

## The Higher Education Achievement Report: what might it mean for academic colleagues

Over 90 Universities and Colleges are currently working to develop and implement a new student achievement record – the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR). This development, which is designed to replace the existing Transcript (and subsume the Diploma Supplement), reflects the belief that in today's world:

- a single judgement – the honours degree classification – cannot do justice to our understanding of the knowledge, skills and experience gained by students, although the degree classification will continue to be included on the final document for the foreseeable future;
- employers – and postgraduate admissions tutors - are interested in a much wider range of graduate capabilities than those captured purely in marks and grades, although these will remain an essential element of the HEAR.

**Several institutions have already issued HEARs to their graduates and more will do so this year. When fully implemented, the HEAR will provide a range of information including:**

1. **More detail about the content of the programme studied**, including course coverage and the knowledge and understanding a student can be expected to have gained. It will also contain a detailed breakdown of the modules studied and the marks obtained, perhaps also identifying the assessment methods used and how they contributed to the final mark. The main intellectual, practical and transferable skills developed through the programme will also be detailed in the HEAR.
2. **More detail on a wider range of achievement.** One section of the HEAR will be dedicated to additional information that goes beyond traditional academic achievement. This will be verified and validated by the institution under three headings:
  - additional awards – accredited performance in non-academic contexts - such as through employability awards;
  - additional recognised activities – achievement in such areas as volunteering, student union activities or representation at university, county or national level in sport; and
  - University (or College), Professional and Departmental prizes - rewarding both academic and non- academic achievement.

**Early evidence shows that the HEAR is not a job for Registry alone. Implementation requires an alliance of Registry, academic departments, Careers and Employability services, Senior Managers and Students Unions. So how might academic colleagues make a contribution:**

- A. By explaining the purpose and value of the HEAR to students at appropriate points throughout their studies so that students understand and can contribute to the enrichment of their HEARs.
- B. By carefully considering what should be in the course related information section so that students and employers gain a detailed understanding of the richness of the learning experience including any opportunities for authentic learning that all students experience.

- C. By making use of the evolving HEAR to support the (academic and wider) development of their students, perhaps in personal or academic tutoring contexts. Many institutions plan to provide the HEAR electronically so it can be used in such circumstances.
- D. By using such opportunities to ensure that students are fully aware of the range of the wider opportunities their University recognises.
- E. By considering the titles of modules and the meaning this conveys to external parties when recorded on the HEAR.
- F. By considering the range of assessments, where components of assessment are recorded, whether these develop a range of skills and attributes and how this is conveyed to students and employers.
- G. By contributing information on prizes and other awards at departmental level.
- H. By considering the relationship of the HEAR to PDP and related activities.
- I. By promoting institutional skills awards, where they exist, that allow students to reflect on their life-wide learning and considering the extent to which these can be supported through the curriculum.
- J. By considering the relationship of the HEAR as a formal and verified document to less formal activities that may be included in the course such as students' portfolios.
- K. By considering how they can work with local employer contacts and groups to convey the purpose and content of students' HEARs.
- L. With careers colleagues as appropriate, ensure that students appreciate the value of, and make use of, their HEAR as an aide memoire in making applications, for sandwich placements and internships; permanent employment; or further study or training opportunities.
- M. By the prospect that, over time, the availability of the HEAR should make the task of writing references easier – and might mean in the longer term there is less need for references on the part of graduates.
- N. By using the HEAR when considering applications for postgraduate entry.

**Produced by staff from HEAR trial institutions in collaboration with the Centre for Recording Achievement, 104-108 Wallgate, Wigan, WN3 4AB**