is a complicated and tricky issue. The internship/practical training period can also place additional challenges upon undergraduates. An important consideration is the necessary tools required to successfully complete this process. The role of technology - particularly its effectiveness - will also be determined strongly by the interface with organizational structure, networks and strategies

The need to provide undergraduates with support and security has resulted in TUC developing an app (available for both Android and iPhone) that ensures users are aware of their rights within UK employment law. The app can also evaluate a potential internship and provide advice and guidance in a convenient and accessible format. The app also enables the undergraduate to identify if the work that they have been doing has met UK legal requirements and, if it has not, advise the steps necessary to secure financial recompense. The app will also provide TUC with valuable performance data, from interns' experiences, that will assist the organization to evaluate how to direct and manage resources effectively.

An app such as this, also effectively ensures that foreign students are aware of their legal rights, providing a safety net to ensure that they are protected from exploitation. Enabling quick and efficient submissions and evaluations of feedback from undergraduates has the potential to promote quality mentoring and management.

Technology has also promoted the exchange and sharing of information and experiences of interns. Peer evaluation of experiences has been important in providing GraduateFog and others with information from for example Geneva Interns Association; that 68.5% of UN interns were unpaid in 2013. UN does not presently cover intern expenses to break the 'cycle of inequality' for interns like David Hyde. (Coslett R L, *I understand why an intern would live in a tent*, The Guardian, 13.8.2015)

## **Discussion**

The development of UK HE to increase professional development offers a wealth of net benefits. This thesis has evaluated developments that have shaped the current UK HE system and culture. The research has determined the purpose and direction of higher education by reviewing findings of both governmental and associated institutional (planning) reports. The thesis evaluates organizational/institutional strategies and the role technology in achieving objectives.

Building relationships with regional partners is a long-term growth strategy that offers perfect synergy to the development of lifelong learning. It is most likely that the Practical Training has more importance when it adds real value for stakeholders. The value should also be considered in reference to McKinsey's 7S model. The practical training examples in this research have achieved significant importance and promote a higher public (marketing) profile for institutional activities.

Reference has been made to learning opportunities and the presence of boundaries between academia and the workplace (Heckman R et.al.) that can be overcome by leverage of a blended learning methodology. Provision of a diverse and individualized study programme to support blended learning does require the full support of the academic provider. Blended learning offers the challenges for individuals to adapt and develop with the evolving nature of international business; where organizations are increasingly looking for adaptability. Organisational culture and diversity in the academic institution is an opportunity to prepare undergraduates with the relevant interpersonal skills that will be expected in the future. On reflection, the boundary to work can be reduced with development of practical training and professional skills development; supported by key strategic partners. Technology improves the overcoming of boundaries however synergy between strategy and organizational structure is a prerequisite. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in UK has developed to include PT, the raised public profile of these professional development activities has increased both value and importance.

The varied elements of a Blended Learning methodology enrich the education process and enable development of Metacognitive processes and self-development that are essential in the future. Development of self-regulated strategies will develop stronger performing individuals, arguably therefore a stronger performing institution, more self-aware and accustomed to co-operation to achieve (shared) team objectives. Reflection on the learning experience can improve self-development and develop individuals with the self-management and leadership skills, valued highly by employers.

Interestingly, although UK degree courses do not contain mandatory work experience periods there is a higher prevalence of internships compared to Finland. One factor in this paradox is certainly a higher number of graduates seeking employment and the increasing relevance of standing out from the crowd.

The planning and development of Practical Training is proven to have an increasingly stronger relevance and - in the UK - a higher degree of implementation and belonging to the 'Shared Values' (McKinsey) of the educational institution. It is perhaps a logical assumption that the cases included in this research will be used in a growing number of educational and professional institutions. Both practical training & professional development represent opportunities to increase potential and add value to the institutions & organizations concerned. Institutions that have begun to take control of managing valuable resources are now benefitting from the operation of networks designed to achieve specific objectives; the win-win principle is a fundamental maxim.

In conclusion; investment in professional development strategy - including practical training - offers improved economic and academic benefits. The aim of this thesis is to encourage and promote an alternative perspective and deeper thinking about: the role of practical training, internationalization and empowering technological development to networking models.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **HEAR Scoping Group recommendations relating to degree classification issues:**

The original Measuring and Recording Achievement Scoping Group made a number of recommendations relating to degree classification issues (Universities UK, 2004).

**Recommendation 1:** there is a need for further investigation of classificatory systems for the appropriate and effective representation and communication of learning and achievement.

**Recommendation 2:** a series of criteria for an effective system of representing and communicating student achievement should be identified and agreed by the higher education sector.

**Recommendation 3:** since the current system of degree classification no longer provides a sufficient means of summarising student achievement, it should be reviewed.

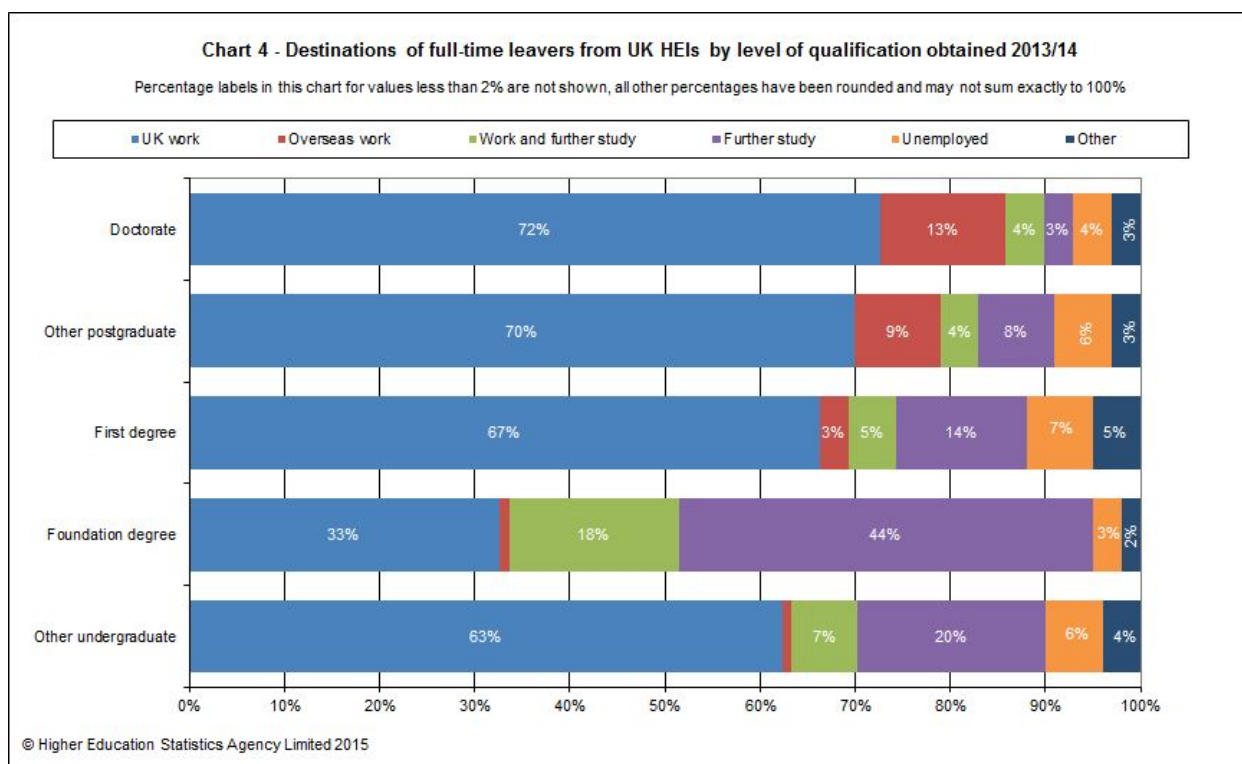
**Recommendation 4:** proposals for changing the degree classification system should not merely focus on the undergraduate degree but should take into account the complete range of higher education qualifications.

**Recommendation 5:** developments in describing, measuring, recording and communicating achievement should take place in parallel with, and as complementary to, the Diploma Supplement and ultimately the Europass.

**Recommendation 6:** higher education institutions should continue to implement Personal Development Planning within the guidelines developed by the Progress File Implementation Group. There should continue to be evaluation of the impact of learning and the representation of learning and achievement of different forms of Personal Development Planning.

**Recommendation 7:** in taking work forward on recording achievement in higher education full account should be taken of existing congruent practice including developments in schools and further education colleges, in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. The opportunity should be taken particularly to ensure that this dovetails with emerging proposals and policies for 14-19 education. Attempts should be made to ensure that optimal transitions for students, from school and further education into higher education, and within higher education itself, would be possible.

## Appendix 2 HESA graduate statistics



### University leavers by activity 2013-14 (all survey respondents)

Activity	Number	Percentage %
Full-time work	253,415	59.7
Part-time work	49,885	11.8
Work with study	14,240	3.4
Study with work	12,405	2.9
Full-time study	47,245	11.1
Part-time study	4,355	1.0
Due to start work	3,660	0.9
Unemployed	19,975	4.7