

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)

Library staff at MMU worked with the Careers and Employability Service to create two workshops which fit in with the employability themes at the University and which contribute to the MMU Futures Award. This award is an extra curricula scheme where students can gain points for activities such as attending non-study-skills related workshops, volunteering or working on a local community project.

Researching commercial companies and industries for applications and interviews

This 60 minute workshop includes a company “recipe sheet” of items students need to consider when looking for company information, e.g. current financial performance, themes, market trends and competitors. A PESTLE analysis is used to frame the discussion of these aspects and then demonstrations are given of the resources that can be used to track down the information, e.g. Business Source Premier, Mintel, Lexis Library and FAME. As students will not necessarily have access to this information when they leave and get jobs, the librarians also show free resources such as the major newspapers, company annual reports and free financial web sites, e.g. Yahoo Finance, Morning Star. Students are also recommended to use the local public library as it has a Business Information Service.

Although the session includes a lot of demonstrations, there is opportunity for students to have hands on experience in using the resources in order to start looking for information on relevant companies and/or industries.

Social media for work not play: how to manage your digital identity

This 90-minute workshop starts with a quiz to highlight to students the factors affecting their online identity, both positively and negatively, and how vulnerable they are in the jobs market if they have an inappropriate online profile. This includes examples of good practice at MMU (currently an undergraduate award winning blog) and examples of bad practice on Twitter (currently a major computer company). Practical tips are provided for students about how to tidy up their profile (including Facebook privacy tweaks) and personal branding (innovative CVs, self-marketing on social media biographies) and then networking online (using Twitter).

This hands-on session necessarily changes practically every time it is run owing to the continual evolution of these services. Careers staff cover the use of LinkedIn in a separate session.

Around 5-10 students normally attend the above sessions unless they fall within a special week of events run by Careers in which case many more students attend.

Library staff have also contributed to MMU’s Employability Online Moodle area that is available to every student and is currently being reviewed. Library and careers staff co-authored materials for this.

Outcomes

The motivation for library staff to get involved in these activities was a desire to support MMU's employability agenda using their relevant knowledge and experience. The collaboration has led to the development of useful partnerships with careers staff and a new working relationship. A by-product has been offering some staff training for them on library resources to help their advisors when discussing career options with students.

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