

Workstream 3.2: Social and Emotional Skills Development and Work Readiness

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The main purpose of this workstream was to develop a suite of training modules and workshops that would enable students to enhance their social and emotional competencies; hence, to foster graduate attributes associated with employability, and career success. These were to be made available to students throughout their programmes. Modules designated for Year 1 were to focus on promoting self-awareness, intercultural awareness, and stress management. In Year 2, learners were to be offered group-based programme/discipline-specific coaching events (e.g., Business, Engineering, etc.). In final year, students were to be offered a work-readiness module, with a practical focus to enable them to demonstrate mastery of skills for employment. Learning events will include employer–delivered workshops. Learners will also receive coaching in CV and interview preparation, and mock competency-based interviews with employers.

Objectives	Key Achievements
<p>Conduct a comprehensive survey of Irish employers to determine the key graduate attributes they most prize.</p>	<p>A questionnaire was designed to assess the types of socio-emotional skills employers believe are required in the contemporary workplace and the importance that employers place on graduates possessing these skills. A cohort of 128 employers completed the questionnaire across five discreet employment sectors, namely: 1. Engineering, construction and architecture; 2. Professional services, including financial, scientific and technical consultancy; 3. Human health, social work and education; 4. IT and digital media; and 5. Manufacturing and pharmaceuticals. One-to-one interviews also took place with 22 employers.</p> <p>Results of the employers’ survey were presented at the Island Of Ireland Symposium in June 2021, which can be accessed here: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/ireland-symposium-2021</p> <p>A short video was also created to summarise the results of the employer’s survey which was presented as part of a symposium that took place in November 2021 to highlight the outputs of work package 3.2 during Transform-EDU week. This video, and others highlighting a range of outputs from this work package, can be viewed here https://transformedu.ie/media/</p>
<p>Development of a suite of training modules and workshops that will enable students to enhance their social and emotional competencies to enhance employability, and career success.</p>	<p>Training modules were developed for first, second and final year students.</p> <p>A training module in mindfulness was designed and delivered to first year students. This module was delivered online and a research paper highlighting the positive impact of the module is currently under review.</p> <p>A training module in group-based emotional intelligence coaching ws designed and delivered to second year students. This module was also delivered online and a research paper highlighting the positive impact of the module was published. See: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2022.861564/full</p> <p>A training module in workplace readiness was designed and delivered to final year students. This module was delivered both in-person and online. This module was designed in consultation with employers and five iterations of the module were developed, each tailored to the specific requirements of employers in separate employment sectors. A research article highlighting the consultative process undertaken to develop the module and the positive impact it has had, is currently under review.</p>

	Arising from the development of these modules a submission has been made to the University Education Model team at TU Dublin proposing that these be mainstreamed across all academic disciplines.
Quantitative analysis of the impact and efficacy of mindfulness, EI and work-readiness coaching modules.	<p>To ensure maximum benefit to students and employers, a principal goal of this work package was to thoroughly assess the impact and efficacy of the modules that were developed. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analysed from students and employers which has clearly demonstrated the positive impact that the modules have had.</p> <p>A pre and post-test design was employed whereby students who participated in the mindfulness module had their perceived levels of resilience and stress measured both prior to and on completion of the mindfulness module. Statistical analysis revealed significant improvements in both domains and qualitative analysis further revealed that students derived benefit from participation not only with respect to their academic engagement but across all aspects of their daily lives.</p> <p>Similar results were gleaned from an analysis of the impact of engagement with EI coaching. Participants' emotional intelligence was measured both before and after completion of the coaching module and results revealed statistically significant increases in EI. Qualitative analysis also revealed that students derived benefit from participation, noting positive impacts academically and with respect to students work and personal lives.</p> <p>With respect to the work readiness coaching module, students were invited to attend workshops that were delivered in partnership with employers from their field of study. Interactive activities and conversations took place, culminating with students being offered mock competency-based interviews with employers in their field of study and receiving feedback on their performance. Qualitative feedback from students was extremely positive and an overwhelming majority of employers stated that they would be more likely to hire students who had completed the work readiness module.</p>

Workstream Impact and Continuity

The social and emotional skills development and work readiness modules that have been developed are available for use both within and beyond TU Dublin. Importantly, comprehensive analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, has clearly demonstrated the positive impact that engagement with these modules has for students. Analysis of data gleaned from employers, further highlights the positive impact that engagement with the work readiness module is likely to have on employability. It is hoped that the modules will be mainstreamed in one or more courses for the 2022-2023 academic year on a pilot basis, with the expectation that they will be embedded in curricula across TU Dublin in due course.

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