**Helping students boost their employability: a guide for academics**

Your students’ career thinking should start as soon as they arrive at Queen Mary, i.e. during their first year of undergraduate (or postgraduate) studies. The Careers and Enterprise department believes that students need to give themselves time to explore their options, acquire work experience, as well as relevant and specific training. Eventually, students need to be able to understand what their values and motivations are and how these align with their future career path; they also need to be able to confidently show they are the right fit for the opportunities and the organisations they are interested in.

However, not all students think like this. In fact, many of them do not think about their career until they are in their final year or even final few months of their studies. Although this is understandable considering their desire to focus on achieving their degree, it is not necessarily the best way to do it. How can we change this behaviour? The key word is “we”. We need to make them aware of the opportunities available to them and promote the importance of exploring their career options early on. Hopefully this article helps you understand how you can positively impact a student’s career.

Firstly, the purpose of advisers discussing students’ career early on (i.e. during their first year of undergraduate studies) is to ensure they are already exploring their career options and are not worried about their future when it is too late. Some final year advisees might be worried about their future after their university education has been completed; others might think there are not as many opportunities available to them. What is the best way to empower students and calm their worries? Stefan Couch, Careers Consultant, shared three top tips for academics to support students, whether they are worried, not very confident, “last-minute preppers” or even over prepared.

* Refer to the information and advice in the [“Academic Advisers Careers Help Sheet”](https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=4268) document. This document was specifically created to help academics help students with typical careers-related questions they may have.
* Encourage your students to be independent and explore the information and advice in the “Career Guides” put together by Stefan Couch and Jonathan Strathdee, Employer Engagement and Internships Coordinator. These guides are tailored for Mathematical Sciences students and specifically designed for each year of study. They can be found on the [‘Maths Careers’ QM Plus page](https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=4416) under the tab called “Careers Guides”.
* Lastly, please encourage your students to reflect on where they are at in their career thinking. To help students reflect on this, it is a good idea to use a model called EAST *(Explore, Acquire, Show and Tell).* This model will allow students to reflect on their career thinking progress and is a great way to begin this potentially lifelong process of career thinking, too. If you would like more information related to understanding the original concept of the EAST framework (i.e. what is the methodology behind it? What other universities in the UK use this model?), please refer to the [Careers Registration Practical Guide](https://www.nagcas.org.au/documents/item/365) for further details.

If you have any questions about Careers and Enterprise or how to better support your students with their career thinking, feel free to contact Stefan Couch. We hope you found this article useful. If we all support our students towards a better future, hopefully they will be able to come back and “tell” the next generation of undergraduate and postgraduate students at the School of Mathematical Sciences and inspire them towards successful futures too.