

## ICE/ IStructE/ ACED Annual Meeting, 23rd April 2012

### Summary of Comments from 'Current Employment & Placement Issues' Breakout Discussion

Currently, there is a difficult environment for graduates and students looking for employment. What can be done to improve the situation?

- The main problem is that there is a job shortage.
- Students should make an early start on career planning and not leave it until the very end of their course.
- HE STEM in the Midlands have carried out a study regarding employment and produced a guide which will be available for students.
- Some students are 'unemployable'. They seem to lack some essential basic skills required during the application/interview process.
- Sandwich courses are obviously helpful, but obtaining suitable placements is difficult.
- There was a suggestion that Universities should help students prepare for 'online tests' which employers are increasingly using during the selection process. Others did not agree with this.
- Universities could try and improve the employability skills of students.
- University careers service staff can help with preparing students for employment: skills which employers are looking for, CVs, how to go about looking for employment, etc.
- Some Universities have 'Placement Officers' – people employed specifically to liaise with companies both nationally and internationally, to promote employment opportunities for students.
- Universities liaising with local ICE & IStructE branches would be helpful in developing links which could lead to employment for students.
- It was noted that ICE Scotland is hosting a graduate career guidance workshop in Glasgow in May, for recent graduates who are not in employment. This is being majority funded from the Benevolent Fund with a recruitment consultant providing the workshop.
- Sometimes placement opportunities are not taken up by students. There are probably various reasons for this such as a delay in graduation in the case of thick sandwich, job location, etc.
- There could be a central resource for employment opportunities - wider than individual Universities. This would publicise a greater range of opportunities.
- Students could become unpaid 'interns' to gain experience. However, some felt that this should not be encouraged, as it was preferable that students were in paid employment.
- Students should be encouraged to look overseas as well as UK.
- Engineers Without Borders has good opportunities for overseas experience, which would then improve future employment prospects.
- Involvement with Constructionarium would help with future employment.

- It was noted that employers have varying requirements when they are recruiting graduates and students.
- Students should have realistic expectations of the job which they could obtain, and be aware of current industry trends.
- Some courses have industry sponsored places (MSc) so this is obviously good for employment prospects.
- It was noted that employment statistics of graduates would be considered by prospective students.

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