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YEAR IN INDUSTRY: Barriers, Challenges and Motivations Project Report

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Table of contents

Executive summary List of tables and figures

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Project scope
- 1.2 Project objectives
- 1.3 Project organisation
- 1.4 Student collaborations
- 1.5 Dissemination

2. Literature review

3. Methodology

- 3.1 Research design
- 3.2 Datasets
- 3.3 Student surveys
- 3.4 Student interviews

4. Findings

- 4.1 Dataset analysis
- 4.2 Student surveys
- 4.3 Student interviews

5. Conclusions, recommendations and next steps

- 5.1 Conclusions
- 5.2 Limitations of this research
- 5.3 Recommendations
- 5.4 Next steps

References Appendices About the authors and acknowledgements

Executive summary

Introduction

There is a well-established link between completing an undergraduate Year in Industry (YiI) placement and a subsequent improvement in both academic performance and graduate employability. Despite the significant benefits that a YiI can provide, the uptake of this option is variable across the University of Leeds (UoL) with a large proportion of students not choosing this route. Although there is some literature exploring student decision-making about YiI, the barriers that deter students from YiI options are not well understood. However, it has been strongly suggested by some that the most important barrier to YiI access is the impact of unpaid placements. These commentators suggest that if all placements were paid, assuming this did not affect the number of placement vacancies available, uptake of YiI options suggests that the barriers to uptake are much more complex and specific to individual students than has previously been suggested.

The aim of this project was to explore and understand the motivations and barriers that influence student decision-making about Yil options. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, a comparative study of student experiences and opinions was developed with undergraduate students from Leeds University Business School (LUBS) and the School of Design (SoD) at UoL. These two schools have very different placement contexts and Yil structures, but both have high levels of engagement with Yil options. As a mean average from 2007/8 to 2016/17 inclusive, 40% of all UoL Yil students came from these two schools.

This project focused specifically on Yil, but the authors acknowledge that there are other options at UoL that students can engage with to help develop their personal employability. There have been several projects at UoL exploring engagement with this wider suite of opportunities and there is another LITE Teaching Enhancement Project considering non-engagement with these. Therefore, these aspects are considered out of the direct scope of this project.

Methodology

A mixed methods research design was used to explore student decision-making. Quantitative data sources were analysed to investigate any demographic differences between Yil and non Yil cohorts in each school across a 5 year period. In parallel, a student survey was developed to explore the experiences, views and opinions of students across both schools and across different student cohorts including Yil, non Yil, year 2, year 3 and year 4 students. The survey responses were then used to identify participants for individual semi-structured student interviews, the majority of which were conducted through a peer to peer process.

It should be noted that this study was relatively small-scale and exploratory in nature, with inherent limitations such as risk of non-response bias in the survey responses gathered. However, the 28 interviewees were from years 2-4 in both schools, both Yil and non Yil

students, and therefore the qualitative findings provide a representative picture of the experiences and perceptions of students' decision-making.

Findings

The quantitative data showed that Yil students in both schools are more likely to come from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, more likely to have been to state schools and have higher UCAS tariff points than non Yil students. This is in line with research external to UoL. Also in line with external research, Yil students were more likely to be in a graduate job than non Yil students 6 months after graduation. From the survey, students stated the principal barriers that impeded uptake of Yil were:

- wanting to focus on university studies
- affordability (especially in SoD)
- not feeling the Yil was for them
- choosing the Study Abroad option (particularly for LUBS).

The detailed analysis of the survey results suggested that affordability and not feeling the Yil was for them were driven by more complex underlying factors that were explored in the interview stage of the research.

From the interviews, in general, all Yil and non Yil interviewees clearly understood the competitive nature of the graduate job market and that they need to differentiate themselves from other applicants. They also tended to have a good understanding of what graduate employers are looking for, and they understood the value of work experience. There was, however, a marked difference in the level of understanding of employability between those students who declared they had good careers provision at secondary school level and those who said such provision had been limited or absent. The variations in pre-university employability awareness appeared to have an impact on student engagement in employability activities when at university. This was true for all participants, irrespective of whether they were Yil or non Yil students.

A wide range of barriers to Yil participation were discussed by interviewees, confirming the survey findings, and it was possible to explore decision-making in much more depth. For example, when affordability was quoted as a barrier to taking the Yil option, this was often linked to a non-financial resistance to moving away from home or Leeds for a placement. When a need to focus on academic studies was identified as a barrier, often the underlying problem was the time needed to complete placement applications during year 2, rather than the time actually spent on placement.

Conclusions

Overall, the majority of students recognised the value of the Yil, and they all seemed to see the same barriers to the placement option irrespective of degree subject, cohort demographics, placement context and whether they were Yil or non Yil students. What differentiated students was how they dealt with the barriers and how they perceived their ability to overcome them. The decision to pursue the Yil option was governed by how students mitigated for these common barriers, which in turn seemed to be driven by the student's inherent confidence or attitude to deal with them.

Furthermore, the students applied a process of 'trading off' between the potential benefits of the Yil and the perceived 'costs' of the Yil. This 'trading off' was modulated by external factors such as pre-university employability exposure, peer groups, university employability provision, industry practice and influential individuals.

Given the diversity of student attitudes and the diversity of external factors, we suggest that the decision-making for Yil is much more complex than previously thought.

Recommendations

The research findings and the success of each school's Yil programme provide a good foundation for recommendations to develop best practice for wider engagement in Yil and other employability activities across the UoL campus.

Given the variability of students' exposure to career guidance prior to arriving at university, the timing of employability interventions is particularly important. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- A review of each individual student's employability knowledge and skills should be developed to identify appropriate employability support. This should lead to signposting of appropriate employability support at each level of undergraduate study
- All undergraduate programmes should feature early, repeated and mandatory employability sessions, with exposure to employers and industry expertise from academic staff
- Delivering employability support at programme level (both academic and professional) must be supported by access to the appropriate industry expertise to 'add value' for each discipline
- Peer to peer contact between returning Yil and year 1 and 2 students adds further value to the engagement process. However, the nature of the contact (e.g. such as structured mentoring or Q&A sessions) should be tailored for each school depending on resources, the nature of the degree programme, and the placement context.

Specifically, for the Yil option, to positively support the 'trading off' process, successful engagement is built upon demonstrating the value of Yil options to prospective students. The value of the Yil option should be tailored to align with the target sector and the degree programme context. Students also need exposure to, and the opportunity to contact employers as well as having access to peer advice from Yil students. This peer to peer contact validates the value of the Yil option more effectively than validation from staff. However, guidance from academic staff is important, especially from those staff members with recognised industry experience.

These recommendations have been developed from the findings of this LITE project, with advice from other LITE projects and input from other stakeholders across the campus (please see acknowledgements).

List of tables and figures

Figure 1 Overview of research methodologyFigure 2 Motivations for enrolling on a Yil module – peersFigure 3 Barriers to enrolling on a Yil module - peers

Table 1 Project interviewees
Table 2 Key undergraduate student characteristics
Table 3 Key features of Yil students
Table 4 Descriptive statistics for core survey question responses
Table 5 Motivations for enrolling on a Yil module - self
Table 6 Barriers to enrolling on a Yil module - self

1. Introduction

1.1 Project scope

This project developed from the researchers' experiences of supporting Yil students in two schools; Leeds University Business School (LUBS) and the School of Design (SoD). Through this joint experience, it was recognised that there is considerable existing data for Yil modules within the University and schools' databases but there is a very significant dearth of information regarding uptake of other work experience opportunities outside formal Yil. Therefore, the focus of this project was Yil modules. Although the project findings are specific to Yil, the literature presented in Section 2 suggests that the findings can be applied to other work-based learning opportunities such as informal work experience opportunities.

The context for this project is recognition that a Yil can have a significant positive impact on student employability and through the qualitative component of the research, the project explores students' understandings of employability. This approach is used to explore student views and is not intended to provide a formal, institutional definition of employability.

However, to facilitate analysis and the presentation of the project findings, an existing and broad definition of employability has been used. This definition has been developed by the Higher Education Academy based on the following description:

'A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy'

(Yorke and Knight, 2006, p. 8 cited in Artess et al, 2017).

The HEA define employability as a set of personal attributes that help individuals navigate career decisions and build meaningful careers while at university and for the rest of their working lives; it is not just about getting a graduate job (Cole and Tibby, 2013 cited in Artess et al, 2017). As such, employment metrics, such as DLHE (Destination of Leavers from Higher Education) survey results must be considered as just one of a number of measures for employability.

This employability definition is broad enough to represent the diverse nature of students, subjects and sectors within the scope of the project. Not all students will consider working in industry as their destination post university, thus employability is about students developing 'knowledge, skills, behaviours, attributes and attitudes which will enable them to be successful not just in employment but in life' (Cole and Tibby, 2013, p.5). These skills include, but are not limited to, communication skills, numeracy, information technology, learning how to learn, personal development planning, problem solving and team working (Dearing, 1997 cited in Cole and Tibby, 2013). Another important aspect of the lens through which this project explores Yil is the concept that students are agents in their own employability development. There may be a range of opportunities available, but the student needs to be active and take ownership of developing their personal attributes and strategies in this area (CBI/NUS, 2011, cited in Cole and Tibby, 2013), a concept described as a processual view of employability (Brown, 2013).

It is recognised that there are other options that students can engage with to help develop and improve their personal employability. These include summer internships, work experience, term time work and the wider suite of programme variants such as Study Abroad and Integrated Masters programmes, as well as the application of the Leeds Curriculum and extensive knowledge and guidance from the Careers Service and employability staff in their schools. There have been several projects at UoL exploring the engagement with this wider suite of opportunities (e.g. Divan and McBurney, 2016, Sharp, 2017). There is another LITE Teaching Enhancement Project considering non-engagement with the wider suite of opportunities, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Balfour and Watkins, Employability Non-Engagement Data project, 2018/19). Therefore, these aspects are considered out of the direct scope of this project.

1.2 Project objectives

With graduates facing an increasingly competitive job market, being able to demonstrate work-readiness at graduate level is becoming an important personal tool allowing them to differentiate themselves to prospective employers. Placement opportunities such as Yil modules between years 2 and 3 of an undergraduate programme, and shorter summer internships have been found to help students to develop their employability attributes and their competitive edge (Crawford and Wang, 2016; Jones et al, 2015; Hergert, 2009). In addition the positive impact of Yil has been seen in improved student academic performance and employment outcomes for the vast majority of Yil students in the focus schools for this project.

However, despite the documented benefits of Yil placements on graduate employability and academic performance, the majority of UoL students do not choose this option, and the reasons for this are not clearly understood at UoL and in the higher education sector more widely (HEA, 2014). Therefore, this project was developed to explore the motivations and barriers that students experience when making decisions about Yil participation. Using a comparative study between LUBS and SoD, where the context and structure of each school's Yil module is distinctly different, a diverse range of factors influencing student decision-making were explored to achieve the following project objectives:

- To develop a methodology to explore placement uptake, the effect on academic performance and graduate outcomes and possible impacts associated with social mobility from existing university data systems
- To understand in more depth student expectations and experiences relating to Yil
- To provide evidence-based policy recommendations for teaching and support of placement and non placement students which are transferable to other schools
- To formulate a structured approach, for use by other schools, for placement students to share their experiences and mentor pre and non placement students

A summary of outcomes against these objectives is shown in Appendix A.

1.3 Project organisation

Both researchers were partially seconded to the Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence (LITE) for 1 year at 0.1FTE from March 2017 to February 2018. The project was additionally supported with £3,000 of funding.

1.4 Student collaborations

The project methodology was reliant on collecting detailed, and on occasion personal, input from participating students from LUBS and SoD. As the project researchers are part of the teaching teams in LUBS and SoD, it was important to utilise student researchers in the project as it was believed that peer to peer engagement would explore the student voice more authentically than if led by staff researchers. This project involved three student researchers in the student researchers contiguously as project interns. The student researchers were not students in either school to avoid any conflict of interest/ethical issues and to retain objectivity as much as possible.

1.5 Dissemination

A summary of dissemination and collaboration activities is shown in Appendix B.

2. Literature review

Graduates in the UK face significant challenges when trying to find graduate level employment. The growth in the number of graduates over the last 20 years has not been matched by growth in the job market (Abrahams, 2016), resulting in oversaturation of graduates in many sectors of industry (Allen et al, 2013; Balta et al, 2012). Therefore, both employers and graduates see a good degree as necessary, but not an effective tool to differentiate graduate skills. Other attributes are needed to be able to compete in the marketplace, an issue that has been referred to as the 'opportunity trap' (Abrahams, 2016; Brown, 2013).

In addition, employers still believe many graduates arrive into the workplace unprepared for the working environment, and that they lack core skills needed to be immediately successful (APPG, 2017; Thompson and Simmons, 2013; Tomlinson, 2012). Skills such as communication, resilience and innovation are perceived to be lacking in many graduates at the time of employment (APPG, 2017). Furthermore, such skills are difficult to identify from an applicant's degree subject and classification (APPG, 2017), leading many employers to engage in complex multi-stage recruitment processes to differentiate applicants.

However, employability attributes developed through work experience are seen as an important bridging tool for the transition from university to graduate employability. Many employers are now using work experience opportunities as a proactive part of the assessment process for graduate recruitment (HighFliers, 2016; National Centre for Universities and Business, 2016). In survey research carried out with over 900 employers, 67% of them agreed that they preferred to recruit graduates with some sort of work experience (Bennett et al, 2008). According to the annual HighFliers Report, almost half of the employers surveyed said they were unlikely to employ a graduate with no previous work experience, and over 30% of graduate positions were expected to be filled by graduates who have already worked for the organisation (HighFliers, 2016). The value of placements as a strategic component of employers' recruitment planning is demonstrated by the fact that more than 90% of the UK's leading graduate employers offer paid work experience (HighFliers, 2016).

There is a positive correlation between having work experience and improved employment opportunities. Work placements or internships are seen as effective methods for gaining an edge in the graduate job market (O'Connor and Bodicoat, 2017). Placements can assist students with work readiness as well as providing them with a communication device to illustrate to prospective employers how they have developed and have used their skills in 'real life' environments as opposed to academic contexts (Accountancy Age, 2016; Auburn, 2007).

The tangible benefits of work experience on graduate employment can be seen in analysis of the extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of career success (Binder et al, 2015; Brooks and

Youngson, 2016; Gault et al, 2000). Extrinsic measures such as time taken to obtain a graduate job, starting salary and current salary show the benefits of having work experience. More placement students (82%) go into work after graduation than non placement students (73%) (HEA, 2014) and they tend to be quicker to secure their first graduate role than the non placement cohort (Gault et al, 2000). Placement students tend to have a higher starting salary (Brooks and Youngson, 2016; Gault et al, 2000). In addition, the average salary of placement graduates is 8% higher than non placement graduates 6 months after graduation (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 2012). It has been suggested that this salary advantage can remain up to 4 years after graduation, with placement graduates also having a higher likelihood of promotion (Gault et al, 2000). These findings are reinforced by recent longitudinal research at Nottingham Trent University, which found placement students were more attractive to employers, secured jobs more quickly, had higher salaries and better job satisfaction than non placement students (Binder et al, 2015).

These advantages can be partly explained by also considering the intrinsic value of placements. Placement graduates tend to have greater career stability and job satisfaction compared with non placement graduates (Hergert, 2009). This may be due to the placement experience helping students understand the diversity of workplace requirements, which in turn enhances their confidence (Bullock et al, 2009; Edwards, 2014)). Placements can also support the development of self-confidence about career decision-making (Elijido-Ten and Kloot, 2015); studies suggest that placement students are almost 2.5 times more likely to feel highly confident about their employability if they have gained work experience through an internship during their degree (Qenani et al, 2014).

The impact of placements on students' post placement academic performance has been shown to be positive. Most studies report improvements in student motivation and attitude and an increase in student marks for post placement students, (Brooks and Youngson, 2016). The degree of improvement in marks is often relatively small, but can be statistically significant (Binder et al, 2015). Compared with second year marks, placement students on average increased their assessment scores by 3-4% (Jones et al, 2015), although it is not clear from this study whether and to what extent non placement students improved their marks. However, a cross-programme study at an English university found that placement students could improve their final year marks by up to 7%, and that they tended to have a larger improvement in their final year compared to non placement students, particularly for students whose grades were below the level of a 2.1 classification in year 2 (Reddy and Moores, 2012). It is important to note that the placement students formed 72% of the higher achieving group with 2.1 or above grades in year 2, compared with only 59% of students whose grades were below a 2.1 level in year 2.

The academic benefit of placements is also reflected in degree classifications (Binder et al, 2015). Recent mixed methods work in accounting and finance found that 76% of placement students achieved a 1st or a 2.1 degree compared with only 46% of non placement students (Anderson and Novakovic, 2017).

There is a suggestion that some of the academic benefits achieved by placement students may be linked to the optional, self-selection nature of many placement modules. Students who opt for placements tend to be those that already have better grades and are more engaged in their own personal development (Binder et al, 2015). However, a study which segmented high and low achievers found placements had a similar impact on academic performance for both groups (Reddy and Moores, 2012). In addition, in a study of 268 accounting and finance placement students, it was found that they improved on their second year scores by 3.3% in their fourth year, after completing their placement year, while their non placement peers showed only a 1% improvement after going straight into final year, suggesting placements can drive the improvements in academic performance (Crawford and Wang, 2016). Although this study did not investigate whether placement students being generally one year older than non placement students when entering final year had an impact, Reddy and Moores (2012) found no significant impact of age, again supporting the argument that it is the placement experience itself driving the improvement. It is, however, important to note that there is a dearth of research into why and how work experience impacts academic outcomes positively.

This positive academic effect appears to hold true across a range of subjects and disciplines, genders and ethnic groups (Binder et al, 2015), although there are some marginal differences in the scale of improvement by gender. There is also evidence that the positive impact of placements holds true for different socio-economic groups (Reddy and Moores, 2012).

Research on the student perspective of placements suggests that students are aware of some of the extrinsic and intrinsic benefits of completing a work experience placement (ASET, 2012). They readily identify the value of placements in helping with competing in the graduate job market as well as recognising the opportunity for placements to develop realistic career expectations and ambitions (Khalil, 2015). Often students also recognise placements can provide more direct benefits for their final year of study (Balta et al, 2012). They see placements as a learning opportunity to improve professional skills, to appreciate the nature of negotiation and compromise and even the construction of self-image (Bowen, 2018).

To summarise, there is strong evidence of the value of the extra time taken in doing placements for student employability in the short and long term as well as the cumulative effects of year long placements on academic performance; evidence that is applicable across most of the student body and which does not appear to be affected by race, gender or prior academic achievement (Binder et al, 2015). Therefore, it can be argued that placements, if equitably available, can be considered as one of the few opportunities in higher education that can level socio-economic differences; the research suggests that almost all types of student who complete a placement module, as part of their undergraduate degree, are very likely to improve their grades and employability.

Based on these findings, there is an important question to ask. If placements have a positive impact on academic performance and on employment prospects across a wide

range of student characteristics, and student awareness of the benefits of placement is widespread, why don't more students opt for placement modules?

One of the most common responses to the question is built on the perception that a large number of placements are unpaid, creating a significant, and in some cases an insurmountable, barrier to some placements for the majority of students (Lee, 2015; Sutton Trust 2014; Allen et al, 2013). The Sutton Trust found that the majority student placements (encompassing Yil and shorter placements) were unpaid irrespective of sector (APPG, 2017). UoL data for the School of Design is consistent with this (see Table 3). In some sectors, unpaid internships are common practice. For example, up to 63% of cultural or creative sector placements are not paid (APPG, 2017).

Unpaid placements can create an inequitable social mobility barrier. Only those students who can afford to do unpaid placements will benefit from the academic advantages and the greater employment prospects that these provide. There is evidence showing a larger proportion of middle class students complete placements than working class students (Abrahams, 2016), which suggests the influence of unpaid placements should not be ignored. The lack of paid placements could be seen as a barrier to social mobility (APPG, 2017; Lee, 2015). However, there is considerable research and growing evidence that this economic factor is just one of a number of barriers that negatively influence the uptake of placement opportunities for undergraduate students.

From the sociology literature, the impact of economic capital (e.g. access to financial support from family or other sources) is coupled with the impacts of social capital (e.g. access to networks of contacts to help secure work experience) (Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2015; Tholen et al, 2013) and cultural capital (e.g. tacit knowledge about behavioural norms in interview situations). The interactions of these three capitals determine where a student is positioned in the field of employability (Ingram and Waller, 2015; Tomlinson, 2012). This therefore, suggests that student perceptions of placement opportunities and the associated barriers are more complicated and diverse than simply reflecting the unpaid nature of many placements in the UK. There are a wide range of factors that influence student decisions to engage in placements. For example, students lacking suitable social and professional networks may perceive greater barriers to placements and graduate employment than those with networks (Abrahams, 2016; Bathmaker et al, 2016). The majority of the students in a qualitative study conducted at two elite universities in the UK and in France were found to have used their social and professional networks to secure placements (Tholen et al, 2013), a finding echoed by a professional accountancy body, which found that 50% of students found placements through their networks (ACCA, 2014). Students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have a lack of access to networks (APPG, 2017) are therefore, less likely to secure placements, whether these are paid or unpaid. Furthermore, it is known that students from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to be geographically mobile; only 53% of these students will move from home to attend university compared with 75% of the higher socio-economic background students (APPG, 2017). This lack of mobility is related to economic capital, but also to more intrinsic issues associated with the other capitals. This is important, as placements often require geographic mobility.

The aim of this project is to gain an enhanced understanding of the motivations and barriers that influence student decision-making for Yil options. Through improved understanding of student decision-making, recommendations for increased engagement in Yil and potentially for other opportunities and activities that can enhance employability can be developed.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

A pragmatic mixed methods research design, with quantitative and qualitative data collection was developed. The methodology used quantitative findings to provide context for the qualitative results (Cohen et al, 2011). A summary of the research design is shown in Figure 1, which consists of three components:

- 1. Analysis of existing data sources to explore the characteristics of Yil and non Yil students
- 2. Student surveys across different cohorts (years 2, 3 and 4) and Yil and non Yil students
- 3. Student Interviews to explore the factors influencing decision-making.

The methodological approach was developed to explore the diversity of barriers and motivations students associated with the Year in Industry option and qualitative and quantitative data is presented within this report. However, the quantitative data serves purely as a backdrop to provide context for the qualitative findings, which were the primary focus of this research, given the complex and personal nature of Yil decision-making.

To comply with University ethical regulations the project obtained ethical approval from the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee in January 2017.



Figure 1 Overview of research methodology

3.2 Datasets

A number of existing datasets were used to explore the characteristics of the Yil and non Yil student cohorts for LUBS and SoD. The datasets used were:

- CendatQ census information of registered students at the University of Leeds (2007/8 to 2016/17)
- HESA MarketQ- demographic information of UoL students compared with the UK HE sector and the Russell Group (2011/12 to 2015/16)
- DLHEQ –graduate employment outcomes of UoL students (2011/12 to 2015/16)
- DLHE MarketQ graduate employment outcomes of UoL students compared with UK HE sector and the Russell Group (2012/13 to 2015/16)
- Strategy and Planning (S&P) custom built UoL dataset combining data related to UCAS applications, academic performance and employment outcomes.

The S&P custom built dataset contains anonymised comprehensive student data for entry cohorts from 2007/8 to 2013/14. The dataset collates information for pre, peri and post university student experience. The construction of the dataset and the parameters for its analysis were developed in collaboration with the UoL Strategy and Planning team. Due to the complexity of the data sources, the development of this customised dataset took considerable time, and the initial release of the database contained some minor flaws. As a result, a revised dataset had to be compiled, which was released to the research team near the end of the project. Therefore, for this report, there is limited reference to findings from this data source.

3.3 Student surveys

The objective of the surveys was to map student decision-making as individuals progress through their university studies. However, as the project was only 12 months in duration, a longitudinal study of student progression was not possible. Therefore, a pragmatic pseudo-longitudinal approach was taken, where surveys of different year groups in both schools were undertaken to identify general trends in decision-making.

Existing research was used to create an extensive list of motivations and barriers, which was then used within the survey and interviews in various formats. The approach was validated and piloted prior to survey launch. Validation was achieved through consultation with the University's Careers and Educational Engagement teams, and in conference workshops (ASET and SEDA). The survey was piloted with non LUBS and non SoD students.

The survey consisted of a set of common core questions from which a series of 'branching' questions were used to distinguish between different student cohorts. A prize draw of a £20 Amazon voucher was used as a participation incentive. The response rate of different student cohorts to the survey varied from 4% to 29%, which could be seen as a limitation of this data, but overall 160 usable responses were obtained, representing all programme areas in both schools. The survey of year 3 students who were doing their Yil was conducted in Summer 2017. In Autumn 2017, year 2 students (those planning to do a Yil

and those not planning to do a Yil), year 3 finalists (non Yil students), year 3 Yil students (who had recently commenced their Yil) and year 4 finalists (who had done a Yil or a study abroad year) were surveyed.

3.4 Student interviews

The survey identified interview participants for semi structured interviews where the factors that influenced decision making were explored in detail. The rationale for the interview structure was to apply an interpretivist approach, as the literature suggested that there could be multiple versions of reality with regard to student experiences and opinions of employability (Qenani et al, 2014; King and Horrocks, 2010).

It was also expected that the interviews would explore sensitive aspects of students' backgrounds (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013), so to minimise the impact of the staff researchers on the outcomes, a peer-peer interview approach was taken. The majority of interviews were conducted in Autumn 2017, during the first semester of the academic year 2017/18, by undergraduate student interns, who were trained in interview techniques using extracts from Mann (2016), Cohen et al (2011) and King and Horrocks (2010).

All interview participants completed a consent sheet with information provided before the interview, and were offered a £20 Amazon voucher afterwards as an incentive to take part. Prior to the interview, participants were sent a career decision-making timeline to prompt them to think about influences on their career decisions from school or college through to their current position at university. The interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes and were recorded and transcribed; transcription was complemented by interviewer notes.

Interview analysis was independently carried out by each researcher, from which a set of themes was derived, using the basic thematic analysis process described by King and Horrocks (2010). A summary of interviewees is shown in Table 1 below. Year 2 students were categorised as those that were planning to do a Yil (Yil) and those that were not (non Yil). 79% of interviewees were female and 79% were UK origin students.

Interview Group	SoD	LUBS	Total
Year 3 (student on Yil)	5	5	10
Year 2	2 (non Yil)	9 (4 non Yil <i>,</i> 5 Yil)	11
Year 3 (non Yil, finalist)	6	1	7
Total	13	15	28

Table 1 Project interviewees

4. Findings

4.1 Dataset analysis

Using the pre-existing datasets, key features of the general student population and the Yil student population for LUBS and SoD were identified and, where possible, were compared to the wider UoL cohort, the HESA market of UK higher education institutions and the Russell Group (RG). The market and RG comparison provided an opportunity to explore the possible influence of vocational degrees, institutes and industry sectors on placement decision making (O'Connor and Bodicoat, 2017; Reddy and Moores 2012; Bennett et al, 2008) as both LUBS and SoD are considered to have a stronger vocational focus than many other schools and degree subjects at UoL.

Table 2 shows a comparison of key undergraduate student characteristics between LUBS and SoD averaged for academic years 2007/8 to 2016/17 inclusive, as well as UoL and where possible between sector and other RG universities.

	LUBS	SoD
UoL students by school (%)	8%	5%
Percentage of UK students (%)	72%	92%
	Sector 68%	Sector 86%
	RG 56%	RG 78%
Female students (%)	50%	84%
	Sector 45%	Sector 86%
	RG 46%	RG 85%
Students from a low socio-economic	18%	20%
classification (SEG 4-7) (%)	Sector 33%	Sector 36%
	RG 19%	RG 23%
Students from state school (%)	68%	82%
	Sector 87%	Sector 97%
	RG 69%	RG 86%
Average UCAS tariff (points)	443	423
	Sector 346	Sector 339
	RG 455	RG 403
Graduate prospects (DLHE) (%)	86%	70%

Table 2 Key undergraduate student characteristics, mean averages for 2007/8-2016/17 inclusive

In summary, compared to the sector and to the Russell Group, LUBS and SoD students are:

- more likely to be of UK origin
- less likely to be from a lower socio-economic background
- less likely to be from a state school
- more likely to have achieved a higher UCAS tariff.

These characteristics also hold true for the Yil students from both schools.

Table 3 shows a summary of the key features of the Yil students in LUBS and SoD averaged for academic years 2007/8 to 2016/17 inclusive.

School	LUBS	SoD
Percentage of all UoL Yil students	19%	21%
Yil students of UK origin (%)	93%	97%
(UoL Yil 96%)	(Total all LUBS 72%)	(Total all SoD 92%)
Female Yil students (%)	54%	87%
(UoL Yil 68%)	(Total all LUBS 50%)	(Total all SoD 84 %)
Yil paid placements (%)	99%	37%
Yil London placements (%)	28%	51%
Yil Graduate Prospects (%)	90%	75%
(UoL Yil 86%)	(Total all LUBS 86%)	(Total all SoD 70%)
Yil students with previous work experience with their graduate employer (%)	58%	69%

Table 3 Key features of Yil students averaged for academic years 2007/8 to 2016/17 inclusive

Over the period 2007/8 to 2016/17, LUBS and SoD parented on average 13% of all undergraduate students at UoL, but on average accounted for 40% of all UoL Yil students. The vast majority of LUBS and SoD Yil students are from the UK, which is in line with the overall UoL Yil distribution. The Yil gender mix is in line with both schools' overall mix. Both schools' Yil cohorts have a better Graduate Prospects DLHE measure compared with the overall results of each school.

Unpaid placements are a strong feature in SoD, as is a London bias for placement locations, where as in LUBS unpaid placements are very uncommon and there is less emphasis on London placements. The majority of Yil graduates in both schools had worked previously

for their final graduate employer; it is likely the previous work experience was through Yil opportunities, but it is possible it could have been through vacation or other experiences.

4.2 Student surveys

Beyond standard demographic information, the survey was designed to explore student motivations and barriers to YiI, perceptions of employability, employability provision at UoL and whether students would be willing to participate in a project interview. Motivations and barriers were explored from two perspectives; from the participant's personal viewpoint and also from their perceived view of decision-making in their peer group.

4.2.1 Attitudes to Yil and employability

Table 4 summarises the findings for selected questions related to student attitudes to Yil and graduate employability. The results are split between Summer (year 3 students on their Yil) and Autumn (year 2, year 3 students on their Yil, year 3 finalists and year 4 finalists) surveys, split by school. The responses are based on a Likert scale with a higher score indicating a more positive response to the question. The analysis considered both the mean average and the most common response for each question.

Question	Survey	Responses	Mean	Mode
1. To what extent did the option to	Autumn SoD	41	4.9	7
complete a Year in Industry influence your decision to apply to Leeds?	Autumn LUBS	71	4.2	6
,,	Summer SoD	33	5.0	7
	Summer LUBS	15	5.3	5
2. What value do you think Year in	Autumn SoD	41	6.3	7
Industry placements have for university students?	Autumn LUBS	71	6.1	7
	Summer SoD	33	6.7	7
	Summer LUBS	15	6.7	7
3. How confident are you in your	Autumn SoD	41	4.8	5
ability to secure a graduate job related to your degree course?	Autumn LUBS	71	5.1	5
, 3	Summer SoD	33	5.5	6
	Summer LUBS	15	5.7	6
4. What impact, if any, do you think	Autumn SoD	41	6.0	7
the Year in Industry may have on graduate employability?	Autumn LUBS	71	6.2	7
	Summer SoD	33	6.5	7
	Summer LUBS	15	6.3	7

Table 4 Descriptive statistics for core survey question responses

What is striking about the survey results is the alignment of student views irrespective of level, school or whether they had completed a YII or not, both in terms of mean and modal responses. The YiI options appeared to be a positive influence on students choosing UoL, even if the student was not planning to complete a YiI. There was general agreement across all students that the YiI option was of great value and had a positive impact on employability, with the most common response being 7 from YiI and non YiI alike. This suggests a high level of awareness among all students that a university degree may need to be supplemented by additional experiences to secure a graduate job, as well as recognition that YiI options could provide a competitive advantage.

4.2.2. Motivations for enrolling on Yil

All cohorts were asked to consider a list of reasons for doing a Yil and to identify those that they believed were a motivation to opt for a placement year. The participants were asked to consider these motivations for themselves and for their peers. Participants ranked the top five personal motivations in order of importance. When considering motivations for their peers, participants were asked to select the five most important motivations but not to rank them. Participants selected personal and peer motivations from a list provided. In both questions, an 'other' option with a free text box was available to capture other motivations. The results are shown in Table 5 and Figure 2 below.

Survey	Top reason	2 nd motivation	3 rd motivation	4 th motivation	5 th motivation
Autumn SoD	I have a family or other connection in industry (mean 2.00)	Relevant work experience is necessary (mean 2.00)	The experience would improve my CV (mean 2.56)	To learn more about a specific industry (mean 2.60)	Following advice from parents or tutors (mean 3.00)
Summer SoD	To learn more about a specific industry (mean 2.10)	To develop confidence (mean 2.19)	Following advice from parents or tutors (mean 2.33)	Relevant work experience is necessary (mean 2.52)	The experience would improve my CV (mean 2.96)
Autumn LUBS	Relevant work experience is necessary (mean 2.20)	To learn more about a specific industry (mean 2.48)	To develop confidence (mean 2.78)	Following advice from parents or tutors (mean 3.00)	To secure a graduate job (mean 3.07)
Summer LUBS	To earn and save money (mean 1.50)	To learn more about a specific industry (2.63)	To develop confidence (mean 2.67)	To develop new skills *(mean 3.00)	Following advice from parents or tutors (mean 3.00)

Table 5 Motivations for enrolling on a Yil module – self. Table shows top five motivations for each set of survey respondents, by mean (1 = highest rank, 5 = lowest rank). Those reasons in bold were identified in both the Summer and Autumn surveys as in the top five motivations. *Specified as 4th reason as more students included this reason in their top five than the other reason with the same mean.

When reflecting on their personal reasons for doing a Yil option, it is interesting to note only nine different motivations were ranked. The majority of these motivations focussed on the work experience and developing skills and confidence, understanding the work place and following advice from others.



Figure 2 Motivations for enrolling on a Yil module – peers. Figure shows frequency with which each reason was cited by respondents in each school, combining the Summer and Autumn survey responses.

The most highly-ranked motivations were consistent across both schools. There was widespread awareness of the importance of relevant work experience to employers. The instrumental reason 'to get a graduate job' seemed more important to LUBS students than those in SoD, while SoD students valued the CV boost which Yil could provide. LUBS students on a Yil also prioritised the financial aspects of a Yil but these seemed less important to LUBS students in other years and to SoD students – perhaps because of the generally better pay levels for Yil placements in business compared with design.

With regard to the frequency with which reasons were cited in the top five reasons why respondents thought others chose to do a Yil, there was a high degree of consistency between SoD and LUBS respondents – with a focus on the necessity of having work experience, 'CV development', contribution towards getting a graduate job, but also the learning and skills development aspects of a Yil being perceived to be important motivating factors.

4.2.3 Barriers to enrolling on Yil

All students were asked to consider the barriers to Yil for themselves and for their peers, and identify those they believed were barriers to opting for a placement year. The participants were asked to consider these barriers for themselves and for their peers. Participants ranked the top five personal barriers in order of importance. When considering motivations for their peers, participants were asked to select the five most important motivations but not to rank them. Participants selected personal and peer motivations from a list provided. In both questions, an 'other' option with a free text box was available to capture other motivations. The results are shown in Table 6 and Figure 3 below.

Survey	Top barrier	2 nd barrier	3 rd barrier	4 th barrier	5 th barrier
Autumn SoD	Do not know what industry to apply to (mean 2.00)	Do not want Yil job applications distracting them from their academic work (mean 2.00)*	Prefer to focus on university studies (mean 2.50)	Cannot afford to undertake a Yil (mean 3.00)	Do not feel a Yil is for them (mean 3.00)
Autumn LUBS	Cannot find a placement to apply for (mean 1.00)	Applying for a study abroad year (mean 1.80)	Do not want Yil job applications distracting them from their academic work (mean 2.00)	Do not feel a Yil is for them (mean 2.60)	Already have enough work experience (mean 2.67)**

Table 6 Barriers to enrolling on a Yil module – self. Table shows top five barriers for each set of survey respondents, by mean (1 = highest rank, 5 = lowest rank). This question was only applicable in the Autumn surveys as all students surveyed in the Summer were doing a Yil. *same frequency of responses as well as mean rank. ** Do not know what industry to apply to had the same mean (2.67) but a lower frequency of responses.

Unlike the clear convergence of views for motivations, student perceptions of the relative importance of barriers were more varied. Only two barriers were ranked in the top five in both schools; the perception that the Yil was 'not for me' and the idea that applications were a distraction from academic work. These two barriers were investigated further in the interviews, and the perception a Yil is 'not for me' was probed further to explore the underlying factors.



Figure 3 Barriers to enrolling on a Yil module– peers. Figure shows frequency with which each reason was cited by respondents in each school, combining the Summer and Autumn survey responses.

The figure shows that when it came to perceived barriers other students faced when considering a Yil, there was less consistency between SoD and LUBS than when the respondents considered peers' motivations to do a Yil. As well as being ranked in the top five barriers faced by students themselves in LUBS, affordability was the most frequently mentioned barrier for other students among SoD respondents. Concern about pay was less of a priority in LUBS, probably because the vast majority of LUBS placements are paid. Wanting to focus on studies and not feeling a Yil was for them featured strongly for the respondents from both schools, supporting our sense that these barriers should be probed in the interviews. Study abroad is more popular in LUBS than SoD and, as this is mutually exclusive with Yil, that it featured relatively strongly in the LUBS responses but not in SoD responses was not surprising.

The detailed analysis of the survey data showed there was a diverse range of issues students considered, often with a complex and individual mix of perceived barriers being identified. This suggested, unlike the motivations for a Yil, the barriers seemed to be much more personalised.

4.3 Student interviews

From the analysis of the interview transcripts, five principal decision-making themes were identified.

- Employability
- Placement value
- Placement barriers
- External factors
- Trading off placement value and costs.

4.3.1. Employability

A highly-developed ability to articulate what employers are looking for in graduates was almost universal among the interviewees, whether they were Yil or non Yil students. This suggested there is high awareness within the student community of employers' requirements, the crowded nature of the job market and level of graduate competition. Most interviewees suggested that degree subject and classification and university attended were a basic requirement, but these attributes need to be supplemented by extracurricular dimensions. All interviewees, irrespective of Yil or non Yil, perceived that graduates with work experience had specific non-university skills, were more work-ready and could 'fit' into the workplace more easily. Almost all interviewees gave consistent answers about employability, suggesting it was related to securing a graduate-level job and having the skills to gain a competitive edge. There was a suggestion that most students understood the need to have 'employability attributes' for them to be able to achieve their graduate goals. Interestingly, it was not possible to distinguish Yil from non Yil students by their understanding or definitions of employability; there was a general view that held for the majority of interviewees irrespective of level, school or experience.

4.3.2. Placement value

The positive impact of placements on graduate employment prospects is well-documented, and the interview analysis demonstrated that students have an awareness of the value of placements. They all expressed the value of placements as a route to gaining work experience and developing 'employability attributes', which ultimately would support their pursuit of a graduate career.

Interviewees perceived placement value in terms of their CVs and stated appropriate work experience as being an important tool to achieve success in the initial stages of recruitment (e.g. applications and shortlisting). However, they perceived placement experience as being vital during the latter stages of the recruitment process (e.g. interviews) as they needed the work experience to articulate and validate their skills. The perceived value of the Yil was maximised when students expressed their work readiness and emphasised their 'fit' with the employer; they had proved their ability to fit in with a team for an extended period via their placement year.

4.3.3. Placement barriers

The student survey highlighted a wide range of potential barriers seen by students. The interview process allowed exploration of any underlying factors influencing student perception of these barriers.

The most commonly stated barrier in the survey was preferring to focus on university studies. Analysing the interview responses, it was possible to identify three factors influencing students' perception of this barrier:

- Some students perceived themselves to be 'behind' their cohort because of a gap year, having had a change of programme or being a mature student. They felt a Yil would push them further behind their peers
- A smaller but discrete group felt they needed to finish their degree as quickly as possible because they were not enjoying their studies or university life
- The amount of time needed to complete the volume of often detailed placement application forms and other recruitment stage processes (e.g. psychometric tests) was considered by many students as a major barrier. In addition, the timing of applications (usually late in semester 1 or early in semester 2 of year 2) was perceived to have a major impact on study and assessment deadlines.

These factors driving the 'preferring to focus on university studies' were not always mutually exclusive and some students expressed concerns about combinations of these when discussing their decision-making.

Affordability was another potential barrier that was explored in the interviews. There was specific concern about unpaid placements in SoD, which were intensified by the high proportion of London-based placements. However, even for LUBS students, on paid placements, there was concern about spending a high proportion of their salary on living costs, especially in London. Affordability was often linked with relocation, which was seen as a negative or positive factor for different students. Some actively sought placement opportunities in London to experience the lifestyle, while others wanted to avoid London placements. This was sometimes linked to living costs but, equally as important, linked to wanting to remain in the familiar surroundings of Leeds or their parental home while they tried to navigate their transition to the unfamiliar world of work.

Beyond the detail for specific barriers, the most significant finding from the interviews, which supported the analysis of the survey results, was that the barriers perceived by Yil and non Yil students were virtually the same. It was not possible to distinguish students in terms of school or Yil status by the barriers that they identified. Students saw the same challenges to taking a Yil option irrespective of background. Conversely, what did differentiate students was how these barriers were perceived and mitigated for when considering Yil. It became evident that the decision to undertake or not undertake a Yil was the result of a series of sometimes complex personal trade offs between the value of doing a Yil and the potential barriers or costs, that they as an individual perceived; the perception of costs (the barriers) was driven by their personal circumstances and intrinsic attitudes. Costs in this trading off process were not limited to financial costs but more importantly included personal negative impacts and social costs. Student attitude and confidence also appeared to be important personal attributes in the process of trading off the Yil costs and benefits.

4.3.4. External factors

There were external factors that appeared to modulate students' attitudes towards decision making for Yil options:

- Pre-university employability exposure: The knowledge students had about employability before arriving at university was a factor that influenced their Yil attitude and decision making. Students exposed to pre-university career advice tended to have a clearer understanding of the value of the Yil
- Peer groups: Yil decisions made by a large proportion of the student peer group can influence individuals. Students may feel 'left behind' their group by not aligning with the group. In some cases, this factor alone was strong enough to push students to overcome their personal barriers to Yil
- University employability provision (both Yil specific and more general): Access to employers, support from Careers, engagement with year 4 students and advice from industry-experienced staff was seen as a positive external factor that influenced student decisions

- Industry practice: The value that the industry sector places on gaining pregraduation work experience, particularly for 'vocational' subjects can mitigate for the effect of perceived barriers
- Influential individuals: Support, guidance and experience of parents, friends and older siblings can be a significant factor for decision-making.

4.3.5. Trading off placement value and placement costs

Generally, students are aware of the importance of employability and the role placements can play for access to a successful graduate career; they understand the value of placements. This reflects the findings from other research in this field (Balta et al, 2012; Khalil, 2015; ASET, 2012). They are also aware that there are a number of barriers they need to negotiate to access placements and they perceive that there may be costs associated with doing a Yil as well as benefits.

Whether a student decides to opt for a Yil seems to be driven by a complex personal process of trading off the costs with the value of a placement year. This process seems to be a mix of conscious and subconscious decision-making where a student's inherent attitude and confidence to deal with the barriers determines if that barrier is seen as an insurmountable challenge or as a temporary obstacle on the journey to positive gains. The ability to trade off is modulated by the external factors discussed in the previous section. Students who are pre-loaded with employability knowledge from their secondary school or college tend to value Yil more highly, which positively influences the Yil trade off outcome. The individualistic and multi-faceted nature of trading off suggests there is a a very complex process for navigating the map of motivations and barriers to placement opportunities; each student will have their own individual attitude that is modulated by their experience of the external factors, which in turn determines their decision-making about Yil. This aligns with the complex interactions of capitals and the belief that barriers are more complicated than just those associated with unpaid placements as found in the existing literature (APPG, 2017; Abrahams, 2016, Bathmaker et al, 2016, Tholen et al, 2013; Balta et al, 2012).

5. Conclusions, recommendations and next steps

5.1 Conclusions

The arguments for completing a Yil are well-established and are based on the rational value of academic development and short and long-term career benefits. However, the reasons for not engaging with the Yil are much more complex and significantly influenced by personal factors.

Students in both schools recognised the value of completing a Yil and the motivations for undertaking a Yil converge and align around key themes; the importance of relevant work experience to employers, a positive contribution to learning, CV development and a route to getting a graduate job. However, the decision to pursue a Yil is driven by a range of trade offs between the potential benefits and the perceived barriers to doing a Yil. This suggests that the situation is much more nuanced than some of the existing literature portrays (APPG, 2017; Tholen et al, 2013; Balta et al, 2012). The 'trading off' process for each individual student is influenced by their attitude and external factors, such as pre-university employability exposure, peer groups, university employability provision, industry practice and influential individuals.

The comparative nature of the project, between two very different disciplinary areas and associated industry sectors, in addition to the different Yil structures in the SoD and LUBS, helps to reinforce these findings. The same barriers, external factors and trading off process were identified for both schools, irrespective of degree subject, cohort demographics or placement context.

Analysis of the barriers to doing a Yil, showed there was a very wide range of reasons why a student may not decide to pursue a Yil. What was surprising was the barriers identified were the same for the Yil cohort and the non Yil cohort. It appears that all students perceive the same barriers. However, it is how the students resolve or mitigate these barriers during the trading off of costs and benefits of Yil that differentiates them. This research suggests there is a high level of complexity in understanding and resolving the trading off for Yil decisions and other employability-related decisions, aligning with the processual employability concept, that each student is the agent of their own employability, as discussed in the introduction. This suggests that the 'solution' for helping students reach a rational decision about the Yil and other 'employability' options is also more complex than previously thought; there is no 'silver bullet' that covers the diversity of student attitudes and external factors.

However, the project has been able to identify common themes that can help support students' decision making about Yil and employability. Tailoring and embedding the 'employability approach' to align with the sector and the programme context was seen as an important factor by LUBS and SoD students. Exposure to employers during their degree was viewed positively; it allowed students to develop a better understanding of the value of work experience and to start to create their networks. Peer advice from Yil students was also valuable, as was guidance from academic staff who had personal industry experience. The timing of employability interventions is particularly important, given the variability of pre-university employability provision. In the same way that the first year of a degree programme is designed to ensure all students, irrespective of route to university and qualifications, achieve similar levels of knowledge and skills for years 2 and 3, a similar approach is suggested for 'employability'; in particular interventions are required at year 1 to encourage proactive thinking from students about their careers while there is time to plan their career path through university.

5.2 Limitations of this research

This study was relatively small-scale and exploratory in nature, within two schools at one research-intensive institution. Survey response rates in both schools were relatively low, which could be considered a limitation of the work, as there may be issues of non-response bias. Interviews required student volunteers, again leading to the risk that only those with strong views would volunteer for an interview. However, the number of interviews conducted, across different cohorts and with both Yil and non Yil students does allow us to have reasonable confidence that the qualitative findings provide a representative picture of the experiences of students in both our schools.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the complex nature of student decision-making about Year in Industry and this potentially being extended to employability more generally, our project recommendations are as follows:

- A review of each individual student's employability knowledge and skills should be developed to identify appropriate employability support. This should lead to signposting of appropriate employability support at each level of undergraduate study
- All undergraduate programmes should feature early, repeated and mandatory employability sessions, with exposure to employers and industry expertise from academic staff
- Delivering employability support at programme level (both academic and professional) must be supported by access to the appropriate industry expertise to 'add value' for each discipline
- Peer to peer contact between returning Yil and year 1 and 2 students adds further value to the engagement process. However, the nature of the contact (e.g. such as structured mentoring or Q&A sessions) should be tailored for each school depending on resources, the nature of the degree programme, and the placement context.

It is recognised that existing best practice which addresses some of these recommendations may be already embedded in many schools across the UoL campus. However, the application of employability provision varies across the campus and an accurate assessment of best practice and efficacy may be required to ensure all students can benefit from the sharing of and embedding of best practices in their programme context.

5.4 Next steps

Potential next steps include:

- Further analysis to determine whether there are demographic differences between Yil and non Yil students in other schools at the UoL, and links between Yil uptake, academic performance and employment outcomes, using the S&P dataset, and broadening the analysis to include other institutions
- Development of university-level policy recommendations to support consistent provision and timeliness of employability support
- Review, evaluation and further development of pilot employability sessions/modules tailored to context and industries at programme level, including identification of academic and professional staff with appropriate expertise to provide the local, tailored support on employability for which there is demand
- Review, evaluation and further development and sharing of of pilot peer-peer contact schemes at school or programme level.

A forum to share best practices and the experience of practitioners across the campus would provide an effective and efficient strategy to explore and develop these recommendations and next steps.

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Appendices Appendix A | Project objectives and outcomes

This appendix sets out the outcomes of our project against each of the original objectives.

Objective	Notes	Outcome (Green = fully
		met, Amber = partially
		met, Red = not met)
To develop a methodology to explore placement uptake, the effect on academic performance and graduate outcomes and possible impacts associated with social mobility from existing university data systems	 Relevant Qlikview models obtained and analysed (section 3.2) Strategy and Planning dataset linking demographic information to academic performance and employability outcomes of Yil and non Yil students 	
	 across the university obtained – initial analysis completed (section 4.1) but further in-depth analysis to identify trends in LUBS and SoD required Dataset now exists 	
	for other schools and faculties to analyse under the control of Strategy and Planning	
To understand in more depth student expectations and experiences relating to Yil	 Survey and interview findings (sections 4.2 and 4.3) enrich our understanding of expectations and experiences of both Yil and non Yil students in both schools, from years 2 to 4 	

To provide evidence-based policy recommendations for teaching and support of placement and non placement students which are transferable to other schools	 Recommendations based on research findings have been developed (section 5) and are being discussed with both LUBS and SoD, and with the Chair of the Placements and Internships Group 	
To formulate a structured approach, for use by other schools, for placement students to share their experiences and mentor pre and non placement students	 Not addressed due to lack of project time. This is a potential further project for the researchers or others, subject to senior sponsorship, time and funding, and we understand some pilot schemes have already been run. Interviewees (both year 4 Yil returners and year 2 pre Yil students) demonstrated a clear appetite for such an approach in LUBS and SoD 	

Appendix B | Project dissemination and collaborations

Event	Date	Session title	Nature of session
ASET conference	September 2017	Year in Industry:	Workshop (c.40
		Barriers, Challenges	attendees)
		and Motivations	
University of Leeds	January 2018	Year in Industry:	Parallel session (c.10
Student Education		Barriers, Challenges	attendees)
Conference		and Motivations	
SEDA Spring	May 2018	Year in Industry:	Workshop (c.10
Teaching, Learning		Barriers, Challenges	attendees)
and Assessment		and Motivations	
Conference			
University of Leeds	May 2018	Year in Industry:	Workshop (c.15
Pedagogic Research		Barriers, Challenges	attendees)
in the Arts (PRiA)		and Motivations	
lunch			

Dissemination

Collaborations

Throughout the project, we have discussed our ideas and shared our emerging findings with the Careers Centre, Educational Engagement team and the Employability teams in our schools and other LITE Teaching Enhancement Project Leaders whose projects are in the area of employability (Schuessler and Souter, Watkins and Balfour, Llewellyn and Campbell). In April 2018, we were consulted by a team from the Department for Education who have an interest in employability research in UK HE. We also discussed our research topic with a member of the 'Paired Peers' project about undergraduate and graduate social mobility conducted at the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England, and attended the launch event for phase 2 of that project.

About the authors and acknowledgements About the authors

Alice Shepherd is an Associate Professor in Accounting and Finance at Leeds University Business School and a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. She teaches on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Prior to that, Alice taught at Manchester Business School, worked in professional accountancy training and was a manager and group leader in Assurance at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. Her interest in Year in Industry derives from her professional background and experiences in managing placement students in accountancy practice, as well as teaching final year students at LUBS. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and has publications in the fields of education and accounting.

Mark Sumner is a Lecturer in the School of Design. He teaches modules for undergraduate and postgraduate students and provides supervision for masters and PhD research students. In addition to teaching and research responsibilities, Mark has managed the School's Year in Industry programme, and has seen a growth in the number of students taking this option of over 50%, with 115 students from the school going on a Yil in 2016/17. His interest in the project stemmed from ad hoc discussion with students about their attitudes and perception of the value of Year in Industry and a curiosity about the ability of the placements to either widen or narrow the social mobility gap for different students.

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