Employer Input into Programme and Course Design and Delivery

The University is committed to ensuring that our degree programmes remain current and support student employability. In order to achieve this we seek employers' input to course content and degree programme delivery; there are very real benefits to be gained from this consultation, for both vocational and non-vocational subjects.

Note re terminology: 'Employer' is a catch-all term for external organisations or individuals with an interest in the University and in supporting the development of its talent. They may also recruit our students and graduates.

Why it makes sense

- It increases the relevance of programmes to current labour market needs, allowing market testing and confirmation that programmes meet a demand for particular skills and knowledge. Employer endorsements could be useful in taking your new programme to your market.
- It offers the potential to enrich the programme – partners may be able to deliver guest lectures, provide student projects or work experience and recruit graduates from the programme.
- It opens up a network of committed external partners and opportunities for further collaborations for the University, such as co-sponsorship of doctoral degrees and collaborative research projects.
- It may be a requirement for any relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies.

Who to consult

In addition to doing desk research about employer needs, identify potential partners using as broad a network as possible. This could include:

- Personal contacts through research or other areas of your life
- Colleagues' contacts
- School contacts – speak to Knowledge Exchange or Business Development staff as well as professional services colleagues
- Support services such as the Careers Service or Edinburgh Innovations who have large databases of warm contacts from external organisations who are keen to work more closely with the University
- Alumni – in addition to your own contacts, Development & Alumni Office may be able to offer connections. You can also use Platform One (https://www.edinburgh.aluminate.net/) to identify alumni with an interest in maintaining links with the University community

A single organisation is unlikely to be fully representative of a whole sector and it may be advisable to consult with a range of organisations from different sectors and of different sizes. For courses with no obvious links to any industry sector, you may like to consult with a range of organisations, including larger companies who recruit from any discipline.

Inspiring futures
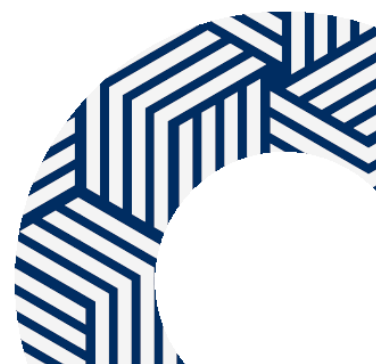
Negotiate employer's input

The decision about the appropriate level of involvement will be specific to your context and could include consulting employers about **curriculum design**, e.g.:

- Having a representative on the programme design team
- Advising on content that could be covered
- Suggesting how a programme might be delivered
- Making recommendations about assessment of the programme

It could also involve employers getting involved in **curriculum delivery:**

- Delivering guest lectures
- Offering student projects or placements

Or offering **co-curricular support** such as:

- Paid internships
- Competitions
- Work insights through company visits

Ultimately, your employer partners could become recruiters of your graduates.

Further help

Some Schools seek regular input from employers via Industry Advisory Boards and may be willing to share their experiences. Contact the Careers Service in the first instance if you would like to connect with relevant colleagues or have any other questions about involving employers in supporting the curriculum.