

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**HSS Student Bursary Project Advert 2023/24**

**Project title:**

An investigation of international students' awareness and engagement with Careers & Enterprise services and an identification of measures to improve participation rates.

**Summary/explanation of the project:**

This joint projects seeks to understand why most international students do not engage with the wide range of services available via the Careers & Enterprise Service, where at the same time they acknowledge the benefits of doing so. We hope to understand how to improve engagement rates.

**Project leads:**

Jennefer Brown, Programme Convenor, Pre-Masters Graduate Diploma, Language Centre, SLLF, [jenny.brown@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:jenny.brown@qmul.ac.uk)

Rhianna Skeates, International Careers Consultant, Careers & Enterprise Service, QM  
[r.skeates@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:r.skeates@qmul.ac.uk)

**Relationship between this project and your research or scholarship:**

Over the past 6 years, as programme lead on the Pre-Masters Graduate Diploma, I have tried to engage my students in career-enhancing activities; provided information about Careers & Enterprise (C&E) events/services, prepared workshops, encouraged outside companies to interest them in internships. It is unfortunate that only a few students have taken up these opportunities where there are so many benefits to be gained. My scholarship work seeks to understand whether there are particular barriers to access and involvement in these activities.

I have enlisted the support of Rhianna Skeates, a newly-appointed International Careers Consultant, who seeks to boost the participation rates of our large cohorts of international students to a wide range of C&E services. A student survey conducted in summer 2023 indicated that international students are keenly aware of the importance of career-planning but when presented with opportunities, do not take them up. With a greater emphasis on employability embedded in the QM 2030 strategy, this small study may have wider implications for access to and provision of support for international students who comprise 30-40% of total student numbers.

**Project work and outcomes:**

I will work with the funded student to create a short questionnaire which aims to identify levels of awareness/engagement with the C&E service specifically among international students. We will recruit participants via Schools' T&L Managers, student networks, with the aim of identifying those students who have had no contact with C&E. We will jointly analyse the questionnaire data to inform the second stage of the project. The students who have indicated non-engagement with C&E will be invited to take part in interviews and/or focus groups which will be scoped out depending on available participants. Discussions during these interviews/focus groups will focus on questionnaire findings as well as respond to specific question areas pre-defined by C&E.

Analysis of findings will inform changes to our approach in order to increase international students' participation in a wide range of beneficial activities and experiences.

**Student skills and knowledge required:**

Experience of creating and analysing questionnaires and conducting interviews/focus groups is useful, so a PGT student is preferred. Proactive and independent approach. Attention to detail and an analytical mindset.

**This project may appeal to international (or home) students themselves who have had no contact with the Careers & Enterprise service and would like to find out how it can benefit them as well as promote it to other international students across QM.**

**Start date and work pattern:**

**Hours of work:** guideline of 7 hours maximum per week to be followed.

**Project schedule:**

Initial meeting in mid January 2024 to scope out the study and approximate time lines

Stage 1 – create and disseminate questionnaire and carry out analysis of respondent data with support of Careers & Enterprise services

Stage 2 – invite specific questionnaire respondents to interviews/focus groups to explore reasons for non-engagement with Careers & Enterprise services and determine possible actions to promote engagement.

All project work to be completed by **19 April 2024**.

Students must submit applications to Alicia Barnes, Research Officer ([a.barnes@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:a.barnes@qmul.ac.uk)) by **12 noon on 1 December 2023**. Each School will make its own arrangements for selecting student applicants; these may include interviews if considered appropriate.

We anticipate that funding will be disbursed in two instalments, both subject to confirmation by the academic project lead that the student has been working appropriately.

The first instalment (40% of the award) will be paid no earlier than the end of February 2024; the second (60% of the award) will be paid upon overall completion.