

RESPONSE TO THE LAW BOARD OF STUDIES STUDENT CONSULTATION ON EMPLOYABILITY

This is a response to the consultation on employability, which took place between 29 November and 13 December 2021. Available here: [Law Board of Studies Student Consultation Forum - November 2021](#)

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

The consultation was set up to ask students to comment on the ways in which the Law School, together with the Careers and Employability Service (CES), assist students in developing and enhancing employability. Students were able to post comments on a forum and were also given the option of completing a short questionnaire.

Students were particularly asked to comment on the materials available via the Law Study Home page and CES website, CES support services, student employability events and the ways in which module materials help students to gain employability skills.

DETAILS OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Forum threads were set up with specific matters that the Board of Studies (BoS) and CES were particularly interested in receiving feedback on. However, students were also advised that they could start threads of their own and could comment on any matter relating to careers and employability.

One thread relating to the experience of post-graduate students unfortunately did not generate any comments. An action is, therefore, to consider other ways to encourage feedback from this student group.

It was hoped that giving the option of a questionnaire as well as encouraging forum comments would widen participation in the consultation. It is true that the number of students responding to the questionnaire was considerably higher than those posting comments, possibly due to anonymity. However, it may be that this resulted in fewer students providing more substantial feedback via the forum as contributions were limited. That said, the contributions made have provided a useful insight into student experiences of careers and employability services and resources.

- Responses to the questionnaire: 165
- Forum posts by students: 37
- Number of students posting at least once: 12
- Total ratings (likes and favourites): 15
- Estimated readers (minimum): 93

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Careers and Employability Service

Within the questionnaire, students were asked whether they had heard of CES. 145 student (88%) had heard of the service while 20 students (12%) had not.

Students were also asked to indicate any CES services they have made use of. Results showed:

Careers Website	46
Individual CES Guidance	8
Webinars	16
Forum	27
Employer Fair	13
None	96

Students were then asked to rank how useful they found CES, with 1 being not at all useful and 5 being very useful. Results showed an average of 3.4:

1 – Not at all useful	13 (14% of those responding)
2	6 (6%)
3	26 (28%)
4	26 (28%)
5 – Very useful	23 (24%)
No response	71

It is encouraging to see that, following additional efforts to enhance awareness of CES, the majority of students are now aware of the service.

The highest level of interaction with materials is via the website. Students commenting on the forum advised that they had found a lot of information on the website, but that it could be difficult to navigate for this reason. There was also feedback in relation to the Opportunity Hub and the fact that an alternative browser was required to access this, as well as the fact that unread messages are not highlighted and so it is not obvious which are unread. CES are picking up the points regarding the Opportunity Hub. An employability planning meeting for 2022/2023 will be taking place in May 2022 where consideration will be given to how we can better direct students to the resources and help them navigate the sites.

Other comments showed that the information on the site is useful, and that it was good to know that one-to-one support is available if required.

One student also noted that the materials were geared towards students looking to start/change their career and not those wishing to enhance their existing career. This will be given consideration when planning future events and reviewing materials. Students are also advised to seek a one-to-one support session.

Materials available via the Law Study Home page

The questionnaire asked students firstly if they are aware of the Law Study Home site. The majority of students (88%) were aware of this. When asked if they were aware of the “succeed” tab containing employability resources, 44% of students were aware of this while 56% were not. This highlights that more work needs to be done by the Law School to enhance awareness of these resources. So far, the induction materials have been updated to direct students to this tab and induction sessions for students have been used as an opportunity to showcase the materials. Initial emails to students are also under review.

The questionnaire also asked students to rank how useful they found the materials in the “succeed” tab on the Law Study Home page, with 1 being not at all and 5 being very useful. Results showed an average of 3.5:

1 – Not at all useful	11 (12% of those responding)
2	7 (8%)
3	26 (29%)
4	21 (23%)
5 – Very useful	26 (29%)
No response	75

Work has been undertaken to improve the materials, which some students commenting on the forum were not aware of until advised within the consultation. This highlights the need for more work to be done to enhance awareness of these materials.

One student commented that the “law careers” and “non-law careers” were useful and easy to navigate. It was felt, however, that more information for international students would be beneficial.

Module Materials

Student comments on the forum were very positive regarding the incorporation of employability skills into the module materials. It was also evident from the comments that students have a good awareness of the way in which academic skills are transferrable to the workplace. The development of new LLB modules is currently underway and careful mapping of employability skills is being undertaken to ensure that the module materials continue to teach and develop employability skills.

Personal development and FutureYOU

Students commenting had not engaged much with this resource. This was not because of a lack of awareness, but because students did not feel it was a tool that benefitted them, although one student did note that it helped with reflection early on in his studies. There was some disagreement as to whether this type of tool should be built into module materials, though it was not felt this should be a compulsory aspect of the course.

Law School Employability Events

The Law School has been running a series of monthly employability events running from May 2021 to May 2022.

Within the questionnaire students were asked if they were aware of this calendar of events. 55% (90 students) advised that they were aware while 45% (75 students) were not. They were also asked, if they were aware of the events, how they heard about them. Results showed the following:

Law Study Home page	36 (22%)
CES Website	4 (2%)
Email	46 (77%)
Word of Mouth	4 (2%)
N/A	71 (43%)

These results show that students overwhelmingly rely on email to enhance awareness, as well as the subject website. We will continue to use these methods of communication for future events calendars but will also consider additional methods including the Student Support Team (SST) forum, LLB forum and tutor group forums (TGFs). We will also explore the enhanced use of social media.

Students were also asked to indicate which of the employability events they had attended.

Life as a lawyer at Kingsley Napley	4 students
Transferable skills and relating existing skills to a legal career	4
One-to-one with Kingsley Napley Solicitors	1
Meet your Careers and Employability Team	4
All About Law Virtual Fair	8
Networking and the Law Simplified	3
N/A	148

It is important to note that the figures above do not represent total attendance at the events, but attendance by those taking part in the consultation. However, the figures do indicate that, of those who have been aware of the events, attendance has been limited. Student comments on the forum may go some way to explaining this. Students advised that they often struggle to attend additional events due to time constraints and the need to fit in study around other commitments. Events can often clash with other priorities such as TMAs and tutorials and, at these times, students prioritise their module studies. The events calendar is set for this year but, for 2022/2023 events, the team will review attendance and student feedback to ensure that events are, as far as possible, held at times that most students find convenient. This is, of course, difficult in relation to assignment submissions as all modules have different submission dates for assignments. The dates and times of events are also limited to a degree by the timetables of those holding the sessions.

Students have suggested that events take place during the academic break. This will be discussed at the employability planning meeting in May 2022. In the past, engagement with events during the academic break has been limited and, now that more modules will be starting in the February presentation, the academic break will not coincide for all students.

Finally, students were asked if they would be interested in joining a future Law School mentoring scheme. 69% (114 students) advised that this is something they would be interested in while 31% (51 students) said they would not. It is encouraging to see that students welcome mentoring opportunities, particularly in light of the recent launch of the Law Employability Mentoring Scheme in February 2022. 36 mentors have been recruited, including solicitors, barristers, trainee solicitors, police officers, international lawyers and a judge. We have been able to offer 60 mentees the opportunity to take part in order to learn from the experiences of their mentors and receive practical advice, encouragement and support. It is hoped that the scheme will also help students taking part to develop communication and personal skills, identify their career goals and establish a firm sense of direction. Following an initial period, the success of this project will be evaluated to assess the benefits to students.

FULL RESPONSE

You said	OU response	Next steps, if appropriate
Students found there were a lot of resources and navigating them was time consuming.		Develop a guide for students to help them work through the resources available. Students have indicated elsewhere that they would like to engage with employability resources during breaks between modules. The guide can be highlighted to students when modules come to an end so that they are reminded of this before their break period and can work through resources during this time.
The Opportunity Hub site is cumbersome as it requires a different log-in, needs to be opened in a different browser and, whilst it says there are unread emails, there are not highlighted in the list.		CES are working with IT to see if any steps can be taken to address these issues.
Students found certain resources, for instance the information about law careers and non-law careers, useful. It was also reassuring to know that CES could provide one-to-one sessions.	We appreciate this positive feedback.	
Students would like more information to be provided for international students and students who are already in a career and are looking to progress this rather than starting/changing careers.		Consideration will be given to these topics when planning the next events calendar. Students are also advised to speak to a CES advisor in a one-to-one capacity.
Students were not aware of all resources.	We have already started to address this through the induction materials and sessions, bridging materials, forums and emails to students.	We will consider further comms routes such as social media and via module pages in the Employability planning meeting in May 2022.
Students felt that the module materials incorporated employability skills effectively. Students were also very aware of how these skills could be translated into the workplace.	We are very glad to have received this feedback. We are currently mapping employability skills across our new units to ensure that we continue to teach and develop these across the curriculum.	
FutureYOU was not used by students commenting on the forum as they did not feel it was useful to them	We recognise that not all resources are useful to all students.	We will consider at the planning event how we might enhance awareness of the functions and benefits of this tool so that students can make an informed decision whether to engage with it.

Many students were not aware of the Law School events

We will be building a comms calendar for the 2022/2023 events timetable soon and will consider what additional communications methods we can use, for instance social media.

Students would like to see events taking place at different times and during the academic break.

Law School events take place monthly throughout the year and so some events do take place during the break period. However, we will look at ways to engage students with CES and other employability resources during periods when there is a break in study.

Analysis will be undertaken of the most popular times for events. This will inform the development of the 2022/2023 events schedule.

Students advised that they would like to take part in mentoring events. We are delighted that the Law Employability Mentoring Scheme is now up and running.

Analysis will be undertaken of the scheme to assess the benefits to students and inform future mentoring schemes.

Date: 18 March 2022