Employability:
The employers view and how universities are responding

Rebecca Fielding, Managing Director, Gradconsult
20th March 2015
Where did ‘Employability’ come from?

Hillage and Pollard (1998)
Robinson (2000)
Harvey (2001)
Forrier and Sels (2003)
Sanders and De Grip (2004)
Fugate, Kinicki, and Ashforth (2004)
Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2005)
Fugate (2006)
Rothwell and Arnold (2007)
Berntson (2008)
1976 The Graduate Connection (Pearce and Jackson)

- 40,000 graduates, 70 Universities and polytechnics, 1,000 employers
- Self-analysis
- Value and graduate desire for good quality work experience
- Transition into work
  - Nature of work; routine, boredom, pressure
  - Supervision, rules and criticism
  - Social life and personal relationships (with people not like me)
- ‘Archangel Gabriel’ standard; Intelligence, judgement, adaptability, tenacity, communication and leadership
University activity

• Strategic partnership level activity e.g. schools, corporate degrees
• Brands, marketing and joined up CRM with BDUs
• Internships and placements (demand, funding, variety) esp. red bricks
• Earlier engagement e.g. 1st summer
• Targeted work e.g. headhunting, pre-screening
• Leveraging Linkedin and alumni

• KPIs, measurement, reporting and marketing
• Academic/faculty lead initiatives and ownership of employability
• Digital-led activity
• Consultancies / third parties ‘selling in’
• Awards, certificates, training courses, work shadowing, mentoring and on it goes………
• International activity
• Employer boards/groups
The employers’ view

2015 landscape
• Vacancies up 11.9%*
• Resources and budget/resource static
• 46%* unfilled vacancies
• SMEs biggest area for economic growth

Looking for
• Experience/work-readiness
• Working with real diversity
• Resilience and taking ownership
• Followership skills (not leadership)
• Social mobility

Frustrations
• Technical knowledge e.g. Software
• Proliferation and complexity of initiatives
• Cynicism and scepticism of ‘funded’ and DHELI timed schemes
• International student employment
• Effectiveness of on campus fairs and face to face interactions

*AGR winter survey Feb 2015
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