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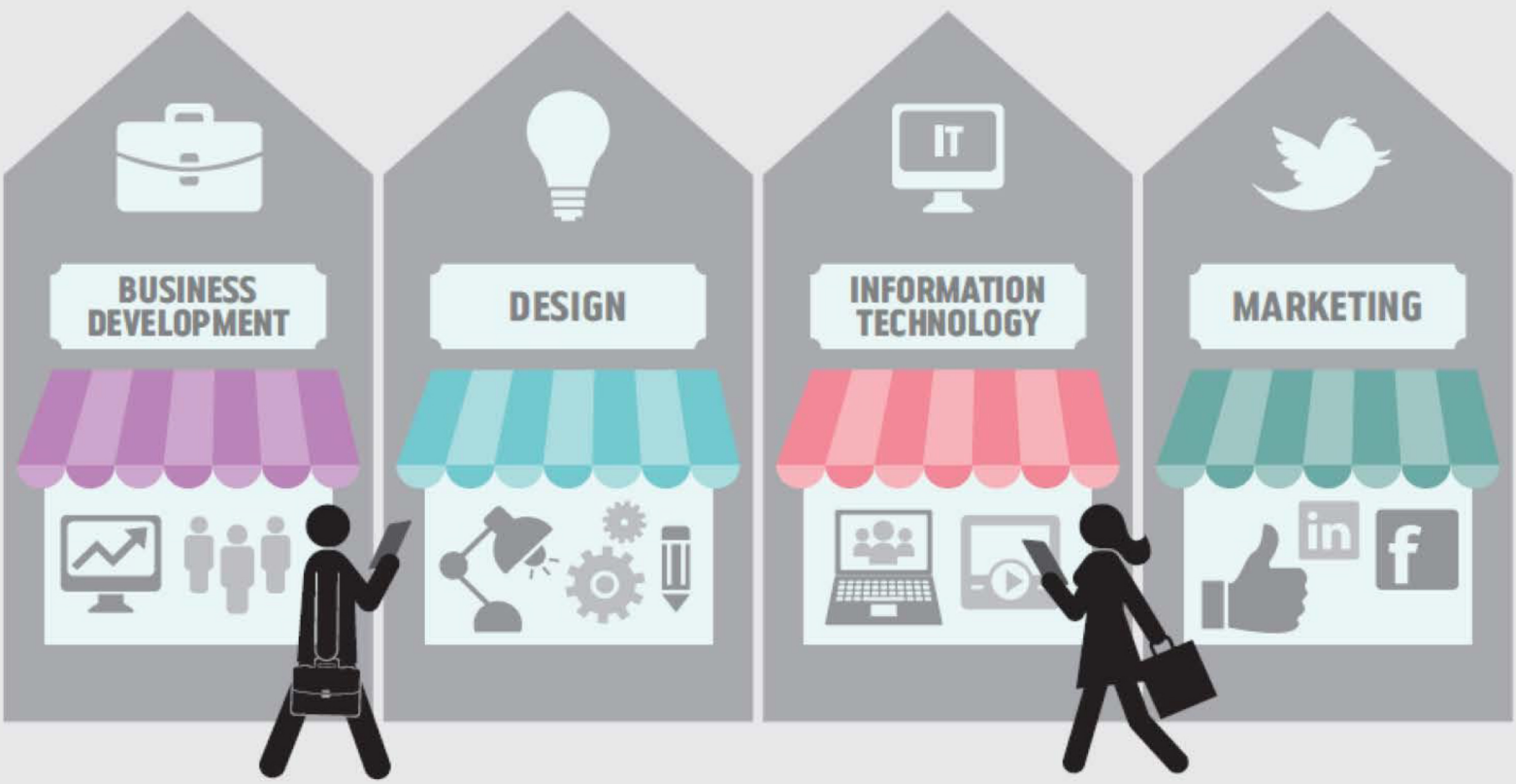
Talent Exchange Project Description and Evaluation



scdi Scottish Council for Development and Industry

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

fsb Experts in Business

Authors: Cook, Y., Fulford, H., and Marcella, R., 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. The 3 year Talent Exchange project, funded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in the order of £475,000, was designed to widen and extend the pool of work related experience (WRE) opportunities available to Robert Gordon University (RGU) students; enhance student employability; encourage interaction and knowledge exchange between small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) and the university's academics; and better support SMEs in the region and contribute to the region's sustainable economic growth.

2. Previous research had suggested that the SME community is particularly hard to reach in terms of academic/industry interchange. Despite the fact that SMEs represent the largest segment of local enterprises (97% in 2012), fewer than 50% of student placements were with SMEs. Talent Exchange was viewed as a 'step change' project by RGU and encompassed investment by the university in new IT infrastructure and software to support the management of the anticipated enhancement in activity.

3. The Project Steering Group comprised SFC as the funding partner, also 3 industry partners: Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC); the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB); and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry. From the outset the project was designed and delivered from an SME perspective rather from a Higher Education Institute (HEI) perspective and the advice and insights provided by the industry partners was invaluable.

4. During the start-up phase of the project, academic staff were involved in developing a WRE framework following review of existing WRE engagement types and the barriers reported by SMEs. It was apparent more flexible solutions were needed, including shorter term WREs and opportunities for students to work on campus rather than in the business. This led to the distillation of four overarching categories of WRE: challenge, project, placement and connection. These engagement types alongside project branding concepts were tested with a broad spectrum of businesses.

5. A Marketing and Communication Plan was developed for the 3 target audiences. The highest number of WRE opportunity leads was generated

through internal referrals from academic and support staff and through attendance at industry networking events and exhibitions. PR activity included production of a range of case studies. Three targeted marketing campaigns were delivered per annum to source WREs for specific courses.

6. Engagement with SMEs resulted in the generation of 625 WRE opportunity leads from 407 discrete businesses, 81% of which were new to working with RGU. Generic cross-sectoral business needs dominated, including design, marketing, websites and management. The third sector accounted for 15.5% of all businesses engaged, followed by business services (14%), hospitality, leisure and tourism (12%) and energy (10.6%).

7. Academics were engaged with the project through a range of channels. Two extra-curricular modules were developed as a useful aid to academics to motivate students to take part in extra-curricular activity by enabling them to receive recognition and gain additional credits.

8. The project had more limited direct engagement with students, opting instead to utilise existing processes and channels at school, course or module level to promote WRE opportunities to students. Enterprise themed events were offered, including participation in competitive entrepreneurship challenges and focus groups. In total an additional 687 student WREs were delivered, 58% of which were projects, a reflection of the attractiveness of this engagement type to SMEs.

Findings

9. Responses from business were very positive. With regard to benefits, businesses cited the value of a student bringing new ideas or a fresh perspective and the additional resource provided to enable the business to embark on a new activity which would otherwise not have been possible. Businesses were asked to rate the benefit to their business of the WRE on a scale of 1 – 10 and 69% of respondents gave a rating of 8 or above.

10. Students cited benefits such as the value of having an opportunity to apply learning from their studies to a real work-based situation, also an opportunity to put technical skills into practice, enhance presentation skills and explore career options not previously considered. Students were asked to rate the WRE on the same scale as an opportunity to put learning into action and 67%

gave a rating of 8 or above. With regard to how they rated the contribution made by the WRE to their employability, 58% gave a rating of 8 or above.

11. From an academic perspective, a number of respondents highlighted the value of the WREs in providing students with the opportunity to put their learning into action. A small number of academics indicated that some businesses did not seem to understand the importance of providing a learning and development experience for the student. Academics were asked to rate the contribution of the WRE to course/module employability objectives and 70% of respondents gave a rating of 8 or above.

12. Project partners overall found involvement with the project to be a very positive experience. There were unanimous comments regarding the significant impact of engaging with SMEs across the region and assisting businesses to achieve things they would not otherwise have had the time or expertise to do, and to grow and develop their business faster than previously planned. As for benefits and impacts on their organisation, responses cited a deeper understanding of the education sector, further relationship building with RGU staff, and a worthwhile initiative to promote to their members. Managing the expectations of businesses was noted as a challenge.

13. The project has created an excellent model and is regarded as being very successful by the university, by SFC as the funding partner and by the project industry partners. It has resulted in a significant shift in SME engagement and a new way of working. All success criteria were met:

- Increased awareness by SMEs of the value student placements and work-related experiences can add
- Increased SME engagement with RGU with high satisfaction levels
- Positive student feedback regarding employability skills gained from SME engagement
- Increased engagement of SMEs already engaged in work experience/placement activity with other university knowledge exchange activity
- A new embedded and sustainable model for university/SME engagement which enables placements/work experience to be delivered effectively and efficiently at scale.

14. Overall in conclusion it is believed that this project has proven that the perceived barriers to SME interaction with universities can be overcome with

real benefit to both parties. High level conclusions that might be drawn from the project include that:

- That it is possible for the engagement of SMEs with universities to be increased and enhanced;
- That there is a real appetite for knowledge interchange in the SME sector;
- That the single entry point for SMEs provided an easily accessible route in to the university;
- That SMEs valued in particular the opportunity to access fresh talent and new ideas;
- That such interactions can best be delivered through an approach that recognises the constraints within which SMEs operate and takes a very direct and responsive approach to need;
- That SMEs are very open to such an offer by universities and that indeed a greater challenge in delivery for universities will be to manage SME expectations and to be clear about what is and what is not possible;
- That working with business representative membership bodies is a very effective way of communicating with small business without great additional cost;
- That students are eager to be involved in such real life work experience, can be made aware of wider opportunities in the SME sector, can see that work experience adds value to their CV and gain benefit from such experience in testing the application of their knowledge in practice ;
- That such experience actively impacts on employability is still to be fully tested but students are as a result of WRE activity better able to communicate their skills and strengths to potential employers and more open to a wide range of job opportunities;
- That a greater challenge than engaging small business is the engagement of academics and that it is essential that the benefits for courses, teaching and learning must be disseminated widely to the academic community;
- That the model does not work equally across all disciplines and that cases of good practice need to be evolved for the widest variety of disciplines but it should be acknowledged where it might not work;
- And conversely that there may be demand from SMEs that universities cannot supply for good reason and that there should be clear protocols observed about how to respond to such demand and to which organisation or agency the SME should be directed;

- That the appetite and potential for Masters WRE activities needs to be further explored and new mechanisms to grow their number be put in place: there is clearly a need for further research in this area;
- That there will be demand from SMEs that universities are not able to supply and the importance of clarity in setting out what is possible is paramount;
- Equally there will be academic subject demand for WRE that cannot be met by SMEs.

Recommendations

15. Arising from the evaluation and the lessons learned, a number of recommendations can be made:

- Establish an agreed policy on student remuneration at university or school level to enable relevant guidance and advice to be included in documentation for employers, academic staff, and students.
- Ensure the scoping stage for a WRE, usually undertaken by an academic, business and student, is sufficiently detailed to include agreement on goals, expectations, and feedback mechanisms.
- Ensure continued involvement in the scoping stage of relevant academics to check that a given WRE will be sufficiently challenging for a student and will provide learning at a level appropriate to their stage of study. Also that the assigning of student to business is undertaken carefully and thoroughly to ensure the best possible match.
- Do not underestimate the time and effort required of academics to scope and design a work related experience appropriately for a student or group of students.
- Ensure that university marketing messages emphasise the notion of "exchange".
- Maintain focus of all activity on ***learning*** and the provision of a well-crafted learning experience for students.
- Ensure involvement of academic staff in securing, scoping and supporting student work related learning activities is acknowledged.
- Disseminate the work related experience framework (placements, projects, challenges and connections) more widely for use as a course and module design and enhancement tool.
- Raise greater awareness of the benefits of WRE opportunities more widely among the student community.

- Review and document WRE processes including academic responsibilities in WRE delivery, also communication with the SME when a WRE is underway to achieve a quality and consistent approach.
- Consider four options identified for delivery in Scotland of the SME engagement model developed to secure student WREs.

Chapter 1 Introduction and Context

1.1 The Talent Exchange Project

This report documents and reviews the delivery of the Talent Exchange project to enhance engagement between RGU staff and students and SMEs, which was funded by the Scottish Funding Council, (SFC). It outlines project methodology, reports outcomes, and evaluates the project against success measures. The report provides contextual information, outlines project delivery mechanisms and infrastructure, details engagement with target audiences, and documents quantitative outcomes, as well as qualitative feedback received. It concludes with an overall project evaluation, wider conclusions and recommendations.

Initially labelled 'Enterprising Together', the aims of Talent Exchange were:

- to widen and extend the pool of WRE opportunities available to Robert Gordon University (RGU) students;
- to enhance student employability;
- to encourage interaction and knowledge exchange between small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and the university's students and academics; and
- to better support SMEs in the region and contribute to the region's sustainable economic growth.

It was also hypothesised that the project had the potential to conceptualise, build and test a new model for Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) Institutions in Scotland to deliver enhanced placements and WREs efficiently and effectively at scale.

1.2 Background to the Project

Previous research had suggested that the SME community is particularly hard to reach in terms of academic/industry interchange and it was believed that the project would both build experience of successful interaction and provide a valued resource in the form of student projects and placements. Ultimately the

initiative would enhance student employability and open avenues to employment for both graduates and small businesses.

It is widely recognised that **Universities** should be prepared to play a leading role in economic development, regionally through innovation, while cognisant of the contribution to that development made by SMEs (Pickernell, Clifton, and Senyard, 2009). Interaction and knowledge exchange between **higher education** institutions (HEIs) and **businesses** is a key element of innovation in knowledge-driven economies, however this engagement is often thought to be more effective in more practice oriented institutions in countries where there is a binary divide (Delfmann, 2012). University interaction with SMEs is also recognised to be challenging (see, for example Gallagher, 2015 and Karlsson and Odenrick, 2007).

It also widely believed that SMEs can benefit to a greater extent than they do presently from this form of interaction (Haour and Mieville, 2010). Arguably the involvement with students could encourage the development of a positive learning culture in SMEs (Fitzpatrick, O'Connell, and Murphy, 2010).

Increasingly SMEs are being seen as an important source of fieldwork experience (Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson, 2012), while **universities** are increasingly encouraged to take a leading role in economic development, particularly through innovation. Simultaneously, economic development policy itself is increasingly focused on SMEs and encouraging employment of graduates by SMEs is nationally important to economic health, although traditionally, most **internships** have taken place in large organisations. Some studies have shown how well this can work in for example tourism, while acknowledging there are still challenges to be overcome (Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson, 2012)

Graduate development programmes continue to be seen by policy makers, **higher education** institutions and **SMEs** as a way to strengthen **higher education**-business links and in turn improve the match between graduate skills and industry needs (Stephens and Onofrei, 2009)

1.3 The Project Context

Talent Exchange has been a ‘step change’ project for RGU, enabling the university to align its employability, enterprise and knowledge exchange

agendas with the needs of SMEs for the mutual benefit of the SMEs, the university and its students. It encompassed investment by RGU in new IT infrastructure and software to implement a university-wide solution to support the management of work related experiences, and to enable the anticipated step-change enhancement in activity to be delivered in an effective and efficient manner.

RGU has long held an excellent record on graduate employability, in both a Scottish and UK context. However, in a challenging employment market, faced with a regional industry in flux and catering for a very diverse student population, the university sought to consolidate and build on this record of success through innovation to "enable all graduates from RGU to have acquired work related experience and/or participated in a 'study abroad' programme". The university drew on several sources of intelligence to evolve the Talent Exchange approach, including the FSB's 'Micros Untapped', (2012); Universities Scotland's 'Taking Pride in the Job' (2013); 'Your Growing Business (Young, 2013); and SFC's 'Learning to Work 2' (2014).

The university recognised that despite the fact that SMEs represent the largest segment of local enterprises (97% in 2012), fewer than 50% of student placements were with SMEs and it was concluded that there was a strong rationale for and wider societal value from a project which aimed to increase university/SME engagement.

A case for funding was therefore made for SFC Strategic Funding and £475,000 was awarded for a 3 year project (see appendix A - Income and Expenditure). This was match funded by RGU's investment of £300,000 in new IT infrastructure and software to support the management of work related experiences.

During the course of the project, changes in the external and internal operating environments had an impact on the project. Severe contraction in the oil and gas sector was recognised and recorded as a risk. Sourcing of yearlong placements became more challenging for RGU's placement offices and this positively galvanised programme change, with for example the introduction of a part time alternative built on the Talent Exchange model (see later section on Connect to Business). The increase in start-up businesses in the North East generated an increase in referrals to Talent Exchange from business support agencies.

The internal university operating environment also changed significantly during the last 9 months of the project, with a subject reprofiling exercise, the introduction of a voluntary redundancy scheme and an academic restructuring exercise.

1.4 Project Objectives and Success Measures

The project was delivered over 3 phases, with objectives set for each stage:

Phase 1 - Design and Build

- To provide clear communications about what student work related experience is and how it can add value to employers, therefore clarifying expectations and building an understanding of opportunities and a pipeline of demand for students to undertake work related activities;
- To establish a dedicated, user focused, fit for purpose infrastructure, based on an effective and efficient technology resource to support the management of activity, complemented by a physical presence, including a web/contact point to assess needs and undertake matching and oversee end-to-end management of the engagement;
- To grow a strongly engaged academic community where models of work related experience and course design have been reviewed to ensure as many RGU students as possible gain work related experience as part of their formal RGU course.

Phase 2 Step Change Delivery

- To source a minimum of 250 additional work experience/placement opportunities which are formally recognised within award bearing courses in the first year.
- To deliver enhanced student enterprise activity by offering co-curricular opportunities which can also be credit bearing.
- To deliver enhanced knowledge transfer by exploring other opportunities with employers who already support placements and work-related experience.

Phase 3 Evaluation and Dissemination and Sustained and Enhanced Delivery

- To produce a project report for dissemination evaluating the Talent Exchange model.

- To review the project to ensure that its outcomes are sustainably embedded, therefore maintaining the enhanced levels of activity, impacts and outcomes.

The success of the project is being measured by achievement of activities, outcomes and impacts:

- Increased awareness by SMEs of the value student placements and work-related experiences can add;
- Increased SME engagement with RGU with high satisfaction levels;
- Positive student feedback regarding employability skills gained from SME engagement;
- Increased engagement of SMEs already engaged in work experience/placement activity with other university knowledge exchange activity; and
- A new, embedded and sustainable model for university/SME engagement which enables placements/work experience to be delivered effectively and efficiently at scale.

Several data sources have been utilised to reflect on the success of the project, including:

- Number of engagements with SMEs as recorded at 24th October 2016, such as documentation of work related experience (WRE) opportunities sourced, tracking of the opportunity through to conversion or cancellation, and the student(s) and academics involved.
- Feedback received from businesses, students and academics regarding completed WREs.
- Feedback received from the project's 3 industry partners.
- Feedback received from RGU's placement offices.
- Project Steering Group reports
- Year- end reports provided to SFC for each project phase.

The overall approach to evaluation is based therefore on a set of quantitative and qualitative measures, which holistically underpin the conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

Chapter 2 Project Delivery Mechanism and Infrastructure

2.1 Governance

2.1.1 Project Steering Group

A Project Steering Group was established with RGU, SFC and industry partner membership. The 3 industry partners were Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI).(A list of Steering Group members is provided in appendix B.)

The Steering Group was responsible for the strategic management and delivery of the project, including its strategic direction, monitoring progress and spend, raising awareness of the project, considering project sustainability, and alignment with other RGU initiatives.

The Steering Group met on 11 occasions. At the end of each academic year a full report was provided to the Steering Group on operational activity and progress made towards achievement of project outcomes, along with a financial statement. A risk register was developed and reviewed and updated at every meeting of the Project Steering Group.

2.1.2 Project Management

The project was at all times conceptualised, designed and delivered with an intent to assume an SME perspective on the engagement and the contribution of the 3 industry partners has been crucial in achieving this ‘outside in’ lens. The advice and insights they provided have been invaluable and have ensured a strong industry focus in all aspects of project delivery. The project team comprised both administrative and academic staff with a seconded industry representative from AGCC during the initiation phase to ensure the needs of SMEs, including third sector organisations, remained at the forefront. The composition and scale of the team resource changed over the life of the project.

Successful delivery and internal alignment of the project depended upon the establishment of strong and effective internal engagement with support staff

across the university, in for example Placement Offices, Careers, Research and Enterprise Services. (Engagement with academics is documented in 3.3).

Process maps were developed during phase 1 of the project to set out the journey a customer might take to seek a WRE and to maximise efficiency and speed of response. This helped the team to understand the way in which it would interact with other departments within the university, to clearly identify responsibilities for each stage, and to plan the resources required (appendix C - Process Maps).

2.1.3 Placement Management Software

The project to implement new placement management software was delivered in parallel with the Talent Exchange project. A new approach was required to bring together several existing discrete systems, based on inconsistent business processes and datasets, as well as to replace existing placement management solutions at end of life, in particular the solution used by the School of Nursing and Midwifery. There was also a need for a solution to manage projected growth in numbers of Talent Exchange WREs.

Following a tender process, Inplace was chosen to be the university-wide employer and work experience database platform, with key goals to:

- Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of placement administration through the use of a shared information database and standardised processes, and through the use of automated matching algorithms;
- Provide a database and business process to support the planned growth in RGU's provision of placements/WREs;
- Provide a coherent and improved experience to students
- Improve engagement with employers by allowing direct access to the placement management system;
- Enhance engagement with stakeholders by providing RGU Staff with a single shared directory of employer contact details.

The objectives were:

- All placement management activity in each Faculty managed using a shared solution, shared information, and common processes, including Talent Exchange WREs;
- Standardisation of employer related data across the institution;

- Configuration and deployment of a technical solution, which was enterprise wide, scalable, and configured to meet the above objectives.

Due to the scale of the undertaking, the cross University implementation plan was split into 2 phases. The Talent Exchange project was part of the 2nd phase. Implementation of the Inplace Placement Management System is the subject of a separate report.

Chapter 3 Project Delivery

3.1 The WRE Framework

In order to develop and articulate a range of work related experiences that would appeal to businesses, academics and students, the team reviewed existing work related engagements and the barriers to engagement reported by small businesses, in particular the challenge of investing in a year-long placement. It was apparent more flexible solutions were needed, including shorter term WREs and opportunities for students to work on campus rather than in the business.

The development of a WRE framework was initiated in a workshop facilitating academic staff discussion around ways of increasing students' engagement with the "world of work". The workshop elicited examples of good practice across subjects; identified the benefits of various types of WRE; and surfaced design and delivery challenges associated with each type of experience. Following the workshop, a number of matrices were produced, detailing the wide variety of types of WREs identified and these were subsequently codified according to common attributes and features. A framework of four over-arching categories of WRE was thus developed, illustrated in table 1 below:

Placement A student spends a period of time (ranging from a few weeks to a full academic year) based in a business in a specific role or on a defined project or activity, guided and directed by the host business.	**Project** A student, or small team of students, engage(s) in a short-life project, working to a project brief provided by a business. Project work is typically undertaken at RGU, with meetings arranged with the business as required during the life of the project.
Challenge A student, or small team of students, engage(s) in a competitive activity, working to a brief provided by a business. The challenge work is typically undertaken at RGU, sometimes within a taught session or over a period of weeks, with the business invited to act as the judge of the challenge entries.	**Connection** A cohort of students participates in a guest lecture, presentation or workshop delivered by a business; or a cohort of students participates in a site visit to a business. Often these are arranged by drawing on an individual academic's network of contacts in the local business community.

Table 1 – WRE Framework

A number of key benefits of the framework were identified (see table 2) for the three core participant groups typically associated with a WRE, namely the business, the student and the academic.

Participant	Benefit
Business	Offers a variety of flexible ways to engage, rather than simply via the hosting of a student placement. Allows a business to build-up their engagement with the university incrementally adopting a staged approach, from delivering a presentation or workshop to a group of students; progressing to a small-scale challenge, and moving on to more substantive engagement through larger-scale projects or placement. Can be used as part of a needs analysis and scoping activity with a business to help establish the most appropriate form(s) of engagement Enables even very small businesses to engage with the university in offering work related learning opportunities, where for example a lack of business premises for hosting a placement student is not a barrier
Student	Increases student awareness of the range of WRE learning activities in which they can participate and encourages them to think beyond simply a single placement Builds student participation in work related learning as they progress through studies, from connections and small-scale challenges and to larger projects and substantive placements. Forms the base for a student portfolio of relevant work related experience and evidence to showcase for graduate recruiters. Enables students to participate in both individual and group-based work related learning activities. Allows the inclusion of paid part-time work (typically unrelated to their programme of study) alongside work-related learning
Academic	Supports review or development of modules or programmes of study at any level from undergraduate to postgraduate. Offers a range of individual and group work related learning activities which can be incorporated into a programme. Supplements academics' established network of contacts in the local business community.

Table 2 – Framework Benefits for Participant Groups

Three industry focus groups were delivered to participants from a broad spectrum of businesses in order to: raise awareness of Talent Exchange; test the engagement types set out in the Framework; identify barriers associated with the different models; and gather participants' ideas for working with students. 50 business representatives participated and a further 28 expressed interest. The team was also asked to present to a Deeside Destination Management Organisation (DMO) business to business networking evening.

The focus groups demonstrated a clear appetite for these more flexible routes to working with students but identified a number of barriers, including: geographical remoteness, absence of payroll in some micro businesses and the need for clear guidance as to the nature of engagement.

Attendees were asked to consider any opportunities they may have for WREs and over 60 distinct WRE opportunities were identified and captured for follow up. These crossed a wide range of businesses, disciplines and subjects and included two potential year-long placements.

Options for branding were also tested during the focus groups, with the favoured option being that of a row of boutique shop fronts labelled with a range of disciplines. Project names were tested. It was recommended that the branding should convey the 2 way nature of engagement, with commitments and benefits for both students and businesses. This led to the adoption of the Talent Exchange brand, for which guidelines were developed and a range of marketing collateral material produced.

3.2 Promoting Talent Exchange

A Marketing and Communication Plan was developed for the 3 target audiences of businesses, students and academics. During project delivery it became clear that attendance at networking events generated the greatest number of leads and provided the best return on investment. (See appendix D - Marketing and Communications Plan). In total 126 external and internal events were attended, 118 of which were external industry facing. (See appendix E - Events)

A website was designed with 4 sections; for businesses, students, RGU staff and one which featured case studies. The website carried the Talent Exchange Twitter feed and information on up and coming events and exhibitions. The business section included a short registration form for businesses to complete outlining their areas of interest. (See appendix F - Website Analytics). In 15/16,

greater use was made of digital marketing channels, including social media, to drive traffic to the website.

Every business registering interest was offered an opportunity for joint PR upon completion of a WRE, providing rich data for use in PR activity. (See appendix G - Media Coverage Generated). 21 case studies were produced for marketing and PR purposes, 6 in video format. They were selected to showcase WREs with positive feedback from both businesses and students and the wide range of subjects and student groups involved. They formed the basis of media releases, featured on the website, and were especially powerful tools in internal and external presentations for all 3 target audiences. (See appendix H - Case Studies). A further 6 video case studies are currently in production.

Every business engaged with Talent Exchange was asked to indicate how they heard about the initiative. A table detailing all leads by channel source is provided in appendix I and a graph showing percentage calculations by channel type is shown in table 3 below.

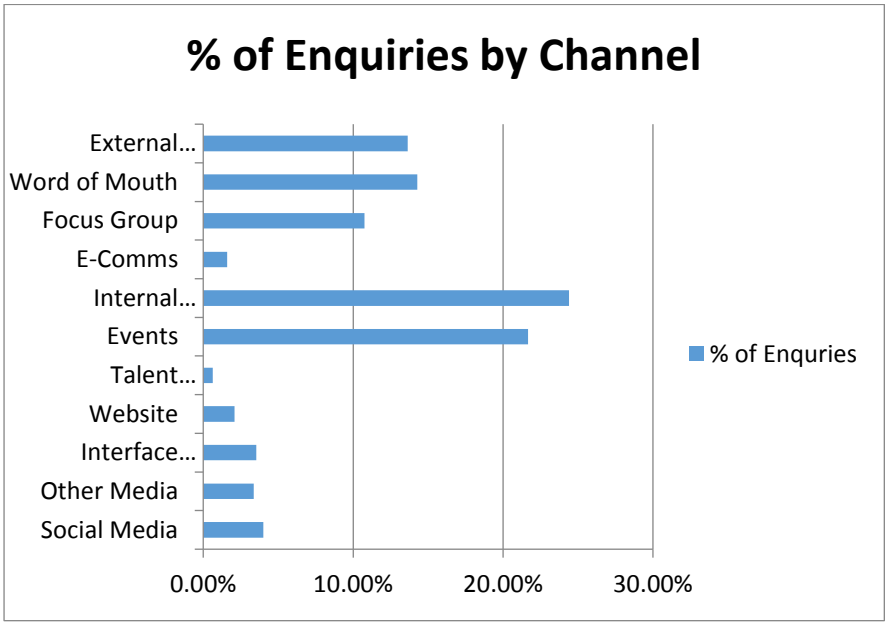

Table 3 (as at 14th October 2016) – Enquiries by Channel

Internal communications generated 24% of enquiry leads, including staff referrals. This channel was closely followed by attendance at events and exhibitions which generated 22% of all enquiry leads. As the project became more established, enquiries from word of mouth recommendations grew, particularly during the final 6 months of the project, and totalled 14% of all

enquiries. Another significant source was external agencies, also comprising c14% of all enquiries. 58% of these external referrals emanated from Elevator (Business Gateway) and 28% were generated by Interface. Enquiries generated through use of social media are relatively low, however this was initiated later in the project and responses have steadily increased.

3.2.1 SME response

While previous research had suggested that the SME community is particularly hard to reach in terms of academic/industry interchange, the steps taken to design a market focused offering ensured that the project started with an excellent 60 opportunity leads, a number which steadily grew. Indeed the market and appetite for WREs in the SME community has not proven an issue but rather demand at times exceeded capacity to supply. As a result, there was a gradual shift during phase 2 from a responsive mode to sourcing the majority of leads on a proactive basis informed by course needs. From spring 2015 onwards, 3 targeted campaigns were delivered per annum to source WREs for specific courses, based on WRE start dates and to fill WRE gaps in specific subjects.

625 WRE opportunity leads in total have been generated from 407 discrete businesses. (See appendix J - WRE Opportunities Ranked by Subject). Generic cross-sectoral business needs dominated, with design and marketing each constituting over 15% of all demand, followed by websites (7.8%), management (7.7%), digital marketing, market research, photography, events, and communications & PR, (all 4-5%). Despite intentional non-promotion of these dominant subjects, in order not to jeopardise university capacity to deliver, it remains the case that these are for SMEs the skills that are in highest demand.

The 3rd sector accounted for 15.5% of all businesses engaged, followed by business services (14%), hospitality, leisure and tourism (12%) and energy (10.6%). The high demand from hospitality, leisure and tourism is partially attributable to one of the 4 four initial focus groups having been delivered exclusively for this sector. (See appendix K - Business Sectors Engaged)

As outlined in table 4, 49% of all engaged businesses were micro (under 10 employees), 13% were small (under 50) and 8% were medium (under 250). 27

businesses with more than 250 employees responded and the same processes were successfully applied to these engagements.

No. of Employees	No. of Businesses	%
0-1	81	19.9%
2-9	120	29.5%
10-49	53	13.0%
50-249	32	7.9%
250+	27	6.6%
Unknown	94	23.1%

Table 4 – Size of Respondent Businesses

The proportion of additionally engaged businesses new to working with RGU was consistent throughout the project and stood at 81% at project end. Of the 407 engaged businesses, 30% offered more than one WRE opportunity. This is at least partly due to the Talent Exchange team uniquely having a view of all WRE needs and opportunities across the university. Table 5 below details the number of multiple opportunities offered by businesses.

No. of Opportunities Offered	No. of Businesses
2	73
3	33
4	12
5	2
6	1
7	1
11	1
13	1
TOTAL	**124**

Table 5 – Multiple Opportunities Offered

3.2.2 Meetings and Communications with Businesses

When an opportunity lead was received, each businesses was invited to meet with a member of the team. Those not registering online were asked to complete the short registration form in advance, allowing some advance thinking around the relevance and suitability of the WRE. The meetings with businesses were multipurpose and enabled:

- Information sharing around the types of engagement on offer;

- Understanding of business drivers and the proposed WRE(s);
- Exploration of future opportunities;
- Discussion around suitable courses, the timescales, and questions about payment or incentivisation;
- Emphasising the importance of a productive student learning experience;
- Clarification that there was no guarantee of quality of student output;
- Expectations management on timescale and the likelihood of WRE selection;
- Agreement that the WRE opportunity proceed to the next stage or be declined;
- Referral to another agency, e.g. Business Gateway for start-ups, Careers for paid part time work, RGU Union for volunteering.

These meetings showed that businesses valued the flexible and short term nature of the engagement types and that students could work on campus if the business had no workspace available. Some businesses had not identified exactly what they needed and the discussion allowed the review of different approaches. They were generally open to advice and guidance on delivering a student WRE and unless resolution of the business challenge proposed was time critical, in most cases businesses were prepared to wait until the appropriate time in the academic year for WREs.

It was often challenging to provide specific information on payment policy requirements as these vary across the university. Some WRE opportunities had to be declined at the first meeting, mainly due to insufficient academic content e.g. inputting data, cold selling, with businesses focused on securing valuable additional resources at low cost. Equally some businesses thought it inconceivable that student work could be accepted without remuneration. Start-up businesses often had unrealistic expectations on what could be achieved at low or no cost. A small number of issues relating to Intellectual Property Rights were not fully resolved, as university policy is not widely understood or uniformly applied.

For most WREs there was a scoping meeting or discussion between the business, the academic and the student(s) to agree expectations around content and expected outcomes. Issues which arose in this context include levels of communication, goal setting, anticipated outcomes, timescales, relative responsibilities and commitments to support: a template for

consistently recording agreed outcomes, levels of support and communication would minimise future problems and enable resolution.

During the course of the project, SFC advised that greater use of Innovation Vouchers (IVs) by RGU could benefit the project by providing funding to SMEs. RGU conditions attached to IVs have been revised: since then 7 businesses with IV potential have been identified through the project, 1 of which has been successful. This has the potential to grow Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs).

3.3 Academic/School Engagement

A project such as Talent Exchange is built upon fostering strong mutually advantageous relationships between SMEs and academics: at the outset, challenges had been identified in engaging with SMEs and students: academics were the third stakeholder group. During the planning stage of the project it was proposed that academic champions be identified in each Faculty, however at the start of phase 2 it was agreed that much wider direct engagement would be desirable. A number of channels were utilised to achieve this:

- Meetings with Heads of School, as well as with staff responsible for programmes, courses, stages and modules;
- A survey of Course Leaders and Module Co-ordinators;
- Presentations at appropriate meetings and committees ;
- Work Related Experience Sub Committee meetings and events;
- Stands at internal academic facing events e.g. Academic Learning and Teaching Conference.
- On campus plasma screens.

2 surveys of academic staff were undertaken: (i) to Module Co-ordinators to capture the scale and range of existing WRE activity: and (ii) to Course Leaders to capture needs for future course enhancement. The response rate from course leaders was 23%, with the highest response rate from the Business School (32%). The response rate from Module Co-ordinators was only 6%, exclusively from the Business School. Follow up meetings were organised with respondents expressing a need for WREs.

It is fair to say that the response from different Schools was highly variable, with some very positive about what WRE could offer and others less

convinced. Equally academic response times to enquiries tended to be slow and frequently required prompting by the project team. Overall the speed of processing of WREs tended to be an issue and once underway it was at times difficult to monitor WREs for project reporting and evaluation. This worked best where academics had administrative support, pointing to a need for School administrative support for academics in order to facilitate WRE activity. Other areas which may need policy clarification and communication are that of academic responsibilities in supervising WREs and health and safety.

Two specific examples of success in academic engagement might be considered: the first involved the embedding of WRE processes in Gray's School of Art through the establishment of an employability focused group. Results included fast response times and a workshop being embedded in the BA Commercial Photography course which brings together SMEs and students to provide students with an opportunity to develop real-life client management skills. Secondly, Talent Exchange was instrumental in support of the Connect to Business option, an innovative development offering the opportunity for students to undertake industry sourced short projects as an alternative to a yearlong placement.

It was recognised that alignment between Talent Exchange and the university's placement offices would be essential to project success and they have been consulted and updated throughout. Robust processes were developed as the volume of WRE opportunities sourced grew and the placement teams have offered expertise and advice on the suitability of WRE opportunities based on a regular programme of communication.

Placement requirements have been included in Talent Exchange promotional activity which led to a number of opportunities sourced for the Business School Placement Office. Despite some scepticism around there being opportunities for engineering WREs, a small number of opportunities were identified for the Design and Technology Placement Office and there is unexplored potential that could be tapped in the future.

Of the 504 opportunities referred, 55% were referred to academics direct, 27% to the Placement Offices, and 18% to both simultaneously. In most instances when opportunities were referred to both, the main referral was to academics, copied to Placement Offices for information. Some WRE topics were relevant for more than one course, resulting in multiple simultaneous referrals: examples include websites, animations, social media.

Referred to	No. of opportunity leads	%
PO Only	134	26.6%
Academic Only	278	55.2%
PO & Academic	92	18.3%
TOTAL	**504**	**100.0%**

Table 6 - WRE Opportunity Referral Destinations

The Talent Exchange proposal had included the development of two extra-curricular modules to enable students undertaking work related experience activity to receive recognition and gain additional credits, referenced on their Higher Education Achievement Record. Titled Business Project 1 and Business Project 2, the Module Descriptors are outlined in generic terms to reflect their relevance for a wide range of industry projects across Schools, for individual students or teams of students. Bearing 5 and 10 credits respectively, they are a useful aid for academics to motivate students to take part in extra-curricular activity, and provide flexibility, although not exclusively, to the Talent Exchange project to meet SME requests beyond the constraints of modules within the curriculum.

3.4 Student Engagement

The third stakeholder group with whom engagement was essential for Talent Exchange success are of course students. It was agreed that there were existing processes and channels in place to promote WREs to students, albeit these differed across Schools and courses. The Talent Exchange project has added value by sourcing additional WRE opportunities and opening up engagement with SMEs. Inclusion of WREs in the curriculum is an academic decision and promoting Talent Exchange direct to students risked raising expectations which could not necessarily be fulfilled. In many instances, particularly where cohorts were offered a range of WRE opportunities sourced by different means including Talent Exchange, there was no need for students to be made aware which opportunities had been sourced through Talent Exchange.

A number of summer projects sourced by Talent Exchange were offered to students, particularly in media and PR, design, and computing science and digital media. These were offered via established routes in the relevant departments/schools and in most cases an academic supervisor was identified.

There have been several initiatives to engage with students:

- A group of students in Aberdeen Business School established a Marketing Society and expressed an interest in working on real life business challenges. Several relevant opportunities have been referred to the Society, however to date none have progressed.
- A digital incubator was established early in 2016, designed to create a corridor from research to entrepreneur ventures for students and alumni. Several opportunities were sourced, however to date only one has progressed.
- In Gray's School of Art students have been encouraged to embrace opportunities through a presentation as part of the Professional Practice module, on the benefits of working with a live client.
- During phase 2, the Enterprise Workout was established to nurture student enterprise.
- Enterprise themed events involving students, alumni and businesses, participation in competitive entrepreneurship challenges, focus groups, creation of an enterprise Moodle page to promote enterprise activity to students, and further embedding of enterprise topics in modules.

3.5 Introduction of Inplace Placement Management Software

Since the implementation of Inplace, almost 4,000 placements have been detailed on the system in Health and Social Care disciplines and several additional courses are allocating their placements for 16/17 utilising the system. The work involved was complex and time consuming and has included data cleansing and business process refinement, as well as the instigation of a cultural shift.

The Talent Exchange project was fully engaged in the 2nd phase of Inplace implementation. In line with the Talent Exchange project plan, an Access database for SME WRE opportunity data was developed early in phase 2 (December 2014). Over the next 18 months, as Talent Exchange processes and reporting requirements were developed, defined and continually enhanced, the Access database evolved and expanded. This prototyping on Access was a necessary step in defining data management requirements and ultimately informed the Inplace solution to support Talent Exchange SME engagement and the range of WRE types offered. The use of an interim Access database did not

impede SME engagement and was a necessary step to inform the Inplace implementation, although the efficiencies anticipated through Inplace could not be realised at this stage.

Following prototyping on Access, workshops were held to articulate Talent Exchange processes and data storage and reporting requirements. Several additional fields were created on the system to support Talent Exchange activity. When the required tailoring of Inplace had been completed and Talent Exchange data was subsequently migrated from Access to Inplace in the summer of 2016, there was an immediate key benefit of having a single database replacing multiple systems, resulting in a university wide overview of all businesses engaged in student WRE provision. Additional benefits to the university included increased data security, a higher level of data integrity, wider access to WRE data, and the potential to link with other university systems. Work continues to further embed Inplace and to fully utilise functionality to release further benefits. These include greater use of automation to support workflow, use of communications functionality, review and challenge of existing processes to identify further efficiencies, and linking with the SITS student record system to populate student Higher Education Achievement Records (HEAR) with WRE data. Inclusion of student WREs on HEAR contributes to graduate employability by giving visibility to potential employers of relevant industry experience.

Moving forward, the aim is to maximise the opportunities presented by having a shared cross university data source which will enable the university to:

- Work more closely together to target existing WRE providers and to source new ones;
- Continue to seek out efficiencies and streamline processes;
- Support the increasing provision of WREs; and
- Enhance the student experience

The move to Inplace has proven invaluable in terms of ease of use, speed and accuracy of reporting and in improvements to data integrity. The design of the implementation plan was such that learning from Phase 1, in terms of data design, cultural and business process change requirements, significantly benefitted the phase 2 disciplines. The system will effectively and efficiently support the planned increase in the number of placements and work experience provided.

Chapter 4 Project Outcomes

4.1 WRE Participation

Overall the project has generated 625 opportunity leads from 407 discrete businesses, 81% of which were new to working with the university. (See appendices I - Leads by Channel and K - Business Sectors Engaged). 32% of opportunity leads converted, resulting in 686 student WREs (See appendix M - Opportunity Conversions by Course and School). 56% of all student WREs were completed in Aberdeen Business School, 32% in Design and Technology courses, 4.5% in Health & Social Care and 7% by mixed cohorts.

Table 7 demonstrates the degree of step change in scale and pace of activity over the 3 years of the project. The 15/16 academic year more than doubled the previous year's activity and the first 3 months of 16/17 have already generated 72% of the previous year's total.

Academic Year	No. of Student WREs
14/15	125
15/16	326
16/17	235+ to 24/10/16

Table 7 – WREs Completed

There was an aspiration to increase the number of WREs in Masters courses and 24% of all student WREs were linked to 15 post graduate courses.

The types of WREs completed are shown in table 8 below.

WRE Type	No. of Businesses	No of student WREs
Placement	35	85
Project	120	396
Challenge	16	205
Connection	7	0
TOTAL	**178**	**686**

Table 8 – WRE Types

58% of all WREs were projects, reflecting the attractiveness of this type of engagement for SMEs. The project engagement type is used to describe a wide

range of RGU WREs, including industry collaborations, consultancy type Masters projects, honours projects, short placement projects etc.

Currently, 164 opportunity leads (26%) are still live, either referred to academics/placement offices for consideration (100), new and being scoped (19) or on hold with future potential (45). (Appendix L - Work Related Experience Opportunity Leads Pipeline 24/10/16)

In total, 257 opportunity leads (41%) did not convert and were cancelled. (Appendix N – Cancellation Reasons). 57% of all cancellations were instigated by businesses. Cancellations resulting from declines by academics and students were each 21% of all cancellations. For national Interface enquiries, the cancellation rate was 3% higher than other cancellation reasons, partly due to the tight turnaround time. In most cases students have choice in the selection of a WRE. Students' selection criteria include career aspirations, CV building potential, the specific learning they want to put into action in a workplace, and the extent to which the opportunity may be incentivised. (See appendix O - Conversions and Cancellations by Subject which highlights where the level of cancellations is disproportionate)

4.2 WRE Feedback

4.2.1 Evaluation Approach

Evaluation instruments comprised three forms which were designed to gather data from each of the participant types in a work related experience: student, business, academic. The forms are provided in appendix P – WRE Evaluation Forms. Emphasis was placed on gathering qualitative data focussed on the participant's reflection on the impact of the experience. This approach enabled the qualitative data to be collected to supplement and enhance the quantitative data being collected and recorded via the database management system and other project monitoring mechanisms.

The evaluation forms for businesses and academics were designed to acquire data about the WRE; whether the outcomes were delivered; whether any additional benefits were realised; comments on participation in the activity (what worked well, what did not work so well, what could be done differently); comments on support provided by Talent Exchange; and indications of any further plans for engagement with Talent Exchange and/or the university more widely.

The evaluation form for students was designed as a reflective learning log to encourage students to consider how they had benefitted from participating in the activity; what knowledge and skills they had gained or put into action; and what impact the activity had had on them e.g. highlighting strengths or weaknesses, identifying areas for future development, and stimulating thought about different career options. The student evaluation form facilitated easy inclusion in a student's learning and development portfolio as its emphasis was very much on learning and reflection, rather than being a simple "happy sheet" feedback gathering mechanism. In other words, participation in the evaluation was, for the students planned to be part of their learning, and the evaluation form was a learning tool to facilitate this.

The design of the evaluation forms was reviewed and piloted among a sample of academic staff, students and businesses, and following some minor amendments the forms were then employed in the project to facilitate evaluation of individual work related experiences.

During the review and piloting process, some academics indicated that their preference was to issue the forms to students themselves, and it was noted that an easy way of doing this within modules would be through the use of the module Moodle page with a dropbox set up for responses. The perceived advantage of this approach was that, keeping the form completion activity within the academic environment, would help reinforce for the students the learning focus of the reflective learning logs. Forms were issued via a range of channels and the best method for distribution of forms to students was agreed with each academic. WRE evaluation forms were issued for all completed WREs, with the exception of the Connect to Business projects, (see 4.2.3).

Following internal consultation, it was agreed that the design and content of the evaluation forms should be expanded to elicit richer data and to increase response rates. The original questions were retained to ensure the integrity of the data previously gathered. The main changes made to the forms included splitting some questions to secure more in depth answers, probing the impact on businesses of the WRE, and reviewing language utilised for each target group. The changes broadly had the desired effect. (See appendix Q - WRE Evaluation Forms, Expanded Version.) Emphasis is placed in the summary of findings in highlighting, from the perspectives of each of the core participant groups (Businesses, Students and Academics) what was deemed to have

worked well, what they considered had not worked so well, and what they believed could be improved.

Through the analysis of the data received, the following principal themes were noted for each of the three participant groups:

Business evaluation forms:

- Benefits realised
- Participation experience
- Support mechanisms
- Further engagement plans

Student reflective learning logs:

- Participation benefits
- Learning and development

Academic evaluation forms:

- Outcome delivery
- Participation experience
- Support mechanisms
- Further engagement plans.

4.2.2 Key findings

Table 9 below provides an overview as at 18th August 2016 of the total number of evaluation forms received from businesses, students and academics which have been used to inform the summary of findings presented in this report. As can be seen from the table, the numbers of forms received for Challenges and Connections was extremely low. This was due to the fact that it was more difficult to secure feedback from students who had undertaken challenge type WREs. In addition, SFC provided guidance that WREs should be of a substantial nature and that connection type engagements should not be included within student WRE reporting. Consequently, the focus of the findings presented in this section is on Placements and Projects.

WRE Type	Forms received			TOTAL
	Business	*Student*	*Academic*	
Placement	12	29	20	**61**
Project	30	62	29	**121**
Challenge	2	22	3	**27**
Connection	1	0	1	**2**
TOTAL	**45**	**113**	**53**	**211**

Table 9 – Evaluation Forms Received

Business responses

As indicated in table 9 above, a total of 45 evaluation forms were received from businesses. The majority (67%) of these were for Projects, with 27% being for Placements, and the remaining 6% received for two Challenges and one Connection.

Responses from businesses were very positive. With regard to benefits realised, a key point raised by a number of business respondents was the value of having a student (or students) bring new ideas or a fresh perspective to a business project or problem. In this respect, the value of Challenges was highlighted as a useful means of presenting the business with a range of ideas or suggestions from different students. This suggests that WREs acted as useful knowledge transfer opportunities, during which students could apply their academic learning to the business situations they were presented with in their placements or projects.

A further benefit identified by a number of businesses was that the Placement or Project provided additional resource, enabling the business to embark on a new activity, such as establishing a social media presence or devising a marketing plan. Such activity had previously not been possible for the business owing to internal resource constraints.

Illustrative quotes from business participants included:

Interesting to have a new perspective

… when you have a student they are fresh, they have learnt all the newest things from their lecturers so it's good to have them in because they are fresh with ideas and you know they've got a really young mind set to do these things.

Outside looking in, give us an external view of our business … helped to confirm our thinking on some points and look at new areas.

In reflecting on the experience of participating in Talent Exchange project activity, business respondents were again very positive. There were comments from 4 businesses about the service from Talent Exchange being excellent/first class. There was some evidence among responses of concern over the progress of, and output from, some individual work-related experiences (4). Concerns and problems typically seemed to relate to a mismatch of student to activity (1); difficulties of aligning student and business schedules to arrange appropriate briefing (1), review and handover meetings; non-receipt of final student project reports (4); and insufficient time spent at the outset on agreeing clear goals and understanding expectations (4).

One specific issue raised by 2 respondents was that of payment of students for the work undertaken. There seemed to be a lack of clarity over what the payment (or non-payment) policy was, and a certain amount of discomfort over leaving payment discussions and agreements to a business and an individual student.

Business respondents were generally happy with the support mechanisms in place during the Placements and Projects. A minority (4) commented that there was a lack of communication from the university during the Project or Placement and 2 commented on insufficient academic support for the student(s) during the WRE. Progress check-up calls or emails would have been welcomed. Two businesses observed a lack of guidance on professional behaviour for students.

A high proportion of business respondents indicated that they would be happy to engage further with the Talent Exchange Project in the future. Of the 45

business forms analysed, 36 respondents (80%) utilised the expanded form. In this form businesses were asked how they would rate on a scale of 1 – 10 the benefit to their business of the WRE. The table below summarises the 36 responses:

Benefit to Business Scale 1 - 10	No. of Responses
1	0
2	0
3	1
4	0
5	1
5-6	1
6	1
7	6
7-8	1
8	7
8-9	1
9	6
10	11

Table 10: Benefit Rating

All but 4 of respondents rated the benefit to their business with a score of 7 or above. 69% of respondents gave a rating of 8 or above and 31 % gave a rating of 10. Overall these ratings indicate a very high level of perceived benefit to businesses.

Businesses were asked to indicate how Talent Exchange could work with them in future. Of the 36 respondents, 4 did not answer the question, 2 advised that they would not want to work again with a student, and the remaining 30 responded positively about future opportunities.

In summary, keys to success from the business perspective are:

- Ensure clear goals are agreed at outset;
- Manage expectations of student capability and scope of work to be undertaken;
- Devise appropriate schedule to enable student and business to liaise and monitor progress during Project or Placement;
- Clarify remuneration policies;
- Clarify expectations regarding communication from the university

Student responses

A total of 113 evaluation forms (learning logs) were received from students. The majority (55%) of these were for Projects, with 26% being for Placements, and the remaining 19% received for Challenges undertaken.

With regard to benefits of participating in the work-related experiences, student responses focus on such issues as the value of having an opportunity to apply learning from their studies to a real work-based situation; an opportunity to put technical skills into practice; a chance to enhance presentation skills; opportunity to build their CV; and an opportunity to explore career options not previously considered or been aware of.

Illustrative quotes from student participants included:

It certainly provided a lot of encouragement, as within a very short period of time we were able to contribute valuable ideas to a professional organisation. As a result, I think I am more confident in expressing my ideas within groups.

I was definitely getting out of my comfort zone engaging with this project and working with an external client, so I would say it definitely helped me gain confidence.

From this project I have furthered my confidence in working with clients out with […] university

In relation to learning and development, 41 students (37%) cited enhancement of their communications skills as a benefit and 33 students (30%) noted that they had grown in confidence through participation in a work related experience. Development of team working skills (30 students) and time management (29 students) comprised 27% and 26% of positive comments respectively. For some the team working aspects of a work related experience were highlighted as a positive learning experience, whereas for others team work proved challenging and dissatisfying as equitable workloads were not agreed, or some team members failed to participate fully. Also mentioned as benefits, although to a lesser extent, were further development of problem solving, customer service, influencing and project management skills.

In some cases, students suggested their learning was impeded through lack of (or only limited) feedback or support being received from the businesses about the work they had undertaken (3 students). In other cases, students indicated that the activities assigned to them were not sufficiently challenging or were not well matched to their skillset (2 students). One student highlighted insufficient support from their academic and 3 students commented on insufficient exposure to the business during the WRE. As with the business respondents, the students noted that it was sometimes difficult to align diaries to meet with the business to agree tasks, discuss progress, gain feedback or handover work at the end of a Project or Placement.

Of the 110 student forms analysed, 85 students (77%) utilised the expanded form which included 2 additional questions; a question requesting a rating of 1 – 10 on how the student rated the work related experience as an opportunity to put learning into action, and a question in a similar format requesting a rating of 1 – 10 on the students' thoughts on the contribution made by the work related experience to their employability. Table 11 below summarise the responses:

Learning into Action Scale 1 - 10	**No. of Responses**	**Contribution to Employability Scale 1 - 10**	**No. of Responses**
1	1	**1**	0
2	1	**2**	1
3	2	**3**	0
4	1	**4**	4
5	3	**5**	5
6	7	**6**	14
7	12	**7**	11
7-8	1	**7-8**	0
8	16	**8**	12
8-9	1	**8-9**	0
9	10	**9**	6
10	30	**10**	31

Table 11 - Student Ratings

In terms of how the student rated the work related experience as an opportunity to put learning into action, 15 respondents (17%) rated the

opportunity as 6 or below. 70 students (82%) gave a rating of 7 or above and 57 of the 85 respondents (67%) gave a rating of 8 or above. 35 % of respondents gave a rating of 10. In terms of the contribution made by the work related experience to their employability, 24 respondents (28%) rated the contribution to employability as 6 or below. 49 respondents (58%) gave a rating of 8 or above and 36 % gave the highest rating of 10. Overall these ratings indicate a very high level of perceived benefit accruing from WREs for student respondents.

Keys to success from the student perspective are:

- Ensure clear goals are agreed at outset;
- Ensure activities are appropriately aligned to student skillset;
- Devise appropriate schedule to enable student and business to liaise and monitor progress during Project or Placement;
- Ensure business provides appropriate level of support and guidance;
- Ensure appropriate academic support is provided;
- Ensure student receives appropriate feedback on work undertaken;
- Ensure appropriate preparation of students for team-based activities, including emphasis on roles, responsibilities, meetings, participation, and progress monitoring.

Academic responses

A total of 53 evaluation forms (learning logs) were received from academic staff. The majority (55%) of these were for Projects, with 36% being for Placements, 5% received for Challenges and 4% for Connections.

It is evident from the academic responses that the intended outcomes of the work-related experiences were in most cases delivered satisfactorily. A number of respondents highlighted the value of the experiences in providing the students with the opportunity to put their learning into action in a work-based context. Illustrative quotes from academic participants included:

It puts students' creativity to a real test. [… It also put the theory taught on the module into real use.

Student developed transferable skills e.g. IT and written/verbal communication, as well as putting theory into practice.

The student undertaking the placement activities has had the opportunity to reflect on their skills development, which will be beneficial in terms of their future career.

In addition to the benefits of participation in the work-related experiences, 3 academics also indicated that some of the businesses did not seem to understand the importance of providing a learning and development experience for the student (or students), but were focused more instead on what the student could deliver for them and their business.

Also, of concern to 2 academics was the fact that some businesses did not provide adequate or appropriate feedback to the students on the work they had undertaken.
On the whole, academic respondents indicated that they would be happy to engage further with the Talent Exchange Project in the future.

Of the 53 evaluation forms analysed, 39 academics (74%) utilised the expanded form. In this form academics were asked how they would rate the contribution of the WRE to course/module employability objectives. Table 12 below summarises the 37 responses to this question:

Contribution to Employability Objectives Scale 1 - 10	**No. of Responses**
1	0
2	0
3	1
4	0
5	3
6	0
7	7
8	6
8-9	1
9	1
10	18

Table 12 - Academic Ratings

All but 4 of respondents rated the contribution to employability objectives with a score of 7 or above. 26 of the 37 (70%) respondents gave a rating of 8 or above and 49 % gave the highest rating of 10. Again the majority rated the

WRE experience as contributing to a core outcome for the project of enhancing graduate employability.

Key to success from the academic perspective are:

- Ensure that the emphasis of the planned activity is on providing a learning experience for a student (or students);
- Ensure businesses provide appropriate levels of feedback to students on the work they have undertaken and the contribution they have made;
- Be mindful of the investment of time, knowledge, skill and effort it takes to scope a work-related experience appropriately, and give due acknowledgement to the level of academic involvement required;

4.2.3 Applying the work related experience framework

In this section, an outline is provided of how the work related experience framework designed at the start of the Talent Exchange Project has been used to inform and support a process of an undergraduate course redesign. During the life of the Talent Exchange project, a degree programme team in Aberdeen Business School recognised that the crisis hitting the oil and gas sector in Aberdeen was having a negative impact on the availability of traditional 12-month placements for students studying management programmes at undergraduate level.

In the past, students who did not manage to secure a 12-month placement for their third year of study were enrolled instead on a taught route through year 3, comprising modules on topics such as project management and entrepreneurship. As the oil crisis unfolded and placements become more scarce, the programme team decided to devise a new route through year 3 in order to ensure that students were still able to gain as much work related learning experience as possible even without the traditional year-long paid placement.

The new route was denoted “Connect to Business”, and a total of 32 students participated in it during the academic year 2015-16. The route comprised a number of taught modules focused on enterprise, employability and development of a student’s career capital. The modules were designed to be undertaken at the same time as the student was engaged on a short Placement or Project with a local small business or social enterprise.

The modules included a number of opportunities for students to participate in Challenges, and Connections were provided through a number of guest speaker presentations, group visits to local businesses, and participation in business networking events and training conferences. A business consultancy module undertaken in semester two enabled students to work in teams for a live client on an extended marketing strategy and business development Project. In other words, the academic staff designing the Connect to Business route were able to use the work related experience framework to guide the design of the route, ensuring a mix and balance of work related experience for the students.

In addition, the framework was successfully used by the academics to explain the design of the route to the students and help them plan their year and the activities in which they would engage. Support from the Talent Exchange office was sought (and provided). Over 30 projects were sourced for semester 1, of which 15 were selected. A similar number was sourced for semester 2, of which 19 were selected. Further similar support has been secured for the academic year 2016-17, during which around 30 students are participating in the Connect to Business route.

Evidence gathered to date from the portfolios students create during their time on Connect to Business indicates that the route is popular and provides a valuable range of work related experience. Preliminary analysis of the portfolios is also providing evidence that the students have an increased understanding of what work related experience is (or can be), are thinking of it now as not simply a placement, and are beginning to recognise the role they themselves can play in actively planning and shaping the range of work related experience in which they engage during their studies.

Aside from the benefits provided to students through the Connect to Business route, the way it was developed provides a clear indication of the value of the work related experience framework (Placements, Projects, Challenges and Connections) as a tool for academics to incorporate a range of relevant work-related experience activities into their degree programmes and modules.

4.2.4 Key Observations on WRE Feedback

The evaluation undertaken to date as part of the Talent Exchange project suggests that the flexible framework of work related experience is a useful tool for increasing the range and scope of work related experience on offer to

students. Furthermore, it helps to increase the scope for engagement with small businesses for whom a traditional placement is not feasible. Findings to date suggest that the framework has proved a valuable means of engaging with small businesses, and has increased the university's level of engagement with the local SME community.

Arising from the evaluation and the lessons learned, a number of recommendations can be made:

- Establish an agreed policy on student remuneration at university or school level to enable relevant guidance and advice to be included in documentation for employers, academic staff, and students.
- Ensure the scoping stage for a work related experience, usually undertaken by an academic, business and student, is sufficiently detailed to include agreement on goals, expectations, communications and feedback mechanisms.
- Ensure continued involvement in the scoping stage of relevant academics to check that a given work related experience will be sufficiently challenging for a student and will provide learning at a level appropriate to their stage of study. Also that the assigning of student to business is undertaken carefully and thoroughly to ensure the best possible match.
- Do not underestimate the time and effort required of academics to scope and design a work related experience appropriately for a student or group of students.
- Ensure that university marketing messages emphasise the notion of "exchange", not give the impression of businesses gaining a free service. One simple way of starting to achieve this would be to refer to "work related ***learning*** experiences" rather than simply "work related experiences".
- Maintain focus of all activity on ***learning*** and the provision of a well-crafted learning experience for students.
- Ensure involvement of academic staff in securing, scoping and supporting student work related learning activities is acknowledged.
- Disseminate the work related experience framework (Placements, Projects, Challenges and Connections) more widely for use as a course and module design and enhancement tool.
- Where appropriate, raise greater awareness of the work-related experience framework (Placements, Projects, Challenges and Connections) more widely among the student community to help

increase student awareness of the range of work related activity they can engage in during their studies.

4.3 Project Team Feedback

Implementation of the project generated a range of insights, outlined in this section as key observations from the project delivery team.

4.3.1 Delivery Mechanism and Infrastructure

- Designing the project from an external SME perspective, rather than from an internal higher education perspective, had a significant positive impact on the achievement of project objectives.
- The most productive way of engaging with businesses (including third sector organisations) in the first phase of the project was through the established networks of the project industry partners.
- The project industry partners' knowledge of the SME sector was significant and the insights and advice they brought to the project ensured a strong industry focus on operational decisions.
- Upscaling of activity to generate a wider pool of student WRE opportunities is reliant upon a fit for purpose IT repository to store and interrogate data.

4.3.2 Development and Definition of WRE Types

- Involvement of academics in identifying WREs already incorporated into the curriculum was vital to ensure that the categories of WRE identified as being most applicable to SMEs were aligned to academic and course needs.
- Access to the membership databases of the project industry partners and to their communication channels ensured that the industry focus groups proved to be an effective mechanism to test the concept.
- Market testing through the focus groups confirmed that SMEs found the 4 proposed types of engagement appealing, and in particular the short term flexible options of challenges and projects.
- The industry focus groups assisted in identifying potential barriers and challenges to be resolved and also generated WRE opportunity leads.

4.3.3 Marketing & Communications

- An additional benefit to the project from working with 3 industry partners was the opportunity to utilise their cost effective promotional

channels as routes to market. Their endorsement of Talent Exchange in communications to their membership base was particularly valuable.

- The video case studies produced proved to be a very powerful means of communicating the benefits of WREs with all 3 target audiences, particularly businesses.
- PR activity complemented and supported activity in other channels and ensured a consistent presence in the market place through a continuous 'drip feed' of case study stories.
- Internal promotion was essential to encourage both support and academic staff to adopt an ambassadorial role for the project.
- Investment of financial and people resources in attending networking events was very effective in generating new business leads.

4.3.4 Industry Engagement

- Talent Exchange provided a valued easy to access single entry point to RGU for SMEs.
- SMEs were very open to the prospect of working with students and were motivated by the flexible and short term nature of the WRE proposition, also the option for the WRE to be completed on campus.
- Knowledge of most WRE needs across the university enabled a holistic view to be taken of each SME, leading to identification of the wider potential for mutually beneficial joint working and development of a pipeline of opportunities.
- The project engaged with a diverse range of industry sectors, including the third sector.
- Endorsement and introductions from project industry partners was beneficial, as were endorsements from businesses engaged with Talent Exchange This increasingly resulted in word of mouth referrals.
- Businesses were on the whole flexible regarding any curriculum constraints on the timing of a WRE, a reflection of the fact that for most businesses, the activity would only progress through a student WRE.
- It was challenging to manage supply and demand, particularly in subject areas where there was strong interest from businesses.
- It is vital to have a policy on payment or reward for students completing WREs to provide clarity to all parties.
- The scoping meeting or discussion between the business, the student and the academic is crucial to ensure that each party has a clear

understanding of obligations, communications, and anticipated outcomes. This needs to be supported by robust processes to support WRE delivery, including a scoping meeting framework to be utilised across disciplines, tailored where appropriate.

4.3.5 Academic Engagement

- Academics who engaged with the project, articulated their WRE needs and responded to opportunity leads benefitted from targeted marketing to secure relevant WREs.
- WRE needs were more easily identified, relationships developed more quickly and processes embedded where there was a group at school level focussed on employability matters.
- The project assisted in sourcing pilot projects to inform decisions on planned changes to module WRE content.
- Documentation on academic responsibilities in WRE delivery is essential to achieve a quality and consistent approach.

4.3.6 Engagement with Students

- Activity to raise awareness amongst students of the importance in engaging with WRE opportunities and the associated benefits is vital to convert leads into work experience which impacts on employability.

4.4 Project Partner Feedback

Industry project partners provided structured, formal feedback about their experience and the impact of the project. Overall they found it to be a very positive experience, citing the professional way the project was managed and the success being due to the transparency of the process, the simplicity of the approach and the ability to provide practical solutions to business problems.

Asked specifically about the impact of the project overall and the impact on their organisation, there were unanimous comments regarding the significant impact of engaging with SMEs across the region and assisting businesses to achieve things they would not otherwise have had the time or expertise to do, and to grow and develop their business faster than previously planned, particularly in the context of challenging economic times. The increase in the range and number of opportunities for students to gain valuable work experience was also highlighted.

As far as the benefits and impacts on their organisations were concerned, responses cited a deeper understanding of the education sector, and a worthwhile initiative to communicate and promote to their members. Benefits to their membership were recognised with numerous examples of members tapping in to Talent Exchange across both private and third sector organisations to help their businesses grow. It was highlighted that small businesses have many calls on their time and resources and that consequently projects they want to undertake are frequently postponed or cancelled due to a lack of skills or resources. Unexpected benefits from the project included the uptake from rural businesses, the wider impact of the focus groups in stimulating a number of projects, also the development of a strong aftercare and post project evaluation. Relationship building with RGU staff was also highlighted as an additional benefit.

When asked what worked particularly well, the facilitated focus groups were highlighted, also the management of the project by the Talent Exchange team, the mix of staff with academic and private sector backgrounds, and the positive relationship with the Steering Group. It was also highlighted that it was evident that the partners' feedback was being used to shape the initiative and to make it user friendly.

Responses to questions regarding what worked less well and what could be improved in future SME engagement included the lack of continuity of RGU staff during the first year of the project, also the inconsistent levels of engagement from RGU academic staff. Managing the expectations of businesses was noted as a challenge, particularly in terms of the speed of delivery and the ability to progress WREs outwith term times. One partner highlighted the importance of communicating to members what can and can't be achieved, also business roles and responsibilities in the process. There was a suggestion that case management could be linked to a stronger business development strategy.

All partners indicated that their involvement with the project had strengthened their relationship with RGU and expressed a desire for this communication channel to continue in order to build on the success of Talent Exchange. When asked about the best way of working with other universities in future, the Talent Exchange model was cited as an excellent model to follow because it is red tape free, simple to navigate and action focused. There were also statements about continued commitment to supporting this type of

activity, required as part of the regional skills agenda and the ongoing needs of the SME sector.

4.5 Placement Office Feedback

The 2 placement offices also provided formal, structured feedback on the project. There are differences in their experience of Talent Exchange, summarised below.

Aberdeen Business School reported 121 students placed on Talent Exchange sourced opportunities from 1st August 2014 – 31st October 2016. This represented 12% of all students placed by the Business School over this period. At the end of October 2016 there were an additional 60 opportunities referred to the School which were under consideration. These opportunities helped to alleviate pressure from reduced resources combined with increased student numbers. The Placement Office noted that the success has been due to the fact that the courses on offer in the Business School focus on the types of skills needed by SMEs, in particular PR and media courses where topics such as branding, social media and marketing are taught. Connect to Business shorter term placements were cited as being most successful, recognising that the more flexible nature of these opportunities in terms of time, location and the student during the placement was another factor that made these appealing to SMEs. At postgraduate level there was particular success with MSc Management and MSc Project Management. It was highlighted that although there is always an issue of whether students want to engage with opportunities, this is magnified with Talent Exchange sourced opportunities because it takes more work to sell unknown companies to students. This was less of an issue with matched or semi matched processes.

Design and Technology cited 6 opportunity leads from Talent Exchange, one of which was successful, resulting in 2 placements. In 3 cases the company changed its mind and in 2 cases there was no interest from students. At the end of October 2016 there were a further 3 – 4 opportunities which have potential. Barriers to uptake included technical requirements of placements and concerns about lack of payment.

Overall benefits to the university from Talent Exchange were indicated as being an increase in the number of organisations aware of potential resource available to businesses and some good industry contacts being made. Benefits to students in the Business School were listed as being extra-curricular

experience via opportunities, in addition to the placements sourced. In Design and Technology a small number of students were helped to gain additional work experience.

Benefits which were not anticipated included highlighting the importance of spending time engaging with potential hosts to build a working relationship. The Business School Placement Office has limited time to do this and in the past there has been a stronger focus on students than businesses. In the case of Design and Technology, the sourcing of leads for engineering opportunities was an unexpected benefit.

When asked what worked particularly well, both Placement Offices highlighted clear communications from the Talent Exchange team about the project, about events Talent Exchange was engaging in, as well as information on opportunities. It was recognised that Talent Exchange regularly invited promotion of placements as part of marketing activity and tried to support areas that needed placements. It was also noted that where opportunities had potential pitfalls, these were shared openly by the Talent Exchange team.

With regard to what worked less well, the Business School highlighted that the university could have better clarified the rules of engagement. It was also stated that businesses already engaged may not have indicated that they had engaged previously, impacting on reporting information. It was felt that the process from initial engagement through to evaluation was elongated because Talent Exchange was a 'middle man' at the sourcing point.

The Design and Technology Placement Office highlighted that academic staff in Design and Technology disciplines regard a placement as the first priority and only when the opportunity will not work as a placement can alternatives be considered.

In relation to future improvements, a number of areas were identified:

- Business expectation management should be enhanced;
- Over supply was an issue which required management for some subject areas;
- Businesses which already have an existing relationship with the university should not be overlooked;
- The impact on and perception by existing staff engaged in similar work had felt like a negative and caused some animosity towards the project internally;

- Although Talent Exchange has sourced projects, there remains a considerable amount of work to be undertaken by other teams to achieve positive outcomes from the opportunities sourced.

Chapter 5 Evaluation and Recommendations

The project has overcome barriers to working with SMEs and has created an excellent model resulting in a significant shift in SME engagement and a new way of working within the university. The project is regarded as being very successful by the university, SFC as the funding partner, and the project industry partners. All success criteria have been met:

i. Increased awareness by SMEs of the value student placements and work related experiences can add

a. High levels of project engagement by SMEs in work related experience has evidenced that there is a regional demand for engagement with universities and knowledge exchange to meet skills gaps or needs in particular in areas such as marketing (including digital marketing and use of social media), design, management and market research.
b. This high level of response has also provided evidence that previously cited barriers to SME engagement with the higher education sector can be overcome by providing a focused opportunity for interaction that recognises the challenges of and context in which SMEs operate.
c. The project demonstrated that it was possible to align and encourage growth in interaction between small businesses, academics and students.

ii. Increased SME engagement with RGU with high satisfaction levels

a. Significant numbers of WREs were delivered in a wide variety (but not all) disciplines.
b. Engaged SMEs represented a wide range of industry sectors and included both city based and rural enterprises.
c. The project results indicate that the WRE interaction has proven benefits for small business owners and managers who identified practical outputs and benefits including the new ideas and fresh perspectives brought by students and the additional resource provided to embark on a new activity.
d. Results also indicate that a high proportion of SMEs envisage future productive interaction with the university.

iii. Positive student feedback regarding employability skills gained from SME engagement

a. The project demonstrated benefits for students such as opportunities to apply learning from their studies to a real work-based situation, to put technical skills into practice, to enhance team working and presentation skills, build their CV and explore career options.
b. Success in delivery of WREs has been higher for undergraduate than for postgraduate programmes.
c. The vast majority of students believed that their employability had been enhanced by engagement in a WRE.

iv. Increased engagement of SMEs already engaged in work experience/placement activity with other university knowledge exchange activity

a. 19% of businesses engaged through the project were already engaged with the university, resulting in a stronger relationship to mutual benefit.
b. 30% of new engagements resulted in multiple WRE opportunities being offered.
c. Several referrals were made with Innovation Voucher potential
d. Connection type engagements resulted in a range of further knowledge exchange activity including guest lecturer, attendance at events and conferences and mentoring.

v. A new embedded and sustainable model for university/SME engagement which enables placements/work experience to be delivered effectively and efficiently at scale.

a. Plans are underway to embed the activities of the project more fully in the wider work the university undertakes to deliver WREs. The first stage of the process, the external engagement with SMEs to ensure a pipeline of interesting projects, will be embedded into the Commercial Operations function. The next stage of the process, to take the opportunity forward internally by ensuring appropriateness for academic courses and promoting the opportunities to students, will be embedded within the Student Placement teams.
b. The new placement management software, which is close to being fully implemented, will support effective and efficient delivery of WREs at scale.

There were also a number of unanticipated successful outcomes as a result of the implementation of the Talent Exchange approach, which include: (i) that the project constituted an example of excellent working practice in creating a mutually supportive partnership working across the university and industry representative partners; (ii) that there was a real appetite for engagement amongst SMEs; (iii) that unexpected positive features of the scheme were the opportunity for students to see learning into action and that transferable skills were developed such as IT and written/verbal communication were improved; and (iv) that the project was commended during the university's recent (2016) Enhancement-led Institutional Review[1].

The project identified four types of work related experience and found that these could all be successfully delivered with SMEs if approached in a flexible manner. The four types of WRE are challenges, projects, placements and connections.

Overall in conclusion it is believed that this project has proven that the perceived barriers to SME interaction with universities can be overcome with real benefit to both parties. High level conclusions that might be drawn from the project include that:

- That it is possible for the engagement of SMEs with universities to be increased and enhanced;
- That there is a real appetite for knowledge interchange in the SME sector;
- That the single entry point for SMEs provided an easily accessible route in to the university;
- That SMEs valued in particular the opportunity to access fresh talent and new ideas;
- That such interactions can best be delivered through an approach that recognises the constraints within which SMEs operate and takes a very direct and responsive approach to need;
- That SMEs are very open to such an offer by universities and that indeed a greater challenge in delivery for universities will be to manage SME expectations and to be clear about what is and what is not possible;
- That working with business representative membership bodies is a very effective way of communicating with small business without great additional cost;

[1] QAA (2016) *Enhancement-led Institutional Review of the Robert Gordon University*. Technical Report.

- That students are eager to be involved in such real life work experience, can be made aware of wider opportunities in the SME sector, can see that this adds value to their CV and gain benefit from such experience in testing the application of their knowledge in practice ;
- That such experience actively impacts on employability is still to be fully tested but students are as a result of WRE activity better able to communicate their skills and strengths to potential employers and more open to a wide range of job opportunities;
- That a greater challenge than engaging small business is the engagement of academics and that it is essential that the benefits for courses, teaching and learning must be disseminated widely to the academic community;
- That the model does not work equally across all disciplines and that cases of good practice need to be evolved for the widest variety of disciplines but it should be acknowledged where it might not work;
- And conversely that there may be demand from SMEs that universities cannot supply for good reason and that there should be clear protocols observed about how to respond to such demand and to which organisation or agency the SME should be directed;
- That the appetite and potential for Masters WRE activities needs to be further explored and new mechanisms to grow their number be put in place: there is clearly a need for further research in this area;
- That there will be demand from SMEs that universities are not able to supply and the importance of clarity in setting out what is possible is paramount;
- Equally there will be academic subject demand for WRE that cannot be met by SMEs.

The project has defined a model for successful engagement with the SME sector to mutual benefit which can be replicated by other FE and HE institutions. Key features of the model are:

- Partnership with industry bodies
- Definition of WRE engagement types responsive to SME needs
- Systems and software to support efficient and effective management of WRE leads and opportunities at scale
- Utilisation of industry partner routes to market

- A comprehensive overview of WRE needs to facilitate a holistic approach to SMEs, maximising the potential for both the university and individual enterprises
- Engagement with academics and students
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

The model can be applied at national, regional or local level and four options for delivery have been identified:

i. That the Talent Exchange model could be adopted at a national level across Scotland working with representative agencies such as FSB, the Chamber network and SCDI, but would require support either from government or from universities working together, e.g. through for example Universities Scotland;
ii. That regional networks of talent exchange activity could be established across Scotland typically involving universities and colleges, local authorities, local industry bodies and the regional Developing the Young Workforce group;
iii. That a third model might be universities investing in a centralised support function to deliver WREs successfully across a wide range of disciplines;
iv. That a fourth model would be for a WRE approach to be embedded within Placement/Work Experience Offices in institutions.

Options i – iii would require system and software alignment and also have the potential to address the challenge of leads generated which are surplus to requirements. These delivery options are worthy of a feasibility study to explore potential in detail.

Some challenges were encountered in project delivery that would benefit from further reflection, including:

- That issues around payment need to be resolved by the university at a policy level;
- That academics are not uniformly aware of the employability agenda and how this translates into inclusion of WRE opportunities in courses;
- That WRE delivery processes should be reviewed and communicated;
- That clarity should be provided on intellectual property matters in a WRE context;
- That communication between the university and the SME during the WRE could be improved

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Appendix A - Income & Expenditure

TALENT EXCHANGE INCOME & EXPENDITURE				
INCOME				
	2013/14	**2014/15**	**2015/16 (unaudited)**	**2016/17 (projected)**
SFC grant	250,000	185,000	40,000	
Surplus from previous year		196,000	237,000	107,000
Total Income	**250,000**	**381,000**	**277,000**	**107,000**
EXPENDITURE				
	2013/14	**2014/15**	**2015/16**	**2016/17**
Staff	40,000	124,000	157,000	97,000
Travel	2,000	1,000	1,000	500
Training		1,000	2,000	
Equipment	1,000	1,000		
Marketing Activity	9,000	15,000	9,000	9,000
Admin	2,000	2,000	1,000	500
Total Expenditure	**54,000**	**144,000**	**170,000**	**107,000**
Surplus carried forward	**196,000**	**237,000**	**107,000**	**0**

Appendix B - Project Steering Group Members

RGU

Chair - Shona Cormack, Vice Principal, Student Experience & External Relations (to June 2016)

Vice-chair – Professor Rita Marcella, Dean, Aberdeen Business School

Professor Val Maehle, Dean, Faculty of Health & Social Care (to October 2016)

Professor John Watson, Dean, Faculty of Design & Technology (to September 2015)

Professor Chris O'Neil, Associate Dean, Faculty of Design & Technology (from October 2015)

SFC

Ken Rutherford, Assistant Director/Outcome Agreement Manager

Greg Anderson, Senior Policy Analysis Officer

ABERDEEN & GRAMPIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Liam Smyth, Membership Director (to December 2014)

Mary Holland, Network Membership Manager (from January 2015)

FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES

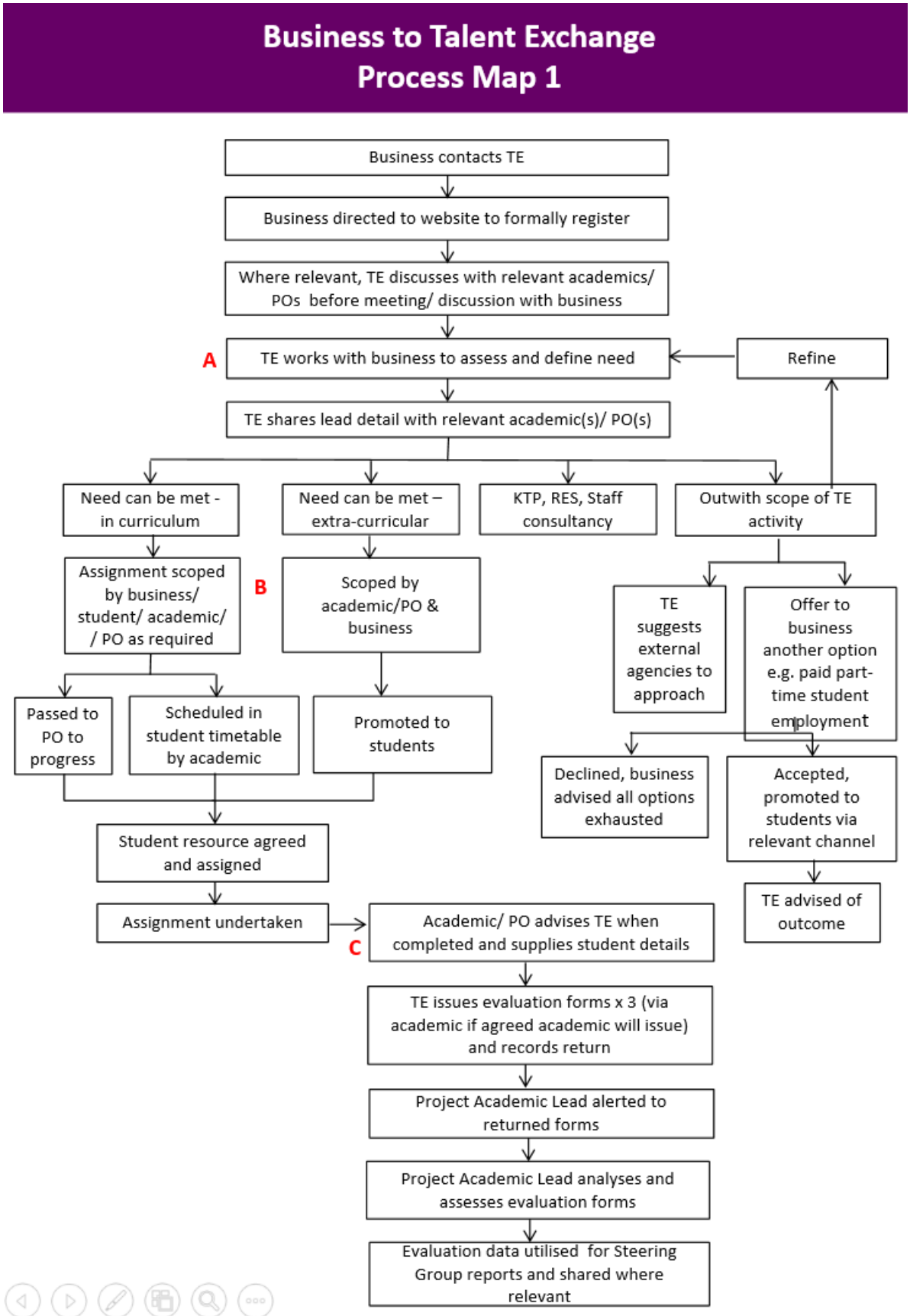
Andy Willox OBE, Scottish Policy Convenor and Vice Chair UK Policy

Catherine Ward, Development Manager, North East Scotland Federation of Small Businesses

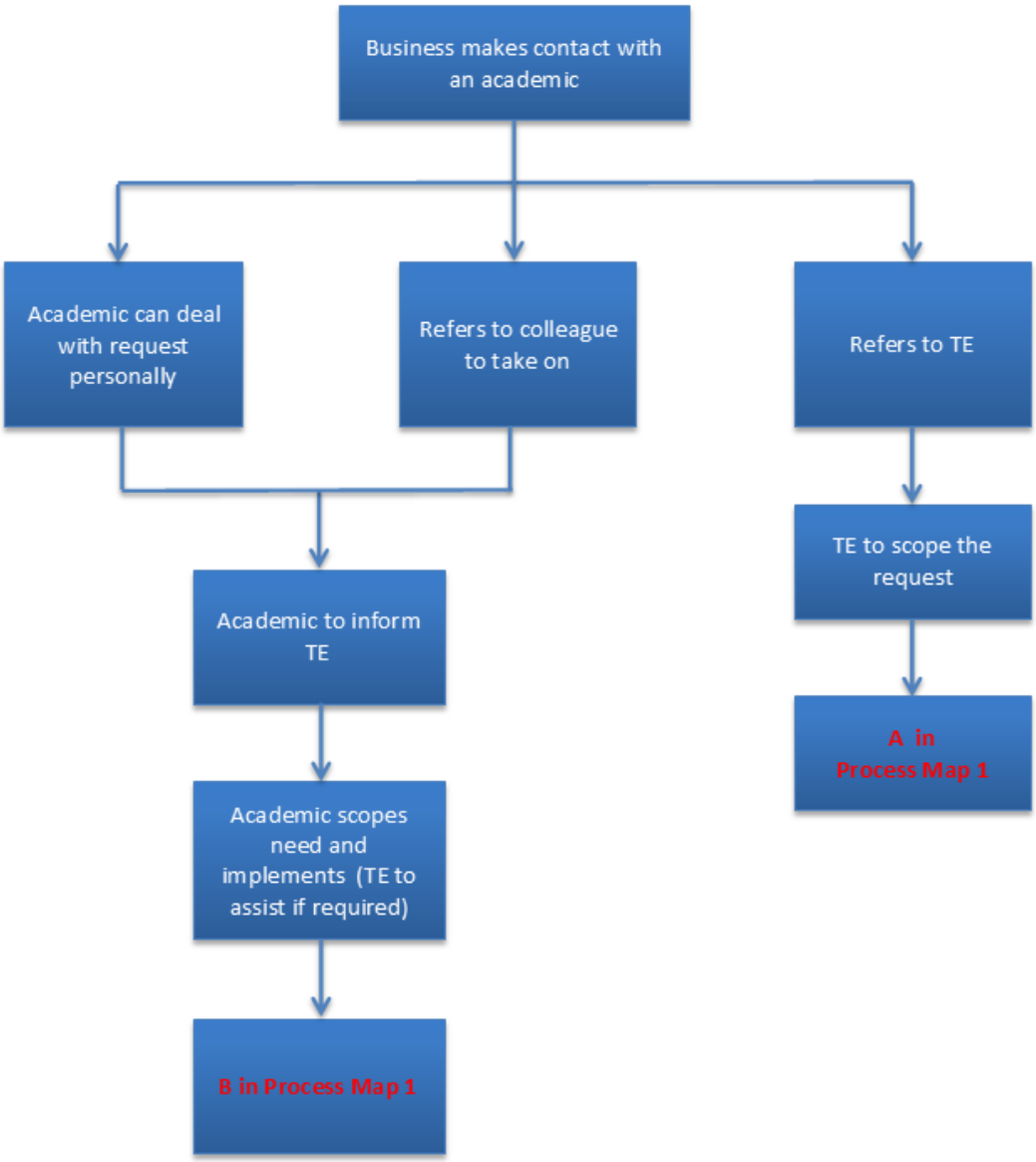
SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRY

Ian Armstrong, Regional Director

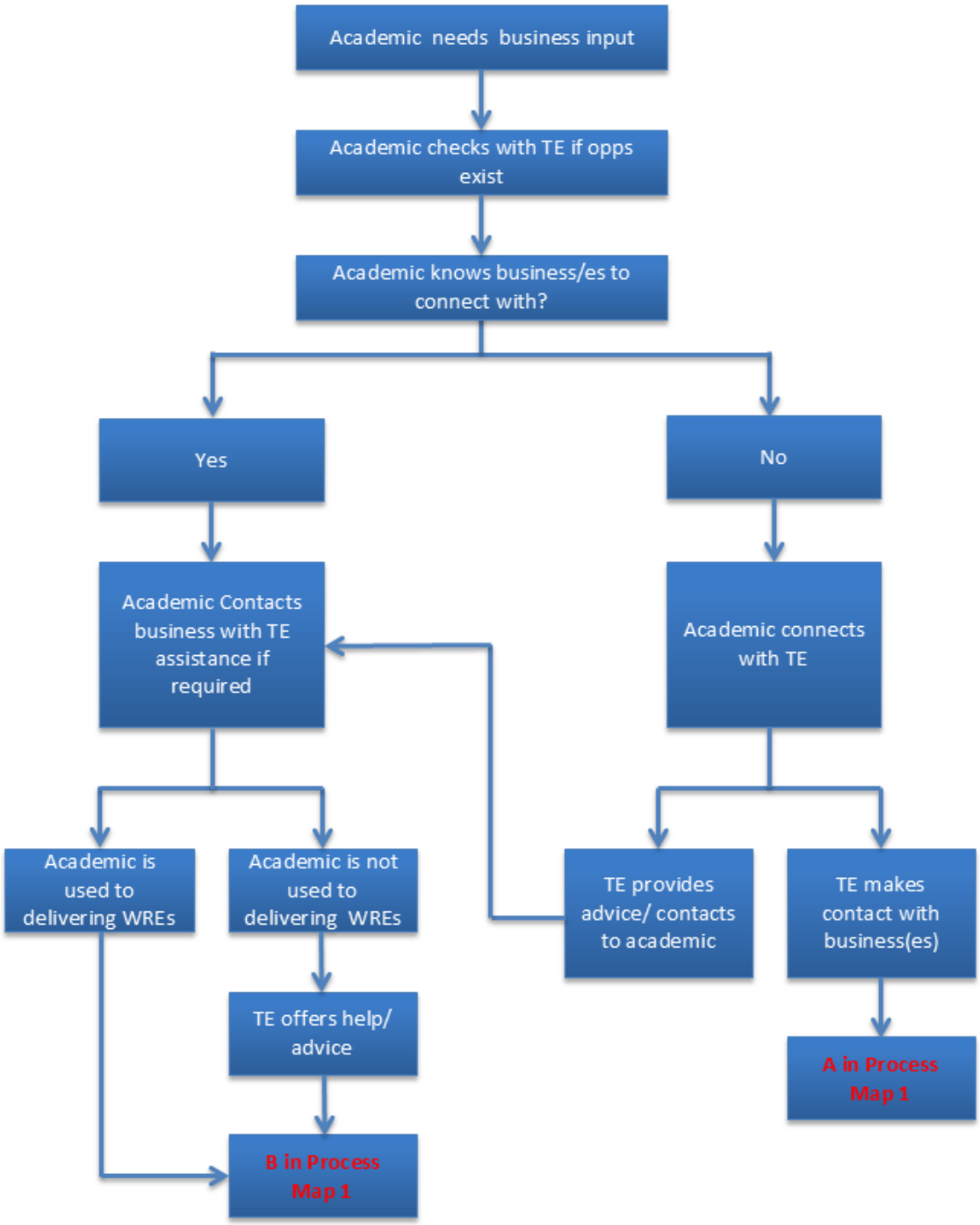
Appendix C - Process Maps



Business to Academic
Process Map 2



Academic to Business Process Map 3



Appendix D - Marketing & Communications Plan 15/16

1 Introduction

The first Talent Exchange Marketing and Communication Plan for 14/15 was approved by the Steering Group in December 2014. The 15/16 plan outlined in this report is a continuation of this and takes account of learnings during 14/15. It is a high level plan that reflects the project's 3 audiences, the channels to be utilised and the key messages. It also reflects the fact that industry bodies and trusted peers are recognised as highly effective and trusted routes to market.

2 Context

Talent Exchange is an initiative, funded by the Scottish Funding Council over 3 years, designed to deliver a step change in the university's capacity and capability to deliver work related experiences (WREs) to undergraduate and postgraduate students and to deliver benefits to small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) in Aberdeen City and Shire.

The strategic context for the project sits in 2 of the university's 6 strategic statements:

- Employability Plus – The vision is for RGU graduates to be recognised as the most fit-for-work, innovative, creative and engaged participants in the labour force and the economy, and for the university to be recognised for its close engagement with employers. The strategy includes enabling all RGU graduates to have acquired work related experience and/or participated in a 'study abroad' programme.
- RGU and Its Region – The vision is for RGU to be recognised for stimulating and shaping positive strategic change in the region's development. The strategy includes creating a 'hub' for the many SMEs and entrepreneurs, including the third sector within the region, to connect with RGU and benefit from student skills and knowledge.

This high level integrated marketing and communication plan is a framework for phase 3 of the project, to December 2016. This 3rd phase marketing and communication plan for 15/16 has been shaped and informed by tracking and evaluating 14/15 activity outcomes. This plan is supported by a detailed monthly activity planner listing target audience, channel, team member responsible for delivery and outcome.

3 Objectives

The objectives of this integrated marketing and communication plan are:

- To promote Talent Exchange to SMEs, including third sector organisations, to make it easy for businesses to access the skills and knowledge of RGU students to help businesses to grow
- To raise the profile of Talent Exchange with academics and students to secure greater buy in to work related experiences to help students increase their employability

Achievement of objectives will be demonstrated by:

- Creation of an additional 500 WREs by 31st December 2016
- Creation of a legacy from activity to ensure future sustainability

4 Marketing and Communication Strategy

The marketing and communication strategy is to achieve a high level of awareness and engagement with Talent Exchange across the 3 diverse audiences that are crucial to achievement of objectives:

- SMEs
- Academics
- Taught postgraduate and undergraduate students

5 Positioning and Messaging

All Talent Exchange marketing and communication activity across channels reflect the university's strategic positioning. A message deck aimed at the 3 target audiences is attached as Appendix i. These messages will continue to be utilised consistently, as appropriate to the channel and the target audience.

6 Tactical Plan

From the second phase of the project it is recognised that industry bodies as trusted advisors can be the best routes to market. The value of peer endorsement has also become clear. The tactical campaign plan reflects this and focuses not only on securing the required volume of work related experiences, but also on the quality of the student experience, as well as the business' potential for growth and for a stronger and longer term relationship with RGU.

6.1 Segmentation

The tactical plan is predicated on a segmented approach outlined below**:**

External - SMEs	**Internal – Academics/Students**
• SMEs engaged with project industry partners • SMEs engaged with other professional/trade/destination associations • Existing clients • Previous clients • Alumni • Academics' industry contacts	• Academics/students in courses with no WRE opportunities • Academics/students in courses with limited WRE opportunities • Academics/students in courses with capacity for 'one offs' • Academics/students in courses with high level of WREs • Academics planning changes to WRE course content

6.2 Branding

A visual identity has been created for the project that sits within RGU's branding framework. Brand guidelines have been produced including a logo, social media icons, email and web. Brand guidelines will continue to be adhered to in all activity.

6.3 Marketing Collateral

A range of promotional material has been produced including; pull up banners for use at events, a short animation for the website and for inclusion in presentations, industry facing flyers including a flyer tailored to the Oil and Gas industry and branded pens, tote bags, USB memory sticks and water bottles. Several video case studies have also been produced for use on the website and for inclusion in presentations.

6.4 Channels

A multi-channel approach will continue to be employed, however based on learnings from activity undertaken in 2014/15 there will be a particular focus on industry networking opportunities, B2B events and use of social media.

6.4.1 Website/Social Media – WWW.RGU.AC.UK/TALENTEXCHANGE , @RGUTalentExch

The website has 3 distinct areas for businesses, academics and students, with user specific content for each. Five case studies comprising video content and testimonials from each stakeholder group are a key part of website content to facilitate peer to peer recommendations and selling. The website is also being used to capture and register initial interest from businesses and will be utilised to provide live information on events etc. RGyoU opportunities will be fully utilised.

Twitter, LinkedIn and Aberdeen Business Network (ABN) Community will continue to be utilised and businesses involved in Talent Exchange encouraged to follow and participate. Talent Exchange will continue to utilise RGU's LinkedIn and RGU Alumni LinkedIn accounts, and will work with the project's 3 industry partners to maximise benefit from their social media channels. Twitter and LinkedIn have been useful tools in generating leads; particularly for proactive promotion of specific projects they will continue to be used extensively in both proactive promotions of projects and keeping current stakeholders engaged.

6.4.2 Events/Meetings

Participation in both external and internal events and meetings to promote and present on Talent Exchange is ongoing. Identified opportunities are shown in the table below:

External	**Internal**
• B2B events organised by project industry partners e.g. business breakfasts, regional/district meetings, NEBW • B2B events organised by other industry bodies e.g. ACVO Big Aberdeen Action • B2B events organised by the private sector e.g. Granite Expo, , ABS, BNI, BNS & Let's Network. • Opportunities with organisations that provide business advice e.g. Elevator/Accelerator Scottish Enterprise, banks, accountancy practices etc. • Speaker/panel opportunities, seminars	• RGU hosted industry events • Faculty Management meetings • Work Related Experience Sub Group meetings and seminars • Course leader meetings, lunch and learn – by Faculty, School, Department • Strategic Planning and Resources Group, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, Academic Development Committee • Internal networking events • Induction sessions for academics • Alumni events • RGU Union • Careers including events/Student Help Point • Arts & Culture Expo • RGU Learning and Teaching Conference

6.4.3 Media/PR

A comprehensive and sustained media and PR activity plan has been developed with the Communications Department which includes:

- Media releases
- Internal editorial opportunities in Nexus, the Bulletin, Wired
- Editorial opportunities in the local media e.g. featured articles and case studies in the P&J's Your Job Supplement, Business Bulletin, Energy Voice, Aberdeen Business News, Business Now.
- Collaborative editorial opportunities and editorial opportunities through the communication channels of project industry partners.
- RGU campus plasma screens.
- A blog from an SME involved with Talent Exchange detailing their experience of working with Talent Exchange to appear on Universities Scotland's new website.

As a matter of course each business that engages with Talent Exchange will continue to be offered PR opportunities once their project is completed.

6.4.4 Advertising

Targeted advertising will continue to be undertaken on a tactical basis, utilising both print and digital channels. Focus will be on industry partner channels, including for example brochure inserts and business to business publications. To ensure value for money, other advertising opportunities will be utilised on a limited basis and only where there is identified need for additional lead generation. The media buying firm that RGU uses will be utilised when purchasing advertising space to ensure best value for money.

6.4.5 Print

Three industry facing flyers have been produced:

- Generic industry facing flyer, detailing a range of possible projects.
- Energy industry specific facing flyer.
- Flyer tailored to a communications networking event specifying certain projects the university is trying to source.

An A4 leaflet has been produced detailing upcoming projects and placements available within the upcoming semester and distributed to Elevator, Bank of Scotland relationship managers team, Hall and Morrice, and Aberdeen City Council. This will be refreshed for each semester with details of potential projects to stimulate demand.

A promotional folder and business cards have been produced and other print will be produced on a needs basis, recognising the advantages of web based channels both in cost effectiveness and ability to refresh content on a continuous basis.

7 Evaluation

All promotional activity is being tracked and evaluated to gauge effectiveness and inform future marketing and communication activity. Sources of information on Talent Exchange is captured when businesses register their interest and campaign review meetings are held to inform future campaigns.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATION PLAN 15/16

MESSAGE DECK

RGU is a distinctive university recognised for stimulating and shaping positive strategic change in the region's development through working in partnership with private, public and voluntary organisations.

RGU has an enviable record in student employability. Extensive integration of work related experiences within courses is a contributory factor.

Talent Exchange makes it easier for businesses to access the skills and knowledge of RGU students to help businesses to grow and students to flourish.

BUSINESSES	ACADEMICS	STUDENTS
Access new talent and skills and get a fresh perspective	Bring real business challenges into student learning programmes	Put learning into action in real workplace scenarios
Solve a business challenge	Network with the local business community	Gain relevant experience and skills to build your CV
Flexible solutions on offer, tailored to your business needs – projects, one-off challenges, placements and connections with academics	Enhance student learning with flexible work experience opportunities	Build the content of your Higher Education Achievement Report through a range of education experiences
Help our students get a head start in the jobs market by offering valuable work related experience	Develop case studies	Expand your knowledge and awareness of business and make industry contacts
Work with a university with an established track record in business engagement	Access primary research data	Improve your chances of success in the graduate employment market
	Secure positive impacts to enhance course marketing	

Appendix E - Events

Events Attended 1st Sept 2014- 31st October 2016

External	**No. of Events Attended**	**Staff Attendance**	***Internal***	**No. of Events Attended**	**Staff Attendance**
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce	**58**	**82**	**Industry Facing**	**9**	**17**
Women Mean Business	8	14	*RGU Sport and Exercise Science Industry Engagement Conference*	2	3
City Connections	7	12	*RGU Arts and Culture Expo*	1	2
Shire Connections	8	11	*RGU Economic Summit*	1	2
Speed Networking	12	16	*Connect to Business Event*	1	3
Business Breakfast	14	16	*Talent Exchange Event*	1	4
Tourism Network Meeting	1	1	*RGU and Its Region Launch*	1	1
Property Network Meeting	1	1	*RGU Digital Incubator Launch*	1	1
Food and Drink Network Meeting	1	1	*Digital Incubator Mentor Event*	1	1
Maximise Your Membership	4	4			
Launch of Work Placement Toolkit	1	2			
The Ultimate Business Show	1	4			
Aberdeen Business Network	**10**	**11**	**Academic Facing**	**2**	**3**
F2F	2	2	*RGU Learning and Teaching Conference*	1	2

B4N	4	4	*RGU and its Region: CSR*	1	1
M4	4	5			
Scottish Council for Development and Industry	**4**	**4**	**Knowledge Building**	**2**	**2**
Reception	1	1	*KTP Seminar*	1	1
North East Committee Meeting	1	1			
Seminars	2	2			
Federation of Small Businesses	**3**	**3**			
Federation of Small Businesses South Aberdeenshire AGM	2	2			
Federation of Small Businesses lunch event - Change Driving Growth	1	3			
Other	**39**	**56**			
Let's Network	8	9			
RBS Opportunity Knocks	1	1			
Institute of Directors Masterclass	1	1			
Business Network Scotland	9	12			
Granite Expo	2	7			
Ideas in Partnership: Aberdeen Entrepreneurs Conference and Exhibition	1	2			
Offshore Europe	1	1			

North East Sensory Services Lunch and Learn	1	2			
Northern Star Business Awards	2	2			
Northern Star Awards Launch	1	1			
Business Women Scotland Exhibition	1	1			
Business Women Scotland Lunch	1	2			
Business Network International	1	1			
Aberdeen City Council: Business Booster	3	7			
Asset Workshop	2	2			
Aberdeen Youth Games Opening	1	1			
Universities Scotland Parliamentary Reception	1	1			
Elevator Awards	1	1			
ACVO Event	1	1			
Total	**114**	**157**		**12**	**21**

Appendix F - Website Analytics

The following can be drawn from website analytics:

- There were a total of 2,381 views in the period 15th September 2014 to 19th October 2016.
- The Case study pages of the website have had the most views in this period with 38.4% of total views.
- The spikes in page views correlate to the campaign activity undertaken to proactively source specific WRE opportunities.
- Average time spent on pages is encouraging, with an average time of 1 minute 41 seconds per page, indicating high levels of user engagement.
- The high bounce rate of 56.8% is reflective of the relatively simple structure of the website and suggests users quickly find what they are looking for.

Key:

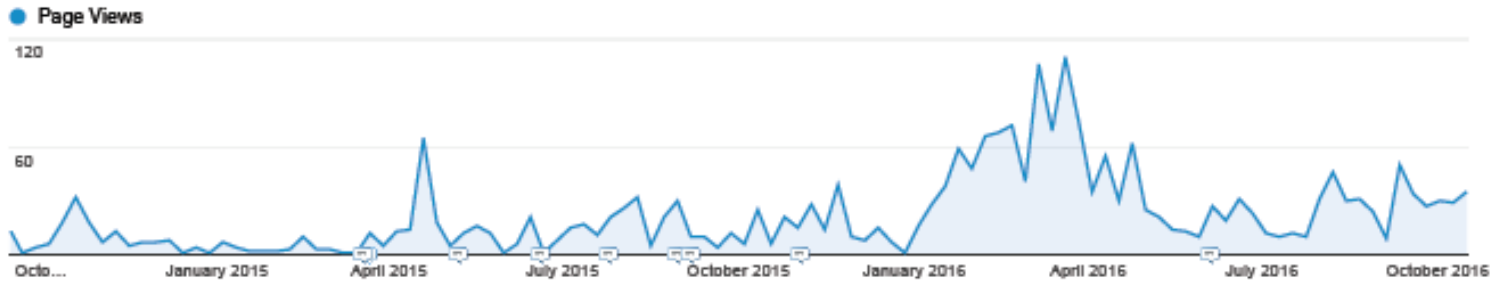
- Page views: the total number of pages people visited on the website.
- Unique Page views: Unique page views eliminate the factor of multiple views of the same page within a user's single session. If a user views the same page more than once in a session, this will only count as a single unique page view.
- Average time on page: the average length of visitors' sessions.
- Bounce Rate: the percent of visits that are single-page only (i.e. people who visit one page and leave).
- % Exit: Exit rates are similar to bounce rates. They refer to the percentage of people leave the whole site after visiting a certain page – whether or not they entered the site on that page.

Content Drilldown

15 Sep 2014 - 19 Oct 2016

All Users
100.00% Page Views

Explorer



This data was filtered using an advanced filter.

Page	Page Views	Unique Page Views	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate	% Exit
	2,381 % of Total: 0.01% (33,231,352)	1,707 % of Total: 0.01% (24,990,412)	00:01:58 Avg for View: 00:01:41 (16.36%)	56.81% Avg for View: 55.40% (2.54%)	29.02% Avg for View: 35.15% (-17.45%)
1. /talent-exchange/case-studies	915 (38.43%)	557 (32.63%)	00:01:46	54.55%	24.04%
2. /talent-exchange/for-businesses/for-businesses	406 (17.06%)	307 (17.98%)	00:02:53	65.71%	39.90%
3. /talent-exchange/for-businesses	249 (10.46%)	180 (10.54%)	00:02:48	38.89%	37.75%
4. /talent-exchange/talent-exchange-video	215 (9.03%)	189 (11.07%)	00:02:36	46.15%	31.63%
5. /talent-exchange/case-studies/case-studies	172 (7.22%)	122 (7.15%)	00:01:47	55.56%	22.09%
6. /talent-exchange/for-students/for-students	165 (6.93%)	137 (8.03%)	00:01:12	84.62%	34.55%
7. /talent-exchange/for-students	120 (5.04%)	103 (6.03%)	00:01:11	70.00%	27.50%
8. /talent-exchange/for-staff	82 (3.44%)	70 (4.10%)	00:01:04	100.00%	17.07%
9. /talent-exchange/for-staff/for-staff	57 (2.39%)	42 (2.46%)	00:00:34	50.00%	8.77%

Appendix G - Media Coverage Generated

Date	Media Outlet	Type of Media	Coverage Title	Link	Notes
Aug-15					
26/08/2015	AGCC Website	Website	Business Brains Boosted by new Work Experience Scheme in Aberdeen	Link	
26/08/2015	Oil Online	Website	Talent Exchange Program Builds SME Networks	Link	
26/08/2015	Aberdeen Business News	Website	New Work experience Programme for Aberdeen SMEs	Link	
26/08/2015	Northsound	Radio Station	N/A	N/A	TE featured in Business Bulletin
26/08/2015	Original 106	Radio Station	N/A	N/A	TE featured in Business Bulletin
26/08/2015	RGU Linked in	Social Media	N/A	Link	
27/08/2015	RGU Website	Website	Business Brains Boosted by New Work Experience Scheme in Aberdeen	Link	
27/08/2015	Evening Express	Newspaper	Talent Exchange for Business Boost	N/A	
31/08/2015	Aberdeen ILV	Website	Business Opportunity - work with Talent Exchange at RGU	Link	TE included as part of event announcement
31/08/2015	ABN Community	Social Media	Talent Exchange - Open for Business	N/A	TE video featured on homepage
Sep-15					

01/09/2015	Rigzone Website	Website	Aberdeen Initiative Allows Oil, Gas Access to Skilled University Students	Link	
03/09/2015	RGU Linked in	Social Media	N/A	Link	
14/09/2015	ABN Com-munity	Social Media	Talent Exchange - Open for Business	N/A	TE video featured on homepage
14/09/2015	Informed Scotland/aj enterprises	Blog	Informed Scotland July/August 2015 – So much happening, so much to learn	Link	Informed Scotland tweeted the same information
22/09/2015	Sporting Chance Initiative	Blog	Focus North: Collaboration in Action	Link	Sporting Chance tweeted the same information
29/09/2015	ABN Community	Social Media	Talent Exchange - Open for Business	N/A	TE video featured on homepage
	Nexus	eNewsletter	Business brains boosted by new work experience scheme in Aberdeen	N/A	
Oct-15					
12/10/2015	ABN Community	Social Media	Talent Exchange - Case Study	N/A	TE video featured on homepage
26/10/2015	ABN Community	Social Media	Talent Exchange - Open for Business	N/A	TE video featured on homepage
Nov-15					
20/11/2015	Press & Journal: Your Job	Newspaper	Talent Exchange	N/A	
30/11/2015	ABN Community	Social Media	Talent Exchange - Case Study	N/A	

30/11/2015	ABN Community	Social Media	Talent Exchange - Case Study	N/A	
Dec-15					
Jan-16					
05/01/2016	Aberdeen Business News	Website	Talent Exchange attracts hundreds of local businesses	Link	
06/01/2016	Press & Journal	Newspaper	Castle gets uni scheme boost	N/A	
06/01/2016	AGCC Website	Website	Talent Exchange attracts hundreds of local businesses	Link	TE featured in Business Bulletin
08/01/2016	Deeside Piper	Newspaper	Businesses take part in Talent Exchange	Link	
08/01/2016	Mearns Leader	Newspaper	Businesses take part in Talent Exchange	Link	
08/01/2016	Kincardin-shire Observer	Newspaper	Businesses take part in Talent Exchange	Link	
18/01/2016	ABN: Community	Social Media	Talent Exchange - Case Study	N/A	TE video featured on homepage
Feb-16					
04/02/2016	Business Now	Magazine	Salary Review/ Job Market Theme. Talent Exchange - Case Study	N/A	
15/02/2016	ABN Community	Social Media	Talent Exchange - Case Study	N/A	TE video featured on homepage
Mar-16					

02/03/2016	Matrix Risk Control Website	Website	Matrix engage with the Talent Exchange	Link	
21/03/2016	Kincardineshire Observer	Website	Artist collaborates with student	Link	
	Business Now	Magazine	Talent Exchange for Business Boost	N/A	
Apr-16					
11/04/2016	Samphire Subsea Website	Blog	When Making Progress is the Only Option…	Link	
11/04/2016	Samphire Subsea Website	Blog	Samphire Subsea Collaborates With RGU	Link	
29/04/2016	RGU Website	Website	RGU students design new website for Lord-Lieutenant	Link	
May-16					
Jun-16					
01/06/2016	AGCC Website	Website	RGU media students collaborate with local charity to promote volunteering	Link	
02/06/2016	RGU Website	Website	RGU media students collaborate with local charity to promote volunteering in the north-east	Link	
02/06/2016	Evening Express	Newspaper	Students focus on charity	N/A	
Jul-16					
Aug-16					
01/08/2016	Elevator UK Blog	Website	Businesses accessing the skills and talents of RGU students	Link	

05/08/2016	RGU Website	Website	MDT International and RGU student successfully collaborate on market research project	Link	
Sep-16					
16/09/2016	AGCC Blog	Website	Four reasons why you should try speed networking	Link	
Oct-16					
Nov-16					
TBC	AGCC Business Bulletin	Opinion	Why Collaboration Doesn't Always Need A Commercial End Goal		

Appendix H - Case Studies

Organisation	WRE Type	Course	Case study Type
Aberdeen Drilling School	Placement	BA Multimedia Development	Video
Aberdeen Science Centre (Satrosphere)	Challenge	BA Communication Design	Telephone Interview
Aberdeenshire Council	Project	BA Communication Design	Video
Barnardos Fostering North	Project	BA International Business Management	Telephone Interview
Befriend a Child	Project	MSc Digital Marketing	Telephone Interview
	Project	BA International Business Management	
	Project	MSc Software Engineering	
Bistro Verde	Placement	BA Media	Video
Boagart	Project	BA Communication Design	Telephone Interview
Braemar Castle	Placement	BA Media	Telephone Interview
Candacraig House	Project	MSc Digital Marketing	Telephone Interview
Electra Learning	Project	BA Management with HR	Telephone Interview
Forget me Not	Project	BA Communication Design	Telephone Interview
Homestart	Placement	BA Media	Telephone Interview
International House Aberdeen	Project	MSc Digital Marketing	Telephone Interview
LR Senergy	Project	BA International Business Management	Video
MDT International	Project	BA International Business Management	Telephone Interview
MICA Magazine	Project	BA Communication Design	Blog Request
Motiv8	Placement	MSc Project Management	Video
Northwood Aberdeen	Project	BA Management	Telephone Interview
Pisys	Project	BA Management	Telephone Interview
Prime Mover Pathways	Project	BA Management with Marketing	Telephone Interview
Wait for You	Placement	BA Public Relations	Video

Appendix I - Leads by Channel

Source of Lead by Channel

Channel	Activity	*No. of Leads	% of Total Leads	% of Leads Converted
Social Media		**25**	**4.01%**	**36%**
	Linked in	15		
	Twitter	5		
	Social Media	1		
	ABN Community	4		
Other Media		**21**	**3.37%**	**52%**
	AGCC Business Bulletin	15		
	Evening Express	4		
	Scottish Enterprise	1		
	Press Release	1		
Interface Online		**22**	**3.53%**	**9%**
	Interface Online	22		
Website		**13**	**2.09%**	**31%**
	RGU Website	2		
	Talent Exchange Website	11		
Talent Exchange Print		**4**	**0.64%**	**100%**
	Flyers	4		
Events		**135**	**21.67%**	**30%**
	BNI Event	4		
	BNS Event	7		
	Business Booster Event	11		
	FSB Event	20		
	North East Business Week	5		
	ACVO Event	5		
	Granite Expo (2014)	1		
	Granite Expo (2015)	7		
	AGCC Networking Event	38		
	AGCC The Ultimate Business Show	2		
	SCDI Event	1		
	Enterprise Campus North East	2		
	ABN Event	5		
	Opportunity Knocks 2014	5		
	Networking Event	1		
	RGU Event	5		

	RGU and its Region	2		
	Talent Exchange Event	12		
	Banchory Roadshow	2		
Internal Communications		**152**	**24.40%**	**39%**
	RGU Internal Referral	135		
	Careers Internal Referral	2		
	University	1		
	Students	1		
	Alumni	1		
	Former member of staff	1		
	Research & Enterprise Services	11		
E-Comms		**10**	**1.61%**	**10%**
	Alumni Mailshot	1		
	Email	9		
Focus Group		**67**	**10.75%**	**25%**
	2014	67		
Word of Mouth		**89**	**14.29%**	**34%**
	Word of Mouth	89		
External Referral		**85**	**13.64%**	**31%**
	Interface Referral	24		
	AGCC/City Council	1		
	Project Partner	7		
	Local Knowledge	1		
	Repeat Opportunity	1		
	Previous Engagement	1		
	Elevator	38		
	Business Gateway	11		
	AGCC Referral	1		
***Based on database 14th October 2016**		**623**	**100%**	**32% of all leads converted**

Appendix J - WRE Opportunities Ranked by Subject

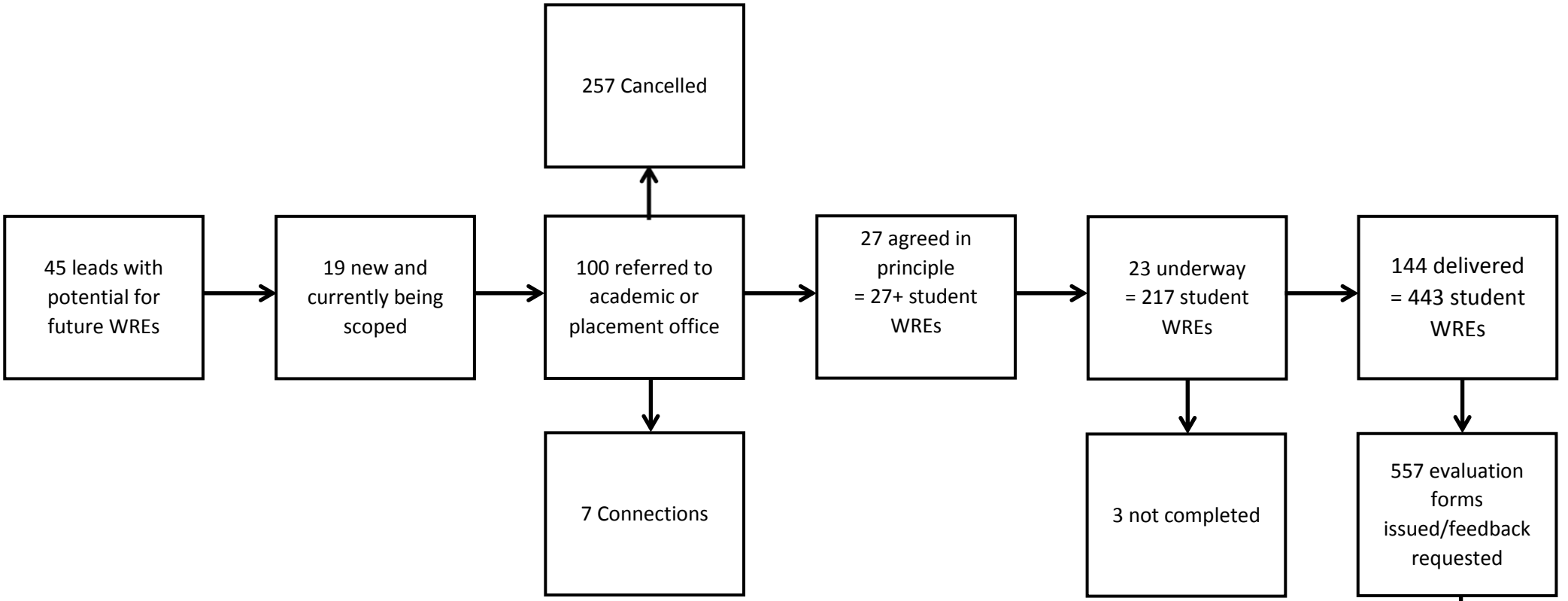
Area of Interest	No. of Opps	% of total
Design	98	15.7%
Marketing	97	15.5%
Management	49	7.9%
Website	48	7.7%
Digital Marketing	39	6.3%
Market Research	30	4.8%
Photography	30	4.8%
Events	29	4.6%
Comms & PR	26	4.2%
Social Media	23	3.7%
App Development	18	2.9%
Multimedia	16	2.6%
Research & Development	14	2.2%
IT	12	1.9%
Animation	9	1.4%
Engineering	9	1.4%
Rebranding	8	1.3%
Database	7	1.1%
E-learning	6	1.0%
Health & Social Care	6	1.0%
Product Development	6	1.0%
HR	5	0.8%
Business Development	4	0.6%
CSR	3	0.5%
Data Analysis	3	0.5%

Area of Interest	No. of Opps	% of total
Accounting & Finance	2	0.3%
Evaluation	2	0.3%
Fundraising	2	0.3%
Hospitality	2	0.3%
Media	2	0.3%
Project Management	2	0.3%
Architecture	1	0.2%
Economics	1	0.2%
Environmental	1	0.2%
Fashion Design	1	0.2%
Guest Speaker	1	0.2%
Information Management	1	0.2%
Interior Design	1	0.2%
KTP	1	0.2%
Language	1	0.2%
Law	1	0.2%
Law and Management	1	0.2%
Network	1	0.2%
Quantity Surveying	1	0.2%
Risk Control	1	0.2%
Site visit	1	0.2%
Sports Science	1	0.2%
Textiles	1	0.2%
Translation	1	0.2%
TOTAL	**625**	**100.0%**

Appendix K - Business Sectors Engaged

Sector	No. of Businesses	%
Third Sector	63	15.5%
Business Services	57	14.0%
Hospitality, Leisure & Tourism	49	12.0%
Energy	43	10.6%
Culture & Creative	33	8.1%
Retail	29	7.1%
Health, Beauty & Fitness	24	5.9%
Education	20	4.9%
Food & Drink	19	4.7%
ICT	11	2.7%
Skills	11	2.7%
Property	9	2.2%
General Services	7	1.7%
Local Government	6	1.5%
Recruitment	5	1.2%
Public Body	4	1.0%
Publishing	4	1.0%
Finance	3	0.7%
Fashion	2	0.5%
Industry Body	2	0.5%
Law	2	0.5%
Engineering	1	0.2%
Environmental	1	0.2%
Transport	1	0.25%
Wholesale	1	0.2%
TOTAL	**407**	**100.0%**

Appendix L - Work Related Experience Opportunity Leads Pipeline 24/10/16



GLOSSARY	
Referred to…	The WRE has moved beyond an initial discussion with an academic or Placement Office and has been scoped or is currently being offered to a student or business.
Agreed…	The WRE has been agreed with an academic or Placement Office.
Underway	The WRE has been agreed and is underway as a live WRE with student(s) currently working with the business.
Delivered	The WRE has been fully completed and delivered.

Appendix M- Opportunity Conversions by Course and School

			Number of Opportunities				Number of Student WREs			
Faculty	**School**	**Course/ Module**	**No. of Opps**	**% by course**	**% by school**	**% by faculty**	**No. of WREs**	**% by course**	**% by school**	**% by faculty**
ABS	**Management**	BA Management	17	8.5%	30.8%	59.7%	18	2.6%	17.1%	56.3%
		BA International Business Management	18	9.0%			19	2.8%		
		BA Management with Marketing	9	4.5%			9	1.3%		
		BA Management with HR	3	1.5%			3	0.4%		
		BA Law & Management	1	0.5%			1	0.1%		
		BA IBM and BA Management with HR (mixed cohort)	1	0.5%			2	0.3%		
		BA Management with Marketing & BA Media (mixed cohort)	1	0.5%			2	0.3%		
		MSc Management	1	0.5%			4	0.6%		
		MSc Project Management	8	4.0%			33	4.8%		
		MBA	1	0.5%			1	0.1%		
		Entrepreneurial Studies module	2	1.0%			25	3.6%		
	Comms, Marketing & Media	BA Media	14	7.0%	28.9%		22	3.2%	39.2%	
		BA Public Relations	8	4.0%			8	1.2%		
		BA Events Management	5	2.5%			12	1.7%		
		BA Journalism	1	0.5%			3	0.4%		
		BA Fashion Management	1	0.5%			16	2.3%		
		BA Public Relations and BA Media (mixed cohort)	14	7.0%			95	13.8%		
		BA Events Management and BA Management (mixed cohort)	1	0.5%			5	0.7%		
		MSc Digital Marketing	11	5.5%			75	10.9%		
		MSc Corporate Communications & Public Affairs	1	0.5%			1	0.1%		
		MSc Fashion Management	1	0.5%			1	0.1%		
		Public Relations Theory & Practice module	1	0.5%			31	4.5%		

D&T	Gray's	BA Communication Design	31	15.4%	19.4%	30.8%	53	7.7%	12.0%	32.1%
		BA Commercial Photography	5	2.5%			25	3.6%		
		BA Fashion & Textile Design	1	0.5%			1	0.1%		
		BA Contemporary Art Practice	2	1.0%			3	0.4%		
	CSDM	BSc Computing (App Software Development)	1	0.5%	7.0%		2	0.3%	2.9%	
		BSc Computer Science	1	0.5%			1	0.1%		
		BSc Digital Media	2	1.0%			2	0.3%		
		BSc Multimedia Development	2	1.0%			4	0.6%		
		MSc Computing: Software Tech with Network Management	2	1.0%			2	0.3%		
		MSc IT for the Oil and Gas Industry	1	0.5%			1	0.1%		
		MSc Information & Network Security	2	1.0%			2	0.3%		
		MSc Software Engineering	1	0.5%			4	0.6%		
		MSc Software Technology	2	1.0%			2	0.3%		
		CM3028: Web application Development module	3	1.5%			105	15.3%		
		Digital Incubator	1	0.5%			4	0.6%		
	Eng	MEng Mechanical & Offshore Engineering	1	0.5%	1.5%		4	0.6%	0.9%	
		MEng Mechanical Engineering	2	1.0%			2	0.3%		
	SS	BSc Quantity Surveying	1	0.5%	1.0%		2	0.3%	0.4%	
		MSc Construction Management	1	0.5%			1	0.1%		
H&SC	ASS	MSc Corporate Social Responsibility & Energy	2	1.0%	1.0%	3.0%	7	1.0%	1.0%	4.5%
	HS	BSc Occupational Therapy	4	2.0%	2.0%		24	3.5%	3.5%	
Mixed Cohort		Mixed Cohort	5	2.5%	3.0%	3.0%	44	6.4%	7.1%	7.1%
		Enterprise Workout	1	0.5%			5	0.7%		
Connections		Connections	7							
TOTAL			201				686			

Appendix N - Cancellation Reasons

	Cancellation Reason	No.	Total	%
Business	Business no longer interested	39	147	57%
	Timing doesn't meet business need	27		
	Business no longer interested: No response after initial registration	22		
	Business no longer able to offer WRE	17		
	Business no longer interested: No response after meeting	12		
	Business no longer interested: Progressed activity outwith WRE	12		
	Business no longer operating	11		
	Business no longer interested: Activity no longer required	3		
	Pursuing other WRE	2		
	Business response to offer of student too late	1		
	Interested students not suitable	1		
Academic - Interface	Interface: Declined by academic - no response	21	31	12%
	Interface: Academic response too late	2		
	Interface: Declined by academic - Scope too wide	2		
	Interface: Timing doesn't meet business need	2		
	Interface Declined by academic - no capacity	1		
	Interface: Application unsuccessful	1		
	Interface: Declined by academic - no reason given	1		
	Interface: Declined by academic - Timing not right	1		
Academic	Declined by Academic - Insufficient academic content	15	24	9.3%
	Declined by academic - no reason given	3		
	Declined by academic - Suitable student not identified	2		
	Declined by academic - no capacity	3		
	Declined by academic – no response	1		
Student	No interest from students	55	55	21.4%
	TOTAL 257	**257**	**257**	**100%**

Appendix O - Conversions and Cancellations by Subject

	TOTAL		CONVERTED			CANCELLED		
Area of Interest (AoI)	No. of Opps	% of Total Opps	No. Converted	% of AoI Converted	% of total Converted	No. Cancelled	% of AoI Cancelled	% of total Cancelled
Design	98	15.7%	25	25.5%	12.5%	60	61.2%	23.4%
Marketing	97	15.5%	40	41.2%	20.0%	26	26.8%	10.2%
Management	49	7.9%	19	38.8%	9.5%	12	24.5%	4.7%
Website	48	7.7%	8	16.7%	4.0%	29	60.4%	11.3%
Digital Marketing	39	6.3%	13	33.3%	6.5%	13	33.3%	5.1%
Market Research	30	4.8%	8	26.7%	4.0%	12	40.0%	4.7%
Photography	30	4.8%	9	30.0%	4.5%	17	56.7%	6.6%
Events	29	4.6%	8	27.6%	4.0%	11	37.9%	4.3%
Comms & PR	26	4.2%	17	65.4%	8.5%	3	11.5%	1.2%
Social Media	23	3.7%	10	43.5%	5.0%	2	8.7%	0.8%
App Development	18	2.9%	3	16.7%	1.5%	9	50.0%	3.5%
Multimedia	16	2.6%	4	25.0%	2.0%	8	50.0%	3.1%
Research & Development	14	2.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	13	92.9%	5.1%
IT	12	1.9%	4	33.3%	2.0%	7	58.3%	2.7%
Animation	9	1.4%	4	44.4%	2.0%	2	22.2%	0.8%
Engineering	9	1.4%	1	11.1%	0.5%	6	66.7%	2.3%
Rebranding	8	1.3%	6	75.0%	3.0%	2	25.0%	0.8%
Database	7	1.1%	2	28.6%	1.0%	3	42.9%	1.2%
E-learning	6	1.0%	2	33.3%	1.0%	1	16.7%	0.4%
Health & Social Care	6	1.0%	4	66.7%	2.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Product Development	6	1.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	5	83.3%	2.0%
HR	5	0.8%	2	40.0%	1.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%

Business Development	4	0.6%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	25.0%	0.4%
CSR	3	0.5%	2	66.7%	1.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Data Analysis	3	0.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	2	66.7%	0.8%
Accounting & Finance	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	50.0%	0.4%
Evaluation	2	0.3%	2	100.0%	1.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Fundraising	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%	2	100.0%	0.8%
Hospitality	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	50.0%	0.4%
Media	2	0.3%	2	100.0%	1.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Project Management	2	0.3%	1	50.0%	0.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Architecture	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	100.0%	0.4%
Economics	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	100.0%	0.4%
Environmental	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	100.0%	0.4%
Fashion Design	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Information Management	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	100.0%	0.4%
Interior Design	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	100.0%	0.4%
KTP	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	100.0%	0.4%
Language	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	100.0%	0.4%
Law	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Law and Management	1	0.2%	1	100.0%	0.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Network	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Quantity Surveying	1	0.2%	1	100.0%	0.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Risk Control	1	0.2%	1	100.0%	0.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Site visit	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Sports Science	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Textiles	1	0.2%	1	100.0%	0.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Translation	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	100.0%	0.4%
TOTAL	**624**	**100.0%**	**200**	**32.1%**	**100.0%**	**256**	**41.0%**	**100.0%**

Appendix P - WRE Evaluation Forms

Talent Exchange – Business Evaluation

Please use this form to reflect on:

Activity Title:		
Activity summary (assignment brief):		
What outcomes did you hope to achieve from the activity?		
Were the outcomes delivered?	**Yes**	**No**
Were any additional benefits realised? Please specify.		
Additional comments about your participation in the activity (e.g. what worked well, what did not work so well, what could be done differently another time)?		
Please comment on the support provided by Talent Exchange in setting up the activity. Are there other ways Talent Exchange could have helped you?		
Please indicate any further plans you have to engage with Talent Exchange.		
Business name:	**Activity date:**	
Contact name:		

Talent Exchange – Student Learning Log

Please use this Learning Log to reflect on your participation in:

Activity Title:	
Activity summary (assignment brief):	
Refection: How did I benefit from participating in the activity? (*Examples to consider here include gaining confidence, being part of a team, experience of taking a leadership role, awareness of customer needs, opportunity to plan or manage time, opportunity to generate ideas or solve problems for an organisation, gaining better understanding of the workplace).*	
Reflection: What knowledge & skills did I gain, or put into action, during this activity? *(Examples of knowledge and skills to consider here include project management, IT, report writing, presentation, data collection, customer care, communication).*	
Reflection: What impact did the activity have on me? *(Please use this space to reflect on points such as any strengths or weaknesses identified, learning or development needs identified, how you will apply what you have learned to your studies, any tasks or projects you would now approach differently, any changes in future career plans).*	
Additional comments about your participation in the activity:	
Name:	**Activity date:**

Talent Exchange – Academic Evaluation

Please use this form to reflect on:

Activity Title:		
Activity summary (assignment brief):		
What outcomes did you hope to achieve from the activity?		
Were the outcomes delivered?	**Yes**	**No**
Were any additional benefits realised? Please specify.		
Additional comments about your participation in the activity (e.g. what worked well, what did not work so well, what could be done differently another time)?		
Please comment on the support provided by Talent Exchange in setting up the activity. Are there other ways Talent Exchange could have helped you?		
Do you plan to run this activity again next time the module runs?	**Yes**	**No**
Name:	**Activity date:**	

Appendix Q - WRE Evaluation Forms (Expanded Version)

Student Work Related Experience – Business Evaluation

We would appreciate you taking a few minutes to give feedback on the experience you had working with our student(s). Your answers will help us ensure work related experiences are benefiting both students and businesses.

Work Related Experience Title:	**Work Related Experience Date:**	
Work Related Experience summary (assignment brief):		
Were the outcomes delivered?	**Yes**	**No**
Please list the intended outcomes and objectives of the work related activity below; noting next to each if it was fully, partly or not delivered. If not fully delivered, please also specify reasons for this.		
Were any additional benefits realised? Please specify.		
Please give details of the impact on your business:		
Please comment on what went particularly well:		
Please comment on anything that did not go as well as expected and how this could be improved, if appropriate:		

Please comment on the service provided by Talent Exchange. **Are there any other ways in which RGU could have helped you?**	
On a scale of 1 – 10, how would you rate the benefit to your business of the work related experience, 1 being least beneficial and 10 being most beneficial? **1 2 3 etc…….10** **What would make it a 10?**	
Please indicate any other ways we can work with you in future.	**Date:**
Business Name: **Your Name:**	

Work Related Experience – Student Learning Log and Feedback

Please use this Learning Log to reflect on your participation in the work related experience. Your feedback will be used to gain a greater understanding of the impact these types of experiences have on students to help in sourcing relevant work related experience opportunities in future.

Work Related Experience Title:	**Work Related Experience Date:**
Work Related Experience summary (assignment brief):	
Reflection: How did I benefit from participating in the activity? (*Examples to consider here include gaining confidence, being part of a team, experience of taking a leadership role, awareness of customer needs, opportunity to plan or manage time, opportunity to generate ideas or solve problems for an organisation, gaining better understanding of the workplace).*	
Reflection: What knowledge & skills did I gain, or put into action, during this activity? *(Examples of knowledge and skills to consider here include project management, IT, report writing, presentation, data collection, customer care, communication).*	
Reflection: What impact did the activity have on me? *(Please use this space to reflect on points such as any strengths or weaknesses identified, learning or development needs identified, how you will apply what you have learned to your studies, any tasks or projects you would now approach differently, any changes in future career plans).*	
On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the opportunity provided by this work related experience to put learning into action? 1 is the poorest rating and 10 the highest. **1 2 3 etc…….. 10**	

If not a 10, what would have made it a 10?	
On the same scale of 1 to 10, give a rate which you feel reflects the contribution of this work related experience to your employability? **1 2 3 etc …… 10** **If not a 10, what would have made it a 10?**	
Any additional comments about this work related experience:	
Name:	**Date:**

Student Work Related Experience – Academic Evaluation

We would appreciate if you would take a few minutes to provide some feedback on the work related experience undertaken by your student(s). Your feedback will be taken into account when sourcing future work related experiences for your course/module.

Work Related Experience Title:	**Work Related Experience Date:**	
Work Related Experience summary (assignment brief):		
Were the outcomes delivered?	**Yes**	**No**
Please list the intended outcomes and objectives of the work related activity below; noting next to each if it was fully, partly or not delivered. If not fully delivered, please also specify any reasons for this.		
What impact, if any, did the work related experience have on your course/module, student(s) and the business? **Course/Module:** **Student(s:)** **Business:**		
Please comment on what went particularly well:		

Please comment on anything that did not go as well as expected and how this could be improved, if appropriate:		
Please comment on the support provided by Talent Exchange in sourcing this work related experience and advise of any other ways Talent Exchange you think could have helped you.		
On a scale of 1 – 10, how would you rate the contribution of this work related experience to course/module student employability objectives? 1 is the poorest contribution and 10 the most significant contribution? **1 2 3 etc…….10** **What would make it a 10?**		
Do you plan to offer this type of work related experience again?	**Yes**	**No**
If you have any further requirements for work related experiences, please detail below:		
Name:	**Date:**	