Brunel’s Employability Programme
Introduction

“Business Life is one of our employability initiatives in which students are encouraged to develop their graduate attributes in preparation for the world of work. We have several years of successfully delivering this programme within the award winning Brunel Business School, and have now rolled this innovation across parts of the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences. We are proud of this programme being able to make a real difference to the lives of our students and, in preparing them for future graduate level employment.”

“Through the Business Life Programme we aspire to develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of our Brunel Business School graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge and which are applicable to a range of contexts in the world of Business and Management. The training workshops in Business Life run in parallel to our academic programmes and focus on developing core graduate attributes associated with interpersonal and applied skills that help distinguish our Business School students from other graduates. The programme is developed in close partnership with leading industrial partners and professional bodies.”

“As an award-winning business school, we are committed to providing our students with a compelling mix of academic learning, impact-based research and skills opportunities supported through a combination of our well-established placements and Business Life employability programmes. It is therefore incumbent upon us to equip our students and graduates to have the skills of not only tomorrow, but the knowledge of how businesses are operating and innovating today.”

“Brunel’s Economics and Finance Department takes student employability very seriously. We encourage our students to think about their future career aspirations from their first day with us. We help students turn their aspirations into reality by organising a number of employability events. Each event is designed to develop skills that they can use to add value to future employers. Some of the events include training on Bloomberg, case study simulations, interacting with senior figures from the worlds of economics, finance and accounting. Employability is in the Department’s DNA.”

Prof. Vishanth Weerakkody
Director of Brunel Business Life Programme (Brunel Business School)

Prof. Ashley Braganza
Head of Department and Director of Brunel Business Life (Economics and Finance)
Overview of the Programme

Brunel Business Life programme is a unique professional development programme, ensuring that all of our students have the skills and competencies needed to develop those striking careers desired now and on into the future.

Success in life is expressed by an individual’s contribution and legacy to family community and work. Our intention is to ensure that we support our student’s future success.

“Business Life is designed to prepare and train students to be successful in the job market, before and after they graduate.”

Heather Carr, Project Leader of the Business Life Programme
Whichever career pathway chosen...

**Commercial Awareness**
- Let’s Talk Business Guest Lecture series
- Making Success Happen Guest Speaker series
- Business Tours

**Commercial Software Training**
- Introduction to SAS Enterprise
- SPSS

**ICT Skills**
- MS Excel Introduction, Intermediate & Advanced

**Soft Skills**
- Networking, BEST Connections
- Charity Event
- Being You on a Hero’s Journey
- Conflict Resolution
- Leadership Skills
- Team Work
- Time Management

**Professional Administrative Skills Development**
- Project Management: Prince 2 Foundation & Practitioner certification
- Minute Writing Skills

**Understanding international business cultures and etiquette**
- Working with different behaviours (adapting to those around you)
- Customer Service Skills
- Communication and influential skills

“**Student Ambassadors**

A superb opportunity for student to develop their business skills and experience. Business Life Communications ambassadors are a key part of the team working alongside the Project Manager and Director.

“It was great to be part of the BL team and to help promote the programme amongst students and academic staff. I would recommend becoming an ambassador to anyone. It will help you further develop your team working and communication skills and build your network. You will also have fun while doing something worthwhile!”

Ralitsa Todorova, BSc first class honours in Business and Management (Accounting) and final year Business Life Student Ambassador
Featured Events

Introduction to SAS Enterprise Software

Free software training developed for students to use in order to gain key SAS skills, as part of our partnership with the SAS student Academy.

For more dates please email: business.life@brunel.ac.uk

“We recognise the emerging theme of “Big Data” and data analytics as becoming a key aspect of almost every industry - from start-ups, through to established multinational companies, across sectors as varied as financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, life sciences, aviation and the public sector. Employers routinely tell us about the importance of being to navigate, interpret, and make decisions based upon a wide-range of data, information and knowledge.

We are proud to support and partner with SAS and their network of companies once again in achieving our shared aims and look forward to yet another successful and popular event.”

Prof. Amir Sharif, Acting Head of Brunel Business School

Other Company Exhibitors

Accenture
Amadeus Software
Aviva
Barclays Bank
Base 3 Ltd
Brunel Business Life
Capital One
CSP
Department for Work and Pensions
Nationwide Building Society
Office for National Statistics and HM Revenue & Customs
PwC
RWE npower, HSBC
SAS UK and Ireland
Sopra Group
The Home Office
And more...

Exhibiting at SAS Careers Fair 2013
Managing Change

**Key message**
Change happens, and we need to get used to it – and power through it. We will identify your key goal that you wish to achieve from your degree choice and explore the best ways for you (personally) to reach it.

- Identify your response to change using Fisher’s change model (where are you on the curve?)
- Applying the Circle of Influence to your current concerns
- Explaining the difference between Needs v Wants (Maslow) and identifying yours
- Discussing ways of staying motivated (Fish philosophy)
- Analysing what motivates you through your own motivational stories

My Communication (1)

**Key message**
We communicate all the time – subconsciously as well as consciously, and communication is most effective when the two are aligned. After all, communication is a TWO-way process and the success of the communication is the message that has been received.

- Identifying how and when I communicate through reflection and feedback
- Applying “Plain English” to your communications (and explaining the importance of spelling and grammar)
- Analysing how our transactions may be positively or negatively impacted using Transactional Analysis (Berne)
- Analysing our competitive or co-operative nature using the Prisoner’s Dilemma (Axelrod)

My Communication (2)

**Key message**
We will examine the key ways of communicating within business and reflect on how well we engage in them.

- Explaining how to make the most of our voice
- Identifying positive and negative body language
- Practicing networking, interview and presentation skills
- Discussing the importance of writing official documents (eg. minute taking, or using/interpreting policies)

Business Master Classes

A new feature to the programme in 2014 this course focusses on delivering practical and interactive training sessions which focus on practicing, developing and reflecting on the key skills that underpin every profession.

Facilitated by trainers who are also professional (British Equity) actors who are experienced at identifying nuances in behavioural performance and suggesting ways in which those traits can be managed.

The topics are designed to parallel the theoretical sessions that will be taught over your business course covering areas such as “Team Building” and “Leadership”, but will enable you to explore your own actions within these areas and put some of the theories that you have learned about to use.

“Hard skills get you interviews, soft skills get you jobs.”
Audrey Tang, Founder of Click Productions and Brunel Alumnus

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Managing my time

Key message
No matter how good we think we are at time management, there are lots of time bandits that we allow to steal our attention. This session is about recognising how we choose to manage our time as well as offer some strategies to improve our practice.

- Identifying our time bandits
- Reflecting on our time management practices
- Applying the “Time management Quadrant” to reveal what we choose to spend our time on, then using it as an action plan to manage our time.
- Explaining the “Pomodoro technique”

Team Effectiveness (1)

Key message
You don’t have to “like” the team you are in; however you have to work together to achieve your goal. If we can understand differences between us and our team members, we can utilise them to best effect.

- Identifying the purpose of a team
- Identifying our preferred role within a team (in comparison to the role we tend to take) (Belbin)
- Defining our organisation as a team (using the Blake-Mouton grid)
- Identifying our performance style and communication preferences using the Merrill-Reid inventory, and explaining how we may learn from other styles and better work with them.

Conflict Resolution

Key message
Resolving conflict is a skill and it can be easier than you think. It is also worth remembering that it is not necessarily a “compromise” that you are seeking, but a collaboration! This is the most effective and positive for both parties.

- Explaining our own response to conflict and comparing it to theory
- Explaining the causes of conflict and how we might contribute to them (eg. personal space, culture, communications)
- Explaining and practicing the LEAPS model of conflict resolution
- Explaining the difference between “Responsibility” and “Blame”

Customer Service

Key message
Those who work in service have a “gift” that they can bestow on others. You can choose who you give that “gift” to. Professionalism is NOT the “gift”; the “gift” is something extra – unwrap it in this session…

- Identifying our view of “good” customer service
- Identifying the barriers to performing good customer service and suggesting ways to overcome them
- Identifying what “Going the extra Mile” entails, and discussing when to do so (the gift…which can be very appropriate, or inappropriate!)
- Explaining that our behaviour is a choice and we can use it to help or hinder a situation!
- Applying our knowledge to scenarios
- Discussing means of support in difficult situations (eg. communities of coping
Leadership
Key message
Leading a team means being the role model you would like to follow yourself – teams take on the personality of their leader!

- Identifying the differences between leadership and management
- Exploring the theories of leadership and where our preferences are as a leader
- Identifying what qualities make a good leader (e.g. Charismatic leadership, or situational leadership)
- Discussing where to find support as a leader - and why we need it
- Analysing whether we would actually WANT to lead

Management
Key message
Can you really lose yourself for the benefit of the team? – when their success is your success...

- Analysing theories of management and where our preference lies
- Identifying the qualities of a good and bad manager and where our own traits are
- Discussing the difficulty of making the change from being within a situation to co-ordinating it, and why it must be done
- Identifying how to get the best out of a team (Team activity - drawing from previous sessions)

Team effectiveness (2)
Key message
This session is about dealing with difficulty – as soon as you recognise that something is wrong, it is often most effective to deal with it openly.

- Identifying what a good/bad team looks like and discussing the consequences of both
- Explaining the key dysfunctions of a team (Lencioni) and identifying ways we can (realistically) address them
- Practice investigating problems within team using the “5 whys” approach (which often identifies more fundamental issues that a simple investigation would)
- Using “Thinking Hats” (de Bono) to manage difficult discussions

Coaching
Key message
Coaching is a very simple style of management that yields great results. It is easy to implement and is effective in developing those around you.

- Explaining the definition of coaching and its differences to training, and mentoring
- Explaining how coaching can be used within a team
- Skills practice - the Action Learning Set Skills practice - Coaching using the GROW or CIGAR models

Building your network
Key message
Once you know what you can offer, you are in a good position to build your network. However, the common mistake is that too often people talk about themselves and what they can do, whereas it is more effective to talk about what you can do for the OTHER person/organisation. This shows that you understand their needs, and that you can bridge the gaps.

- Practicing the “elevator pitch”
- Explaining the importance of knowing the company you want to work for and what their needs are
- Discussing how saying “no” can maintain your value and quality
- Discussing the importance of being specific in targeting your employers (once you are in a position to make a choice!)
- Recognising the effect of generating a genuine warmth compared to looking at your own reflection in someone else’s eyes
BEST Connections
Wednesday 14th January 2015

“The BEST Event was a fantastic event. Not only did it include inspirational talks and expert tips from graduate recruiters but there were interactive workshops that really were fun!

The event is a great chance for you to build your confidence and gives you tips and advice that you can take and apply to many different situations. Even if you’ve done a placement, you can still brush up on your networking skills.

I feel this is an invaluable event for all...”

Siobhan Feeney, 1st Class BSc Honours in Business and Management now an Assistant Brand Manager for Nestle UK & Ireland

Training with actors and international voice coaches, students learn the art of networking, grab business cards and prepare to exploit the 6 minutes opportunity to speed network with our special industry guests...

The whole aim of the ‘networking for real’ session is for it to be a fun session, albeit with a serious purpose.

Full Programme

Let’s Talk Business Series:
Guest Lecturers or industry experts deliver a lecture on a current topic related to the taught module. Delivered during allocated teaching hours or as an added bonus lecture.

Business Tours:
At least 1 industry tour per level 5 pathway. Tours of 25-30 students are taken to an organised company or organisation relevant to pathway/sector specialism.

International Tours:
Postgraduate students only, please enquire with the Taught Programmes Office.

KAU Exchange:
Summer exchange programme with students at the Korean Aerospace University.

Excel Courses:
Half day practical based training on MS Excel spreadsheets offering both intermediate and advanced levels.

ECDL Extra:
Awarded BCS level 2 qualification in ICT proficiency skills.

Introduction to Sage 50:
Software training to enable students to take the examination and be certified in Sage 50.

Introduction to Sage 50 Payroll:
Software training to enable students to take the examination and be certified in Sage 50 Payroll.

Introduction to and Advanced SPSS:
Learning methods of how to gain the best results using SPSS.

Understanding international business cultures and etiquette:
Interactive workshop, run with our partners in the Arts department.

Making Success Happen Series:
Guest: Industry guest speakers delivering real life accounts and advice on how they succeeded in their field. Typically one guest per month.
How to get involved

Students looking to book a Brunel Business Life activity

Getting started

1. Log on to your Business Life Portal & save it to your web favourites/bookmarks: https://ourbbs.brunel.ac.uk/
2. Browse what events/courses you want to attend.
3. Select the event and book
4. Turn up... learn and have fun!
5. Download your certificate of attendance from your BL portal.

Become an Ambassador

The Business Life programme at Brunel is one of the most innovative student employability schemes in the UK. Now we are looking for highly commercial team players to help, promote, run and develop it.

Reporting to the project manager you would be undertaking tasks such strategic marketing, product development, global communications, business intelligence and event management.

For more information email business.life@brunel.ac.uk
Get in contact

Email the team
business.life@brunel.ac.uk

Give us a call
01895 266717

Meet the Project Manager
Heather Carr in the Academic Programmes Office
Ground Floor of the Eastern Gateway Building

Find us on Social Media

Facebook: BusinessLifeProgramme
Twitter: @BBSBusinessLife
LinkedIn: Brunel Business School (official)