Strategy for Enhancing Student Employability 2014-2016

1. Introduction

The College’s Strategy for student employability aims to create a stronger College framework in which the career development of students is seen as an integral part of their time at King’s; with clearly articulated provision that is high profile, professional and relevant to their career aspirations.

Employability support at King’s will always be a mixture of embedded provision offered through departments, centrally coordinated support and student-led activity, set within the wider context of King’s external relationships; the aim of the Strategy is to ensure that these strands cohere for maximum impact and are monitored effectively. The Strategy below outlines specific objectives relating to some of the College’s central activity strands, the expectations of Schools and departments, and some areas of targeted support for specific cohorts of students.

2. Context

Currently, King’s has adequate provision for career development support, a good reputation amongst a variety of graduate employers, and numerous strands of co-curricula activity which enable students to enhance their employability. However, these strands are disparate, uncoordinated and not sufficiently embedded in discipline-based activities, leading to inconsistent provision across departments, lower impact on the student experience and the potential duplication of effort and resource across the College. Specific issues that this Strategy seeks to address:

Student recruitment:

a) Increased focus on employability amongst prospective students and their funders
b) Recruitment challenges in new markets, especially at PGT level

Student satisfaction & employment outcomes:

c) Lower proportions of King’s graduates moving directly into graduate level work or postgraduate/professional study in some areas relative to competitor institutions
d) Variable performance in relation to graduate level employment across departments at UG and PGT levels – affecting league table performance in domestic subject tables
e) Fragmented points of contact for employability support for both students and employers leading to lower student satisfaction in some areas
f) Student feedback on insufficient access to internships and other work related experiences
g) Increased government focus on social mobility and the employability support provided to students from non-traditional backgrounds

Employer relations and community engagement

h) Significant investment amongst many key competitors on highly visible and coordinated employability support, especially around work experience and internships
i) Current lack of capacity to extend the network of employers targeting King’s and capitalise on the extensive external connections with King’s
j) Desire to build a stronger culture of entrepreneurship and innovation amongst the student body, including enhanced support for those who want to move into self-employment or start-up post-graduation

To move to a position where King’s has a genuinely positive story to tell around support for career enhancement of students, the following are required:
1. Clearer planning & evaluation
2. Increased student engagement with work-based and co-curricula opportunities
3. Higher profile and reach with employers (UK and internationally)
4. Increased input into student employability from our alumni community (with particular focus on mentoring and work opportunities)
5. Higher profile for innovation and enterprise
6. Student-led career enhancement activities to be actively supported by the College

To address these requirements Careers and Employability will support Schools and departments to develop clear plans for employability provision, working with other central Units to deliver coherent programmes of support relevant to disciplinary needs. Plans will also take account of important institutional partnerships and related strategies such as KHP and the wider NHS networks. All involved Units will be asked to share data on the outcomes of their activity in order to evaluate impact.

3. Goals of the Strategy

The success of this Strategy will be demonstrated through:
1. Continued high performance in relation to graduate employment/further study destinations, including addressing areas of lower performance
2. Increased student engagement in career learning and employability activities reflected in higher student satisfaction (NSS; PTES; PRES) and better impact measures (student engagement figures)
3. An increase in active graduate employer contacts from organisations of all sizes both within and outside the UK – measured through increased student opportunities & improved reputation measures in relevant metrics
4. Increased opportunities through the College’s alumni network, building on existing mentoring & engagement programmes to connect more students with individuals and opportunities
5. A more visible and coordinated offering around developing entrepreneurship and innovation skills, as well as more focus on active support for start-up and self-employment as graduate career options

To achieve these strategic goals the following operational objectives have been identified, followed by specific objectives for particular student groups:

1. Clear planning & evaluation
   Employability support will be clearly planned and evaluated at School level, informed by robust data and the objectives of the Strategy
2. Increased work-based and co-curricula opportunities
   Work-based experiences and other career enhancement activities will be seen as a key part of the educational offering at King’s to sit alongside the AKC as a differentiator in the market
3. Higher profile and reach with employers (UK and internationally)
   King’s will be one of the most highly targeted institutions in the UK by graduate employers, who are provided with clear points of access and suitable ways to engage
4. Increased value for student employability from our alumni community
   Alumni networks will be utilised to ensure that students benefit from the College’s extensive alumni connections
5. Higher profile for innovation and enterprise
   Innovation and enterprise skills will be integrated where appropriate within disciplinary learning and co-curricula opportunities
6. Student-led activity to be actively supported by the College
   Students will be supported to develop their own employability, including specific support for student-led career enhancement activities
4. Ownership & governance

Delivery of the Strategy will be through the relevant central units led by Careers & Employability, working in partnership with schools and departments. Progress against the Strategy will be monitored by College Education Committee through the inclusion of relevant outcomes data and commentary within School Annual Reports. This data will also be included in annual School planning rounds. A more robust cycle of review and planning will be established whereby decisions around employability provision are informed by outcomes data.

Work around innovation and the development of entrepreneurship support will be led by staff within the Research Management Directorate (Partnerships & Consultancy), with oversight by the College’s new Innovation Committee.

5. Operational Objectives

The six core College-wide objectives are detailed below, to be adapted to disciplinary frameworks and student cohort needs. There are also specific objectives identified for particular groups of students (PGT and PGR students; international students; students from a widening participation background).

(5) 1. Employability support will be clearly planned and evaluated at School level, informed by robust data and the objectives of the Strategy

Challenges: employability provision in departments is frequently ad hoc and not based on robust evaluation of performance data or a review of available resource. A more effective annual cycle of planning and review would help to ensure that employability support is tailored, targeted and appropriate to the requirements of the student cohorts.

Objectives:
1.1. Employability data to be included in annual School review and planning processes, with reports on progress and subsequent plans included in reports to CEC
1.2. All departments to have a clear annual plan for careers and employability support, informed by outcomes data and aligned to student needs
1.3. Formalise the role of Careers Liaison Tutor within Departments and consider appropriate resource to support the role
1.4. Ensure that each dept is aware of their named Careers & Employability Lead
1.5. Pilot a process for gathering employability data from students at the point of annual registration to inform provision and help to track progress. Key data collected would be around career intentions, work experience to date, and possibly entrepreneurship markers

(5) 2. Work-based experiences and other career enhancement activities will be seen as a key part of the educational offering at King’s and a differentiator in the market

Challenges: evidence supports the importance of work-based experience as an indicator of early graduate career success but King’s is not achieving sufficient impact in this area. Activity is disparate and fragmented leading to confusion amongst the students and employers we are trying to engage in this agenda. There are also particular challenges facing different cohorts of students in accessing work-based experiences (e.g. constraints for PGT students around limited time spent at King’s; for PGR students around completion rates; and the challenges faced by international students in London and those students at all levels who may face particular financial barriers to meaningful work experiences)

Objectives:
2.1 Increase the number of students accessing internship opportunities, with particular emphasis around sectors of particular interest to students
2.2 Track the impact of work experience on early career success of graduates
2.3 Make more explicit the employability benefits of the wide variety of co-curricula learning and development opportunities that students might undertake whilst at King’s, including the AKC, the College’s co-curricula awards, language learning and professional skills development.

2.4 Increase and track student engagement with the AKC and the Colleges’ co-curricula opportunities.

(5) 3. **Employer connections - King’s will be one of the most highly targeted institutions in the UK by graduate employers, who are provided with clear points of access and suitable ways to engage.**

Challenges: King’s has excellent links with a wide range of employers but there is room for expansion, particularly in the areas of SME engagement, more coherent links with employers in sectors of strategic importance to King’s (e.g. bioscience, cultural & creative industries, public administration) as well as links with employers in key overseas labour markets.

Objectives:

3.1 Careers & Employability to develop employer engagement strategies for priority Schools with clear targets for increased engagement

3.2 Develop a coherent strategy for international employer engagement which aligns to the strategic goals of the College and ensures that students benefit from the College’s strategic partnerships and other international links.

3.3 Create more opportunities for students to engage with employers through SME engagement, student internships and projects linked to graduate employment.

(5) 4. **Alumni networks will be utilised further to ensure that students benefit from the College’s extensive alumni connections.**

When students elect to study at King’s they expect to join an established global community that will provide career enhancement opportunities beyond their period of study. Evidence suggests that many of our alumni are keen to support students and recent graduates with their career development. A more coherent approach to utilising these connections for students is required.

Objectives:

4.1 Continue with existing student-alumni connections through the College’s alumni mentoring programmes and alumni-based careers events.

4.2 Expand the alumni connections platform to become a wide-ranging resource for students seeking careers information or contacts in the UK and beyond.

4.3 Increase the number of internships or other work-relevant opportunities that are made available to students from alumni.

(5) 5. **Innovation and enterprise skills will be integrated where appropriate within disciplinary learning and co-curricula opportunities.**

Challenges: King’s would like to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurialism amongst our student body at all levels. Business-startup is also a legitimate graduate-level destination which requires support to make reality. Activity in this area is currently high quality and impactful but not reaching the mainstream of the student body or being tracked to measure impact.

Objectives:

5.1 Continue to support and extend visible pre-start-up IAG and business planning support for students interested in starting their own business (including the Lion’s Den Business Competition, UnLtd partnership and support for relevant student societies).

5.2 Raise the profile of innovation activities currently taking place at King’s, to help the College to be more closely identified with innovation and enterprise.

(5) 6. **Students will be supported to develop their own employability, including support for student-led career enhancement activities.**

Challenges: there are numerous examples of high quality student-led employability activity through student societies and other activity groups. The College will continue to support and encourage the
range of student-led activities relating to career learning and employability happening on campus, to ensure that student-led activity is high impact.

Objectives:

6.1 Work with KCLSU to collate and analyse data on student engagement in student-led career-related activities and consider ways to track impact
6.2 Establish a career development fund to support student societies looking to enhance their offering in relation to careers/employability
6.3 Establish a similar fund to provide financial support to assist students to access internships or other employability enhancement activities, who otherwise might not be able to

6. Targeted support for specific cohorts

The specific cohorts below have been identified as groups of students where a cross-College approach would be of benefit.

(6) 1. Postgraduate taught students:

Challenges: A significant proportion of our PGT cohort expects a highly bespoke career development service tailored to their discipline and their career aspirations. Currently, PGT employability provision is under-resourced and fragmented across the College. Creative approaches are required to balance impact against availability of resource, and looking at partnerships between Schools, Careers & Employability and The Graduate School.

Objectives:

1.1. Ensure that PGT provision is built into School employability plans so that resource is allocated appropriately where impact is most required
1.2. Evaluate the relative impact of centralised School-level support versus discipline-embedded approaches to employability support for PGT students
1.3. Continue to focus on increasing work-based opportunities for PGT students, recognising the relative length and intensity of their programmes (e.g. through more part-time internships)

(6) 2. Postgraduate research students:

Challenges: employment outcomes are good for our PGR cohort, and students can access an excellent range of professional and career development training and support through the Researcher Development Unit. Challenges here are to ensure that higher numbers of PGR students are aware of, and able to access, this support; and that adequate support is given to PGR students to explore the full range of career options open to them. As with PGT students, this requires a partnership approach between Careers and Employability and the RDU in the Graduate School.

Objectives:

2.1 Extend the successful Step internship scheme to create a framework for PGR internships through the Graduate School (possibly targeted by sector or discipline)
2.2 Support the Careers Consultant to have more strategic discussions with PGR students, earlier in their studies about the range of career options open to them.
2.3 Expand the highly successful alumni careers events that are run specifically for PGRs where they can connect with King’s PhD alumni who work in sectors other than academia
2.4 Work with the RDU to run alternative careers workshops aimed at researchers
2.5 Consider alumni data collection to gather longitudinal measures of PGR employment outcomes, particularly around progression in academia

(6) 3. Widening participation and access to the professions: to ensure that students from all backgrounds are supported to access the full range of possible careers.

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1 Latest PTES data indicates that that 53.8% of respondents had chosen to study at PGT level to improve their employment prospects; 55.9% stated that they were motivated by potential for progression within their chosen career.

2 Post-doctoral research staff are also able to access specific careers support through Careers & Employability and the Researcher Development Unit
Challenges: the King’s Strategy for WP has adopted a Lifecycle approach to student support from attraction through to graduate employment outcomes. Work is now required to link up strands of activity and to ensure that outcomes are tracked to identify where targeted support may be required.

Objectives:
3.1 Cross-reference WP data and DLHE data to better profile the graduate employment outcomes of our WP cohorts and identify areas where additional support might be required
3.2 Continue to channel OFFA money to support students to access co-curricular enhancement activities (e.g. Study Abroad, internships and volunteering opportunities)
3.3 Strengthen signposting of existing opportunities to support students from particular backgrounds to access different careers, as well as look for ways to strengthen this support

(6) 4. Internationalising student employability:
Challenges: King’s has a rich diversity of students from across the world, many of whom were attracted to King’s because of the opportunity to study in London and access experiences through UK higher education. Challenges include providing sufficient levels of targeted support for students from different labour markets who wish to work outside the UK after their degree; and developing contacts internationally to enhance work and study opportunities abroad for all King’s students.

Objectives:
4.1 Develop clear strategic objectives and targets around international employer engagement to include internships and volunteering opportunities – to be defined in consultation with the VP International and King’s Worldwide
4.2 Develop a more coherent set of student support services around career management and employability for EU and non-EU students, linking together work done by Student Advice and International Student Support, Study Abroad and Careers and Employability – to be defined in consultation with the new VP International
4.3 Continue to encourage and support language learning, study abroad and other international opportunities as a potential employability differentiator for students – highlighting the work done by the Modern Language Centre, Study Abroad and relevant academic departments
4.4 Develop more connections with international employers in strategic labour markets through Careers & Employability, working with King’s Worldwide

7. Key Performance Indicators
Various KPIs will be appropriate to these different strands of activity. However, at the highest level, the following measures would be used to determine the success of the Strategy and to inform planning and evaluation of activities and initiatives across Schools and departments:

7.1. Graduate employment outcomes
- Graduate Prospects score for departments benchmarked to relevant competitors - targets to be set for each Department at UG and PGT level based on 09-12 trend data
- Reduction in unemployment figures in relevant departments to improve overall EPI for the College, particularly at UG level (targets to be set per dept where relevant)
- Graduate prospects outcomes mapped against widening participation profiles for depts

7.2. Student satisfaction (using NSS, PTES, PRES as main benchmarking data)
- Establishment of baseline data from NSS 2014 around careers support to identify priority areas and to review current provision
- Review of PTES and PRES data around professional development support as part of annual reviews

7.3. Employer engagement & internship measures
- Targeted increases in strategically important sectors
- Increased number of placement or internship opportunities provided through employer partners - current benchmark to be established and annual targets to be set
- Measures of employer engagement impact through (e.g.) position in annual High Fliers survey of graduate recruiters
## Appendix 1: Objectives for 2014-16 with indicative timescales/ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College-wide objective</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Timescales</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Employability support will be clearly planned and evaluated at School level, informed by robust data and the objectives of the Strategy</strong></td>
<td>1.1. Employability and employment outcomes data to be included in annual School review and planning processes, with reports on progress and subsequent plans included in reports to CEC</td>
<td>Enhanced data included in 2014-15 planning round. Annual reports to include commentary on employability provision from 2014.</td>
<td>C&amp;E working with School Leads</td>
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<td>1.2. Develop and formalise the role of Careers Liaison Tutor (CLTs) within Departments and consider appropriate resource to support the role</td>
<td>Revised role in place by start of 14-15 academic cycle. Regular meetings of CLTs established at School/Cluster level</td>
<td>C&amp;E working with HoDs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.3. Ensure that each dept is aware of their named Careers &amp; Employability Lead</td>
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<td>1.4. Pilot a process for gathering employability data from students at the point of annual registration to inform provision and track progress</td>
<td>Pilot for registration 2015-16</td>
<td>C&amp;E working with Student Administration</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Work-based experiences and other career enhancement activities will be seen as a key part of the educational offering at King’s and a differentiator in the market</strong></td>
<td>2.1 Increase the number of students accessing internship opportunities, with particular emphasis around sectors of strategic importance to the College.</td>
<td>Transition of accredited internship provision into Careers &amp; Employability by July 2014</td>
<td>C&amp;E</td>
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<td>- Develop the scope of accredited internships provision</td>
<td>20% increase in Step opportunities by March 2015</td>
<td>C&amp;E</td>
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<td>- Continue King’s Step post-pilot to deliver 20% increase on the pilot year</td>
<td>Develop pilot student consultancy programme with KISS-DTC Sep 2014</td>
<td>C&amp;E / Graduate School / Partnerships &amp; Consultancy</td>
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<td>- Develop a more coherent central offering around internships across all sectors, so that students know where to go to access opportunities</td>
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<td>- Track the impact of work experience on early career success of graduates</td>
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<td>2.5 Make more explicit the employability benefits of the wide variety of co-curricula learning and development opportunities through the new co-curricula prospectus &amp; online information</td>
<td>Co-curricula prospectus produced annually ready for start of the academic year</td>
<td>KLI</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.6. Increase and track student engagement with the AKC and the College’s other co-curricula opportunities – including representation of the HEAR</td>
<td>Student engagement data to be reported through the SOS Committee regularly</td>
<td>C&amp;E/KLI</td>
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<td>3. <strong>King’s will be one of the most highly targeted institutions in the UK by graduate employers, with clear points of access and suitable ways to engage. Alumni networks will be utilised to ensure that students benefit from the College’s extensive alumni connections</strong></td>
<td>3.1 Develop employer engagement strategies for priority Schools with clear targets for increased engagement</td>
<td>Plans in place for 2014-15 academic cycle for priority areas</td>
<td>C&amp;E with dept leads</td>
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<td>- Develop a coherent strategy for international employer engagement which aligns to the strategic goals of the College and ensures that students benefit from the College’s strategic partnerships and other international links [resource dependent]</td>
<td>Develop international employer engagement targets by Dec 2014 [resource dependent]</td>
<td>C&amp;E working with King’s Worldwide</td>
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<td>3.3 Strengthen employer liaison to create a stronger focal point for SME engagement, student internships and projects linked to graduate employment [resource dependent]</td>
<td>Targets for engagement set for priority sectors Sep 2014 [resource dependent]</td>
<td>C&amp;E</td>
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<td>4. <strong>Alumni networks will be utilised further to ensure that students benefit from the College’s extensive alumni connections</strong></td>
<td>4.1 Continue with existing student-alumni connections through the College’s alumni mentoring programmes and alumni-based careers events</td>
<td>Ongoing schedule of events annually</td>
<td>C&amp;E working with Alumni Relations</td>
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<td>4.2 Expand the alumni connections online platform to become a wide-ranging resource for students seeking careers information or contacts in the UK and beyond</td>
<td>Soft launch of online mentoring platform Spring 2014. Engagement targets tbc</td>
<td>Alumni Relations</td>
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<td>4.3 Increase the number of internships or other work-relevant opportunities that are made available to students from alumni [resource dependent]</td>
<td>Strategic targets and numbers tbc [resource dependent]</td>
<td>Alumni Relations working with C&amp;E</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. **Innovation and enterprise skills will be integrated where appropriate within disciplinary learning and co-curricula opportunities**

5.1 Continue to support and extend visible pre-start-up IAG and business planning support for students interested in starting their own business (including the Lion’s Den Business Competition, UnLtd partnership and support for relevant student societies)

UnLtd Partnership launched Jan 2014. Lion’s Den Competition to show annual increase in engagement/business start ups

Partnerships & Consultancy supported by Graduate School & C&E

5.2 Raise the profile of innovation activities currently taking place at King’s, to help the College to be more closely identified with innovation and enterprise

Activity tbc in line with priorities of new Innovation Committee

6. **Students will be supported to develop their own employability, including support for student-led career enhancement activities**

6.1 Work with KCLSU to collate and analyse data on student engagement in student-led career-related activities and consider ways to track impact

Initial data collated by Dec 2014 C&E/KCLSU

Feasibility of fund to be explored by Sept 2014 C&E

6.2 Establish a similar fund to provide financial support to assist students to access internships or other employability enhancement activities

Feasibility of fund to be explored by Sept 2014 C&E

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**Targeted support for specific groups of students:**

1. **Postgraduate taught students**

1.1 Evaluate the relative impact of centralised School-level support versus discipline-embedded approaches to employability support for PGT students

Initial review Sep 2014 with implementation in 2015-16 C&E working with the Graduate School RDU

1.2 Ensure that PGT provision is built into School employability plans so that resource is allocated appropriately where impact is most required

Annual plans confirmed for 2014-15 C&E working with Schools

2. **Postgraduate research students:**

2.1 Extend the successful Step internship scheme to create a framework for PGR internships through the Graduate School (possibly targeted by sector or discipline)

Pilot scheme launched Mar 2014. C&E

2.2 Expand the highly successful alumni careers events that are run specifically for PGRs where they can connect with King’s PhD alumni who work in sectors other than academia

Tbc [resource dependent] C&E/GS RDU

2.3 Ensure that alternative careers workshops aimed at researchers are included in the Researcher Development Programme

Ongoing – evaluation of attendance and feedback on an annual basis C&E/GS RDU

2.4 Consider alumni data collection to gather longitudinal measures of PGR employment outcomes, particularly around progression in academia

Tbc [resource dependent] C&E/GS RDU

3. **Widening participation and access to the professions to ensure that students from all backgrounds are supported to access the full range of possible careers.**

3.1 Cross-reference WP data and DLHE data to better profile the graduate outcomes of our WP cohorts and identify areas where additional support might be required

Initial WP data analysis available by July 2014 C&E/WP

3.2 Continue to channel OFFA money to support students to access co-curricular enhancement activities (e.g. Study Abroad, internships and volunteering opportunities

Fund established with clear administration and application processes – Mar 2015 C&E/WP

3.3 Strengthen signposting of existing opportunities as well as look for ways to strengthen this support (based on analysis of employment outcomes for different groups)

Initial data analysis available by Sep 2014 to look at outcomes in relation to WP criteria C&E working with HEFCE project lead

4. **International student employability & student mobility:**

4.1 Develop clear strategic objectives and targets around international employer engagement to include internships and volunteering opportunities

Targets tbc [resource dependent] C&E working with King’s Worldwide

4.2 Strengthen coordination of student support services for international students around career management and employability

Targets tbc C&E, Study Abroad, Student Advice