

DEVELOPING CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**An evaluation of a development programme
in eight institutions**

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This report is based on a MMU/NICEC evaluation of a DfEE-funded development programme on career management skills covering eight higher education institutions. From the experience of the projects, it seems that the systematic incorporation of career management skills into the HE curriculum is likely to be a lengthy and complex process. Standardised solutions will not be effective. The essence of good practice is a complex process involving senior managers, academic staff, Careers Service staff, employers and students. Close attention is needed both to the overarching culture of the institution, and to the concerns and agendas of the various sub-cultures within it. At national policy level, careful consideration is required of the change strategies and funding mechanisms that are likely to provide effective support for such development.

The evaluation was conducted by David Hustler, Karen Carter and Rob Halsall (MMU) and by Tony Watts, Ben Ball and Rob Ward (NICEC). Rob Ward was particularly involved in the drafting of this report. A separate NICEC Briefing (*Developing Career Management Skills in Higher Education*) provides a short summary of the issues raised.



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This work was produced under contract with the Department for Education and Employment. The views expressed are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of DfEE or any other Government Department.

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ISBN 0 951 4865 94

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Abbreviations

AGCAS	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council
CAL	computer-assisted learning
CMS	career management skills
CV	curriculum vitae
CVCP	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
EHE	Enterprise in Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HND	Higher National Diploma
IT	information technology
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications (now Qualifications and Curriculum Authority)
SME	small and medium-sized employer
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
TQA	Teaching Quality Assessment
WWW	World Wide Web

Preface

In the wake of the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997), much attention is currently being given by many higher education institutions to ways of developing students' employability, particularly through greater attention to key skills and to work experience. Closely linked to this is helping students to develop the skills through which to manage their progression in learning and in work: their career management skills. This is in some respects a more subtle undertaking, and at some risk of slipping off the agenda. Yet structural changes both in higher education itself and in the graduate labour market would seem to make such skills more and more important.

The projects reported on here provide a rich vein of experience and evidence to help higher education institutions in addressing their responsibilities in relation to the development of students' career management skills. A primary aim of our evaluation of the projects has been to distill the transferable learning that can be derived from the projects, and to make it accessible to other institutions.

We are grateful to the Department for Education and Employment for funding our evaluation, and to the staff and students of the projects for their help and co-operation in carrying it out. While we have taken care to ground our account in the evidence we have gathered, the ultimate responsibility for the views expressed in the report is ours.

Section 1 Introduction

The Projects

- 1.1 In July 1995 the then Department of Employment issued a 'Development Projects in Higher Education Prospectus' inviting proposals for projects addressing issues identified as priorities for research and development. One area was that of career management skills (CMS), for which 67 bids were received. Eight were selected, associated with the following lead institutions:
- (a) University of Central Lancashire, University of Leeds and the University of Manchester, where large 'Whole-Institution Projects' (WIPs) were supported.
 - (b) Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, the University of Exeter, the London Institute, the University of Nottingham and the College of Ripon and York St John, where smaller 'Specialist Projects' (SPs), usually working on specific strategies or techniques, were funded.

- 1.2 In inviting proposals, the Department of Employment made clear its concerns with the changing nature of the labour market for graduates:

'The rationale for the theme is that the speed of social, technological and economic change has produced a graduate labour market which is increasingly complex, unpredictable and individualised. The notion of the "graduate job" is disappearing, job and career changes are becoming more common and frequent, and the proportion of graduates whose first experience of work in the traditional graduate traineeship with a large employer is shrinking rapidly.'

It also noted the new demands this placed upon such graduates:

'In this situation it becomes increasingly important that graduates have well developed skills to enable them to manage their own lifetime learning and working careers, including the skills to manage learning and work in parallel, on and off campus.'

It further affirmed the need to address such demands through new approaches and partnerships within higher education:

'The expansion of higher education and changes in the job market have faced careers services with a rapidly increasing workload, and a fundamental challenge to their traditional ways of working. The intention of this theme is to seek ways to address this problem:

- by developing new models for linkage between graduate careers services and the curriculum;
- by exploring specific strategies for development;
- by disseminating existing good practice more widely.'

A number of outputs from the funded projects were envisaged:

'At national level, the programme of projects will improve the ability of:

- graduates to manage their lifelong careers;
- academic staff to support the development of career management skills in their students;
- institutional managers in higher education to provide services which support the development of career management skills; and

- careers staff to work with academic colleagues and other partners with experience of working outside the institution to develop career management skills in students.

The Evaluation

- 1.3 In April 1996 the Department for Education and Employment invited tenders for a theme-level evaluation of the projects, seeking formative input into the development of the work as well as a final summative report. The Manchester Metropolitan University and the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling submitted a joint evaluation proposal, which was accepted.
- 1.4 This report draws upon evidence gathered through this theme-level evaluation. We consider in detail:
- (a) The approaches employed within the projects to *deliver* career management skills. In Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 we consider the range of delivery practices adopted.
 - (b) The *roles and responsibilities* taken by various parties within this enterprise, notably Careers Service personnel and academic staff, but also senior management, employers and students. Sections 6, 7 and 8 pursue these issues, to determine 'who does what' regarding CMS.
 - (c) *Assessment* in CMS. In Section 9 we focus exclusively on the contentions regarding how, and whether, to assess.
 - (d) Success factors, challenges and issues for the future. In Section 10, drawing on our evaluation evidence, we point to what we regard as the key issues for *development*.

Initially, however, we consider the broader context for the work, and some of the issues this raises.

CMS Origins and Workplace Change

- 1.5 In the 1980s, the term 'career management' was reserved almost exclusively to describe policies and practices used by large business organisations to develop the careers of middle and senior management (Hirsh, 1984). Careers Services in higher education, by contrast, described their curriculum-related work as 'career education' – borrowing a conceptual framework used in secondary education. The use of the new term, therefore, provided the opportunity for Careers Services to rethink their links to the academic curriculum and consider new approaches to delivery. This included the expression of some dissatisfaction with the 'career education' construct, one (challengeable) view being that 'career education' was a reactive form of learning which does not have clearly articulated long-term implications.
- 1.6 One of the findings of our first interim evaluation report (Hustler *et al.*, 1997) was the various ways in which career management skills were being interpreted by the participating projects, and the lack of an overall consensus. For some projects it was clearly to be an emphasis on individual career planning and on the task of managing transition into a competitive labour market. For other projects, career management skills were additionally associated with workplace effectiveness and the ability to understand and interpret a changing employment context.
- 1.7 It seemed clear that academic staff and senior management in particular favoured the development of a coherent conceptual framework of the skills involved, in order to per-

fellow academics that the tasks of career management merited curriculum time and attention. Accordingly, a paper exploring the nature and range of CMS was developed as part of the evaluation process (Ball, 1997). This sought to promote discussion, in the hope that a greater understanding would emerge of the skills associated with the career management process.

- 1.8 Key factors identified within this paper, some of which were also reflected in the DfEE prospectus for the theme (see paras.1.1-1.2), relate to the impact of workplace change on 'career' and career development. Processes such as delayering, during which employing organisations change their shape by reducing the number of management tiers, result in lower morale, increased workload and fewer promotion prospects, whilst at the same time increasing both the autonomy and responsibility of individual managers (Holbeche, 1994). The 're-engineering' of organisations in the face of world competition has resulted in the need for greater flexibility on the part of individual employees, and in changed work styles which include working more often in cross-functional teams and less often in one particular department or function. It has also, according to Herriot and Pemberton (1995), led to a revised psychological contract between many individuals and their employers, in which employee loyalty is no longer rewarded by a job for life, and little commitment is given on the organisation's part to managing the career development of its employees.
- 1.9 In addition, research evidence (Connor and Pollard, 1996; Purcell and Pitcher, 1996) has highlighted the challenges faced by graduates in their early career development. These have included considerable competition in entering the labour market, career patterns characterised by an increasingly varied mix of work experience, and the need to cope with a rapidly changing labour market and an increasingly casualised workplace.

Personal Transferable Skills

- 1.10 One response to the pace of workplace change has been to attach greater importance to the possession of personal skills. Prior to the Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE) initiative, two projects in particular were instrumental in increasing awareness of the nature of personal transferable skills. The Personal Skills and Qualities Project at Sheffield Hallam University developed a classification of personal skills based on an analysis of the skills and qualities used by administrators and managers in the workplace. At the same time, Allen (1993) developed a conceptual model of transferable skills, based on a lengthy consultation process with staff at the University of Sheffield. A notable feature of the model was the notion that core skills lay at the centre of a hierarchy of skills which, in their most elaborate form, consisted of group skills used in an organisational context and for a specific work environment.
- 1.11 In some ways, the lack of a universally accepted model has been advantageous, leaving staff free to define personal skills in ways that reflected institutional concerns, perhaps ensuring a more successful outcome. Thus a number of influential classifications have emerged, including the NCVQ framework (Hodgkinson, 1996). In a higher education context, Purcell and Pitcher (1996) have distinguished between the traditional *academic* skills (intellectual skills concerned with critical analysis and logical thinking), *personal development* skills (independence and self-reliance), and *enterprise* skills (leadership, inter-personal and presentation skills). The focus is primarily on the skills associated with *effective learning*. Most recently, as the report of the Dearing inquiry (NCIHE, 1997) identified and as the work of the first subject benchmarking groups has confirmed, the development of personal skills is now widely seen as a legitimate concern of the higher education curriculum.

- 1.12 According to Watts and Hawthorn (1992), personal transferable skills and career management skills have some degree of overlap but are essentially different in focus. The focus of career management skills is upon competence in making and implementing the decisions that determine one's career, while the focus of personal skills is upon the competencies within the positions that one enters as a *result* of these decisions and transitions. Watts (1997) has subsequently suggested that career management skills can be viewed as a subset of personal (employability) skills, or alternatively as a separate set of metaskills which enables individuals to make use of the full range of their other skills. The following analysis supports this latter view by pointing to the discrete and complex nature of the tasks involved in the career management process.

The Nature of Career Management Skills

- 1.13 A range of definitional frameworks which inform careers education and guidance practice (Law and Watts, 1977; Ball and Butcher, 1993; AGR, 1995) can be identified as can attempts to synthesise changes in the nature of career expectations (Jackson *et al.*, 1996). Distinctive literature on the subject of career management, in contrast, is limited in scope, emanates largely from the United States, and reflects the concerns of human resources specialists in large business organisations seeking to manage career expectations and progression of particular groups of employees. The focus on the individual's need to cope in a workplace characterised by the kind of change outlined earlier has, however, made the issue of career management one of increasing concern.
- 1.14 Notwithstanding these caveats, it is possible to distinguish a range of processes which define the term 'career management' at its broadest level (Ball, 1997). The processes are:
- (a) *Making career choices and decisions.* This is the career competency most closely associated with self-managed career development. Such career planning is usually construed as an iterative, cyclical process in which individuals first review their skills, values and interests and, after researching career options, take action to put their plans into practice. Most career guidance practice is designed to support, tacitly or explicitly, the career planning process undertaken by individual clients. As Kidd and Killeen (1992) observe, individuals now need to revisit the career planning process on a frequent basis, given the nature and pace of workplace change.
 - (b) *Managing the organisational career.* Much of the career management literature has focused on the way organisations manage the career aspirations of employees (Jackson, 1990; Mayo, 1992; Hirsh *et al.*, 1995). More recently, attempts have been made to elaborate the career management tasks facing individuals in the workplace (Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994), which include those concerned with choice and decision-making, as well as with coping with life-stage transitions, work stress and overall career maintenance; and a taxonomy of career competencies important to the career success of one group (female university academics) has been developed (Hackett *et al.*, 1985).
 - (c) *Managing 'boundaryless' careers.* Arthur (1994) has used the term 'boundaryless career' to describe this particular workstyle because the individuals concerned are no longer 'bounded' by a particular employing organisation. The same workstyle is equally apparent amongst performing artists (Jackson, 1996) as well as amongst designers, illustrators and craftspeople. Similarly, the typical workstyle of many IT professionals who work on a series of short-term contracts with different organisations has much in common with freelance working and

self-employment. For these individuals, the main task of career management is to optimise their workload in order to generate income. This calls for a different emphasis in the career management skills required for career survival, emphasising business promotion (Bridges, 1995) and entrepreneurial skills (Jackson, 1996).

- (d) *Taking control of one's personal development.* With fewer employing organisations willing to provide a long-term commitment to an individual's career development, an increasing emphasis is now being placed on various forms of 'personal development planning'. In place of job security, employees may be offered development activity which will enhance their skills, making them more employable both within and outside their employing organisation (Mayo, 1995; Mackenzie-Davey and Guest, 1994). Three sets of skills in particular would seem relevant to this task: reviewing and identifying development needs; researching appropriate development options; and finding sufficient help and support for the learning to be effective.
- 1.15 While the above framework may provide a starting point for the delineation of career management skills, it is not exhaustive. Other career management tasks which appear in the literature include the ability to maintain self-confidence and self-esteem, to cope effectively with personal change, to anticipate the direction of change in the workplace, and more generally to make sense of and interpret accurately the nature of the environment whether it be economic, business or organisational.
- 1.16 Within the CMS projects that are the focus of the present report, the term 'career management skills' was interpreted in different ways:
- (a) In some cases, the main focus was on *immediate employment* (e.g. helping students to market themselves effectively); in others, on *sustained employability* ('lifelong career survival').
- (b) In some cases, the main focus was on *career planning* (self-assessment, resource investigation, developing a realistic career plan, networking); others also incorporated *workplace effectiveness* (team working, negotiation skills, adaptability, flexibility).
- (c) In some cases, the focus was mainly on meeting the *needs of employers*; in others, on a *critical awareness* of changes in the world of work.
- (d) Some saw career management skills as a sub-set of *personal skills*; others as a set of *meta-skills* required to bring about the effective transfer of personal skills to other settings.
- In general, there appeared to be widespread acknowledgement of the importance of career management skills, but only limited consensus on the precise way these skills should be defined and related to key/personal transferable skills.
- 1.17 The differing definitions of CMS used by project personnel raise questions about the skills involved and their relationship both to each other and to key skills. The written communication skills necessary for producing CVs, for example, appear to be universally held and capable of easy development and enhancement. By contrast, the skills of realistic self-appraisal or the kind of strategic positioning highlighted by Hackett *et al.* (1985) appear to be of a different order of complexity and perhaps more difficult to acquire.
- 1.18 If the skills associated with career management are of differing levels of complexity and build on each other, they could be construed as a pyramid, with at the base the wide range of skills associated with the 'everyday' processes of job search, effective self-presentation, and use of careers information sources, and at the apex the higher-

order skills associated with the maintenance of a positive self-concept, identifying development needs and responding adaptively to workplace change. Such a conceptual framework may be useful in viewing existing practice in higher education and the learning outcomes students derive from it, facilitating discussion about the challenges of:

- (a) developing the more complex skills concerned with career review and decision making as opposed to those of self-presentation and communication necessary to face employers' selection procedures;
- (b) moving from the one-off and bolt-on approaches to careers education which typified much of the early careers education activity undertaken by higher education Careers Services (Watts, 1977) to programmes which now take place over a longer time-scale, are perhaps integrated into the student curriculum and can have more of a developmental impact;
- (c) considering whether degree programmes can lay claim to develop some or all career management skills to the same extent, and if forced to prioritise, whether staff (whether academic or Careers Service) might place their emphasis.

These questions, amongst others, were a strong focus of attention within the project.

Section 2 A Range Of Delivery Practices

- 2.1 At the outset, an attempt was made by the evaluation team to summarise the main similarities and differences in the project proposals, as reflected in the contract documents. Through this process it was possible to identify a diversity of aims, intentions and emphases, including the explicit use of information technology or distance learning, and the focus on areas that were explicitly non-vocational or vocationally specific, on particular student groups, and on innovative approaches to assessment.
- 2.2 Seven potential approaches to the delivery of career management skills were detected across the range of projects:
- (a) as a module developed within the departmental curriculum, fitting generic approaches into particular departmental cultures and contexts;
 - (b) as a stand-alone option within the wider (institutional) modular curriculum;
 - (c) as an integrating element of the degree programme;
 - (d) as an integrated theme (infused into all modules) within the academic curriculum;
 - (e) as a supportive process to the academic curriculum;
 - (f) as an addition to the academic curriculum ('special events');
 - (g) as a support for the development of career management skills outside the curriculum.
- 2.3 Subsequently, as the projects developed, three major strategies were identified by the evaluation team for the purposes of reporting and analysis. These were:
- (a) An approach to delivery through *specific programme modules*, either *generic* in nature and therefore capable of being adopted by many courses and departments, or *customised* to meet the specific needs of particular courses (a and b in para.2.2). We focus on this approach in Section 3.
 - (b) The *integration* of career management skills within programmes, by linking the process of skills acquisition to existing course components, by developing new curriculum initiatives which enmesh with the prevailing programme content and course culture, or by supporting the integration of reviewing processes within learning programmes (c and d in para.2.2). We focus on this approach in Section 4.
 - (c) An approach which offered the opportunity to deliver CMS *outside the curriculum* (through the open availability of technology or via discrete activities/special events) (e, f and g in para.2.2). We focus on this approach in Section 5.
- 2.4 Several features of the curriculum development processes undertaken by the projects merit special attention because of their potential for use in other higher education institutions. These include:
- (a) The involvement of employers in curriculum development and delivery.
 - (b) The participation of academic staff in the delivery of skills sessions.
 - (c) The development and piloting of open/distance learning approaches.
 - (d) The production of CD-ROM and computer-based learning materials.
 - (e) Increased use of formal assessment of career management skills modules.
- 2.5 In the sections which follow, the delivery strategies are examined under the three broad headings identified, and institutional experience is drawn upon to illustrate and illuminate each of the approaches in action. Such an analysis allows the perceived benefits of, and challenges to, the approach to be presented from the perspective of initiators, staff colleagues, student users, employers and internal evaluators.

Section 3 **The Module Approach**

Introduction

- 3.1 The CMS module approach may be characterised as one where the essential starting point was the desire to 'teach' CMS (as opposed to modules where the essential starting point was located within the broader curriculum experience of the student, e.g. a research methods unit or project work where CMS inputs support that activity).
- 3.2 These modules demonstrated an element of shared understanding manifest in terms of content. Given this, it is not surprising that many shared common elements, especially those which were 'generic' in nature as against those which were more 'customised'. The former were designed so as to be available for students in all, or at least many, departments/courses. In contrast, the latter were devised to meet certain particular needs and/or circumstances of identified group of students.
- 3.3 Where both types of module were found in the same institution, it was invariably the case that the generic module 'informed' the customised one(s). Individual CMS modules totally 'tailored' to specific contexts were, in contrast, rare across the projects. Examples of generic and customised modules are presented below with particular reference to what was 'delivered', how and to whom it was delivered, who delivered it and how it was assessed. Following this, some of the benefits of, and issues concerning, the module approach are considered.

Generic Modules

- 3.4 In the case of generic modules, notions of what constituted CMS underpinned content, pedagogy and assessment. An example, referred to as Module A, is presented in Box 3.1.
- 3.5 In another institution, at least two departments offered the same module, which we will call Module B. This was similar in some respects, but different in others, to Module A. Box 3.2 provides an outline of this module. The intended outcomes here were focused more broadly on employability as well as on CMS, whereas those for Module A were focused more specifically on CMS alone.

Customised Modules

- 3.6 Modules A and B are termed generic in the sense that they were, or could be, offered to students from different departments/courses with little or no difference in the module content (or, in some cases though not all, in pedagogy or assessment). There were, however, several examples – both within and across institutions – of modules where the generic template was customised to suit particular needs of identified student groups.
- 3.7 Thus the same project from which Module B emanated devised a module to meet the needs and circumstances of students in a partner institution – a college of further and higher education. In this case, the curriculum, approach and assessment diet all cohered with some of the overarching concerns of, and thrusts within, a BTEC HND programme. We call this Module C: Box 3.3 provides some detail.
- 3.8 A further example of a more 'customised' module came from the geography department in a third institution (a Whole-Institution Project). This module (Module D) is outlined in Box 3.4. While it focused more consistently around career planning than did Module C (which more broadly embraced employability skills), the strong element of customisation was evident.

Box 3.1: Module A

In this institution, the following career management skills were defined:

- *Self-awareness*. Identifying skills, values, getting feedback from others. Identifying areas for personal development.
- *Self-promotion*. Being aware of what employers want and what the individual has to offer. Conveying (through writing and speech) what they have to offer. Learning to transfer skills to new contexts.
- *Finding and creating opportunities*. Understanding 'work', balancing paid work and other interests. Creative job hunting, e.g. networking, using placements, voluntary work, part-time work.
- *Action planning*. Analysing where am I now, where do I want to be, and planning to get there. Time management. Evaluating progress.
- *Negotiation*. Especially important in a world of short contracts.
- *Coping with change and uncertainty*. Being adaptable, understanding support structures, understanding personal risk-taking.
- *Political awareness*. Understanding changes in society, industries and within organisations.
- *Lifelong learning*. Learning to adapt to the pace of change.
- *Building confidence*. This is important as more people can expect periods of unemployment. Maintaining self-esteem is crucial. People will also need courage and intelligence to be prepared to tackle new opportunities and challenges.

These were reflected in the content of the module, which was in four parts:

- *Work*. What we mean by work, and how political, social and economic changes are altering the nature of work in our society and globally.
- *Know thyself*. Looks at self-assessment – identifying one's own values, skills, interests etc. and how these might relate to career development.
- *Researching opportunities*. The students investigate an occupation, including conducting interviews with people actually doing the job. They then use their findings when compiling a CV, covering letter and application form. Also, basic interviewing techniques to help students conduct job-investigation interviews and as a way of honing their personal interview skills, albeit as an interviewer rather than interviewee.
- *Moving on*. Covers such things as negotiating, decision-making, setting objectives, networking, lifetime learning, coping with change and building confidence. Students are then asked to put together a possible action plan for their transition from one stage into their next stage of life, whether it be employment, postgraduate study or a 'year out'.

The aims were to enable students to:

- reflect on what they have learned from their experience;
- audit and evaluate their own skills and competencies, interests and values;
- investigate employment and training opportunities (labour market trends);
- refine and apply problem-solving, goal-setting and decision-making skills;
- enhance self-presentation skills as they relate to job-search techniques.

The assessment diet, though very much influenced by overarching award regulations, was fairly consonant with both the module aims and content, with different assessment elements tied in with the four content components:

<i>Work</i>	Essay: How is working life changing? What might be the implications for your career? Discuss.
<i>Know thyself</i>	Learning journal: on thinking about self and future, including reflection on feelings aroused, ideas, re-evaluation, and clarification of air thoughts and feelings.
<i>Researching</i>	Production of CV: application form, with commentary on an analysis of a job and the evidence of fitting the student to that job.
<i>Moving on</i>	Personal strategy or action plan.

Box 3.2: Module B

In this institution's approach, the underpinning definition of CMS was seen as comprising: self-awareness; self-promotion; research skills; decisiveness and action-planning skills; adaptability and flexibility; negotiation skills; networking skills; teamworking skills; written communication skills; oral communication skills; and presentation skills. The content of the module was:

- Introduction to career management skills.
- Self-awareness.
- Team building.
- Effective presentation skills.
- Group decision making/networking and research skills.
- Group presentations.
- Putting yourself across – CVs and application forms.
- Psychometric testing/course review.
- Putting yourself across – interviews.
- Personal and group skills in selection centres.
- Course review and evaluation.

The assessment diet for the module was 70% examination and 30% coursework.

Box 3.3: Module C

This module aimed to encourage students to adopt a development focus, enhance their transferable skills, and increase their self-confidence to enable them to cope with uncertainty in the future world of work. The curriculum comprised:

- *Introduction to course.* Rationale, assessment, methodology, portfolio management, the concept of lifelong learning and self-reliance. The changing environment, changing organisations. Graduate careers and expectations. The challenges ahead. Researching the job market. Networking.
- *Team work.* What makes an effective team. Team membership. Developing the team. Team leadership.
- *Learning styles.* Self-assessment questionnaire. Model of effective learning.
- *Self-awareness and self-assessment.* Development of a personal SWOT analysis, focus on strengths and opportunities to enhance self-development. Development of personal profile.
- *Self-improvement plan.* Development of specific career objectives; analysis and development of personal, technical, interpersonal and management competencies. Personal goal-setting. Personal action planning.
- *Communication.* Telephone, application forms, letter writing (including speculative).
- *Negotiating.* Assertive negotiation.
- *Interviews.* The interview process, objectives, researching the job and the organisation. Dress, appearance; behaviour, voice, confidence. Preparation for expected interview questions. Role-play a selection interview. Video; video replay with feedback.
- *Review and evaluation.* What have you learned? How could we do it better?

Assessment was by the construction of a personal career management portfolio which included items such as: my contribution to a team; my preferred learning style; self-awareness results; current career perceptions; personal SWOT analysis; specimen letters and CV; interview feedback; reflection analysis; and a personal improvement plan.

Box 3.4: Module D

This more 'customised' model came from a geography department. The module objectives were that students should be able to:

- consider how their geography degree programme and life at university helps in the development of key skills;
- demonstrate awareness of changes in the graduate employment market, both generally and specifically for geographers;
- demonstrate their ability to effectively present their personal and academic qualifications against occupational criteria in a manner that is effective in applications;
- understand the importance and application of their academic, personal and learning skills in the workplace;
- demonstrate awareness of a range of job-search strategies and an understanding of the differing patterns of recruitment in selection in different sectors – SMEs, blue chip companies, voluntary bodies, etc.;
- understand decision-making criteria in relation to career planning;
- evaluate different sources of careers information.

The outline syllabus was:

- Geographers have skills employers want; the aim is to identify what you have to offer. Introduction to essay and reflective log.
- Graduateness and decision-making. Understanding one's own decision-making criteria in relation to career planning. Introduction to group project.
- Interactive case-study: 'Locating a Petrol Station' or 'Building a Gas Platform'.
- Investigating occupational opportunities, Careers Service, WWW, networking events and other resources.
- Occupational employer analysis; the different employment sectors.
- Discussion forum with local employers; what do employers want?
- Group project presentations: '...Geographers Can Take Your Company Places'.
- Changing patterns of work; skill evolution. Discussion forum with geography graduates.
- Targeting the employer, 'CV maker' and covering letters.
- Using the occupations fair for researching occupations and networking.
- Job search strategies; patterns of recruitment and selection; role of networking. Forum with alumni and employers.

The assessment diet comprised a planning sheet, a group project, CVs and letters, reflective log and an essay.

3.9 These represent a sample of the various modules developed across the CMS. They capture in particular:

- (a) the variety of underpinning notions concerning CMS;
- (b) the range from more generic to more customised approaches;
- (c) the variety of assessment diets and modes (see Section 9).

Issues in the Delivery of Modules***How are CMS modules delivered and to whom?***

3.10 While modules shared much in the way of content and purposes, there was considerable variety in how and to whom – in terms of academic level – they were delivered. This can be illustrated by reference to the four modules presented

- 3.11 Module A was an independent learning unit offered as an option to students of one undergraduate award scheme in the first semester of their final year. Most of the students were not on campus – some were on work placements in the UK, others studying overseas. It was therefore written as a distance learning unit in which the students were responsible for managing their own learning and researching with support/structure provided through a set of four workbooks, plus some tutorial support via telephone, mail and e-mail. Discussions were under way to implement a proposal that the workbooks and module documentation be converted into .html format and launched on the internet as a website. Students (and indeed others) would then be in a position to access the materials, together with further primary and secondary sources, from any networked site across the globe, and to e-mail direct from the website to tutors.
- 3.12 The other three modules used more face-to-face methods. Module B was also an optional module for final-year undergraduate students, but – in contrast to Module A – was largely delivered through lecture and workshop sessions involving the group as a whole, with many of these sessions involving inputs from employers from a variety of sectors. Module C was an option for second-year HND students. There was a fairly similar lecture/practical workshop mix as with Module B, but with less employer input. An interesting element was the use of the institution's specialist assessment centre in contributing to the module's self-awareness element. Module D was a second-year option which embraced a wider range of 'delivery methods' than the other modules instanced here: lectures, seminars, workshops, occupations fair visit, employer and alumni fora, and a group project.
- 3.13 The above captures some of the variety in delivery methods and in audiences, with the latter ranging from first-year undergraduates through to postgraduate students. The issue of timing, which is particularly an issue in relation to modular interventions, is revisited in paras.3.26-3.27 below.

Who delivers CMS modules?

- 3.14 The question of who delivers CMS modules highlights the relative roles of the Careers Service and staff from academic departments. Through the projects there was a tendency for greater departmental involvement in devising and/or teaching the more customised modules than in the case of the more generic modules, but this was not always the case. What was clear was the key role of the Careers Service, manifest most explicitly in the framework for considering the styles of relationship between the curriculum-related work of the Careers Service and of academic staff that was adopted in one of the projects. This analysis is presented in Section 7, where the relationships between the Careers Service and departments are discussed further (see also Section 8).

Benefits of a modular approach

- 3.15 The CMS module approach presented a number of benefits irrespective of whether modules were generic or customised. While some of these were also to be found in other CMS delivery strategies, especially the integrated approach where CMS were an element within modules, others are particular to CMS modules.
- 3.16 An important benefit for departments was that modules – as a component of the student's course – fall within the mainstream funding of course provision. Depending on the extent of Careers Service involvement and the institution's resourcing model, some or all of this funding might have to be transferred to the Careers Service. The module could also be seen by departments as a relatively unproblematic way of attending to CMS, in that it avoids any need to re-jig the rest of an award programme (however, there could be a downside to this, which we address later in relation to the issue of

marginalisation). Other benefits of the approach apply to different departments, institutions depending on their particular circumstances and agendas. Thus in institution the module was seen as a useful pilot regarding the use of open/dist learning.

- 3.17 As for students, module evaluation data suggested considerable levels of satisfaction. Quotes from internal evaluation surveys and from our own interviews provide insight into how students themselves felt they had benefited from their module experience:

'They (the sessions) were able to give me an overview of what I need to do to achieve my goals and also how to go about it. It brought a new perspective on what is needed for lifelong learning.'

'It made it possible for me to assess my qualities and faults to improve myself. It gave me an overview of my capabilities.'

'The module has provided us with knowledge about employment (and also skills regarding getting employed) ... a better idea of what would be expected by employers ... opportunities to reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses ... provision not covered by friends on other courses.'

'The module has developed self-confidence. The world of academia to the world of work is a big jump – quite frightening. The step-by-step process on the module has made the whole thing less daunting.'

'I feel more prepared for life after university and it's helped me a great deal to recommend it to others.'

Generic or customised?

- 3.18 The generic module had a number of advantages. For example, it only needed a short period of development time; potentially it could be offered simultaneously to students from different departments; and it could be rooted very directly in the world of what constitutes CMS. As the projects developed, however, there seemed to be a general sense that, to quote one participant, 'I suppose I'm coming round to the view that it's got to be driven by the faculties ... targeted work in the faculties is the way it should be'. More particularly, 'the work does need to relate to the actual degree subject concerns ... (in order) to motivate students and to convince (departmental staff that these students should be doing this work as part of their course'.

- 3.19 Whether students were more motivated by, and got more from, customised as opposed to generic modules, we do not know. However, it does seem that the feeling behind the last part of the preceding quote was fairly widespread among academic staff (and understandably there were others who were happy to take a generic module 'off the shelf').

- 3.20 There was no direct correlation between generic/customised provision and the nature of the curriculum-related relationship between the Careers Service and departments. However, it was more likely that customised modules would involve academic staff involvement in CMS planning, development and delivery. The relative roles of the Careers Service staff and academic staff are explored in depth in Section 8. This does not necessarily have a bearing on other issues concerning CMS modules as a delivery strategy, but it may move to some of these next.

Balancing careers education and guidance with the 'discipline'

- 3.21 Where CMS modules were customised, especially in order to relate more closely to the general thrust of the student's course, the issue could arise of securing an appropriate

balance between careers elements and the discipline. As one departmental participant commented, one of the key issues for her had been 'getting the right balance of Careers Service/department input; also, clarifying the objectives and ensuring these are acceptable to all involved'. Elsewhere, a member of academic staff commented:

'My intention was to influence aspects of CMS by rendering the venture more academically respectable/acceptable, by grounding it in a reflective and theoretical base. I'm not sure to what extent this has actually been achieved, though ... As an academic I tend to feel increasingly marginalised as the project develops much more in the context of AGCAS and careers circles, than in the academic domain.'

Status

3.22 The above quote also raises the issue of the perceived status or 'standing' of CMS modules, particularly in the eyes of academic staff. In one project, a participant suggested that 'some staff have a jaundiced view of the diluting effect that careers education will have on the degree experience of the students', a view that could be seen to be related to concerns such as the reduction of subject coverage and even 'curriculum corruption'. There were cases where difficulties were encountered in persuading internal validation groups to accept CMS modules, and in gaining the support of departmental colleagues. As a second participant put it: 'colleagues in the department need reassuring/convincing that the module is really relevant'.

3.23 Such difficulties remained important, but as the theme developed, the evaluators came to feel that more academic staff were being 'won over'. Thus: 'Quite a number of staff are now comfortable – some change here.' We also detected a number of factors that might have influenced this, not least the positive student response to their module experience, including the way in which it was seen to be supporting them more generally in their learning programme. External examiner and/or other 'outsider' comments can also be seen to have played a part:

'...the question of the level of the work obviously arises ... I have looked at two indicators of level (external and internal to the institution) ... these level indicators can be met (by the module) ... I see no reason why it should not be a demanding and successful level 3 module.'

Curriculum access within a credit-based framework

3.24 Initial evidence raised questions about locating provision within free-standing modules in the curriculum. Where such broadly-based opportunities were contemplated, the fear of some project staff was that they would not be taken up by students (for whom they were not seen as directly relevant to their academic studies) or highlighted by staff (especially if the resourcing which accompanied such modules flowed out from the department if students chose them).

3.25 Where attempts were made to locate modules within particular departmental programmes, issues related to funding began to emerge, expressed in terms of 'who gets to count the students'. In two Whole-Institution Projects, concern was expressed that departments would be anxious to 'ring-fence' their full-time-equivalent (FTE) student count and income in a context of diminishing resources.

Timing

3.26 Issues associated with the timing of modular provision were identified within two Specialist Projects. In one, this related to where a module might ideally be located to support career progression, set alongside the structure of the existing curriculum within particular areas:

'If we wanted to run a module in level 3 semester 1 for business and finance students, and they said "we want to apply for accountancy", almost all major recruiters' closing dates will have finished by the end of the semester.'

It was hoped that broader structural change in relation to this modular scheme (collapsing the modular programme into part 1 (old level 1) and part 2 (old levels 2 and 3)) would open up greater flexibility for students and help with student access to a careers module at appropriate times.

- 3.27 A related though more general tension was between staff interest in helping students develop their thinking at an early stage and student lack of interest at this stage.

'...the lack of identification of this as a major issue in their lives until the time is terribly close to graduation ... actually getting students in level 1 ... to identify a vocational outcome is very problematic ... you look like an old fogey telling them something they don't want to hear.'

Elsewhere a similar tension was identifiable at a later stage: between the demands of the timetable of the applications round and the perceived readiness of students to engage in career-related thinking and planning. Here staff acknowledged that the provision in semester 5 of a 6-semester course might be too late chronologically and felt that it was only when students entered their final year that they prioritised careers education.

Marginalisation

- 3.28 Perhaps the most fundamental issue of all regarding the CMS module approach is the danger that such provision could be regarded by some as a *sufficient* means of delivering CMS, leading to a view that the need would be adequately met by the module and that there was, therefore, no need to address such skills development elsewhere in the student experience. This could potentially lead to marginalisation: there might be no organic linkage with the rest of the student's programme and consequently no mutual benefits realised between this and the CMS module. Then, a more general set of curriculum-development and teaching-and-learning issues that might need to be considered by departments and institutions.

- 3.29 Finally, where modules had, as most did, option/elective status, the lack of organic linkage meant that no CMS-related benefits might materialise for many students. This optional v. mandatory issue itself raises tensions. For example, as mentioned elsewhere (Hustler *et al.*, 1996), if CMS modules are mandatory:

'how easily does that rest with the idea of autonomy and ... do such modules breed dependency and autonomy? If the modules are optional, how easily does that rest with the ideal of equal entitlement and is there any guarantee that those students who have greater need of guidance will opt in?'

Section 4 The Integrated Approach

Introduction

- 4.1 In this section, we explore CMS as an element within various modules, as broad programmes, or via such initiatives as the use of learning logs. While the integrative approach identified for the purposes of analysis and reporting clearly has points of contact with the modular approach (and, indeed, the extra-curricular approach), it also differs in a number of significant ways. The concept of integration utilised in the projects was a broad one, linking the acquisition of CMS with pre-existing course elements and new curriculum initiatives, and using this linkage as a means of making such development explicit to students. Within the range of the projects, such intentions could be discerned at three levels – whole-programme integration, linking programme elements together, or supporting integration at the personal level (for individual students by way of learning logs).

Whole-Programme Integration

- 4.2 In terms of the whole-programme level, the head of one institution reported:

‘Students still at college, as opposed to those who have graduated, also seem to find it more difficult than I would have imagined to make a connection between their desire to practise and the need to prepare themselves for getting started after they leave. This has led us to conclude that it is important to embed those issues as part of the curriculum from the very beginning if they are not to be treated as bolt-on extras, whose importance students can choose to ignore.’

As a consequence, ‘personal and career development’ was proposed as the title of a ten-credit core, across the three years of undergraduate study, to provide ‘...the intellectual framework and study skills for personal development and gaining key skills for career management’. For the head of the Careers Service, the project ‘... was pivotally important in terms of the new curriculum organisation which is coming in ...’

- 4.3 By contrast, within a second institution the ‘module template’ was redesigned to include the *systematic* inclusion of skill development as an intrinsic part of *each* module (offering the opportunity for the skills embedded within each module – including career management skills – to be given greater transparency).

Linking Programme Components

- 4.4 In terms of linking programme elements together, the emphasis was upon provision that was not concerned with the exclusive delivery of CMS *per se*, but rather that contemporaneously supported another part of the curriculum. Thus, ‘... career management skills are taught in the context of the (accompanying) project/placement to provide students with the support and skills to complete the practical task and ... to raise awareness of these skills as important for life’. Work done within the modular structure of a particular department was based on students choosing a discipline-based project linked to a specific employer who supported project development:

‘The module is divided into three phases: preparation for the project, implementation of the project and presentation of the project. Throughout the three phases, you will attend a supporting programme of skills sessions.’

Within another institution, a third-year elective linked the processes of identifying

personal achievements, planning, goal-setting and networking with the final degree (the main focus of final assessment).

- 4.5 Elsewhere, provision was linked to previous (or anticipated) activity, providing a mechanism for capturing and illuminating those career management skills that were acquired within other contexts. Career management skills are thereby 'caught' rather than 'taught'. Within a post-placement analysis module, for example:

'This module has been designed to enable students to correlate the knowledge and understanding gained during level I and level II studies with the experiential learning undertaken during industrial placement.'

Learning outcomes from the module included:

'... developed their skills of critical appraisal of placement experiences ... evaluated personal strengths and weaknesses identified through placement experiences ... and synthesised a personal philosophy and approaches to employment in terms of analysed perspectives of the industry.'

Finally, in another institution, a (non-credit-rated) pre-placement personal and occupational objective-setting initiative was established.

Supporting Integration at an Individual Level

- 4.6 Box 4.1 provides an example at the level of personal integration.

Box 4.1: A personal integration example

An assessed 'Career Learning Log' within a Whole-Institution Project was supported by four contact sessions with Careers Service staff over the academic year. As the introduction to the log emphasised, this was constructed to support the student in:

- (a) Recording key aspects of your experience from:
 - these Career Development sessions;
 - other aspects of the course;
 - other parts of your life (where you feel this is appropriate).
- (b) Synthesising and connecting this experience together, so you can:
 - develop a broader picture of yourself and your achievement;
 - identify your next-step development needs;
 - construct longer-term plans for your future.
- (c) Making use of this synthesis to
 - plan;
 - prepare for and implement the next stage of your career progression (whether this be to further study, to research or development posts in industry, or to something entirely different).

Through this log, students were invited to record and reflect upon CMS learning not only gained through specific sessions, but also from other aspects of their course and from their lives as a whole.

Issues in Implementing Integrated Approaches

Establishing the rationale

- 4.7 Given the intention within this approach to 'build-in' rather than 'bolt-on' provision, the value of the integration proposed needed to be clearly articulated *in departmental terms*. Use of the 'right' language and conceptual frameworks with academic staff was therefore important, as was the explicit recognition of what was termed the 'value

it for us' factor. For one postgraduate initiative, Research Council recognition of the programme was dependent upon a particular credit-point pattern, including a transferable skills component.

Leadership and the nature of partnerships

- 4.8 The nature and establishment of partnerships between the Careers Service, academic staff, students and employers, was identified as a second key issue. Partnership could pose a particular challenge where the provision was explicitly designed to draw upon specific industrial experience. Within a vocational area involved in one project, for example, academic staff recognised that they, rather than the Careers Service, possessed the specialist industrial understanding, and they allocated an academic staff member to work with the Careers Service. Such issues are revisited in depth in Section 8.

The demands of an integrative approach on staff and students

- 4.9 Related to the issue of 'who is best placed to do what' within more integrated provision was the emphasis upon drawing from individual experience to support learning, and the focus placed within such a paradigm upon 'a student-led approach, with tutor support'. In the view of one module tutor:

'What we are trying to do is a qualitative approach ... trying to meet the issues of individuals rather than what we think the issues are.'

This, in turn, highlighted the need for the 'right' staffing and staff skills:

'the success of the sessions depends a lot on whether the speaker establishes a rapport ... to create a forum where there's input from all sides. It is important to have speakers with good people skills and a relaxed attitude.'

- 4.10 This also highlighted questions of assessment – at both a fundamental level (defined by one academic staff member in terms of whether CMS can really be assessed, at least until students are launched into a career) and an operational level. Central to the latter was the need for the assessment process itself to contribute towards module aims in developing self-awareness/self-confidence, for example, or in helping students to:

'recognise the skills they already possess and ... convey these to potential employers ... Assessment in this module is an exercise in critical analysis and evaluation ... If we are pushing self-reliance, this is exactly the exercise we want them to perform.'

- 4.11 Student feedback also related to this issue, in terms of the public/private nature of documents: for example, 'You may not want your lecturers to know what's going on in your head, and certainly not on anything involving values and beliefs.' For these students, however, the involvement of Careers Service staff in the assessment role reduced this problem. The issue of assessment is revisited in Section 9.

Issues associated with personal integration

- 4.12 Evidence from within a range of projects also illuminated issues associated with personal integration, emphasising:

'The variable prior experience of students which may have implication both for the ways in which they approach the CMS content and/or the style of assessment' (Career Learning Log).

'The strengths and weaknesses of approaches based upon limited contact' (providing, for some, an 'oasis in the desert', and for others a hard challenge to keep engaged with the process between contacts that were few and far between).

Student feedback in respect of one learning log stressed the need for continu

'What was for certain was that it helped you if you did the log continuously you were supposed to, rather than simply all in one go when the assessment was due'.

- 4.13 Some students also reported difficulties with a specific action-planning process in the context of personal/labour market fluidity. Questions were asked about who processes were most suited to – the vocationally committed (in an uncertain market), or the vocationally uncommitted: 'Action plans are hard, especially when you still got options open. They're easier if you know what you're doing next.' Conversely however, the same source commented on the recording and planning process as a whole: 'I think it's a particularly useful thing for students on generic courses which aren't tied to a clear, specific vocation.'

Section 5 The Extra-Curricular Approach

Introduction

- 5.1 Within a number of projects, approaches were developed which were less reliant on direct inclusion within the academic curriculum, though they are perhaps more appropriately described as having less overt links to the curriculum. This delivery strand centred upon two elements:
- (a) Approaches delivered via *technology*, such as: the creation or enhancement of websites; the production of a suite of CD-ROMs linked to broad curriculum areas; a computer-assisted learning programme available on CD-ROM; and a profile disk which enabled students to record their progress.
 - (b) Approaches via '*special events*', usually non-credit-bearing programmes running alongside the curriculum. One example was a two-day programme, with a substantial employer contribution. This was devised to reflect the project's notions of what constituted CMS, and included work on teambuilding, networking, lateral thinking and influencing people.

Other examples included employer-linked sessions provided departmentally, and a seminar based upon graduate opportunities in a particular occupational sector (which students appreciated for the way in which it 'gave you a perspective on what the employer looked for, rather than ... presentation skills'). This institution also provided a Careers Fair: an 'awareness raising and recruitment exercise', emphasising links to local SMEs, and developed in collaboration with a 'Using Graduate Skills' project.

- 5.2 The use of technology was seen as appropriate within CMS projects for a variety of reasons. For one employer on a steering group, technology enabled the project to 'take a leap ... the thing I like about the project is that you can get to a lot more students that way'. It could also be seen:
- (a) as a curriculum resource for whatever the tutor wanted to use it for – 'I see part of my role ... as showing different ways of using the CD-ROM with groups of staff ... and students';
 - (b) as a means of engaging with students directly, avoiding potential resistance from academic staff by providing the opportunity to 'go round the blind side, straight to the students, past academic staff who don't see this as important at all';
 - (c) as a mechanism that was 'in tune' with student capabilities, though this might (still) not be true for everyone ('almost a technophobe ... through ignorance, when I arrived');
 - (d) as bringing provision that was independent of time and place, as well as providing a pragmatic reaction to the fact that there 'aren't enough of us to go round ... plus students are more and more familiar with IT ... so you can point them to something on the network ... go and help yourself ... take it or leave it'.

For a key member of staff within a Whole-Institution Project, the technology was 'primarily for students to use on their own ... to teach themselves'.

- 5.3 While such provision may fulfil both stand-alone and multi-access roles, there is also a risk of 'tokenism' inherent in developing initiatives whose links to the wider curriculum are likely to be the weakest of the three delivery strategies highlighted here. Within projects, staff sought to achieve a balance between developing the technology and supporting students and academics in using it.

Issues with the Extra-Curricular Approach

Ownership of the initiative

- 5.4 The issues of 'ownership' was particularly highlighted where specialist skills were involved and a 'product' was under development. Given the specialist focus of the development teams, and the emphasis within the 'technological strand' in the project upon product development, it may have been inevitable that – especially in the early stages – employers and academic staff were used as resources for information delivery rather than becoming involved in shared development roles. Feedback from one project suggested that the work was based upon a strong central team with limited attempts to build collaborative partnerships with academic staff. In the case of one tutor,

'... (the project manager) rang me up and said "can you do a bit ... to help me in finding yourself a placement" ... so I have an awareness of it.'

- 5.5 One employer who was also a steering group member indicated a willingness to become more centrally involved. Thus 'I would have liked to have been more centrally involved, would like this to be taken up more ... but I'm not sure if (the project manager) needs it ... or is too reserved to ask'. Conversely, in one project where employers were involved more centrally and collaboratively in defining CMS at the outset, which informed the development of a computer-aided learning package – providing employer-focused case studies for the package. We develop some of the issues relating to employers in Section 6.

- 5.6 The role of students in developing such extra-curricular provision was also highlighted. Within one project the content of a CMS course was planned by staff, drawing on 'theories of career management skills' developed through other initiatives earlier in the project, and informed by discussions with employers. These were intended to provide the basis for the programme, with the needs of individual students being identified within this context. Interestingly, one employer at least suggested a need for a stronger student 'lead' within the programme, and was disappointed that suggestions made in relation to this were not taken forward by project staff.

- 5.7 Student involvement was, however, noted within other project initiatives where volunteers were involved as evaluators in considering the use of CMS courses and packages, 'working through the programmes and then completing a feedback questionnaire'. As a result, 'the navigation through the system had been too rigid to allow users more choice'. Here, student feedback was identified as being influential in shifting the approach of Careers Service staff involved in the project, and acceptance of the need for increased flexibility to account for student attitudes to choice. Student involvement is revisited in Section 6.

Moving provision into the curriculum

- 5.8 The problematic nature of transferring free-standing provision into departmental curricula is highlighted in several instances. Within one institution, the extra-curricular provision was seen by project staff as making the least demands on the institution, being very much in line with what the institution was currently likely to do. However, they felt that:

'Courses such as this shouldn't be seen as a Careers Service course. They will need to be integrated into the curriculum or graduate school. They will require more involvement at an academic level.'

- 5.9 Elsewhere, evidence of the potential to link free-standing provision to the curriculum was more evident, as with the linking of skills training sessions to the curriculum.

projects in years one and two of a degree programme (in a department participating within a Specialist Project). Evidence from a student perspective, however, suggested a need to consider developmental linkages: for example, developing workshop elements within other parts of the undergraduate programme curriculum, thereby promoting and reinforcing learning. For one student, what was needed was 'a theme to run through the core ... pick this up and develop it ... it gave you so many interesting insights ... from a business point of view ... and from a psychological point of view'.

Further issues

- 5.10 Three further issues bear particularly upon this strand of delivery:
- (a) The long development time required within the constraints of a two-year time-frame. For one project's internal evaluator, looking towards the conclusion of the project, 'the challenge is to be able to say something about something worth noticing'.
 - (b) The cost of updating (e.g. website maintenance) and issues about whose responsibility it is. In one institution, the website development, in the view of the internal evaluator, was 'running in parallel with the rapid expansion of the Careers Service's own website ... a convenient co-incidence ... (which) suggests this will be a live component of already existing developments ...'
 - (c) How other technological strands of the project would be resourced when DfEE funding ceased. The broader issue here (which is at the centre of the CMS programme as a whole) was about whether the extra-curricular approach was fundamentally a 'service' function (in which case it lay with the Careers Service) or was more related to academic development (and hence more appropriately the province of an academic unit).

Section 6 Who Does What?: Employers and Students

Introduction

- 6.1 CMS project participants can be broadly categorised into four groups: careers staff, academic and other academic-related staff, employers, and students. In the next two sections the nature of the roles played by, and involvement of, each is illustrated. Emphasis will be placed on the involvement of employers and students in this section, with attention to the work of Careers Service staff and academic colleagues in the next.

Employer Involvement

- 6.2 In overall terms, CMS projects were characterised by a strong level of employer involvement. For some projects the numbers of employers involved was small, whilst for others employer involvement was much more extensive:

'56 employers have been involved so far in year two of the project. It was encouraging to note that 8 firms, many of them London-based, took part in one pilot module with 8 students. The willingness of both small and large employers to become involved in this project is enormously pleasing and, once semester 2's employers are added to the list, we won't be far off our target of 100 employers.'

(PROJECT STEERING GROUP REPORT)

- 6.3 In a number of cases the nature of employer involvement developed well beyond the traditional role as representatives on project steering groups. Employers were involved at the planning, development, delivery and monitoring/evaluation stages of project development, in addition to contributing to the management function of formal steering groups.
- 6.4 Within some projects, employers made an important input at the planning stages to the discussion, debate and definition of CMS, with employer expertise being drawn upon in complementing higher education staff perspectives of what the 'agenda' for CMS development should be. Here, serious consideration was given to the lifelong nature of CMS and to the need to recognise the application of these skills beyond immediate concerns at the point of recruitment to first-time employment following graduation. The insights provided by employers were significant in highlighting the need for a longer-term perspective in the definition and development of CMS at undergraduate or postgraduate level:

'Employers' input related to career management skills issues and identifying "attributes" which postgraduates need to develop from an employer perspective ... these skills are not just about employability but about being a better student ... a lifelong learner. Perhaps part of the argument is the value of developments for learning in higher education and beyond.'

(EMPLOYER)

'One point which emerged was the expectation from employers that postgraduate students would need to demonstrate that their further study formed part of a longer-term career plan.'

(PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT)

- 6.5 Employers were also involved in developmental aspects of projects, including direct contributions to the production of course materials, computer-aided learning packages and CD-ROMs, and, on occasion, course design. As project participants pointed out, the employer perspective was often recognised as an important element in making course content and CMS materials attractive, relevant and realistic, particularly for students as the intended users:

'When messages are reinforced by employers, this is potent and has status for students. As representatives of employment/the world of work, they have a greater impact upon students/student learning.'

(CAREERS AD)

- 6.6 In their 'teaching' role, employers made direct contributions to the delivery of modules or courses (via taught sessions, workshops, lectures, seminars, and acting as tutors for research, project work and placements). There was also involvement in practical activities such as those associated with recruitment and selection (e.g. interview simulations, application and CV analysis) and team building and problem solving (e.g. team task simulations, team building, and problem-solving tasks and their analysis).

- 6.7 These contributions were valued by staff and students alike in providing insight into the direct experience of employers and the employment context:

'The employer role has been very positive: have established links which will continue (post-project). Employers have been involved in a teaching role in giving a perspective on employment. The teaching role is central – employers have been brought in to provide skills-related inputs. This type of involvement is seen as an important element in the popularity of CMS work with students.'

(ACADEMIC)

In some cases, this involvement led to an increase in the personal knowledge and understandings of higher education staff, a development recognised as contributing directly to course development and improvement and to the provision of a more informed and individualised curriculum for students in the CMS area. This was particularly so where employer and higher education staff involvement was associated with a particular discipline or intended career:

'Employer involvement has been very valued – has informed my personal knowledge-base (regarding particular careers). I now feel much more informed personally, in applying CMS in the employment context.'

(CAREERS)

- 6.8 Such employer involvement provided opportunities to explore not just recruitment and selection issues but also the application of CMS in the context of the long-term after entry into full-time employment. In many cases, the student perspective was a view of employer involvement in their CMS work 'as one of the best, if not the best element' of their courses, with employer input to the curriculum or to extra-curricular activity being seen to provide 'the most relevant and up-to-date viewpoint on the world of employment'. This relevance of the employer perspective was underlined by staff:

'Employers bring in an outside perspective – students value "words from the horse's mouth". Employers can make expectations clear in terms of graduate employment issues.'

(ACADEMIC)

It was reinforced directly by students:

'Employer involvement has made me decide what I want to do and not do – it has opened my eyes to what goes on out there.'

'Examples in the module which are drawn from employers relate skills and processes to the employment context and the specific career context which we are interested in – so it is much more relevant and related.'

'The contribution from employers means that you are more tuned in to what is expected. The Careers Service course has been more tailored to our needs, more individual to course and individual students. Wouldn't get that level of individual attention otherwise. We have an advantage now over other

(e.g. at interview); we will know more, as we have been through it with employers ourselves as part of the module.'

- 6.9 Employers were also involved in the provision of feedback, in facilitating student reflection, and on occasion in formal assessment processes. This type of involvement was also perceived as very beneficial from the point of view both of students and of higher education staff involved in CMS delivery:

'Employer involvement has been helpful. Involvement in assessment has been seen as good, high status: it has made it important and relevant to our future careers.'

(STUDENT)

'While overall academic course is very sound, it does not give you the nuts and bolts; the workshop did do that, it helped you to see where you stand and gave you a lot of personal feedback that you don't always get in academic study.'

(STUDENT)

Changing Roles Associated with Employer Involvement

- 6.10 For some employers, the developing range of their involvement also brought about a change in the nature of their relationships with academic and careers staff. Employers themselves acknowledged a development from more traditional 'careers talks or presentations' towards a more direct role in the delivery of the curriculum (or extra-curricular activity).
- 6.11 Concerns to convey a positive image of the employer organisation and the access provided to prospective applicants or employees were often cited by employers as the rationale for their involvement, together with the motivation provided by positive company policies encouraging community involvement in its broadest sense. But many of the participating employers (and particularly those involved in curriculum delivery) were careful to highlight that 'selling the company' was *not* what their role in the CMS project was about.
- 6.12 In some cases, the nature of employer input was significantly altered as a result of their more direct involvement in the planning and delivery of CMS within or outside the curriculum. Many employers talked about wanting to influence the higher education curriculum by making it more relevant to the employment context, or of wanting to make a contribution to student development in CMS, in terms of the benefits to the students and to employers at large, rather than the specific benefits to themselves or their organisations:
- 'Employer benefits: hope what we get are graduates/postgraduates who are "street-wise", more aware of the importance of the experiences they have, more confident in identifying and communicating their skills and experiences.'
- (EMPLOYER)
- 'In 2-5 years after the project has finished, I hope that it will enable students to come out of courses "better rounded" and able to demonstrate appropriate workplace skills. Employers have to train graduates in these skills and core competencies, so it would be nice if they had these already.'
- (EMPLOYER)
- 6.13 Seeking and maintaining employer involvement was a key issue within the projects. There were many positive examples of productive partnerships between higher education staff and employers evidenced in the various types of contributions made by employer representatives to CMS work. Both academic staff and careers staff pointed to this as a key element of their work (particularly where projects required extensive employer involvement). Initiating and developing partnerships with employers was,

however, very time-consuming and resource-intensive. For some, the response from employers was very positive; whilst for others there were difficulties in establishing and more importantly maintaining, employer commitment during the life of the project. The following quotes highlight this contrast in the experiences of three projects:

'Employers have been directly involved – feels very positive about working with employers in and out of the area. Hasn't had a refusal yet – top companies willing to be involved – seen as a profitable two-way relationship between a top university with top employers. It is important to maintain the status of the university, the department and the course – for students and employers.'

(ACADEMIC)

'In considering the employer role there are issues here, and some disappointment in the involvement of one of our employer representatives. There have been some difficulties in establishing a sense of ownership for the project here.'

(PROJECT)

'There are fewer employers on the CMS committee ... It is difficult to get the commitment these days. Whilst the project may not be suffering as a result of less employer input, a stronger employer presence might have given more "value added" ... to help the project team.'

(PROJECT)

This latter statement would seem to illustrate the difficulties in engendering a sense of ownership for project developments such as CMS, where employers are expected to commit themselves not just to formal steering group activities but to more varied types of involvement (e.g. attendance at, or input to, modules, courses, etc.).

- 6.14 The benefits of building upon longer-term or already established partnerships with employers have a previous 'track record' of involvement with the higher education institution (whether with academic or careers staff), might provide one solution to the ownership problem. Attractive as this sounds, however, there are associated difficulties, particularly when higher education staff are looking to extend the number and scope of employers involved in CMS activities. In seeking to extend such partnerships, the issue of 'employer saturation' needs to be highlighted. Project personnel became very aware of the need to be sensitive to the demands of multiple employers and to try to co-ordinate their partnership activities in order that the same employers were not being approached repeatedly, or too often, by either the Careers Service or academic staff/departments (or both):

'Employer involvement has high status – very involved. Departments are keen to be using employers although we have to watch out for over-saturation – not involving the same employers too much.'

(CAREERS)

'In terms of managing the relationship with employers it is very positive. We have some really good employers in terms of "profile" and ability to deliver. However, we do however, need to manage the relationship effectively and not "overuse" the same people.'

(CAREERS)

- 6.15 Evaluative feedback demonstrated that students wanted employer participation to be extended still further, even in cases where it might have been considered to be extensive already (e.g. within CMS module delivery). As one academic tutor commented in reflecting upon her own students' evaluations: 'They always cry for more employer involvement, no matter how much they are getting already.'
- 6.16 Unsurprisingly, employer contributions tended to come from traditionally high-profile recruiters of graduates and therefore reflected only part of the graduate labour market. One Specialist Project, for example, anticipated working with SMEs but ended up working with major employers. Criticism about the lack of SME involvement

was often raised. Although some projects consulted and involved representatives from SMEs, this tended to be on a small scale, the difficulties of involving and gaining commitment (in terms of time and human resources) from SMEs being often raised as the reason. Nevertheless, SME involvement was 'on the agenda' of many projects, and both academic and careers staff were aware of the need for such involvement alongside counterparts from larger organisations. This was particularly significant where some employer representatives expressed a concern that employer perspectives shared with students (e.g. through modules, teaching/learning materials or computer packages) did not reflect the employment and career contexts of smaller as opposed to larger-sized employers.

- 6.17 There was another side to this difficulty, with employers themselves suggesting that they would have welcomed further consultation and involvement in project initiatives, but that this evident sense of ownership was not always capitalised upon:

'The company offered to do some "training the trainers" to assist academic staff in developing the skills and expertise related to the delivery of CMS. Not sure where this idea of assisting in training staff went (the offer was not taken up) ... Perhaps this could be followed up, although it may be what such an offer is not now still available.'

(EMPLOYER)

This suggests a lack of clarity about roles and expectations relating to the nature and extent of employer involvement. Clearly, some employers felt that as projects developed, there was scope for their role to develop as well.

- 6.18 The delivery strategy or model adopted by the projects also had an impact upon the nature of the partnership established between higher education staff and employers, and upon the nature of the involvement of the latter. In the case of extra-curricular approaches, employers tended to be involved in a consultative capacity (e.g. in the production of CD-ROMs and computer-aided learning packages, in planning events, or occasionally in delivery of one-off courses, workshops or short courses). In contrast, within the modular model of delivery, employer participation in contributing to the delivery of the curriculum often required more regular and repeated involvement.

The Nature of Student Involvement

- 6.19 There were examples of practice where developments reflected a traditional notion of curriculum or service delivery, with courses or teaching and learning materials being developed or delivered quite independently of student consultation, or where the focus upon individual needs was less explicit. Here students were described as the 'recipients' of CMS provision: 'course content has been planned by staff – not accounting for student needs and experiences at an individual level through the course content.' The underlying notion was: 'they'll get what is provided'.
- 6.20 Several projects, however, stressed in their proposals the importance of students as *active recipients*, identifying what they might take from the developments, the aim being to:

'... enable students to recognise their own potential and their transferable skills to enable them to make confident personal decisions; equip students with career management and personal transferable skills.'

Some viewed students more proactively as *partners* in the development process, the intention being:

'To involve students at every stage of the process including planning, delivery and evaluation ...'

6.21 In one Whole-Institution Project, the project strategy for working with students involved targeting a wide range of student activities outside the departmental structure, e.g. through:

- (a) a Careers Service presentation to representatives of student societies;
- (b) career management workshops for student societies;
- (c) joint Careers Service/Student Union presentations to conferences;
- (d) formal Careers Service links with student society committees;
- (e) liaison with the Student Action Committee.

In addition, the perspective, and in some cases the input, of previous graduates was sought, students who had previously experienced CMS modules being contacted after graduation and involved in the delivery of modules to current groups of students.

6.22 In considering views of the student role along the 'participant-recipient' continuum, some projects placed an important emphasis upon the need to respond to student needs (at what was perceived to be a more individual level) and to encourage and actively use student feedback and evaluation in informing CMS developments and their implementation. Students made valuable contributions in undertaking the role of 'evaluator', for example, in relation to module/course delivery, some of the IT-related work, and to a certain extent with open/distance learning modules. In addition, there were instances where the student perspective was specifically sought, with students being involved in questionnaires as part of project developments, and being consulted through the use of surveys or focus group discussions, as part of project evaluation strategies.

6.23 This responsiveness was viewed by students as a very positive and distinctive characteristic of CMS work when compared to previous provision made either in the academic curriculum or by the Careers Service:

'There is a responsiveness to student feedback on this module: for example, the course structure was re-organised in response to student feedback. Staff seem to be about aiming to get the best out of us – everyone is involved in making the module work – staff and students recognise this.' (STUDENT)

'There is evidence from previous years that student feedback is taken on board and used to improve the course. Past experiences of students are seen as influencing the course. There is a fine tuning of the course each time it is run – in response to our evaluation. Opportunities for student feedback are provided and are taken up by staff.' (STUDENT)

In addition, the provision was seen as being responsive to individual students' needs:

'The course is trying to be responsive to student needs and experiences, e.g. mature students who have already covered some course elements or skills development elsewhere in the course.' (ACADEMIC TUTOR)

'In discussion with students, they see the module as very positive. Feedback suggests it is one of the most important if not the most important module they have done. The module is seen to cater for individual needs ... This is accommodated within the delivery of the module and students perceive this as important.' (ACADEMIC TUTOR)

6.24 In such ways the role of students in contributing to the development and implementation of CMS work was strongly highlighted. There was also, however, a sense amongst some project staff that the role of students in 'selling' or 'marketing' CMS developments to other students in this positive way was something which was

not always fully recognised or capitalised upon as a powerful development tool:

'The involvement of students in influencing other students, for example to choose the CMS module, is something we need to look at to extend their involvement in a marketing role. This can also come through the involvement of past CMS graduates in talking with students and in providing an input to modules.'

(PROJECT MANAGER)

6.25 In general, student data (from module evaluation in particular) indicated a high level of satisfaction with CMS provision and also suggested that many of its potential benefits were beginning to be recognised. Thus, for example:

- (a) Student feedback on a generic module and on a two-day course was very positive, all 26 participants in the latter case indicating that they would recommend the programme to others.
- (b) Survey data in one Whole-Institution Project reported that students who had participated were more conscious of the skills they possessed, of their ability to articulate them and present them to an external audience, and of the significance of these skills in career management terms.
- (c) The final report from a second Whole-Institution Project highlighted evidence from student presentations which confirmed the importance of recognising and presenting skills in terms of their employment applications, together with an emerging understanding of how self-knowledge might influence future decision-making.
- (d) In a CMS module group where students kept a semi-public log that was shared with tutors and was accessible to the internal evaluation process, the internal evaluation highlighted the development of student perceptions through the module, moving beyond the view that career security or employability was based upon occupational information/knowledge, and towards the view that such security was based upon processes of continuing development and learning.

6.26 The positive way in which students perceived CMS work can be linked to:

- (a) the explicit and transparent articulation of the purposes and intended outcomes of initiatives by staff, and consequently of the role(s) students were required to play in such contexts;
- (b) student involvement in feedback and evaluation activity, as noted above, in the context of initiatives which were seen as responsive to such feedback.

Positive student reaction was particularly evident where their involvement was seen to have an impact upon future developments for future groups of students.

6.27 The various forms of involvement of students in the CMS work signified a shift in the student role from the 'recipient' end of the continuum towards a more participatory role. In this sense, there were some signs of a shift in the teaching and learning relationship, with students acknowledging that they now 'have more of a say' in what goes on. Some felt that they had been given a role in negotiating the nature of this relationship, and this had resulted in an increased sense of ownership over personal learning in the CMS area. It also demanded a different level of autonomy than that required in other areas of undergraduate or postgraduate study. The focus upon the identification of personal strengths and weaknesses, upon personal analysis and reflection, contained in many of the CMS initiatives (be they courses, modules, CAL packages, workshops, learning logs, etc.) underlined this, with students feeling that their involvement and role as learner in CMS work was very often different from their experiences elsewhere within their higher education studies.

6.28 For some, the demands made in focusing upon skill development and upon performance and development represented a very marked change in their role as learners in the academic curriculum:

'I am now more able to evaluate myself – the course has made you do this. It is the only course which has. It pushes you into reflecting on yourself. It has also helped me to recognise ... to "collect together" skills, which I have learned previously and put them together.'

(STU)

'Student participation is important – in developing our own identities (as professionals, as employees), in establishing moral positions as prospective "planners". This unit provides opportunities for this level of discussion and self-discussion and self-exploration.'

(STU)

Perceived changes in the nature of the tutor-student relationship were important here, irrespective of whether the tutor was an academic member of staff or from the Careers Service:

'From a departmental perspective they have made the module applicable to our course. The amount of effort put in by staff (in delivering the module) is reflected in the high level of commitment from the students. We make an effort because they (the staff) do; it is a reciprocal thing between tutors and students.'

(STU)

Section 7 **Who Does What?: Careers and Academic Staff**

Introduction

- 7.1 In this section, we focus on the attitudes, involvement and changing roles of academic staff, and on the involvement and changing roles of careers staff. Issues relating to the respective roles of the two groups in CMS management and leadership, and to implications for the role of the Careers Service, will be discussed in Section 8.

Attitudes of Academic Staff

- 7.2 Most projects brought about considerable attitude change amongst certain groups of staff. Some academic tutors became more aware of the skills that students were developing. Some senior managers saw the notion of career management skills and the project outcomes as potentially supportive of the institution's mission: for example, by demonstrating the potential career pathways within, prior to and after higher education, it would be possible to promote access to higher education for a wider range of socio-economic groups. CMS projects therefore not only were responsible for new ways of working amongst project participants, but also brought about changed perceptions on the part of other staff within the institutions concerned.
- 7.3 At times there was considerable resistance to CMS activity, often due to the concerns of academic staff regarding its impact on the amount of subject coverage that was possible within their degree course and, allied to this, its 'diluting effect' on the degree experience – for example, because of the (alleged) impossibility of CMS work operating at the necessary 'level' within the academic structure. This was brought into particularly sharp relief in relation to the matter of assessment, where project staff were confronted by concerns of academic colleagues about the 'intellectual integrity' of CMS and the relationship between skills assessment and degree classification. In some cases, gaining the approval of course validation groups proved particularly problematic.
- 7.4 Strategies in response to such resistance included attempts to work with individuals who were seen as blocking developments, and 'buying in' visiting staff to bypass resistance amongst existing academic colleagues. Our evidence suggests that more academic staff, in some departments at least, were being 'won over' as the projects developed – their assumptions and beliefs shifting, for example, in relation to such matters as the 'sanctity' of the subject, or the appropriateness of certain kinds of skills development, or the legitimacy of considering notions such as employability within the academic environment.
- 7.5 It was difficult to generalise about whether some 'disciplinary cultures' leaned more towards CMS activity than others. Different disciplines responded differently as a result of different needs, different views of accreditation, and different links with employers or professional bodies, but no clear-cut pattern emerged across the projects. Thus, in some institutions, non-vocational areas such as the humanities either had not taken up the project at all or their involvement was seen by project teams as disappointing; in others, however, the reverse was the case, often because of the concern of staff in these disciplines that many of their students had little sense of career direction or knowledge of the jobs market.
- 7.6 Similarly, in some institutions, vocational areas were the keenest to be involved, while in others they saw little need for this because of the extensive employer links they

already had, their specialist knowledge of the job market and requirements, and the view that their students' career paths were well-defined.

- 7.7 What appeared to have been a more consistent factor than the 'disciplinary culture' was the presence of particular individual members of staff or groups of staff eager and willing to act as 'project champions'. This was especially influential when it comprised, or included, someone at the level of head of department, course leader or head of degree scheme. Also important were 'link persons': key staff within departments who were keen to be involved at operational level.

Involvement of Academic Staff

- 7.8 Some academic staff accepted the desirability of CMS, but felt it to be outside their areas of expertise. Some also resisted involvement on the grounds of pressures on their time, and lack of attention to skills work in the academic reward structure. Some staff looked to Careers Service staff to take responsibility for delivery. Other academic staff, however, were keen to take more active responsibility themselves.

- 7.9 The involvement of academic staff from departments or degree schemes was very varied across the projects, depending on the model of delivery chosen (modular, integrated, or extra-curricular). In some institutions it was quite extensive, but in others minimal. Within this broad picture, however, the involvement within the CMS projects of academic staff, or of academic-related staff outside the Careers Service was manifest at a number of levels:

- (a) A few academic staff were employed as project managers, project officers or project workers, and were therefore involved not only in the delivery of CMS initiatives but also in their management and co-ordination.
- (b) Other academic staff and senior managers within higher education were involved in an advisory capacity, either serving as key personnel on steering groups, or in some more general advisory or overseeing capacity.
- (c) Academic staff were involved from within departments or faculties at a more operational level in the planning and delivery of CMS initiatives.

The latter two categories of academic staff involvement suggest a range of issues related to partnership, which will be explored later in this section and also in Section 8. Here we focus upon the various ways in which the role of academic and other academic-related staff were described and observed, both by themselves and by others involved in the projects.

- 7.10 Involvement of academic staff in the planning, delivery and, on occasion, assessment of CMS work depended very much on the extent to which a productive partnership was developed with those responsible for project management and leadership (in most cases, the Careers Service). Key academic project personnel who were part of core project teams had a very central role in these types of activities, whilst senior managers had a more distanced advisory or managerial role.

- 7.11 In addition to participation at the planning and development stage, academic staff were also involved more formally in a teaching and assessment role, particularly where CMS initiatives were modular or course-driven. Academic staff were further involved in the production of, or in consultation about, teaching and learning materials, including those related to the use of information technology. Beyond this some described an important aspect of their role as being concerned with offering guidance and support, not just in academic terms, but in career-related terms (a domain others might perceive to be that of the Careers Service).

- 7.12 Academic staff also found themselves in a position where they were key 'link people' to project developments (where the leadership of these was located outside the academic management structure). Here their role as departmental, faculty or academic 'enthusiasts' or 'champions' was identified as a key part of project management strategy, particularly in attempting to embed project work within departments or amongst a broader base of students. It was necessary for some academic staff to adopt a leadership role in curriculum development and innovation, particularly where CMS developments were recognised as 'new' to their working context:

'I have tried to be proactive in this promotional role but it has not been easy to try and get these things across.'
(ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF)

'I recognise my role as that of departmental champion for careers work within the department.'
(ACADEMIC TUTOR)

'My role has primarily been managerial and directing, but not involved in a hands-on role. Supported the project manager in her work and "wielded a big stick" with one or two members of academic staff. I think I've been the project's champion in that sense, which is what the head of a college ought to be.'

(ACADEMIC SENIOR MANAGER)

Changing Roles of Academic Staff

- 7.13 Changes in the role of academic participants resulting from the CMS projects included involvement in the management and delivery of what were, for some, new and different methods of teaching and learning, and in some cases of assessment. The skills focus of the career management initiatives required the implementation of new approaches to curricular and extra-curricular delivery.
- 7.14 There were issues concerning the 'academic credibility' of CMS in some institutional contexts. As a result, a number of staff found themselves having to grapple with academic structures as well as academic opinion in getting CMS work off the ground. In this sense, academic staff (often together with their colleagues in the Careers Service) were required to be involved as curriculum developers and innovators at both the planning and delivery stages. For some, this represented a significant departure from previous practices; for others, it was merely an extension of their previous work.
- 7.15 Changes were also required from academic staff in addressing their role as assessors. Although there was little evidence of peer- or self-assessment in relation to formal assessment requirements, many CMS developments placed a heavy emphasis on student self-reflection and analysis. The role of the academic tutor therefore required an increased emphasis upon the facilitation of such reflective processes, which for some represented one element of a broader change in their role as tutor or lecturer. This was similarly the case where academic staff became involved in what were perceived to be new forms of assessment, requiring different skills from assessors than the more traditional methods of testing and assessment usually employed within higher education programmes.
- 7.16 In many cases this type of development required a partnership arrangement with the Careers Service, where the negotiated roles of academic teaching staff and careers advisory staff evolved and changed over the time-span of the project. Such role changes, particularly when made in response to changes in methods of curriculum, planning, delivery and assessment, highlighted staffing and staff development issues, both for those staff currently involved and in relation to bringing more academic staff 'on board':

'It has proved very difficult to ask subject-oriented academics to embed skills in the curriculum and assessment.'
(ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF)

'... Staff development is needed to equip staff to do what they need to ... But this is about your experience as an employer, which is the last thing most academic staff see themselves as being.'

(ACADEMIC T

- 7.17 There were some tensions associated with the evolution of staff roles in relation to issues of support and expertise. There were circumstances where academic staff were identified as the main source of CMS expertise, whilst in other cases it was Careers Service staff who were perceived to be the only personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver CMS work. In some cases this resulted in academic staff involvement in CMS work being in isolation from Careers Service staff; in other cases the reverse was the case, with Careers Service staff being involved in the delivery of CMS in isolation from their academic colleagues. Between these two poles, there were a number of examples of variable types of partnerships between the two role groups (see para.7.10), which demanded a change of emphasis within the previous relationship between Careers Service and academic staff.

Involvement of Careers Staff

- 7.18 The role of the Careers Service will be considered in more detail in Section 8. The focus here is upon the role of careers *staff*, and identifiable changes to their role revealed through an analysis of CMS involvement.

- 7.19 In some projects, little distinction was made between the roles of careers and academic staff, particularly where project initiatives involved a curriculum development or curriculum delivery element. In this respect, careers advisers (and those who worked with them) variously described their roles as involving many of the activities outlined in respect of academic staff. Involvement in planning, developing and delivering courses, learning materials and CAL packages were all in evidence, as was undertaking the roles of 'teacher', 'tutor', 'guider' and 'assessor'.

- 7.20 Careers staff were also involved in what might be described more traditionally as the 'role of the lecturer' and in many instances undertook responsibilities commensurate with the role of an academic tutor. Their participation was also characterised by increasing involvement in teaching and learning matters at the level of curriculum development and evaluation. This involvement was marked by a recognised shift towards a different and more flexible role for careers advisers, which for many was seen to go beyond their previous responsibilities and ways of working:

'There has been some blurring of my role as my advisory role encapsulates a teaching element, although much of this I would describe as a facilitation role.'

(CAREERS ADV

'The careers adviser role has changed: it has become very much more a "teaching role" ... not just as a bridge between the world of academia and the world of work; it is more involved in the learning process.'

(CAREERS ADV

'The involvement of XX (careers adviser) has been in the delivery of the module, with us (college staff) supporting. XX within a teaching role has been very positive; she takes on a "lecturing" role beyond "pure guidance".'

(ACADEMIC TU

- 7.21 Where project leadership and management was centred upon the Careers Service delivered by others with a careers advisory background, their involvement in the project also required skills in project management and implementation. Thus a number of careers staff found themselves taking on the role of project leaders, or enthusiasts (within the Careers Service or elsewhere), and of curriculum innovators.

and developers. This posed particular challenges for some project personnel, and whilst providing personal and professional challenges and positive opportunities for development, also had implications in terms of support and staff development.

Changing Roles of Careers Staff

- 7.22 The changes evident in the role of some careers staff, highlighted by the nature of their involvement in the CMS theme, may be characterised to a greater or lesser extent by moves towards a more clearly defined role in teaching and learning in higher education, and away from a dominant concern with the provision of 'one-to-one' careers guidance:

'We are focusing, as a result of this project and other developments, much more upon careers education, working within the curriculum ... We are providing less and less for individuals and more and more group work and materials which students access for themselves. The one-to-one interview is assuming a much smaller proportion of our time.'

(CAREERS ADVISER)

- 7.23 This change brought with it the requirement for careers staff to become involved not just in a teaching role but in an academic administration role, thus bringing direct contact with the academic management structures and systems associated with the delivery of the higher education curriculum. Engagement at this kind of level – for example, at examination boards, teaching and learning committees, and the like – brought new demands. Careers staff sometimes found themselves in a position where, either alone or alongside their academic colleagues, they had to 'fight the corner' for CMS as part of departmental, faculty or institutional-level debates about both curricular and extra-curricular provision.

- 7.24 An additional implication of the changing role was the requirement to become involved in the *management* of a range of new partnerships or relationships (or in the extension or maintenance of existing ones) within the mainstream academic structure. In addition to managing links with employers which might be considered to be part of the more traditional role of the careers adviser, many Careers Service staff began to talk of the importance of extending, managing and maintaining their links with academic staff and senior managers of the institution with responsibility for academic concerns as being a key part of their role:

'Changes from the project have required more collaborative work with departments. This has reduced traditional Careers Service provision – individual guidance side has become a smaller part of our work. Our aim is for departments to work routinely with the Careers Service to add value to programmes. This is reflected in CMS project management, in that the project is actively working with and through departments. It's about the development of different partnerships.'

(PROJECT MANAGER)

'I see the Careers Service as a very important support service and initiator of a range of activities. It is important to note, however, that many colleagues have no contact with or knowledge of the Careers Service at all. On the other hand, a lot do.'

(ACADEMIC TUTOR)

'This project has given me the chance for the first time to work closely with a senior academic.'

(PROJECT DIRECTOR)

- 7.25 Such changes in role, apart from pointing to the need for staff development and general professional support for careers advisory staff, also signalled the possibility of 'role overload' or 'role ambiguity', and certainly of 'role tension'. As new roles

developed, dealing with the ambiguity and tension which this can create was crucial. Some staff talked of being well supported, of their development needs being accounted for within wider strategic visioning or planning (within the Careers Service), or of re-negotiating their role and responsibilities during the life of the project:

'For the future, the role involves more varied tasks. We are constantly looking at the issue of refining our roles (e.g. through strategic planning) within the Careers Service and within the institution more broadly.' (CAREERS ADVISER)

'We are aiming to change the culture of the service to the extent that work in departments and with students in departments has become more widespread and established ... There are, however, issues here related to the management of staff development for advisory staff in order to support them in taking on this new type of role.' (PROJECT MANAGER)

Others described their experience of project participation as more isolating, with fewer opportunities for sharing experiences of project management or implementation where concerns could be raised and experiences shared. In addition, some careers staff discussed concerns regarding the status of their work on CMS, and the perception of others within the Careers Service that CMS project work is not the 'real work' of the careers adviser.

- 7.26 There were also examples of staff experiencing 'role overload', where project activities demanded commitments above and beyond their normal role. Whilst this commitment was largely given, other activities were not always displaced but continued to make demands alongside project work. This had significant implications for continuance strategies at the cessation of project funding, and highlighted the need in some instances for consideration to be given to the re-negotiation of roles by careers staff.
- 7.27 In several projects, staff with a careers advisory background were employed outside the Careers Service in key project roles which might be defined as 'academic leadership' rather than Careers Service leadership. Such careers staff found themselves taking on the mantle of the academic tutor or curriculum innovator, not just as part of their role, but as a major focus of it. The changing role of the Careers Service itself is considered in Section 8.

Section 8 Roles in CMS Management and Leadership

Introduction

- 8.1 In this section, two key areas of concern will be dealt with, from the point of view of management and leadership:
- (a) partnership issues between academic staff and Careers Service staff in the development and delivery of CMS;
 - (b) the role of the Careers Service.

The role of employers and students in CMS management and leadership has been explored in Section 6.

Flexible Partnership

- 8.2 Different delivery models and strategies demanded various types of partnership arrangements between careers staff and academic staff. The modular approaches adopted by some projects, for example, brought with them varying degrees of partnership: some involving Careers Service staff and academics in a shared planning, delivery and assessment role; others demanding very limited academic involvement and a substantial lead by Careers Service staff in terms of delivery.
- 8.3 One of the Whole-Institution Projects, adapting a framework developed by Watts and Hawthorn (1992), identified four models for curriculum-based delivery:
- (a) *Parallel delivery* – academic staff and careers advisers each have separate slots in a departmentally based programme, usually initiated and owned by the department.
 - (b) *Consultancy* – careers advisers lend support and expertise to work undertaken by departments, being involved in planning groups and materials development and in informal staff development.
 - (c) *Integrated* – departmental staff and careers advisers work as a joint course team, planning and giving validation for delivering and assessing career-management-related modules which are tailored to departmental needs and are owned and delivered in the department (e.g. Modules C and D in Section 3).
 - (d) *Specialist* – modules delivered solely by careers advisers and employers. These may be free-standing electives based in the Careers Service, or may be based within academic departments, tailored to the needs of the department but delivered wholly by the Careers Service (e.g. Modules A and B in Section 3).

It is, of course, possible to conceive of other models, e.g. one where the Careers Service had nil or minimal involvement, but in terms of the projects it seems that all CMS modules, and almost all of the initiatives, fit one of these four.

- 8.4 In one project, the original intention of the project strategy was to begin with Careers Service leadership and involvement, and end with devolving delivery responsibility to academic staff. In practice, however, it proved necessary to develop more flexible and adaptable approaches to partnership in CMS delivery in order to meet the needs and demands of the academic departments involved. This flexibility of approach largely developed in response to the realisation that academic staff groups had broadly divided themselves into two camps in their dealing with CMS initiatives within the institution:

'There has been a significant change with regard to academic staff (during the project) ... Two camps are developing within the departments we are working with: (a) those departments subscribing to the module as in the original plan - where it is ultimately to be delivered by the departments themselves by the end of the project, and (b) those who are happy to continue with the module but not to deliver it themselves - they wish to continue to "buy in" the Careers Service to deliver it.'

(PROJECT MANAGER)

- 8.5 Thus it was not only those involved in more integrated methods of delivery who had to contend with the need for flexibility within such partnerships, but also those involved in modular or extra-curricular delivery strategies. The need for experimentation, adaptability and flexibility in managing the relationship between the Careers Service and academic staff was highlighted by a number of project managers in reflecting upon this issue:

'I think the bottom line of the project was: we are going to try these different ways of working with different people and see ... if they do work, which ones are going to work, and how we can then work with them.'

(CAREERS ADVISER)

- 8.6 In looking at the nature of these different partnerships and of involvement of the two groups of staff, it is important to recognise that the relationship between them often developed, changed and evolved. Careers Service staff working with academic staff were able in some cases to bring about changes in attitude or increased levels of involvement of academic staff. As one careers adviser reported:

'The impact on the department has been huge ... I have gone from working with someone who was slightly cynical to someone who is evangelical (about CMS).'

One academic tutor provided an explanation for such changes in the attitudes of academic staff:

'The partnership with the Careers Service on the CMS project has worked very well because of the respect and the professional manner in which the module has been delivered by Careers Service staff.'

- 8.7 The notion of developing an 'academic empathy' as a basis for responding to academic staff's reactions to CMS (either within or outside the curriculum) was central to the strategies developed by project personnel in their promotion of CMS activity. Such concerns also characterised the nature of the relationships and partnerships which evolved between careers staff and academics. Whilst there was a general concern amongst projects to 'build bridges' between the Careers Service and academic staff (particularly those at the practitioner level in departments or faculties), some of these attempts met with difficulties.

- 8.8 Barriers in academic staff attitudes, both to the nature of CMS within higher education programmes and to the status and role of the Careers Service, provided a challenge to those involved in establishing productive partnerships. Challenges faced by Careers Service staff in this respect are illustrated in the quotes below, which highlight the ongoing need for Careers Service project managers to address their intended strategies for managing both latent and explicit resistance amongst academic staff within their plan for CMS continuance:

'If the new module works well I can see it developing into a compulsory experience - eventually. But this would lead to delivery issues given the extra numbers involved. Also, colleagues in the department need reassuring and convincing that the module is really subject (discipline) relevant. I had a bit of a struggle with this in the first place. The head of faculty would also need convincing in terms of the resource transfer implications.'

(ACADEMIC TUTOR)

'Career management should locate itself more centrally within the academic project. There ought to be a closer collaboration between the academic community and the Careers Service – driven in my view (though I would say that, wouldn't I!) as much by the academic agenda as by the careers agenda.'

(ACADEMIC TUTOR)

- 8.9 In the adoption of extra-curricular and integrated approaches to delivery, it also proved important to work on the development of productive relationships with academic staff. Whilst this was achieved with varying levels of success, an important issue, highlighted consistently in the evaluation data, was the importance of 'link' people. Careers staff stressed the importance of having clear contacts and communications with key people in the departments, whilst academic staff often talked of the importance of their relationships with a key member of staff in the Careers Service:

'In managing the relationship with departments and academic staff, the important thing has been trying to keep up a positive dialogue/communication. It's been about dealing with individual staff members, i.e. key link people and heads of department.'

(PROJECT MANAGER)

'Key issue in managing roles has been the need to keep close contact, e.g. with the graduate school, with research contract staff. In talking to others, you begin to connect and identify work similar to your own and make connections between your work.'

(CAREERS ADVISER)

- 8.10 Some projects experienced difficulties in this respect, however, particularly with regard to staffing changes. In one project, an employer representative reported, with regard to changes in the involvement of Careers Service personnel, that:

'There was lots of enthusiasm from the project team at the beginning, (but) this has waned a lot. XX (careers adviser) was very good – clear communication and dissemination. If this had continued, then it might have been better. The change of project personnel has affected things.'

In a second project, an academic tutor commented: 'Staff changes in one degree programme have created a disaffected group of students.' Similarly, in a third project, one careers adviser involved in joint tutoring with academic staff reported

'concerns about not having the involvement of a full-time member of staff from the department. The previous post-holder was more aware of the demands of the module in terms of resource issues and additional time. This work makes greater demands than a part-time contract allows... This makes things difficult at times... I've had to provide more input and take more responsibility (than previously).'

- 8.11 This highlights the importance of acknowledging the impact of staff changes upon the ongoing relationships between academic enthusiasts or 'link persons' within departments or faculties as a key factor in the effective management and co-ordination of such Careers Service/academic partnerships. This is underlined by the fact that where difficulties in establishing or maintaining a productive working relationship between the two groups arose, this was often characterised by a lack of continuity in personnel ('losing contact with one's link person'). For some projects this was a significant factor in the breakdown of partnerships between academic and careers staff, even being identified as a threat to the continuation, embedding or spreading of CMS developments.
- 8.12 The illumination of such difficulties points to the significance of continued vigilance in maintaining a variety of approaches to the nurturing and growth of partnerships

between careers and academic staff. This must include an emphasis upon the maintenance of good relationships with senior managers. Project personnel point to the importance of 'keeping the interest of those senior within the academic structures of the university in CMS developments after the period of project finishes'. Partnerships between academic and careers practitioners and senior institutional managers were recognised as an important element in pursuing the embedding or continuance of project activities. As one employer representative explained: 'There is a danger that continuance will be seen as a "continuing pilot not doing it for real.'

- 8.13 The increased involvement of careers staff in teaching and learning concerns at institutional level (which was highlighted throughout the lifespan of the project) goes some way towards providing a platform for the effective utilisation of such partnerships with senior management and towards the prospect of continued CMS developments. Management of relationships with senior academic managers was therefore just as important a priority for project teams, as they considered continuing strategies, as the management of the partnership at the practitioner level.

Careers Service as 'Leader'

- 8.14 The location of project leadership within the Careers Service of participating higher education institutions, while not the case for all projects, was an important characteristic of the CMS theme. In some cases, project leadership was located outside the Careers Service itself, either in a separate unit or more broadly under the auspices of an academic 'lead'. The concern here, however, is to address the role of the Careers Service where it was identified as housing the leadership and management of the project.
- 8.15 The location of project leadership within the Careers Service rather than other possible locations was described as having both advantages and disadvantages:

'The Careers Service is the appropriate place for project leadership because of the skills, expertise and support available within the service. Perceptions of academic staff that they do not feel that they have the skills, expertise or resources to undertake a leadership role in relation to CMS – this came through at the steering group meeting. Therefore it seems right that the management and leadership of the project is in the Careers Service.'

(EMPLOYER)

'There is some resentment at the Careers Service getting into curriculum development and delivery roles. Also, a sense that Careers Service are "embedding building". Certainly there is a fair bit of cynicism about any initiatives that come from them ... Some attempt has been made to distinguish between the module and the project in terms of ownership, but the hegemony is largely centred within the Careers Service – which can be counter-productive.'

(ACADEMIC TUTORS)

'The disadvantage of the project leadership being located in the Careers Service is that we are not seen as "academically rigorous": we are practitioners, not known for our research history or expertise. There has been quite a lot of rejection on this basis, as we and CMS need to be seen to be "academically prestigious". It has not, however, been a severe disadvantage because the project is in line with both institutional and Careers Service missions and goals. Because the project is consonant with these goals it has worked, because it reflects the direction that we are moving in – this has given the project more momentum.'

(PROJECT MANAGER)

- 8.16 These perspectives imply the importance of matching the location of project leadership to the institutional context. In most cases this was achieved when decisions were made at the project bidding stage. Generally (though with some exceptions) project participants selected the most appropriate setting for their projects and employed staff within this context, in the light of institutional needs, particularly in terms of maximising opportunities for the achievement of project aims and ambitions. Thus in some institutions the location of project leadership within the Careers Service was seen as entirely appropriate, whilst in others it was viewed as inappropriate.

Shifting Locations for Leadership

- 8.17 A number of tensions were raised from some participants where the leadership of a project shifted during its lifespan or where the influence of the Careers Service as project leader was perceived to be less than satisfactory:

'I want the Careers Service to be involved but... we firmly decided that ... at this stage ... it wasn't on. There has been a change of emphasis – unavoidably – therefore in terms of who is doing the leading. The Careers Service are not leading it any more, so I've got to take it along paths I can handle. I hope that we can work together in the future ... that the Careers Service will have a role ... Unless we work collectively I don't think things will change.'

(ACADEMIC TUTOR)

'I'm not particularly happy about the status of the academic within the project. It is too Careers Service-driven, not all that much sense of real partnership, and I resent this because I've really committed myself a lot to it all ... I'm on delicate ground here, but I would like to see the project driven less by concerns for the Careers Service, with more emphasis and significance placed on the broader academic and personal learning of students.'

(ACADEMIC TUTOR)

- 8.18 Careers staff involved in project management and leadership were mindful of the need to address issues of their perceived status within their institutions, particularly where their work required engagement with the mainstream academic concerns of the curriculum. In the face of such anticipated (and in some cases actual) negative perceptions, it is a credit to those careers staff responsible for project leadership and management that they were able to achieve so much: not just by way of project outcomes for students, but also in terms of the level of involvement of academic staff which was achieved and the types of partnerships which were productively built.
- 8.19 In this respect, careers staff were able to establish themselves as 'key players' within CMS developments, both within and outside the curriculum. As one project manager described it, the projects had a 'catalytic' role in bringing about changed perceptions of, and increased understanding about, the potentially useful role which Careers Services could play in the development of the higher education curriculum and the various support and guidance systems which were now required.

Changing Role of Careers Services

- 8.20 What was also significant were the changes in the role of the Careers Service which emerged during the life of the theme. Whilst many of these cannot be attributed to project involvement alone, project managers and other participants were keen to point out that CMS made a strong contribution to processes of internal self-assessment and development in the role of the Careers Service institutionally. This changing context for careers staff was referred to extensively by project participants:

'The CMS project is seen as one means of moving Careers Service work forwards, a changing focus, a link with academic concerns and structures. CMS is part of a landscape of change in this direction.' (PROJECT MANAGER)

'The project is part of the larger context of institutional restructuring, part of a huge wave of change. Currently, Careers Service sits within Student Services. Discussions anticipated about how student services will be delivered, where, and when. A range of outcomes from this relating to CMS delivery will be possible ... No sense yet of which is the right one.' (ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF)

8.21 Involvement in project initiatives was acknowledged as an important basis from which new and innovative roles were developed and experimented with by careers staff. In some cases, this resulted in a re-appraisal of the structure and nature of the Careers Service on a large scale; in others, implementation strategies and roles developed through CMS work contributed to, or were 'woven into', strategic planning activities where the mission of the service was redefined in a way which was informed by the nature of Careers Service staff involvement in CMS work.

8.22 This was highlighted most significantly in some projects by a recognised shift in the work of the Careers Service, in the direction of the curriculum and mainstream academic concerns. This change was described by one member of academic-related staff as: 'The biggest change is that the Careers Service is now talking to people like myself, which didn't happen before.' Other participants pointed to other aspects of this shift in the role of the Careers Service:

'Changes from the project have required more collaborative work with departments. This has reduced more traditional Careers Service provision: the individual guidance side has become a smaller part of our work. The project has had a role in promoting and driving the Careers Service in the direction of the curriculum.' (PROJECT MANAGER)

'Frankly, the Careers Service have provided good work in offering bolt-on advice, both in the final years and at post-graduation. They have not felt the need to be more intrusive in the curriculum. I'm not trying to knock the Careers Service, but I don't think that before this project they had recognised the opportunities for proactive involvement in the curriculum.' (ACADEMIC SENIOR MANAGER)

'There have been changes in the Careers Service resulting from Dearing; also insecurity of feeling amongst staff that they could be "swallowed up" by new careers advisory companies or area consortia. This gives the motivation to move more centrally into academic departments. Since I have been here there is a much more explicit and developing move towards departments. The time is also right for departments to be responsive to new demands placed upon e.g. the student as client.' (CAREERS ADVISER)

8.23 This changing role of the Careers Service was described as reflecting a move away from the periphery and more into the 'centre' or the 'heart' of the institution:

'The Careers Service is proactive, it likes to be seen as "centre stage" ... It's about seeing us as giving careers advice but also providing training and input to the curriculum. Involvement such as this project have widened the remit of the Careers Service.' (CAREERS ADVISER)

'I believe that in the time since the project started, we have moved more towards the centre of the institution. What this project has done has enabled contacts to be made by staff within the institution. We are now seen to be

connecting much more centrally with the core of the university. It is therefore essential that we connect with the curriculum – it is about delivering the best for students. It is much more effective to develop work within courses or departments, than to pursue the Careers Service role as separate.’

(PROJECT MANAGER)

‘Since the beginning of the project the Careers Service has become more central to development concerns within the university (e.g. in responding to Dearing) ... The hierarchy sees the Careers Service as an important central resource, which is being consulted, involved, and informed of developments which connect with its interests and expertise – there is a clear link between the Careers Service and institutional development priorities. The service is thus connecting more with teaching and learning issues.’

(CAREERS ADVISER)

- 8.24 Such changes have implications for the structural position of the Careers Service within institutions (see also CVCP, 1998). Possibilities include:
- (a) The careers service becoming, or existing alongside, a teaching unit focusing on career management as an academic discipline in which research can be conducted.
 - (b) Restructuring the careers service as an academic service rather than a student service.
 - (c) Providing curriculum consultancy and support within the traditional careers-service model, alongside its information, guidance and placement functions.

Much depends on the existing role and resource level of the Careers Service: this varied considerably between institutions. It is also linked to curriculum resource issues: the extent to which the Careers Service should generate income from its teaching activities on the same basis as (and therefore potentially in competition with) teaching departments, or be funded for such activities from central resources. The income-generation model in principle offers greater growth potential.

Section 9 CMS Assessment

Introduction

- 9.1 The assessment of skills and competencies raises particular challenges for those involved in higher education course delivery because it calls for changes to established assessment practices and an additional focus for the assessment process. This additional focus concerns the process of learning and the way students learn, as well as the traditional emphasis on degree course content and the transmission of knowledge.
- 9.2 The assessment of skills also calls for a shift in assessment practices – towards more course-work assessment, the use of explicit assessment criteria, and clearly articulated learning outcomes – all of which challenge some commonly expressed values in many traditional academic programmes.
- 9.3 This section reviews the experience of the CMS projects in assessing the development of students' career management skills as a tangible illustration of the Careers Service/academic partnership in action. The findings presented here draw particularly from the four projects which, from the outset, attempted to link the development of CMS to existing curriculum provision, thereby ensuring a strong commitment to the assessment process. While all projects encouraged an element of student 'self-assessment' in the process of reviewing skills and competencies, and many offered feedback to students in this domain, the focus of the section concerns progress towards formal, tutor-led assessment of student skills.

A Range of Methods

- 9.4 In projects which assessed students' career management skills, a range of assessment methods were employed (see Box 9.1). These included reflective essays and reports, learning logs and portfolios, group and individual projects, as well as the assessment of CVs and written examinations. There was one example of assessment of skills by written examination; in all other cases, assessment was based totally on course work.

Box 9.1: Assessment methods adopted by four projects

Institution	A	B	C	D
Reflective essay/report	✓	✓	✓	✓
Learning log portfolio		✓	✓	✓
Group/individual project	✓	✓	✓	
Group/individual presentation	✓		✓	
Written examination			✓	
CVs, applications and interviews		✓	✓	

- 9.5 The main findings relating to assessment which emerged from the evaluation process were:
- (a) Assessment was largely tutor-led. In some cases, employers contributed informally to the assessment process or gave feedback directly to students in sessions such as 'preparing for interviews', but they had no direct responsibility for formal assessment. In the same way, there was little evidence of student peer assessment. In group projects and presentations, students were often encouraged to give feedback to fellow students, but this had little direct bearing on formal assignment of marks or grades.

- (b) In the Whole-Institution Projects, characterised by a high volume of assessment activity, the assessment of work was likely to be shared jointly by careers advisers and tutors. This was not the case, to the same extent, in the two smaller Specialist Projects.
- (c) Assessment was, by virtue of the nature of the assessment methods adopted, largely concerned with students' ability to reflect on and amass evidence for the development of skills, rather than with the assessment of skill performance *per se*. Some students were, however, assessed formally on the basis of group or individual presentations.
- (d) There were many instances of modules/programmes attempting to provide a mixture of both group and individual assessment.
- (e) There was a sense, in the context of some programmes, that the assessment of career management skills was breaking new ground, both in terms of the nature of the assessment methods being used and also in terms of contributors to the process (careers advisers, employers).
- (f) This sense of innovation was clearly a motivating factor for many of the teaching staff and careers advisers involved in curriculum delivery. For these careers advisers there was also a feeling their work had taken centre stage and was seen to have greater importance. Those careers advisers involved in assessing students, however, felt unprepared for the experience and were surprised by the volume of work they were asked to assess.
- (g) In relation to student feedback on the issue of assessment, two particular findings emerged. Students in more than one institution had difficulty with assessment methods which involved personal reflection and appraisal, such as learning logs and portfolios, because they had not encountered them before. As one postgraduate student commented: 'It all seemed too complex to begin with. I had never used anything like a learning log before. I was unsure what they wanted from us. However, it all became clearer fairly soon, once you started actually using it.' Some students were also concerned about the issue of privacy in completing self-appraisal materials, which were to be assessed by tutors. They were reluctant to divulge their values and beliefs to their lecturers. The involvement of careers advisers in supporting and assessing the process had, however, ameliorated this problem.

Relationship between Assessment and Delivery Strategy

- 9.6 Of the four projects which had made considerable progress in the assessment of career management skills, two could be seen to be adopting what we have described as an *integrated* approach to curriculum development, while two followed a *modular* approach. Thus some assessments focus directly on the skills developed within a particular module; in other cases, there was a recognition that the assessment covered skills that might be developed in various parts of a course. There was no obvious evidence to suggest that the *extra-curricular* delivery model might not lend itself to the processes of assessment and accreditation, but in terms of CMS project delivery, this had not been attempted.
- 9.7 Many of the issues concerned with the assessment of skills were common to both the integrated and modular delivery strategies: these are summarised later. Both strategies resulted in partnership delivery between careers advisers and teaching staff, and joint involvement in assessment. In both, the use of different assessment methods and practices was the subject of negotiation at departmental or validation committee-level. In addition, the skills which were the subject of tutor-led formal

assessment showed a broad degree of similarity in the four projects concerned. Some of the skills which provided the focus of assessment are listed in Box 9.2, which provides an overview of the directly assessed skills.

Box 9.2: Skills which are the focus of direct tutor-led assessment in four institutions

A. Modular	B. Integrated	C. Modular	D. Modular
Self-appraisal, reflection and analysis	Information search	Report writing	Self-appraisal, reflection and analysis
Essay/report writing	Self-appraisal, reflection and analysis	Making presentations	Skills identification
Team working	Decision-making	Self-appraisal, reflection and analysis	Essay writing
Making presentations	Team working	Team working	
Mounting an exhibition	Essay/report writing	Formulating proposals	
	Applications/ CV writing	Applications/ CV writing	

- 9.8 One important question for the future is whether it is possible to design assessed projects and assignments which develop a broader range of career management skills than is presently being attempted. Certainly, there are issues to do with the possible distinctiveness of CMS (i.e. in relation to other skills vocabularies, such as key skills, core skills, etc.). Which skill set is a sub-set of which is a question which, as Section 1 suggested, needs clarification.
- 9.9 Other issues worthy of mention here concern how far CMS skills and their assessment 'complement' or 'consolidate' other skills – which relates to the discussion in Section 4 regarding the 'caught' rather than 'taught' nature of the integrated model. Some student and tutor data showed this as a key point in a modular context too. Of concern here is the recognition that the delivery of CMS needs to be sensitive to delivery of skills elsewhere in the student experience. This has an impact upon not only the planning of programmes but also upon the type of assessment employed. Thus one tutor talked about not being able to offer as exciting a CMS programme as other tutors because interesting elements such as team work or presentation were covered and assessed elsewhere in the course. Students, too, talked about the relevance of their CMS course in bringing together, consolidating and recognising skills developed elsewhere in the course and developed further on the module – they identified assessment as an important element in giving such skills and experiences 'status' and 'recognition'.
- 9.10 A further issue is the risk that assessment may lead to more attention being paid to what can be measured than to what is important. There is a danger that assessment will focus on comparatively simple skills (e.g. CV writing) rather than on the more complex tasks of making career decisions, finding and utilising mentors, or defining development needs.
- 9.11 It may also be worth analysing the skills identified in Box 9.2 in terms of how far they reflect skills which have a 'lifelong learning' element/aspect to them, which one might consider to be a distinctive element of CMS. How far are they recognised as skills which can be applied in the context of lifelong and changing/flexible career paths? How far are they the kind of skills which might be assessed in the future (for students as employees), e.g. at the recruitment/selection stage in terms of long-term development and job changes?

Factors Supporting Progress towards CMS Assessment

- 9.12 According to the evaluation findings, one factor which was both a positive and negative influence on the readiness of academic staff to see the importance of, and assess, personal skills and competencies was the *culture of particular degree subjects and programmes*. Those with a vocational or professional culture were more likely to accept the importance of career management skills and to involve employers in direct assessment of students, as well as offering informal feedback on student performance. A similar readiness to integrate CMS development within courses was found in those programmes which involved employer-based work-experience placements. Here, the development of CMS was linked to the process of briefing and debriefing students pre- and post-placement. By contrast, degree programmes with traditionally academic orientation, such as humanities and language courses, proved initially resistant to the introduction of skill assessment.
- 9.13 A second factor supporting the assessment of CMS was *existing approaches to assessment*. The integration of CMS modules and the assessment of skills were relatively easily accomplished in degree programmes in which the pattern of assessment was weighted in favour of continuous assessment. Similarly, where there was an existing commitment on the part of teaching staff to the use of learning logs and other ways of reviewing experience and recording achievement, the task of adopting these approaches for the assessment of career management skills was more easily achieved.
- 9.14 A third factor was the *commitment of project staff and stakeholders*. Staff from Careers Services involved in project delivery frequently showed a determination to link the development of CMS to the curriculum, in the face of resistance by many academic staff. At the same time, various institutional champions emerged to further the cause and signal the importance of CMS within their own institutions and departments.
- 9.15 A fourth factor was the *attitudes of students*. There was a widely-held view that students gave greater credence to CMS optional modules if they knew that they were to be subject to assessment. The use of assessment was therefore seen as an important motivating factor. As one academic co-ordinator commented: 'Students do like some form of assessment for the effort they put in.'
- 9.16 There were also pointers in the evaluation data to the processes which enabled the easy integration of skill development into courses and the subsequent assessment of these skills. These included:
- (a) making explicit the precise skills which students were expected to develop;
 - (b) providing feedback to students in order to help them improve their future performance;
 - (c) setting clearly defined assessment criteria;
 - (d) selecting assessment methods which were appropriate to the task;
 - (e) devising course-work assignments which were seen to relate to the wider aims and content of a particular degree programme;
 - (f) using a variety of assessment methods to assess the same or different skills;
 - (g) involving employers in the assessment and feedback process.

Factors Inhibiting Progress towards CMS Assessment

- 9.17 During the course of the evaluation, a number of factors emerged which appeared to hinder the process of assessing career management skills. The most obvious issue facing projects which set out to integrate CMS components with the HE curriculum was that of the *perceived legitimacy of the subject matter*. In assessment terms, this

- required project staff to meet the concerns from fellow academics about the 'intellectual integrity' of CMS modules or the relationship between skills assessment and eventual degree classification. According to one careers adviser, there was a constant tension between the assessment of skills and competencies and the need for academic credibility.
- 9.18 A second inhibiting factor was *institutional assessment regulations*. On balance, the regulatory frameworks established by institutions with regard to assessment were seen as a hindrance to skills and competency assessment. In one institution, the CMS module (Module B in Section 3) was required to have 70% of assessment based on written examination, and there was a clear recommendation from the student evaluation that this was unsatisfactory and that an alternative approach needed to be explored. In another institution, a change in the assessment protocol for all independent learning modules had meant that the CMS module had been forced to reduce the range of assessment methods used, and was now assessed along 'traditional academic lines', with 50% of the assessment based on a written essay. In a further institution, the extensive use of continuous assessment for the CMS module was problematic because other programme modules would need to be more formally and summatively assessed in order to achieve a 'balance' of assessment methods across the course programme as a whole.
- 9.19 A third factor was the *perceived subjectivity of assessment*. A number of those interviewed were concerned about the apparent subjectivity inherent in the assessment of skills. One member of teaching staff referred to the 'insufficient objectivity' in inviting students to complete learning logs on the basis of self-determined evidence for the development of skills. Academic staff were, it seemed, wary of incorporating students' personal experience into assessed pieces of work. A careers adviser was concerned about the subjective nature of assessing students' curricula vitae, when it was frequently a matter of taste or preference as to what constituted an effective CV. And while conscious efforts were made to link skill development with specific assessment criteria, there was often evidence of a tension between competency-based assessment and the apparent objectivity of conventional knowledge-based assessment.
- 9.20 A fourth factor was *careers adviser involvement in assessment*. For most careers advisers, assessing student performance was a new experience, which was not previously a feature of their work method or role. In assessing students during the delivery of career management skills modules, two areas of difficulty emerged. Firstly, because of their lack of experience in this activity, careers advisers found that the process of assessment was absorbing more of their time than was initially anticipated. They were conscious of the need to make assessment fair and equitable, but struggled with the structures and procedures inherent in the academic systems of assessment, which some perceived to mitigate against this, e.g. insistence on particular percentages of students within particular grade bands, or issues relating to what a 'first' in CMS might comprise. Secondly, there was an ethical issue, related to role conflict. Many higher education careers advisers shared a commonly held view that to assess students compromised their otherwise 'non-judgemental' stance in guiding and counselling students.
- 9.21 A final inhibiting factor was the *experience of external examiners*. In at least two of the CMS projects, there was a concern that external examiners, viewing degree programmes from a largely disciplinary perspective, were unaware of the importance of career management skills and of the assessment methods required for their assessment. This was understandable, given the new ground being covered by the CMS projects. But it raised questions for the longer term about the availability of external examiners who were experienced in, and sympathetic to, the teaching and learning methods and assessment practices associated with the development of students' skills.

Section 10 For the Future: Success Factors, Challenges and Key Issues

Introduction

- 10.1 This concluding section, in looking to the future, identifies:
- (a) factors associated with project success;
 - (b) a range of key issues for consideration in future development.

Some of these might be characterised as being of a general nature, though with an impact upon the theme; others are specific to the CMS context.

Factors Supporting Success

- 10.2 Four benefits to departments or to institutions generally that project activity was helpful in addressing, or sharpening the need to address, were consistently mentioned by participants:
- (a) graduate employment ('the department hasn't had a particularly good record...');
 - (b) the growing influence of Teaching Quality Assessments in institutions, with CMS often being seen as assisting in responding to TQA expectations ('appealing to me because I'm the faculty TQA co-ordinator'), and the TQA system being used as a lever for the project (though cf. para.10.11);
 - (c) marketing ('a positive indication to potential students that the universities are serious in their commitment to offer excellent academic courses with the added value of integrated careers education focused on key skills and employability');
 - (d) employer links ('useful in maintaining and extending various links with employers ... recruitment, work experience, project work, sponsorship...').
- 10.3 Alongside these, *national factors* which can be seen as supportive of the CMS theme intentions included in particular:
- (a) the increasing national policy attention to student guidance matters, as exemplified by guidance notes produced by both HEFCE and HEQC;
 - (b) the significance of the use of destination statistics in league tables and, indeed, of their possible importance in the future funding methodology;
 - (c) the continuing debate concerning the notion of 'graduateness';
 - (d) the impact in many, if not all, institutions of the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997), not least in relation to the development of key/employability skills (see also CVCP, 1998).
- 10.4 A number of *local factors* appeared to have supported success within the projects. One was prior involvement in projects or institutional initiatives related to careers education or to learning and teaching more generally – particularly prior involvement in EHE. This was the case particularly where the Careers Service and/or the specific project team had experience of managing EHE or related projects. A further factor was the concurrent engagement of project personnel in cross-institution concerns beyond those to do with careers, often embracing direct access to senior managers on a range of matters such as involvement in teaching and learning support units, academic affairs management teams, and quality assurance committees. Equally, linkage with current, related initiatives within the institution was sometimes useful, including initiatives such as understanding graduate skills, enhancing the quality of work placements, developing leadership skills, and development of personal skills.

- 10.5 A further local factor supporting success was 'academic empathy' within the Careers Service, with methods of delivery cast very explicitly and transparently in the content and culture of the department or discipline. This was variously expressed as being responsive to staff reaction, 'learning each other's language', and 'keeping pace' with the department. Linked with this was the importance of the projects in demonstrating to other parts of the institution the potential of involving Careers Service staff in curriculum development, a recognition which had implications for internal staff dissemination.
- 10.6 Crucially, in many cases CMS work did not take a 'simple' employability approach, but was linked with broader skills and learning development agendas. In re-framing the activity, from a focus on broadly-stated objectives concerned with career awareness, to a focus on the explicit development of student skills for managing their careers, Careers Services were able to build on the increasingly widely accepted view that the higher education curriculum has a role in developing students' personal skills. From the perspective of many teaching staff involved in the projects, enabling students to develop the skills for career survival was seen as complementary to the work already being developed to help students develop the skills to become effective learners.
- 10.7 In a number of institutions, project activity benefited from bottom-up pressure from those students who appeared to be more aware than others that there was no job for life and who also had positive attitudes to the notion of 'career' and to industry and commerce. The extent of this student pressure was sometimes related to the stage at which student involvement in project activity occurred. Thus final-year and postgraduate students, together with those in the second semester of the second year, were generally the most enthusiastic. Often, though by no means always, first-year students and those in the first semester of the second year showed less interest because they could not prioritise, or see the immediate need for, study related to career, given its distance from their entry into the job market.
- 10.8 Local success was strongly influenced by support from senior management, evidenced not only in statements about mission, but also through implementation. Institutional managers were generally supportive of the CMS initiative as part of a broader profile of development activities, recognising its links to external demands and internal needs. In the majority of projects, CMS was seen as one of a portfolio of activities which emphasised graduate employability. In one Specialist Project, a survey amongst graduates had a major impact in promoting support from senior managers. In a second, the significance of published league tables indicating levels of graduate employment was seen as increasingly significant. It is important to recognise that significant factors for institutional managers included not only external pressures (the outcomes of the Dearing Inquiry and the subsequent government response, plus HEFCE subject and programme reviews) but also internal 'drivers' such as student demand and alignment with institutional mission.
- 10.9 Institutional managers reported support for the aims and achievements of the CMS initiative in principle, but also indicated that pressures on resources presented a challenge to continuation activities. Only one Specialist Project reported movement initiated by institutional managers away from the innovation in teaching and learning with which the CMS initiative was associated, and this was associated with attempts to re-orient the institution towards a greater focus upon research.
- 10.10 In a range of projects, changes in organisational and reporting structures either accompanied the work or emerged from it. These were approved or sanctioned by institutional managers, and generally reflected the move of the work of the Careers Service beyond the traditional individual advisory role and towards the mainstream

- of the academic provision of the institution (for example, by the establishment of new committee structures).
- 10.11 The stance of senior managers on CMS was strongly influenced by how they saw CMS relating to external expectations and imperatives. This raises the matter of the impact of institutional agendas and national 'forces' affecting HE. Some factors seemed, by and large, to have oriented senior managers to be increasingly positive about CMS concerns. Other factors, though, appeared to impact differentially on senior managers in how they responded to CMS. One example was Teaching Quality Assessment. Thus, while some people saw aspects of the skills development element of CMS as impacting positively on teaching and learning throughout a student's degree, others viewed the TQA exercise as calling for the 'protection' of subjects and a greater push on single honours degrees.
- 10.12 Certainly, there were differential responses to, or levels of interest in, the CMS work by senior managers. These can be categorised as follows:
- (a) *Lukewarm*. Here a certain degree of 'lip service' was paid by senior managers for whom the project and its concerns were far from being a priority but were nonetheless a welcome addition to the institution's portfolio – representing, as it did, enhanced visibility and a measure of success (in bidding for external funds).
 - (b) *Highly positive*. Here we see not just career-related concerns signalled in institutional missions and strategic objectives, but a long-standing involvement in activity on a broad front. Institutions had invested time and resources, and mission statements about careers education were taken seriously and implemented.
 - (c) *In transition*. These institutions had until recently been lukewarm at best, but there were signs that they might be moving towards the highly positive category. The shift seemed to be particularly associated with a fundamental change in emphasis coming from 'the top', often linked to the recent arrival of new senior figures.
- 10.13 Overall (and importantly from an institutional perspective) student feedback suggested that many of the benefits associated with CMS could be seen to address the sorts of key learning entitlements associated with careers education and guidance:
- (a) Help in clarifying their skills, abilities and interests and linking these to learning goals.
 - (b) Help in understanding the range of occupational opportunities available.
 - (c) Help in relating personal learning goals to occupational goals and opportunities.
 - (d) Help in learning how to choose between alternative career goals.
 - (e) Help in planning and executing a strategy to achieve career goals.
- 10.14 A further factor supporting success was being viewed as contributing to other institutional agendas. The existence of other institutional agendas complementary to and supportive of the project invariably benefited project activity. For example, in one institution where the development of open learning was a priority and where the CMS project centred around the development of an open learning module, a senior manager remarked on how he welcomed the project because it offered an opportunity to test out the provision of learning opportunities through the medium of distance materials. In another institution, the project was welcomed because it was seen to tie in with its CAL-IT strategy.
- 10.15 Projects benefited from a focus at an early stage upon continuation beyond the end of the project. Several projects, especially the Whole-Institution Projects, paid considerable attention to this issue. Clearly, questions to do with how CMS activity could continue

to be resourced (especially if such activity expands) were fundamental to the thinking, but so too were educational agendas. Major considerations included:

- (a) The staff development imperative, discussed later.
- (b) Facilitating embedding and sustainability by securing academic credit for CMS provision.
- (c) The advisability of CMS personnel continuing, or beginning, to engage in working groups, committees etc. that had more general or overarching briefs, e.g. to do with teaching and learning practice and policy.
- (d) The need for CMS activity to be as integrated as far as possible with related initiatives within the institution.
- (e) The need to 'publicise', and enable others to recognise, the linkages between CMS activity and national agendas that were being prioritised within the institution – TQA, lifelong learning, etc.
- (f) Linked to this, the importance of finding 'champions', especially those who were key change agents and/or resource-holders. Here, of course, an invaluable 'key' was to gain support from the most senior management personnel.
- (g) Repositioning the place and/or role of the Careers Service. In one institution, for example, discussions were under way to establish the Careers Service as an academic service – which would reinforce its already changing role and stimulate clarification of its key activities. An example from another institution is outlined in Box 10.1 (see also para.8.24).

Box 10.1: Possible strategies for repositioning the Careers Service in one institution

In this institution, a number of possible ways forward were advanced:

- Devolution to the departments. Modules would become the responsibility of the department and be taught by members of academic staff. The Careers Service would be involved as consultants and would deliver some sessions.
- Additional staff resources to the Careers Service, to allow it to continue to design, prepare, organise and deliver the current modules. This might be an attractive short-term solution but would lead to immediate resource problems when more departments wanted to become involved.
- A service-teaching model. Careers Service involvement could be regarded as service teaching and therefore departments could be charged a fee based on existing teaching model formulas. This would be a growth model, because expansion of the programme would automatically bring resources into the Careers Service.
- Additional resources from the centre. The necessary Careers Service resources could be generated from the centre, rather than from individual departments.

- 10.16 Another success factor was curriculum accessibility. It is not possible to generalise about the impact of modularisation on CMS-type initiatives, particularly those involving a module delivery strategy. In some institutions, modularity was seen as supportive of the need to develop the sorts of transferable skills that would help students 'get through' a system involving a wide range of choice; in others, modularity was seen as an obstacle to the successful implementation of CMS. Much depended on how genuinely flexible and student-centred the modular system was. In one of the project institutions, which seemed to have a more open and flexible modular system than most, a more integrated approach to academic counselling and careers guidance had been developed. This appeared to lead to the offering of more impartial advice than was sometimes encountered.

- 10.17 A final factor supporting success was strong employer involvement. As noted in Section 6, the CMS theme was generally characterised by a good level and range of employer involvement. This was especially useful in raising the profile of projects with various groups within institutions: senior managers, departments and students. It was particularly effective when it incorporated an active presence on project steering groups, an input at the project planning stage and to course design, direct contributions to the production of course materials, and participation in teaching sessions and in the formal assessment of students.

Factors Inhibiting Success

- 10.18 Conversely, a number of factors would appear to have inhibited success within the CMS projects. Unsurprisingly, some of these represent the reverse of those influencing successful outcomes.
- 10.19 One was competing institutional agendas, which in places impaired project take-up and progress. The most commonly cited of these was the research imperative, which at times – for some institutions and some departments more than for others – seemed to be set against the student teaching and learning experience.
- 10.20 Another was budgetary devolution and the creation of internal cost centres. Depending on how exactly it was implemented, budgetary devolution and the creation of internal cost centres could cause problems for central service units and departments alike. For example, there could be less topslicing of faculty or department funds, which could mean less money going automatically to central services such as the Careers Service or to units supporting teaching and learning. Where departments were grouped as cost-centres, this could mean less autonomy for individual department heads in terms of being able to decide to allocate resources to such initiatives as CMS. There was also the likelihood that, in respect of modules run or partly run by people outside the cost-centre's own staff, developments such as CMS might be blocked out or not get off the ground because of the transfer of funds involved.
- 10.21 More generally, the general squeeze on funding could constrain CMS and related developments, and in places did constrain them by way of direct funding cuts. It could also help to account for the reluctance on the part of many academic staff to take on board yet another initiative, faced as they were with escalating student-staff ratios. In certain circumstances, the funding squeeze could prompt staff to undertake new initiatives as one possible solution to the problem. There were examples of this: for example, through exploring more independent or open-access learning modes, and through working towards a stronger Careers Service curriculum role partly because of the increasing difficulty in sustaining the one-to-one guidance model.
- 10.22 Another factor inhibiting success was limited employer impact. Concerns were expressed at times about the employer dimension. These included a view that some employers did not fully understand the issues surrounding CMS; that it was difficult to bring SMEs on-board; that there was an imbalance between private- and public-sector representation and involvement; that even though major employers might be involved in project activity, many of them continued to target only the older universities when it came to recruitment; and that employers were happier to involve themselves with vocationally oriented courses than with others.
- 10.23 A final inhibiting factor was inflexibility within modular systems. In such cases, CMS modules could represent competition for credit space. In addition, departments or degree schemes could employ degree regulations, income ring-fencing and partial advice to make it difficult for students to make choices outside their departments or subject areas.

Key Issues for Future Development

- 10.24 The CMS projects identified a number of issues which at present can only be raised as a stimulus for further exploration. Each of these emerged from the experiences of project teams – in their management of CMS – and from other project participants. The quotations which are included in relation to each are used to illustrate some of the more significant concerns. Some of these are specific to the CMS theme; others are specific illustrations of broader issues.
- 10.25 One of the demands on Careers Service staff. All forms of curriculum-related relationships across the projects demanded heavy involvement of such staff. There were tensions here to do with relationships between the Careers Service and departmental staff, including that regarding the balance of study within the modular curriculum. There were also tensions to do with the perceptions some people held about Careers Service ‘project hegemony’ and even ‘empire building’ (see Section 8). The focus here, though, is the demands made on Careers Service staff in terms of time and skills.
- 10.26 Careers Service staff time commitment in module construction, validation, delivery and assessment was considerable. In addition, the shift of role involved in moving to some extent away from a careers guidance model towards a careers education model placed a burden on many Careers Service staff. This was to be expected given the projects’ brief, and in the case of the projects was resourced, to some degree at least by DfEE funding. The question that arises, however, is: if the CMS initiative is successful, for example, in the sense of engaging more and more departments and students, how can Careers Service staff respond? Some options may be:
- (a) Developing roles and provision within the Careers Service as a ‘flexible service provider’:
- ‘Because the delivery strategy has to be responsive to requests from other interested departments, this requires more flexibility in the longer term. Departments are in contact constantly about issues relating to CMS ... We are faced with trying to respond to varying levels of interest in a more flexible way (e.g. developing integrated and extra-curricular models of delivery alongside modular model).’
(PROJECT MANAGER)
- ‘Overall CMS developments are making available a range of resources to staff and students, “a multi-access point career management system”, thereby enabling them to make more effective use of the limited Careers Service resource that is available on campus.’
(ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF)
- (b) Embedding provision within the curriculum (and the management of the role of the Careers Service in undertaking this):
- ‘The route for development from the start was not seen in terms of strengthening the Careers Service but rather in embedding CMS in the curriculum. We are working towards the “embedding into departments” end of the continuum.’
(ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF)
- (c) Disseminating curricular and extra-curricular materials/developments to celebrate achievements and to encourage their use by others:
- ‘Careers Service expertise in the project has been an advantage in getting it started... But now we are thinking of the future in terms of a “broader ownership” within the institution. We need to consider spreading and embedding; otherwise there is a danger that CMS developments will be

considered as Careers Service toys, kept in a Careers Service box, rather than being utilised more widely.'
(PROJECT MANAGER)

- (d) Devolving ownership of developments, working with academic staff (e.g. in departments and faculties):

'The Careers Service is aware that we haven't been pushing CMS to other departments – because we can't meet the demand – but we will address this as part of our continuance strategy. We need to move much more in the direction of working with departments as more staff come on board. Post-project, we need different things for different departments ... trying to develop tailor-made provision.'
(CAREERS ADVISER)

10.27 Other major issues to be confronted include:

- (a) Dealing with an expansion in academic interest and demand for Careers Service support/involvement and with resourcing issues in the light of student 'take-up' or expansion of student numbers:

'At the moment it is just me lecturing. It is difficult: we could do with another tutor. We need support from the Careers Service. In terms of spreading out within the institution there is the issue of expansion of student numbers. There are clearly staffing issues associated with this, related to delivery.'

(ACADEMIC TUTOR)

'The real challenge is trying to embed CMS: to offer it to everyone, moving from the pilot stage to institutional acceptance. We will need to question how we manage this process if many students decide to take it up – this will need managing.'

(ACADEMIC TUTOR)

'To carry the project forward there are resourcing issues – in order to fund continued work in departments. Money is needed to cover staffing appointments.'

(PROJECT MANAGER)

- (b) Conversely, getting beyond the core of 'enthusiasts' amongst academic staff also remains an issue:

'There are still some corners where staff do not see this (CMS) as important; there is a terrifying level of complacency amongst some staff as well as students.'

(ACADEMIC TUTOR)

'There is a continuing role (for project staff) in "selling" the project, maintaining and extending interest in departments. It is about "selling and enthusing others" – how the project manages this for continuance will be important.'

(EMPLOYER)

- (c) Effectively utilising student feedback and evaluation within CMS developments, recognising the potential of students as change agents:

'Staff always say "let us know what you think": this is good. This module has been far more flexible and more tailored to our needs than other course elements. It is the only unit where you have a feeling that you have "a bit of a say" in what happens. This is reflected in the lecturing style – it's far more interactive and personal. You are treated less like a student and more like an individual.'

(STUDENT)

- (d) Maintaining and extending relationships with, and the involvement of, employers (and particularly SMEs where required):

'Employer role in CMS delivery has been important in terms of what they bring from the students' perspective – they meet student needs. Students feel very positive about the insights provided into workplace and employment contexts. There is a need for a continuing relationship – we have invited many employers back, things are working better and we are improving courses as a result. Different levels of partnership need to be utilised in different ways according to module or department needs.'

(CAREERS ADVISER)

- (e) Managing continuance through partnerships (between careers staff, academic staff, senior managers and employers):

'When project funding ends ... more of a joint partnership approach between Careers Service and the departments would be the preferred option for the future.'

(CAREERS ADVISER)

'Collaboration provides "a rich vein which needs tapping". It is a two-way relationship between employers and HE ... It's about emphasising the benefits of relationships between two communities.'

(EMPLOYER)

- (f) Dealing with support and staff development issues for both careers staff and academic staff (including the management of role ambiguity, overload and the re-negotiation of roles and responsibilities):

'Curriculum development is needed to affect more than individual students, and this requires staff development. So that staff development is both supportive and prompting.'

(ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF)

10.28 If one way forward – whether for pragmatic, educational or philosophical reasons – is via greater academic staff involvement in the devising and/or delivery and assessment of CMS, then there is a major staff development and support issue to be faced. Indeed, in a number of the projects, development of academic staff was a central theme. How best to approach this will probably vary from institution to institution, depending on their circumstances, structures and staff development policies. What might need to be 'provided' will also vary, sometimes for groups of staff and sometimes even for individuals. A 'menu' might include:

- (a) Awareness-raising sessions on, for example, the changing teaching role of staff in universities and on how CMS relate to both employability and broader learning agendas – the latter including connections with Teaching Quality Assessment issues.
- (b) Workshops and learning packs to do with, for example, different learning styles, managing small group learning, etc.
- (c) Workshops and learning packs organised around various skill foci.
- (d) Workshops and packs with a focus on assessment of CMS.
- (e) An e-mail hot-line to 'consultants' who can provide advice on problems/issues.
- (f) A collection of write-ups by staff and students who have already experienced CMS modules as teachers and learners.

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