Partnering with business to improve the employability of underrepresented students in STEM

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How can we best build the employability of underrepresented groups in HE?
“All students, regardless of location, situation, programme or mode of study, should have **equitable access to opportunities** to enhance their employability…”

“…added value can be gained by facilitating students to engage [] by multiple means and in a range of contexts”

**AdvanceHE (Success Framework)**
Inclusivity and policy drivers

OfS targets to close graduate outcomes gaps for:

- Disabled students
- Black students
- Mature students
- Students domiciled in IMDQ1 postcodes
Enablers

- Access and Participation Plan (Progress) funding
- SEPnet opps (Emma H)
- Specialist partners e.g. EmployAbility
- Student Connectors
- Employer partnerships
What role can employers play to support in-curricular embedding?
By providing in-curricular challenges

- Reimagine local green spaces for Council
- Identify markets for start-up
- Recommend improvements to SME’s sustainability practice
- Analyse school science policy
- Design furniture for University’s Student Centre
- Assessed on funding application to conservation charity
Other in-curricular contributions

- Content co-creation
- Co-teaching
- Guest speakers
- Discursive panels
- Video storytelling
- Case studies
Careers sub-module

- Compulsory sub-module, Y2 Physics
- 10% of overall module mark
- 11 weeks over autumn
- Co-designed with alumni
- How to build experience (case studies Change 100, Civil Service Diversity)
- Explore options via alumni videos
- CV360 and GraduatesFirst
- Workshop ‘Understand more about Equality in the workplace’
- When/how to disclose a disability
- Students take Autism test
Employer partners

EDF ENERGY  Deloitte  Incorex

WB  WARNER BROS.  Pfizer

McAfee  Royal Botanic Gardens  AstraZeneca

NHS

Disney
University helps employers diversify talent pipeline, build capability and capacity

Employers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge, build skills and confidence in their value to the job market
What role can employers play in extra-curricular provision?
Career Lab

1000 opportunities for underrepresented groups

- Paid flexi internships (some trained by Employ Autism)
- Paid flexi virtual internships with businesses out of UK
- Paid flexi consultancy with community and business
- Paid flexi research internships at the University
- Wrap-around learning in digital skills and CVs
- Inclusive leadership training (representation is key)
- Career mentoring (representation is key)
Success indicators

Students from underrepresented groups who have completed Career Lab achieve higher rates of career readiness and attainment than their peers.
Create your own experience

Startup partners co-deliver:

Weekly Startup Lab
Entrepreneurs-in-Residence
Inspirational ‘Change the Face of’ speaker events
Seed funding and prizes
Podcast interviews
Summer accelerator
Connectors – advise on how to target and engage
Student A

Autistic Maths Student

Worked with Maths Careers Consultant to identify employers of interest

Consultant approached EPM on student’s behalf as part of the Career Lab Programme

EPM received autism training

Student interned successfully
Student B

Visually impaired Physics student

Supported by Entrepreneurship team to set up business which turns scientific data into an accessible format

Interned with Sussex spinout
Student C

Female Physics student

Completed a SEPnet internship in 2020 with NPL

Kept in touch and completed her final year dissertation project in collaboration with NPL

Offered a position at NPL as a research scientist
By learning how to better support underrepresented groups, we – and our employer partners – are finding we improve support for all students/hires.
I know there’s great practice across the sector. Please do get in touch to share what’s working at your university to support underrepresented groups.

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