**Faculty of Management**

**The ‘Business School’ (programmes subject to the AACSB accreditation)**

**PDA report 2015-16**

**‘Ryan is a testament to this course. BU is so thorough in supporting placements and preparing placement students for future employment’.**

**Senior Manager of a BABS student at Disney**

**Executive Summary**

**Accreditation and E-portfolios**

There is now parity of placement coursework on the Business programmes subject to the AACSB accreditation. All students complete compulsory Mahara e portfolios. The development of these underpins the reflective work carried out by PDAs during placement reviews.

All students submit their e portfolios and appraisals by 1 July and these are then reviewed and marked by the PDAs.

The marking rubric has been further developed and PDAs send all students formal feedback by 1 August - prior to their return to the final year.

Placement prizes are being awarded during induction or networking events which will improve the student experience by celebrating and bringing back the placement experience into level 6.

CMI accreditation – For all BABS students the placement e portfolio will carry credits for one of the units in the level 5 diploma in Management and Leadership

Both managers and students consider the e portfolio to be an innovative and welcome approach to placement coursework.

**Market Intelligence and Employer Feedback**

The number of placements and graduate roles in the Accounting, Finance and Professional Services sector has risen to an all-time high. It is now 50% higher than in 2010 (Source: Highfliers Research, June 2016).

More than 90% of the UK’s leading graduate employers now offer paid internships and view them as part of the ‘long interview’ process.

In the given sectors, it is the expectation of most employers that students will do a one year placement which will include a two week handover to the next incoming placement student.

Project management, financial analysis and digital marketing continue to be areas where most students from the ‘BS’ are in demand, irrespective of role and organisation.

Many employers claim that BS students go far beyond expectations and out-perform those from elsewhere.

Most employers state that the students are well prepared for placement both within the curriculum and by the placement team.

The students are praised for their applications and preparedness for interviews and assessment centres.

Both students and managers highlight the continuing need for advanced Excel skills and for students to further develop networking skills.

**Student Performance**

There has been a slight rise in unprofessional behaviour by students and an increase in problems encountered. This has related to students trying to terminate contracts after 40 weeks – despite signing up to a year’s placement and some students taking time to settle into a professional routine at the start of the placement.

There has been an increase in managers who are new to the role and are given ‘charge of the student’ to develop their managerial skills, creating issues for both parties. They turn increasingly to PDAs to help sort a range management issues.

Many students have secured places on graduate schemes and a large number of students have received job offers by the end of their placement.

Several students undertook professional qualifications in the course of their work and a few supplemented their placement with a summer internship.

Most students experienced a positive placement experience with many describing it as the best year so far and the reason for applying to BU. However, there were a handful of students who experienced issues with lowly paid or unpaid roles.

**International Mobility**

For the first time in many years, no ‘BS’ students took a placement within the EEA with Erasmus funding and only a handful of students went further afield. Apart from two, these were students returning to home countries for placement, usually due to visa regulations.

**Embedding Placement and Employability into the Curriculum**

In order to support the application of theory into practice and practice back into the curriculum, PDA course specialisms are maintained in the facultybut good practice is shared and assimilated across the faculty.

A minimum of one PDA has given input to all termly framework meetings, made contributions to CAP and the resulting actions and contributed to PL’s end of year reports.

The PDAs participated in a range of workshops, lectures and assessed units at all levels of the degree programmes, including MBA. They assisted with PAL recruitment and attended a range of project and networking functions.

Monthly meetings are held with the Careers Adviser, Employability Co-ordinators and relevant academics to ensure a cohesive approach to the placement experience.

**PDA support**

In the placement survey on a range of 1-6 where 6 is excellent 76% of students voted the support at level 6, 22% at level 5 and 2% at level 4.

After working as a PDA for the BS for sixteen years, John Babbage retired at the end of August – but not before receiving eight ‘You’re Brilliant’ awards.

A freeze on PDA resource for the last two years, despite greatly increasing student numbers, has resulted in difficulties in offering the agreed level of support to placement students and is an ongoing problem.

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Appendix A: BABS, AFE & Marketing Placement Survey Summary 2015 – 16 16

**Section 1: Dimensions**

In 2015-16, the ‘BS’ PDAs, (2.5 FTE equivalent) supported 262 BABS and AF&E students, in addition to the 19 students from the new BSc Marketing cohort. The placement cohort comprised students from the following degree programmes: BABS with pathways, Accounting Finance and Economics (optional sandwich placement) and joint with FMC, BSc Marketing. The placement cohort comprised students from the following degree programmes and pathways:

BABS with pathways:

* Business Studies
* Business Studies with Economics
* Business Studies with Enterprise
* Business Studies with Finance
* Business Studies with Human Resource Management
* Business Studies with Law
* Business Studies with Marketing
* Business Studies with Operations and Project Management
* International Business Studies

Accounting & Finance Framework with the Option of a sandwich placement

* Accounting and Finance
* Accounting & Business
* Accounting & Law
* Accounting & Taxation
* Finance & Business
* Finance & Economics
* Economics

BSc Marketing degree – joint with FMC

**AFE optional placements:**

The decline in the number of AF&E placement students continues to be of concern. In the past we had seen a rise in the number of AF&E students taking the placement option year on year. However, despite the growth in the number of quality placements available, in the last three years, disappointingly, there has been a fall in numbers taking the option.

2013-14 107

2014-15 93

2015-16 73

2016-17 c.64 at the current time

**Challenges to placement support:**

* Reduction in PDA resource following the move of a PDA to FMC and a phased retirement. This resulted in less time to integrate into programmes and difficulty for new staff stretched across numerous programmes, gaining requisite theoretical knowledge. This can impact on support offered when synthesising academic study with practical experience and in less time to pursue new placement and graduate openings and/or opportunities for collaboration with the university
* Dealing with an increasing number of ‘needy’ students with problems and ‘new’ managers requiring support in handling interns
* Working across FMC and FM with the Joint Marketing degree
* Residual LLB input in the autumn e.g. LPC assessment day
* Extremely long working hours to deliver the promised level of support and not impact negatively on the student experience

Requests for increased resource were input to service delivery planning and are currently being addressed in order to support greatly increased numbers on placement in FM. Many students started their placements in June and delays in supporting them impacts negatively on the student and employer experience.

**Section 2: PDA Support and Interventions During Placement:**

The move of PDAs into schools/faculties has enabled staff to support the whole employability journey of the students and to further integrate the sandwich year into the programmes. This has resulted in increased ‘touch points’ before, during and following placement:

**PDA input covers:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| May (Level 5) | **Pre-Placement Seminar** | * Objectives and ILOs of placement
* requirements for sandwich award
* PDA Service level agreement
* Compulsory coursework requirements (Mahara e portfolio)
 |
| First 6 weeks of placement | **Student Allocations** | Each student is allocated and receives an introduction from their PDA |
| 3 – 5 Months | **First Formal Review** | Face to face in company with student and manager/mentor – reflection on:* Learning
* Objective setting
* Maximising opportunities
* Identifying skills development
* Integrating learning from the units studied and impact of the experience on choice of pathways and final year projects
 |
| Spring Semester | **Mid-Placement Seminar** | * Planning the content with PLS, CA and PCs
* Reflective sessions with students
* Reinforcement of ILOs
* Coursework requirements
* Student examples of best practice with placement e portfolios
* Networking
* Being available for queries
 |
| 5 – 7 Months | **Second Formal Review** | Reflection on:* Learning outcomes
* Articulation of personal and professional development through skills audits, presentation, CV / ‘Linked in’ profile and development of e portfolio
* Impact on career aspirations
* Next steps
* Reintegration into final year - theory and projects
 |
| 1st July | **Coursework Deadline** | * Receipt and acknowledgement of Manager’s (electronic) feedback for each student (shared with students)
* Receipt and individual acknowledgement of Mahara e portfolios from each student and checking that essential requirements are met. (Resubmissions requested where necessary)
 |
| 1st August | **Mahara Feedback** | * Formal, personalised feedback sent to each student along with a link to the BOS placement support survey
 |
| Aug / Sept | **Prizes & Awards** | * Judging of placement prize entries
* Judging and organising e portfolio prizes with relevant PLs and final year programme co-ordinators
 |
| Sept (level 6) | **Inductions & Networking Events** | PDAs input in ‘bringing the placement back into’ the final year – awarding of e portfolio and placement prizes and networking with students and placement employers |
| Year Round | **Ad Hoc Interventions & Contact with students** | * Emails / Phone Calls with students
* Problem solving
* Emails in conjunction with school staff
 |

**Challenges:**

Changes to MYBU and the industrial placement unit for the above courses resulted in loss of the announcement and email facility and had a significant impact on ‘whole team’ communication to placement students.

**Result:** Students using MYBU less, and poorer communications at various touch points – especially related to Mahara coursework and for BABS, confusion on where to find information on final year project choices, as they are not confined to a dissertation. It also resulted in a different MYBU system for the Marketing programme

**Solution:** All students were emailed links to relevant new resource areas under the FM tab and notified of changes subsequent to the advice given at PPS. Information has now been uploaded and updated in readiness for 16-17.

Multiple sites were updated with relevant coursework documentation. Workarounds were developed with PDAs sending numerous ‘round robin’ emails at key points regarding pathways, final year project choice and in particular the compulsory Mahara coursework, in addition to the routine emails.

**Placement Survey:**

In August, the students completed a survey on placement support, including delivery of the MPS. The results can be viewed in **Appendix A**.

**Section 3: International Mobility**

9 students went overseas on placement and 0 students were on the Erasmus programme – resulting in remote support only.

Students placed were as follows:

* 1 BABS student in Helsinki Finland (return to home country for placement)
* 1 BABS student in North Carolina, USA
* 1 BABS student in Cape Town, RSA

International students returning to home countries (mainly due to visa requirements due to a failed unit):

* 2 BABS to Russia
* 1 BABS to Thailand
* 1 student 6 months Vietnam and 6 months Korea
* 1 student in Bahrain
* 1 student in Istanbul, Turkey

All of these students met placement requirements, completed satisfactory e portfolios and received formal feedback on this work by the beginning of August.

In the UK, around 20 students had business trips overseas during their placement. For example, a student at Babcock who spent several weeks working on joint Bids in Paris and one at Disney who is fluent in Greek and went to Athens to help with an audit and assist with translation.

One of the BABS students, (Yolana Bankova, a Bulgarian on placement at Disney) has volunteered on various youth exchange projects. She used the opportunity of working in London to contact Momentum World about opportunities for volunteering and promoting European mobility to others. As a result she joined Europeers which is a European network of young people who have experienced the advantage of studying, volunteering or participation in youth projects in other countries.

They promote Erasmus and encourage other young people to take life changing opportunities. Yolana took on responsibility for building social media content for the Europeers web site and hopes to continue with this in her final year.

We have nominated her as an excellent candidate for the placement pal and placement buddies schemes in the hope of her encouraging more students to do work experience overseas and enhance their CVs with volunteering.

**Section 4: Accreditation and E portfolios**

All placement students on UG programmes subject to AACSB now produce a compulsory Mahara e portfolio with the deadline of 1 July. The fact that this is marked by the PDAs (but not graded) and that all students receive formal feedback by 1 August has been well received by companies and students. The students appreciate the personalised approach to presenting their placement experience and the fact that they have a ‘living CV’ to take forward in their final year. Some level 6 students who we have used as presenters to level 5, have commented that they have continued to build their portfolios and others have used it as a resource to build an e folio which they can add via a URL to their Linked In profiles.

This approach fits well with the HEAR and should be a good foundation if BU takes that route.

In addition, the formalised yet adaptable approach has enabled the work to be used in gaining credits towards the CMI diploma and work is ongoing with academics to make necessary adjustments for the 16-17 BABS cohort.

Once the e portfolios have all been reviewed the best examples – many of which go beyond basic requirements, are judged and prizes and certificates prepared in readiness for induction. These are awarded at a prize giving which is a good way to celebrate placement year successes with level 6 tutors and the placement team.

Examples of Mahara placement e portfolios:

BABS: Chloe Mulligan –

<https://maharabu.bournemouth.ac.uk/view/view.php?t=EGlaZgukKfqinhod65t3>

AF&E: Eric Lock –

<https://maharabu.bournemouth.ac.uk/view/view.php?t=Bxfou3j5bdlgsmDhacNK>

BSMS: Jason Keehn - <https://maharabu.bournemouth.ac.uk/view/view.php?t=rCUMSLlZWToeIDsk26KN>

**Section 5: Employer Feedback and Market Intelligence**

Strong project management skills are sought by many companies and are vital for most roles – regardless of role or sector.

Several students have made enquiries about taking qualifications in Project management, (Prince 2 and MS Project) and a few are following online courses and taking APM qualifications.

Many managers try to ensure that students gain project management experience alongside their placement role, if it is not a project management role per se. Students are expected to be familiar with and to create RAID logs before starting on projects.

As noted in previous reports, both students and managers feel that sales skills are important and should be covered in the curriculum.

Digital marketing, social media marketing, and the ability to use a range of platforms, with awareness of the political and cultural ramifications for their use in a global context, is key to any marketing post now**.**

In recent years we have highlighted the need for advanced Excel skills. One of the managers at Disney, who is an advanced Excel user, identified the following subjects as the most important in the workplace, and his student highlighted in red are those he used most on placement as a financial analyst:

* Basic Code (v-lookup, left, right, mid, search, replace, trim etc.)
* Standard Code
* Pivots
* What If analysis
* Presenting data to management
* Macros
* Advance Code, amalgamation of logic
* Problem solving with code
* VBA
* Excel Modelling

The negative feedback we receive frequently relates to written skills, email communication, use of appropriate register and punctuation and shows ‘communication and literacy’ to be the students’ biggest weakness.

Initially students struggle with multi-tasking, prioritisation and the rigorous approach to attention to detail required in employment. Most develop greatly in these areas and, as the year progresses and they develop customer and business awareness, they learn to look at the bigger picture

The trend continues for an increase in placements which require the application of numeracy and advanced Excel skills. This ensures that the AFE students are particularly in demand, along with BABS students on the Finance pathway.

**Market intelligence:**

Mergers and acquisitions impact on many placements with students working on projects to streamline processes and find efficiencies following international mergers. One such example was the new placement at Boots, Nottingham this year (streamlining projects related to the Alliance Boots takeover by the US company Walgreens). International awareness and cultural agility is key to these roles – an area of expertise that gives our graduates a competitive edge.

Other organisations are splitting and rebranding functions, for example HP and Xerox, who are separating products and services in response to changes created by cloud technology and paperless offices, which have resulted in a reduced need for printers and photocopiers. As a result we now have HP Inc. and HPE (enterprises) which is the service side.

**Key statistics from Highfliers Research Ltd, 2016:**

Along with IT - Finance is the most buoyant area for graduate recruitment - irrespective of a firm’s main purpose.

Accounting and professional services account for the highest number of placement and graduate vacancies, followed, not far behind, by banking and finance.

The number of paid placements in Britain’s leading employers has improved substantially over the last five years and in BS relevant sectors there are about three times more placement vacancies advertised than students looking for placement.

Work experience has become an integral part of recruiting new graduates as many employers want graduates with proven abilities.

More than 90% of the UK’s leading graduate employers offer paid work experience

Nearly half of graduate recruiters stated they were ‘not very likely’ or ‘not at all likely’ to recruit a graduate that had no work experience irrespective of academic achievements or the university attended.

**Challenges:**

One of the main complaints encountered from employers this year related to lack of applications from students. Based on our reputation for placement preparation and support, many companies give the ‘BS’ students priority. The growing lack of / late engagement by level 5 students with the placement recruitment process is a matter of concern.

**Brexit:**

Latest statistics in the Guardian dated 3 September 2016, which were taken from the Association of Graduate Recruiters, stated that the graduate job market has shrunk for the first time in four years as employers scale back recruitment, (against a rise of 13% last year).

Post Brexit worries are blamed for an 8% drop in vacancies along with fears about an apprenticeship levy to be paid by big employers from April.

The main losers are construction, retail and engineering and the buoyant sectors are IT and telecommunications.

**Section 6: Student Performance**

More problems than usual were encountered with a minority of needy students taking time to adapt to a professional working environment. In addition, there is an increasing use of placements to provide managerial and leadership experience to more junior staff. Supporting managers to ensure successful placement outcomes is becoming an important aspect of the PDA role.

Overall the students rose to the challenge and developed greatly during the year. As in previous years, many exceeded expectations and were offered jobs or places on graduate schemes when they finish at university

An extensive list of ‘soundbites’ from the managers’ feedback has been sent to Programme Co-ordinators and PLs. Here are a few typical examples of the type of feedback frequently received:

* *‘Abbie is exceptional and one of the best out of the 10 students I have had. I have nothing but praise for her and would like to keep her. There’re some good students coming out of BU!’* – Abbie Francis (A&F) – Travelport
* ‘*Charlie is exactly the sort of student we’re looking for. We would offer him a job immediately. He’s good at everything.’* Charlie Leck (Economics) – FNB International Trustees
* *‘She is the strongest intern we have had in this department for five years – she thinks outside the box’.* Angel Chen (BABS) – Disney
* *‘Bradley has an outstanding approach to supporting the business. Everything is done professionally. He’s a credit to BU.’* Bradley Wright (BABS) - IBM
* *‘Max has grown into the role and has huge potential as a graduate. He carries himself well, is dependable, agile and trusted.’* Max Wybrow (BABS) - Intel
* *‘Sam has stood out as the strongest of the students. His client engagement has been very strong and he’s taken on a lot of responsibility.’* Samuel Hilton (BSMS) – EST Marketing
* *‘Claire has excelled in many areas as she is by far the best of the 5 interns we’ve had. She’s really been a massive support, is brilliant and totally gets what we do. She needs to understand how brilliant she is!’* Claire McKenna (BSMS) – The Marketing Store

**Sample Success Stories: (there are many more)**

* Faolan Doyle-Finch (BABS) at PWC where he passed the first seven ACA exams averaging 70% and consequently has been offered a place on their graduate scheme.
* Jonathan Bender has obtained a summer internship at the creative agency, Droga5.
* Matthew Davies (BABS) at Aldi has been offered a place on their graduate scheme (provided he obtains a 2:1 or above).
* Charlotte Fereday (A&T) has obtained a summer internship at Smith and Williamson
* Gemma Griffin (BABS) at Microsoft won Intern of the Year for Business Impact as well as a Services Spotlight award.
* Ben Kempton (A&T) and Kyle McCellan (F&E), both at Maseco, are working towards the CFA Investment Management Certificate (IMC) level 4.
* Jack Mitchell (A&F) at IBM has obtained a summer internship at BDO.
* Chloe Mulligan (BABS) won the Virgin Media Intern Superstar of the Year award.

**Section 7: Embedding Work Experience and Employability into the Curriculum**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aim** | **Action** | **Result** |
| To introduce Mahara e portfolios to AF&E students | PDAs, Year 6 students, and a learning technologist delivered a lecture with examples, to level 5 students within the Professional Skills Unit | AF&E will have some knowledge of the software prior to producing the placement e folio and hopefully those not taking the placement option will feel encouraged to develop portfolios using the tool.  |
| To integrate the sandwich year into the ‘BS’ programmes | Attendance by PDAs at all ‘BS’ termly framework meetings. | Working with school staff on aspects of the CAP that relate to enhancing employability and the student experience, feeding back market intelligence and student progress to all programme staff |
| To improve the BABS student experience with cohesive support for the BABS final year project | Working closely with the unit leader for the final year BABS projects (Jens Mohrenweiser) and the project officer (Wendy Bardsley) on a questionnaire capturing the ‘project process’ from a placement student perspective**.** | Attendance at the Project day, advice and guidance to students on choosing the project type and cohesive approach to supporting the students in this area in readiness for their return to the final year. |
| To Improve the preparation of students for placement by researching skills gaps within the 15-16 cohort  | Questionnaire **/**research into skills gaps for the BABS PL**.** | Years 4 and 5Excel development was top of the list.Of note was that in many areas extra-curricular courses do exist but students were unaware.A ‘joined up’ approach to the whole offering, from C&E, STEEP and BU IT courses, and good signposting would be beneficialYear 6Many studentshave identified networking and presentation skills as areas for further development and developing and maximising their use of Linked In profiles. |
| To contribute to enhancing employability on the MBA programme. | Meeting with Milena Bobeva and the PC to look at potential short placement leads for MBA students.  | Emails to employers looking for short placement (or one day a week) opportunities. Participation in the MBA Assessment Day |

**8. Enhancing the Student Experience**

The PDAs have worked with placement co-ordinators, the careers adviser and academics on various initiatives to enhance the student experience.

The placement buddies scheme has continued to run via a closed group on Facebook and names from the returning level P students have been recommended as both potential placement pals and as presenters to be used in any units or lectures related to employability.

Judging of placement prize entries and e portfolios took place in August and prizes and certificates will be awarded during induction week by academic and placements staff which will bring the placement successes into level 6 and start the final year with a celebration of achievement.

PR stories and profiles from the placement year have been sent to the marketing team and for use on web sites as a source of inspiration for fellow students.

**Appendix A**

**BABS, AFE & Marketing Placement Survey Summary 2015-16**

**PDA Support**

Students rated the support received by their PDA very highly. On a scale from 1 – 6 with 6 being excellent:

* 76% rated PDA support at a 6
* 22% rated PDA support at a 5
* 2% rated PDA support at a 4

**Placement Review Meetings**

All students rated their face to face meeting with their PDA as either good (24%) or very good (76%). Telephone meetings rated slightly lower at very good (48%), good (28%) and adequate (2%)

A large majority - 96% - of students felt that this quantity of ‘formal’ meetings was adequate during the year.

85% of students also had contact with their PDA outside of their ‘formal’ review meetings. Informal support ranged over specific work based issues, University deadlines, coursework, general queries, reassurance & support. Additional contact was via email / phone with students appreciating this continued support as demonstrated by comments such as:

* “Great support whenever I needed it, also continued to check up on me via email after the two reviews.”
* “Lots of help and assistance in everything.”
* “Email reminders of deadlines and other useful information.”
* “Numerous emails on recent university news. This proved useful to keep up to date with what was happening at the university.”
* “She was a great help and always very supportive.”
* “General updates and feedback from topics discussed during the meetings.”
* “Email communication to keep up to date with university requirements and assist with other queries.”
* “General catch ups, asking advice on how to proceed with discussions with my manager, and to ask for advice over my final year project.”
* “Also received a number of emails prompting the Mahara deadline and useful information to help complete the requirements.”
* “I was able to speak to ……. whenever needed, in regards to a range of topics from how I'm getting on, any queries I had regarding my placement and to asking questions in regards to Mahara.”

**Students felt that the reviews helped them to focus on the following areas:**

Transferable skills & competencies 91%

Strengths & weaknesses 91%

Overall achievements 81%

Objective setting 65%

Professional development & employability 85%

Next career steps 78%

Coursework requirements 100%

**What aspects of the placement reviews were most helpful?**

This can be broadly split into the following categories:

General reassurance and support; advice with specific work based problems; careers planning & advice; coursework & final year requirements; skills development, reflection, objective setting & evaluation; and providing a link point back to the university. Students commented:

* “Helping me with any problems encountered at work”
* “Advice on issues at work and how to deal with them.”
* “Going through my problems and figuring out ways to solve them. Just to have someone to listen to me has helped me through this year so much!”
* “Discussing what I wanted to get out of my placement”
* “By speaking about your time on placement it made you reflect on what you have learnt and achieved.”
* “Helping me identify the skills I had learnt, and how to apply them and develop them further.”
* “I found that talking through exactly what I'd done made me realise how much I'd actually achieved. I'd been so busy I'd never stopped to self-evaluate, which is extremely important to do, so it gave me the opportunity to talk things through, find any areas that I've excelled in and also any areas that I needed to improve upon.”
* “Evaluating strengths developed. Identifying weaknesses and working on how to turn them into strengths.”
* “Reflecting on achievements and competencies I had developed. Also identifying areas I needed to improve upon and ways I could utilise my day-to-day work to do that.”
* “Looking at employer feedback.”
* “Discussion regarding career development and future prospects, as well as personal development. Having someone on hand to discuss any issues or questions we had.”
* “Placement coursework guidance and final year project questions.”
* “Received some very useful guidance relating to the placement portfolio.”
* “Just knowing there was support if I needed it.”
* “Reassurance.”

**Mid Placement**

83% of respondents attended Mid Placement with students identifying these areas as being the most useful aspects: Project Options; Final year options & subject specific talks; general university updates; PDA contact.

**Some positive comments such as:**

* “Discussion regarding options after completing our degree. Talks from 3rd year lecturers were very informative and insightful into what we have in store. Feedback from other students on their placements.”
* “The overview of the units for next year, which enabled me to have an idea of what modules to choose next year.”
* “Discussing options for final year. Meeting back with tutors and course leaders to catch up and having the option to discuss placement year and also upcoming final year.”
* “The detail given with regards to each units/ pathways and the insight to our dissertation.”
* “It was beneficial to have the opportunity to speak to the lecturers after the presentations in a more relaxed one to one environment.”
* “Updates on what was happening at University whilst away from studies.”
* “It was a useful day in terms of finding out our options and more about our projects; however it was quite crammed into one session.”
* “Being able to speak to our PDAs about any issues or updates.”
* “Also the buffet was a great shout!!! Such a simple thing but made it a lot easier/ more enjoyable for us.”

**However many students seem to feel that the day could be done remotely** without attendance and would rather have information available online than have to take a day’s holiday and travel to attend a seminar on campus.

Comments such as:

* “It was fairly useful all stuff I could have just read on a power point though.”
* “Not particularly useful. Most topics could have been covered by email rather than use a day’s holiday.”
* “Personally I wasn't too pleased as an economics student I would say at least 2/3 of the talk wasn't even relevant to my course!”
* “It didn't feel useful as I knew which pathway I wanted to take.”
* “Could be done via an online meeting to save a lot of travelling for people.”
* “I would suggest a small booklet perhaps electronic with a summary of each project and options so we could read more at home.”
* “It was a long way to travel for a short day that I felt gave me very little information.”

**Students also felt that the following areas could be improved:**

Lecturers/tutor attendance; pathway information; project choices; timing.

Comments such as:

* “Far too long for the little information provided.”
* “I had already chosen my final year project therefore my purpose of attendance was to learn more about my final year pathway. Unfortunately there wasn't a lot of information readily available on this (Business Studies with Economics) therefore I felt that the day was rather ‘unhelpful.’”
* “The talks on each unit were rushed which wasn't good as it is an important decision to make going into our final year and deciding what we will specialize in. Also more information on the final year project would have been helpful and being shown where everything can be found on myBU as it isn't always clear and can take a long time to find answers.”
* “Ensure that all lecturers are able to attend the seminar to prevent any talks being cancelled or shortened.”
* “Maybe have separate talks for different courses?”
* “Don't need to go through all pathways considering most have to stay in what was chosen previously”
* “Instead of different unit tutors giving sales pitches in a very generic none specific way, I would have preferred actual examples of the units for next year, what and how will I be assessed for final year. And clear examples of what will be needed for my dissertation types instead of a broad description, which really left me not extremely clear on what would be a best choice for me.”
* “Make it optional “
* “make use of the time a lot more”
* “More time to talk to lectures”
* “Very poor timing, everything was rushed.”

**Facebook Placement Buddies**

57% of students have used the Facebook Placement Buddies group with 96% of those finding it useful. No suggestions for improvement were made although many students aren’t aware of the site or saw no need for it.

* “Don't really know anything about it”
* “I forgot, could be pushed more if it’s useful”