

Exeter – International Virtual Careers Fair 2011 – 31 January – 11 February:

Name of institution: University of Exeter

AGCAS Heads of Service: Paul Blackmore

Name of persons making the bid: Dominic Prosser

Contact details: d.w.j.prosser@exeter.ac.uk | 01392 723829

Project title: PMI2 International Virtual Recruitment Fair

Project Overview & Rationale

The University of Exeter undertook this pilot project in order to build on its previous experience of running virtual fairs. We also wanted to explore the viability of running an international virtual careers fair which allowed international students and graduates across the UK to engage with employers from a range of overseas countries.

Approach & organization

We considered three web shell options for the pilot virtual fair. We re-examined feedback on the two different shells Exeter had previously used:

- a bespoke graphic-rich in-house system
- an off-the-shelf low-tech third party system (acareerforme)

Priorities for users were:

- A wider range and number of employers
- Fast access to information
- No flashy graphics/simulations if they are at the expense of slower access or a restricted volume of employers

We also ran a focus group with recent graduates where we elicited their feedback and recommendations on the above two shells and another third party virtual fair simulation-style solution (virtualfairuk). The graduate voice was unequivocal and recommended the low-tech acareerforme solution as it was felt it was easy to use and clear, had straight forward easy navigation and of the three alternatives was felt to do the job best at the moment.

Having historically run 10 week virtual fairs (UK employer focused) we wanted to pilot a shorter 12 day fair, inspired by the successful experiences of the two other PMI2 Virtual Fair organizers (Glasgow and Staffordshire).

Marketing to employers was done through direct email shots and linked-in event listing. The most successful marketing tactic was direct personal email invitations. We incentivized employer engagement in the fair through offering free 1 page stands.

Marketing materials

The fair was advertised to students on campus via twitter and facebook, the students' web portal, the employability e-newsletter, the employability website, posters and flyers. We distributed electronic masters of the following through the agcas-studentalert@JISCMail.AC.UK list: webpage banner ad, plasma screen slide, and A4 poster. At Exeter we also distributed a 2 sided DL flyer and an A3 poster.

Meeting PM12 / AGCAS objectives as outlined in your bid

The Exeter fair did not require registration so analysis of visitor origin is dependent on interrogation of the server log which was undertaken using Google Analytics. This indicated a wide geographical take-up within the UK and overseas. The top 20 visitor locations (number of visits) were: 1 Glasgow (330), 2 Manchester (326), 3 Edinburgh (324), 4 Exeter (320), 5 London (220). 6 Oxford (118), 7 Kuala Lumpur (92), 8 Edgbaston (84), 9 Sheffield (70), 10 Nottingham (60), 11 York (55), 12 Plymouth (40), 13 Liverpool (39), 14

Aberdeen (36), 15 Cheltenham (29), 16 Newcastle upon Tyne (25), 17 Birmingham (25), 18 Leeds (20), 19 Falmouth (17), 20 Singapore (15)

Exhibitor numbers - by PMI2 priority markets

- Australia: 6 exhibitors
- China: 18 exhibitors
- Hong Kong: 8 exhibitors
- India: 2 exhibitors
- Indonesia: 4 exhibitors
- Japan: 10 exhibitors
- Malaysia: 3 exhibitors
- Republic of Korea: 1 exhibitor
- Russia: 2 exhibitors
- Saudi Arabia: 1 exhibitor
- Singapore: 8 exhibitors
- Taiwan: 3 exhibitors
- Thailand: 4 exhibitors
- UAE: 1 exhibitor
- USA: 8 exhibitors
- Vietnam: 2 exhibitors

Summary of key deliverables

The Exeter International Virtual Careers Fair took place between 31st January and 11th February 2011. The fair focused on the Pacific-Rim and had over 2000 unique visitors and hosted 36 employers recruiting into graduate vacancies and internships in over 15 countries including Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, USA and Vietnam.

In headline terms, visitor data for the Fair was 2,782 visits from 2,005 absolute unique visitors; 15,239 page views with 5.48 average page views per visit.

Key findings

- 1 This pilot project has demonstrated the value and viability of an International Virtual Careers Fair.
- 2 The International Virtual Careers Fair has helped broker significant new international relationships with key global employers.
- 3 We would run the fair in October/November to coincide with the first cycle of employer recruitment.
- 4 We would retain a strong geographical region focus of employers e.g. Asia-Pacific.
- 5 We would seek central funding to subsidise future fairs to make participation zero cost to employers, as we do not feel there is a strong enough market at present to make international virtual careers fairs income-generating
- 6 We would keep the 12 day format as we achieved significantly higher visitor numbers in 12 days than were achieved in the 10 week autumn fair 2010 (UK employers, but Exeter students only)
- 7 Whilst feeling that a low-tech environment suits the demands of students for rapid access to employer information, we would seek to build in some functionality refinements:
 - a. employer and career sector searching
 - b. cv submission facility
 - c. we have considered but would not run live chat as prior experience in offering this facility and feedback from employers has not shown this feature is felt to be effective and is very time-consuming for employers, fair organisers and users.

Appendices

1. Advertising material (plasma screen master) sent out via AGCAS-link to all AGCAS members



2. Employer mailout sent to employer contacts

Free opportunity to raise your profile with UK-educated student and graduate talent

There are still free places available on The University of Exeter's International Virtual Careers Fair which will be promoted to over 130 Higher Education Institutions UK-wide. Having a stand can help you:

- Find the best and brightest students and graduates
- Promote your graduate recruitment and internship opportunities to UK-educated talent

The Fair will be live from 31st January to 11th February 2011 and will be marketed to students and graduates across the country. In 2008/9, there were 368,970 international students studying in the UK so exhibiting at the Fair will allow you to access a wide pool of UK and International talent.

We are offering 40 free virtual stands on a first-come-first-served basis to employers promoting appropriate schemes.

Apply now!

The closing date for applications is 5th January so book now! For full details and to apply, please see the attachments or visit www.exeter.ac.uk/globaljobs

Recruiting deadline closing soon?

If your recruiting deadline closes soon and you would like to promote your graduate vacancies and internships to University of Exeter students you can submit them for inclusion in our jobsurfing portal via our **offer submission form** also available at www.exeter.ac.uk/globaljobs

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