



FE Staff Training and Information Events NASES

Executive summary

PM12 provided funding for NASES to deliver a series of one day events for careers and employability staff in FE who work with international students.

- Six events were delivered in June and November 2010.
- Events were held at various locations across the country to provide national coverage and enable delegates to attend an event within their region. The following regions were covered: North West, North East, Midlands, South west, London and the south east, Scotland.
- 60 delegates attended the events representing 40 institutions, plus several employers and international students attended to provide case studies.
- Positive feedback has been obtained from delegates.
- A suite of resources has been developed: presentation, useful resources, examples of best practice, and cases studies. They are being made available to a wider audience through the NASES website.
- Links were made with staff, employers and international students which have proved valuable for providing case studies and networking opportunities to develop relationships which have added value to other projects and events.

Background/overview

Employability is a key concern of international students when considering their satisfaction with a UK education. However, international students and graduates come from diverse environments where the employment situation may be very different to that in the UK. To best serve this community, careers and employment service professionals need to be well versed in the special requirements of and opportunities for international students and graduates, and need to develop their cross-cultural skills in order to interact effectively with this group.

The FE sector in particular represents a number of challenges for both practitioners and international students, working with limited resources. This training programme aimed to address these challenges by providing a programme of 6 regional networking and information events to enhance the cultural awareness, knowledge and skills of FE careers and student employment professionals, including disseminating information on National Insurance and tax policy and procedures, available resources and strategies.

The training sessions were originally planned for 3 events in September 2009 and December 2010. However there were delays to the commencement of the project owing to contractual negotiations, and so the original start date was not achieved. In addition the training had to be postponed twice because of reviews of and changes to the Immigration Rules, as there seemed little point in providing information which was in a state of flux and potential change. The events were delivered in June and November 2010.

Because of these delays there have been changes in the economic situation, and although the training was free delegates had to fund their own travel costs. Also staff are sometimes not being replaced when they leave which makes it harder for the remaining staff to be out of the office. Had the training been delivered at the originally planned dates a higher level of attendance might have

been achieved, however this has been mitigated by making the resources available and promoting their availability.

The total indicative project costs are £12,000 in the financial year 2009-2010.

Objectives

The project objectives were as follows.

- To meet the needs of careers and employment advisors in their day to day work with international students.

The positive feedback received indicates that this objective has been met.

- To use and disseminate good practice case studies and other resources developed through the PMI 2 project.

Examples of good practice were obtained through the workshop sessions and a list of useful resources developed. These have been disseminated through the NASES website, see Appendix 4.

- To enhance the cultural awareness, knowledge, skills and awareness of the opportunities and regulations of FE careers and student employment advisors in order to meet the needs of international students and graduates.

These topics were covered on the day through the formal sessions, a detailed programme is included in Appendix 1.

Outputs

The outputs specified in the project bid were:

- the delivery of a series of six regional networking and information sharing events designed to develop the skills and expertise of FE staff advising on careers and employment options for international students and graduates;
- the production of a final report giving a summary of the project and how it met its objectives.

Events

Six events were delivered, five in June 2010 and the final event in November 2010 across six regions. The dates and venues of the events were as follows.

Date	Region	Venue
3 June	North west	University of Liverpool
8 June	Scotland	Edinburgh's Telford College
11 June	Midlands	University College Birmingham
16 June	London and south east	Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College
30 June	North west	Leeds City College
25 November	South west	City Inn Bristol

The programme was developed in consultation and following events for staff in HE previously funded by PMI1 where a need for specific training for staff in FE was identified. The programme included formal sessions covering Cultural awareness, The rules and regulations, Supporting employers, Supporting international students and Useful resources. In addition there were two workshop sessions covering the challenges of working with international students and ways of meeting these challenges. The workshops gave the opportunity to network and to share best practice and experiences in order to benchmark against services delivering the best services. A detailed programme is included in Appendix 1.

Feedback was obtained after each event and appropriate changes to the programme were made on an ongoing basis as a result of the feedback and of issues arising during the day. In addition the Immigration Regulations were monitored and the content of that session changed to reflect changes to the regulations.

Promotion of the events

Details of all the events were added to the Training part of the NASES website, included in the news section of the site and also added to the ticker on the site. A paper flyer promoting all events was produced and sent out to all FE colleges using NASES, UKCISA and AoC distribution channels. NASES promoted the events generally through its e-newsletter, specific regional events were promoted through NASES regional contacts and through the networks of the host institutions. The events were also promoted through the Association of Colleges (AoC), the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) email distribution channels.

A total of nearly 60 delegates attended the events from nearly 40 different institutions mainly within FE but also from HE, and covered a range of different roles within job shops and international offices. Details are included in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively.

Resources produced

The following resources have been developed:

- a presentation, with some accompanying notes;
- useful resources;
- case studies;
- list of challenges faced and potential solutions to the challenges identified for each workshop;
- key themes identified in the challenges and a consolidated set of solutions were identified.

The resources produced for and as a result of the training events have been made available on the NASES website at www.nases.org.uk/wwistraining. Their availability has been promoted to delegates, NASES members, through UKCISA, AoC and AGCAS. Their availability has been highlighted on the NASES website thus making them available to a wider audience. Screenshots from the website are included in Appendix 4.

Reporting

This final report on the success of the project has been produced.

Evaluation feedback

Delegates were asked to complete a survey to give feedback on their views of the training and a response rate of 50% was obtained indicating the following points.

All respondents to the following questions rated the event Excellent or Good:

- Organisation: Were you informed as to when and what the subjects would be?
- Course Notes: Were the notes clear, professionally presented, and supplied on time?
- Relevance: Were the subjects relevant to your job and your future aspirations?
- Supporting Materials: Were appropriate materials provided or a source referenced?
- Style: Was the course conducted in a pleasant and positive atmosphere?
- Back Up: Was assistance offered and available for queries outside the course days?

Comments regarding what delegates found enjoyable included:

- Understanding different cultures and how you could use some of the ideas given in the future
- Looking at perceptions of International Students
- Most of it I found enjoyable, interesting and relevant
- When we all had to get involved and do team work
- Workshop two – sharing ideas and good practice
- Swapping ideas and experiences
- All of it
- I enjoyed the whole day
- I enjoyed the workshop/group work activities as you pick up good ideas that you haven't thought of

Comments regarding what delegates found useful included:

- PowerPoint by the leader informative
- The workshops were useful and it was a good networking opportunity
- The information relating to EEA students - outside my professional area
- The workshop about finding solutions to the questions most often asked, and listening to the student from the Ivory Coast's experience
- Details on visas
- New working regs for international students
- I learnt a lot about the visa with international students
- Legal information
- Learning about the legislation
- The rules and regulations
- Workshops and employer presentation
- Tax Information/National Insurance Information
- All of it. If you knew it, it was still worth listening to the views of other people from other institutions

Comments regarding what delegates found least enjoyable included:

- Most indicated none
- Found regulations part heavy-going but useful
- There wasn't anything I didn't enjoy. Occasionally it was less relevant for what I do, but even those bits I found interesting

There were a few suggestions regarding improvements to the course should it be run again. This included the comment that it would be useful to hold a similar event for staff working in HE institutions. A number of the delegates were from HE as well as from FE.

All respondents except one indicated that with the benefit of hindsight they would still have wished to attend the training event.

Recommendations

NASES will aim to incorporate the training course into its training programme. With this in mind it will conduct a training needs analysis during 2010 of both members and non-members to identify specific current needs. The comments from delegates regarding possible improvements will be taken into account when any further training regarding work with international student is developed.

The political climate has also changed and the outcomes of the current UKBA consultation of the student immigration system need to be finalised before any further training courses can be planned or developed.

In the meantime NASES should continue to promote the availability of the resources developed as a result of the training. There should be a “health warning” regarding the date at which they were correct and updated where possible.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Programme

Working with International Students

This one day event for careers and employability staff provides an overview of the rules and regulations when working with international students. There will be workshop sessions where participants can discuss the challenges faced by staff working with international students, explore innovative ways of overcoming the challenges identified, share best practice and generate ideas. In addition there will be case studies from employers and international students.

9.45	Registration (tea /coffee)
10.00	Welcome and introductions
10.15	Setting the scene
10.30	Cultural awareness
10.45	The regulations - employing international students The legal situation Permission to work Can I advise students? ... National Insurance issues Tax Implications
11.45	Introduction to work shop activities
11.50	Work shop 1 Discussion to identify challenges of working with international students and feedback
12.30	Lunch
13.30	Work shop 2 Opportunity to explore innovative ways to overcome issues identified in work shop 1, share good practice and generate ideas and feedback
14.15	Feedback from work shops
15.00	Coffee /tea break
15.15	Supporting employers including case study
15.30	Supporting international students including case study
15.45	Resources and next steps
16.00	Finish

Appendix 2 – Institutions represented

Aberdeen University
Anniesland College
Birmingham Metropolitan College
Cardonald College
Carnegie College
City of Bristol College
City of Westminster College
Coleg Menai
College of Law, Birmingham
Dudley College
Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College
Glasgow Metropolitan College
Gloucestershire College
Glyndwr University
Greenwich Community College
Heriot Watt University
Hull College
Leeds City College
Leeds University Union
Llandrillo College
Manchester Metropolitan University
Newman University College
Perth College
Queen Margaret University
Students' Union Cheltenham
Swansea University
The University of Edinburgh
University College Birmingham
University of Exeter
University of Abertay
University of Bedfordshire
University of Central Lancashire
University of St. Andrews
University of York
Uxbridge College
Volunteering England
Wakefield College
West Thames College
University of Bolton

Appendix 3 – Types of roles attending

Administrative Services Manager
Admissions Administrator (International)
AG Adviser
Careers Adviser
Careers Consultant
Careers Information Adviser
Careers Manager
Careers Centre Administrator
Customer Services and Operations Manager
Development Co-ordinator
Employability & Enterprise Co-ordinator
Employer Liaison and Careers Support Consultant
Employment Adviser
Head of Administration Services
Head of Guidance and Information Services
Higher Education Senior Officer
IAG Manager
Information and Advice Centre Manager
Information Assistant
International Business Manager
International Business and Welfare Manager
International Centre Administrator
International Co-ordinator
International English Co-ordinator
International Officer
International Programmes Development Manager
International Project Officer
International Student Adviser
International Student Welfare Advisor
Job Centre Co-ordinator
Joblink Co-ordinator
Jobshop Assistant
Jobshop Co-ordinator
Jobshop Officer
Membership Services Manager
Recruitment Co-ordinator
SAGE Team Leader
Senior Lecturer Employability
Student Adviser
Student Financial Support Team Leader
Student Opportunities Officer

Appendix 4 – Training resources produced available on the NASES website

www.nases.org.uk/wwistraining

