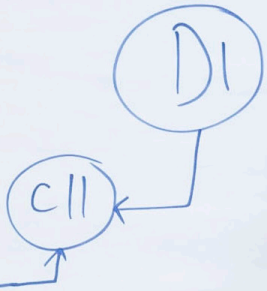


FLOW



Internal

External



# Employer Engagement Strategy 2020-2023

Supporting positive outcomes for  
employers, students and graduates

# Introduction

**The needs of the business world and higher education are more connected than ever, as we aspire to support and prepare a talented new graduate workforce with the skills that employers need in a post-pandemic world.**

Enhancing employer engagement at De Montfort University Leicester (DMU) is vital in supporting the student experience, graduate employability and the recruitment needs of employers. We are proud of our existing examples of excellent industry liaison practice, and this strategy will set out how the university can continue to support high-quality experiences for employers and maximise the outcomes of key relationships.

We will build on the proven successes of our 2016-20 strategy, which provided the framework for our approach to employer engagement, offering a bespoke service to support businesses' recruitment and initiate effective, sustainable partnerships.

Covid-19 has impacted different regions and industries to various degrees. While there will be significant challenges in sectors such as the arts and retail, other areas including IT, healthcare, and business services have seen a boost in opportunities. Understanding this, and adapting to the changing landscape of the graduate labour market is key in helping our students into great graduate-level careers.

With approximately 80 per cent of graduate jobs open to graduates from any discipline\*, we aspire to broaden students' horizons and expose them to a wide variety of career options beyond the narrow confines of their area of study. Catering to our students' strengths and diversity, we will promote these qualities to our employer partners to support their recruitment goals.

\* Institute of Student Employers (ISE). (2020). Student Recruitment Survey 2020: Challenge and resilience in the year of Covid-19. London: ISE



# Winner:

## The Best University Careers and Employability Service



National Undergraduate  
Employability Awards, 2021



## Vision

DMU will continue to build and develop agile partnerships with employers to support recognised agendas such as diversity in recruitment, graduate retention in the locality and social mobility. Graduates from DMU will be able to demonstrate that they have the skills the global labour market requires, be commercially aware and resilient, having been empowered to gain professional experience throughout their transformative student journey.

Through a collaborative approach with the university's academic, business engagement and other key functions, DMUworks will continue to develop meaningful, outcome-focused partnerships with employers.

We have received recognition from employer partners as providing a benchmark service for other institutions to follow and our employer engagement approach helped us to win the 2021 National Undergraduate Employability (NUE) Award for Best University Careers/Employability Service. We will continue to grow through our innovative, client-centred approach, building on our reputation for being responsive and sensitive to the needs of employers and providing an agile and flexible service.

*This has been circulated among other recruiters in our team as an example of good practice and what we should be hoping for from our university partners in terms of a virtual alternative to normal autumn events.*

- Hannah Smith, University Recruiter, Teach First. July 2020

# Principles

**Our vision will be achieved through activities shaped by four core principles.**

We will continue to be successful in our work by being data driven, with the ability to adapt our models of engagement in order to collaborate effectively with all stakeholders, embracing digital opportunities and platforms.

## Data

We will be data driven, engaging with employers and focusing on partnerships whose graduate recruitment needs and agendas are attuned to those of DMU, to maximise the benefits for employers, students and the university.

## Employers

Our DMUworks staff team will use a client-management approach to provide a seamless and single-point-of-entry service to employers. As a central service supporting the whole university we will continue to actively target employers with the following recruitment needs, values, or practices:

### Recruitment needs:

- Recruiting placement or graduate-level roles annually, or in significant numbers
- Recruiting students and graduates from a broad range of programmes
- Recruiting students for placement and graduate roles from courses with challenging employability outcome statistics
- Recruiting to multiple opportunities, including graduate roles, placements, physical and virtual internships

### Values:

- Have strategic agendas based on a genuine commitment to diversity and social mobility
- Offer roles located in Leicester, Leicestershire or East Midlands
- Do not have UCAS point requirements that would disbar some students
- Have a sustainability agenda or commitment

### Practices:

- Have previous consistent or repeated graduate-level recruitment of DMU students
- Maintain existing links and partnerships with DMU, such as suppliers and contractors
- Wish to develop a strong brand presence on campus and engage with on-campus activities such as insight events, fairs, boards, lectures, and input into the curriculum
- Have good graduate retention rates

At the same time our faculty-based teams will work with academic leads to expose students to sector-specific opportunities.

## Students

The effective use of data will allow us to identify students that our employer partners are seeking to recruit, or offer tailored support those less likely to progress in to graduate-level employment, including:

- Students on specific courses or years of study
- Students on courses with low scores for high-skilled graduate outcomes
- Students and graduates from regions where employers have vacant roles
- Students from neighbourhoods with low participation in higher education
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students
- Students with disabilities

Data will be used to record, monitor and report the impact of our work to assess the success of our programmes. Comparing the graduate outcomes for our students against the wider student population will help us identify which methods have the greatest impact.

Using recruitment data provided to us by our employer partners we will monitor how our activity impacts on the number of DMU students recruited as well as the number and quality of applications received from our students. We will also continue to analyse the attrition rates of DMU applicants at various stages of an employer's recruitment processes to identify their skill development needs and offer bespoke support.







## ADAPT

**We will continue to provide a flexible partnership with employers, developing bespoke solutions driven by their recruitment needs. Employer-led activities such as speed interviews, mock assessment centres, 1-1s and network events help businesses to effectively identify potential recruits, and expose our students to professional networks that can boost their aspirations, confidence and career success.**

Adaptable support will be even more crucial during and post pandemic. We understand that many employers have experienced reduced staff and financial resources, while the enforced move to virtual activities during 2020 meant companies have embraced previously unexplored opportunities – many of which could suit businesses long-term.

Our innovative outlook will ensure our students can adapt to changing talent acquisition and recruitment processes. We will ensure that our employer events and programmes immerse our students in relevant experiences that equip them to succeed in this new working world. By continuing to fund remote activities such as internships, we will prepare our graduates for what may become the new normal, especially in sectors such as professional services.

Moving to online activities has also demonstrated the potential of virtual internships in reducing barriers to engagement and supporting social mobility, removing transport costs and time constraints. When on-campus and office-based activities are possible again, we will provide a balanced, adaptable approach comprising real and virtual experiences, depending on the needs of individual employers.

Our established and proven programmes such as the Graduate Champions scheme will continue to provide high-quality work experiences for recent graduates as well as supporting local and national small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), while development of pre-internship support will mean graduates and employers gain maximum benefit from the scheme. We will also seek, where possible, to adapt these schemes to increase engagement from larger graduate recruiters.

# COLLABORATE

**We will collaborate with our key stakeholders, forging strong partnerships to deliver activities with real impact.**

**Employers** Our employer-led approach will ensure that we provide positive outcomes for employers, students and graduates. Our Employer Advisory Panel provides a platform for open and honest discussion, helping us to shape our services to accommodate employer recruitment needs in a constantly changing environment.

**Faculties and academics** We will provide input in to the development and implementation of faculty-specific employability strategies. Using established models of engagement which bring together students, employers and academics, we will provide resources and expertise for these to be administered effectively.

**Students and graduates** Through placement opportunities, Frontrunner internships and Graduate Champion internships we will continue to use the input and insight of DMU students and graduates to help shape our services, enhance the student experience and increase student engagement.

**DMU professional services** We will continue to develop the positive relationships we have built with teams from across the university, adding value to and benefitting from the activities of internal departments to contact new employer partners and alumni, and support the university's strategic aims.

**Local universities** Running collaborative events and activities with fellow universities in the East Midlands will help regional graduate retention and support employers to maximise their outcomes. Previous events with the universities of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby have enabled employers to access students from multiple institutions at one time and benefit from the efficiency of a collaborative approach.







## DIGITAL

**With our enhanced virtual offer, developed through the DMUworks Digital Strategy, we are able to provide a digital experience for employers, students and graduates that can complement face-to-face delivery.**

Experiences gained in light of Covid-19 have demonstrated the benefits of virtual engagements. Employers have been required to embrace online platforms and reimagine their talent identification and recruitment processes. Those that have proven to deliver results and are cost-effective will no doubt become business as usual. We will therefore continue to mould our offer to reflect this shift so that our students build confidence and experience in activities including virtual assessment centres, online interviews and networking through platforms such as MS Teams.

We were quick to develop solutions to the challenges posed by the pandemic and have already delivered successful online events with encouraging engagement from employers and students, aided by continual input from our employer partners through the Employer Advisory Panel.

To further enhance our digital offer, we will also:

- Promote quality, supportive virtual internships to our students and graduates to boost their employability prospects, expose them to professional networks and develop graduate-level employability skills
- Provide employers with the opportunity to run mock and live virtual assessment centres
- Include employer input in our online modules on career development platform Abintegro
- Use the Graduate Champions scheme to create virtual internship packages for recent DMU graduates
- Build a portfolio of employer profiles with embedded interactive content which can be accessed by students and graduates at any time

# KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

## Graduate Outcomes

- An increase in graduates in highly skilled employment
- An overall increase in positive graduate outcomes
- Closure of the progression gap between BAME and white graduates
- DMU to be a leader in graduate outcomes among its comparator HEIs
- An increase in the number of graduate-level roles secured within Leicestershire
- An increase in the number of graduate-level roles secured with our top-tier employer partners

## Employer feedback

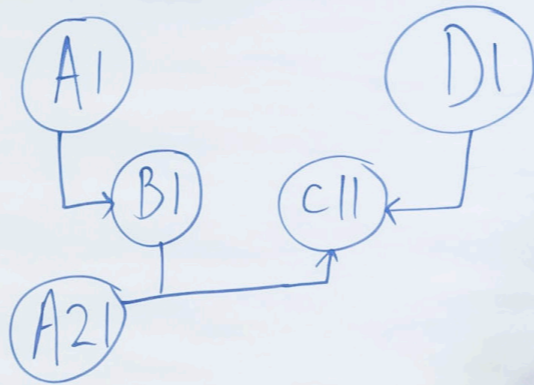
The quality of our service provision will also be monitored through our Employer Advisory Panel members, standardised event and engagement feedback and an annual employer survey.

## Employer engagement metrics

- Number of new employer partnerships developed or new opportunities offered exclusively or semi-exclusively for DMU students and graduates
- Number of opportunities advertised via DMUworks



PRODUCT FLOW



When	Internal	External
August	✓	
September	✓	
October		
November		



## Employer Engagement Strategy 2020-2023

Supporting positive outcomes for employers, students and graduates

[\*DMU's careers and employability service, known as DMU Works, was named the Best University Careers/Employability Service at the National Undergraduate Employability (NUE) Awards 2021, which celebrates the very best work being done in the UK's universities. The university was also shortlisted in the Best University Placement Service category for helping students to maximise access to work placements.]