

On The Move: transitioning from Higher Education into insurance work

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Higher Education Review: Themes for 2015-16

1 Background and introduction

Higher Education Review has a core element and a thematic element. The core element focuses on academic standards, quality of learning opportunities, information, and enhancement. The thematic element focuses on an area which is regarded as particularly worthy of further analysis or enhancement. The thematic element, or theme, is selected by the Higher Education Review Group - which includes representatives of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Universities UK, GuildHE and Association of Colleges - and changes periodically. More information about the theme, including the role it plays in the review process, is provided in Higher Education Review handbook. This document announces the themes for 2015-16 and gives further information and guidance (for the benefit of providers in particular) about how these themes will feature in the review process.

2 The themes for 2015-16

The Higher Education Review Group has selected two themes for reviews happening in the academic year 2015-16: Student Employability, and Digital Literacy. Providers undergoing reviews in 2015-16 will be required to explore one of these themes. It is up to providers to decide which theme they would like to pursue in partnership with their student representatives. The choice of theme should be discussed with the QAA officer coordinating the review during the preparatory meeting held approximately 16 weeks before the review visit. The QAA officer will consider the provider's proposal and confirm within one week of the preparatory visit that the proposal is acceptable. Only where there is a disagreement between the provider and its student representatives about the choice of theme would QAA consider not accepting the provider's proposal.

3 Rationale for the themes identified

Student Employability

Student employability and the steps higher education providers take to improve the employability of their students and graduates have emerged as important areas for discussion both within higher education providers and in the wider community, reflected in recent national initiatives such as the CBI report *Tomorrow's Growth*.¹ Student employability is high on the educational and political agenda. This is fuelled by the impact of higher fees on students' expectations of course content and quality and the broader economic climate that graduates enter into, and is demonstrated by the emergence of a range of initiatives across the higher education sector such as volunteering accreditation, student employability award schemes and extracurricular activities that focus on the development of professional skills and student employability. There has also been a growth in higher education initiatives promoting the development of students' enterprise and entrepreneurial skills.

¹ CBI report *Tomorrow's Growth*, available at: www.cbi.org.uk/campaigns/skills-for-growth/tomorrows-growth-report/.

Annex B - Digital literacy: further guidance

Introduction

Digital literacies can be defined very broadly as those capabilities which fit an individual for living, learning and working in a digital society.² Digital literacy looks beyond functional IT skills to describe a richer set of digital behaviours, practices and identities. What it means to be digitally literate changes over time and across contexts, so digital literacy is essentially a set of academic and professional situated practices supported by diverse and changing technologies. The broad definition above can be used as a starting point to explore what key digital literacy is in a particular higher education context for example university, college, service department, subject area or professional environment.

Courses that embed digital literacy enable students to acquire the requisite skills and confidence and to use them, both in support of their learning, and to enhance their employment prospects and ability to learn and work in a digital society. It therefore enhances the professional relevance of many programmes. Technology-enhanced learning supports the development of digital literacy, for example, encouraging students to communicate through virtual networks, to carry out research using digital tools, to create data sets and to share information.

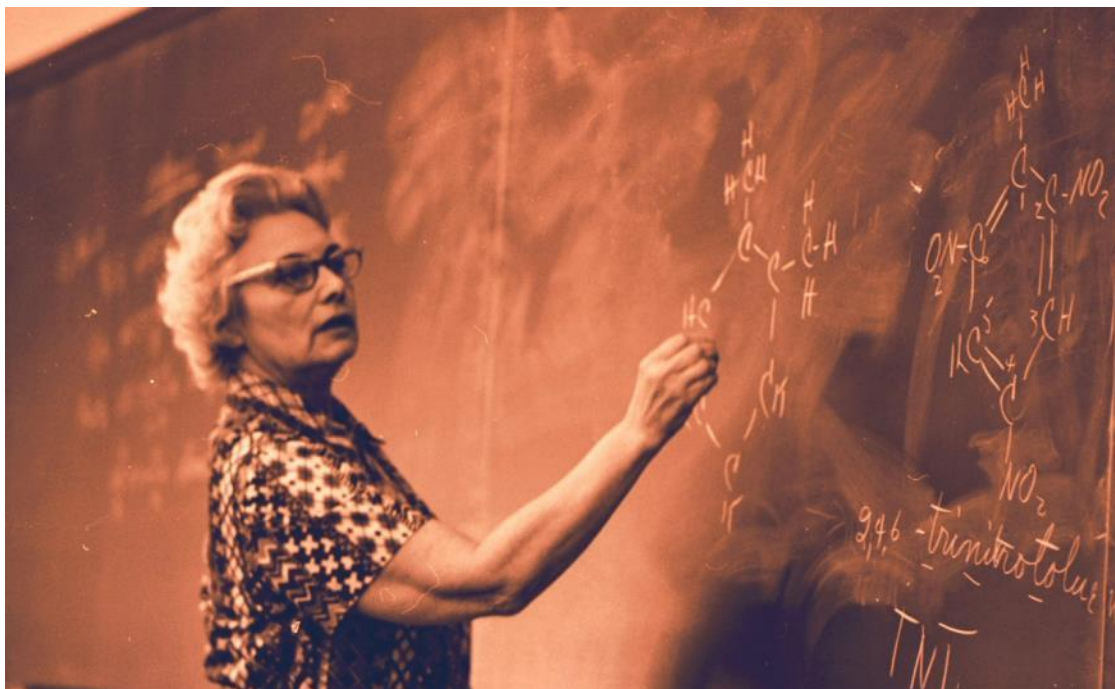
Digital technologies provide new opportunities to enhance teaching, learning, research and the management of organisations. Investing in the digital capabilities of students and staff brings individual and organisational benefits such as:

- providing education in flexible and innovative ways
- meeting the expectations and needs of a diversity of students through an enhanced learning experience
- improving employability and higher skills in a digital economy
- attracting students in a global education market, and improving access
- improving processes, systems and building organisational capacity
- maximising the value of investments in learning technologies, content and services.

As the body of research, resources and technologies relating to digital literacy continues to develop, providers are given new perspectives on how to deliver an education which enables all students to develop digital skills, and new evidence to support and guide them in refining what they do.

This review theme therefore seeks to capture a picture of digital literacy as an established but evolving area. It is intended to consolidate, where relevant, the work the higher education providers are undertaking to enhance the digital literacy skills of their students and graduates, to embed the development of such skills in the curriculum, and to promote technology enhanced learning. It will reach beyond the territory covered in the 'quality of student learning opportunities' element of the review process, to give higher education providers an opportunity to present a fuller and more detailed picture of higher education which enables all students to develop digital skills, identify innovative practice, and showcase examples of good practice.

² JISC Developing digital literacy, available at: www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/infokits/digital-literacies/.



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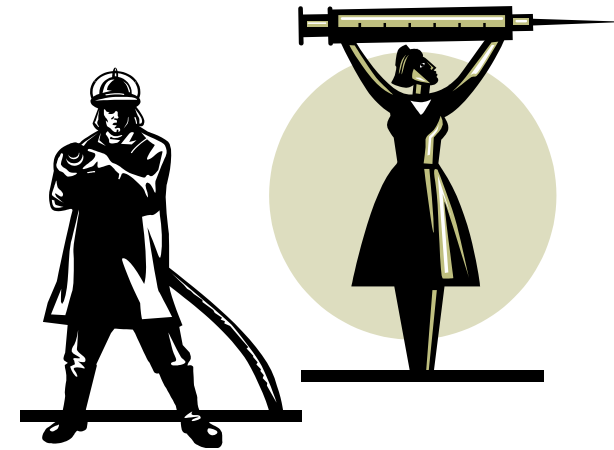


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Information literacy in the workplace

“Information literacy should be defined as the ability to know what there is in a landscape and to draw meaning from this through engagement and experience with information” (Lloyd, 2006:570)

- ‘Learning’ is not the primary goal
- “...productivity, quality measurements, and development of expertise” (Lundh et al, 2013)
- “Effectiveness” (O’Farrill, 2010)
 - Information Literacy as Knowledge Management
 - NHS
- Firefighters, Lloyd (2005, 2006)
- SME and Charities ([Go On UK](#), 2013)



Information literacy in the workplace

- There have been examples of work exploring student attributes in the area of business, accounting and finance (eg Conley & Gill, 2011; Costa, 2009)
- Employers have identified problems around graduate employees being unable to adapt their information capabilities from the study context to the work environment (eg Cheuk, 2008; Kelly et al, 2011; Klusek & Bornstein, 2006; Muir, 2002; Rauterkus & Rauterkus, 2007; Sokoloff, 2012).
- This is partly caused by different contexts, such as sole study in education vs group working practices in employment, and learning outcomes which do not always relate to employability attributes amongst others.
- This area of research is becoming increasingly significant as the demand for knowledge workers' information and digital capabilities in the global knowledge economy continues to grow (Goldstein, 2014; Inskip, 2014; UK Digital Taskforce, 2014; Williams et al, 2014)



Interviews and focus groups

- 18x45 mins interviews at insurance firm, 2x60 min focus groups
- 5x45 mins interviews with students, 1x90 mins focus group
- Transcribed in full externally
- Checked for typos
- Imported into NVivo11
- Coded using themes from questions
- Re-coded using Forster's themes of expanding awareness (TEA)

Themes of expanding awareness?

- Ference Marton
- Phenomenography
- Variation
- Explores different conceptions or experiences, perceptions, understandings
- Differences in meaning, collective analysis



<http://www.walsnet.org/2013/images/stories/bild-13ference220x260px.jpg>

(Forster, 2015, 2016; Yates et al, 2012; Marton, 1986)

Information Literacy experienced ...





Unique Workplace

insurance, manager, underwriters, [company name],
broker, underwriting, underwriter, product, systems,
decision, risks, Lloyds, account, peer, numbers,
claims, individuals, roles, audit, brokers.

1

in processes of
professional
self-
development

Becoming an effective insurance information user

I seek out
knowledge



• I am a
knowledgeable
insurance worker



• I am achieving
and show
professional
competence

• I am achieving
professional
confidence



• I am achieving
autonomy



• I think
strategically,
philosophically,
and am innovative

1

in processes of
professional
self-
development

Becoming an effective insurance information user

I have been **studying** and **researching** the insurance information **field** and **language** and developing technical skills (eg MS Office)



I have become **qualified** and developed understanding of **principles** through learning on-the-job, professional qualification, and ad hoc support



I have gone beyond the training, and have **practised complex processes** and **shared experiences**

My competence has been recognised formally through **appraisals** and informally through day-to-day transactions



I have a **deeper** understanding of insurance information through higher level skills and experience

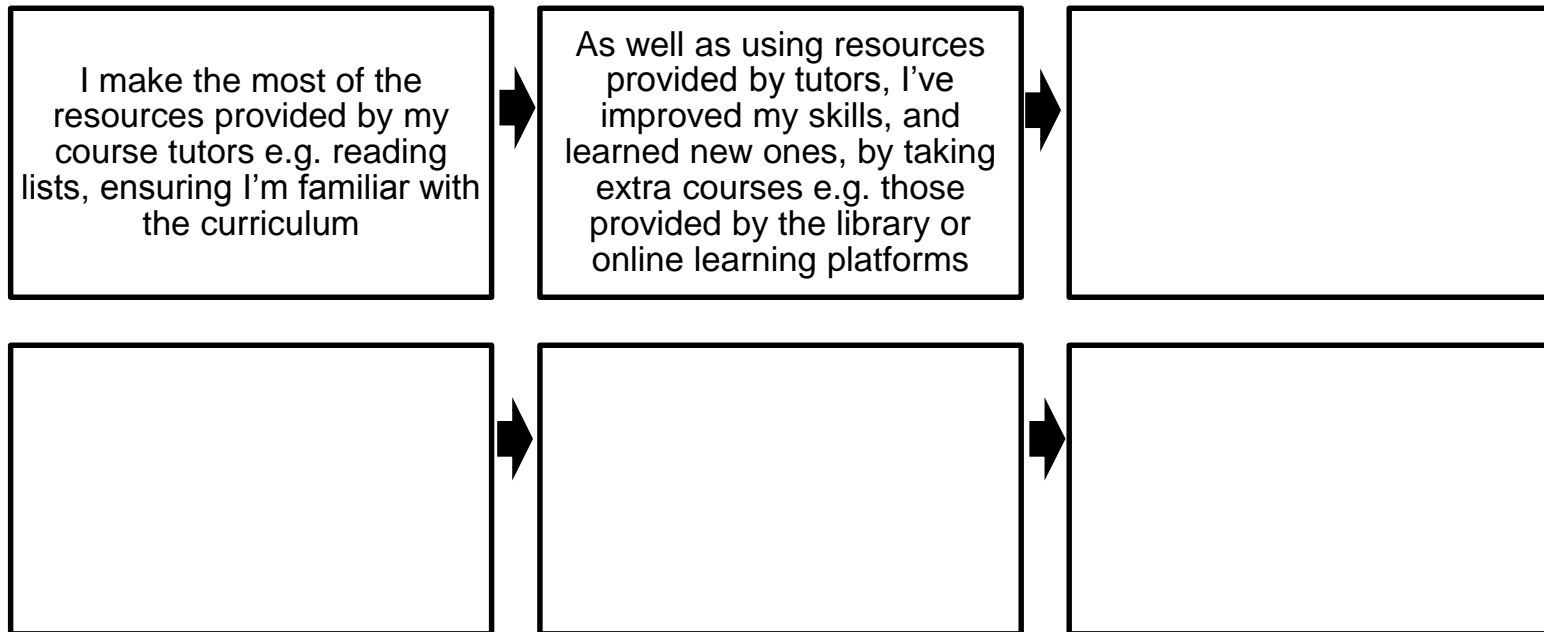


I am **equipped** with the ability to critically reflect on insurance information to **form arguments** and wider strategy

1

in processes of
professional
self-
development

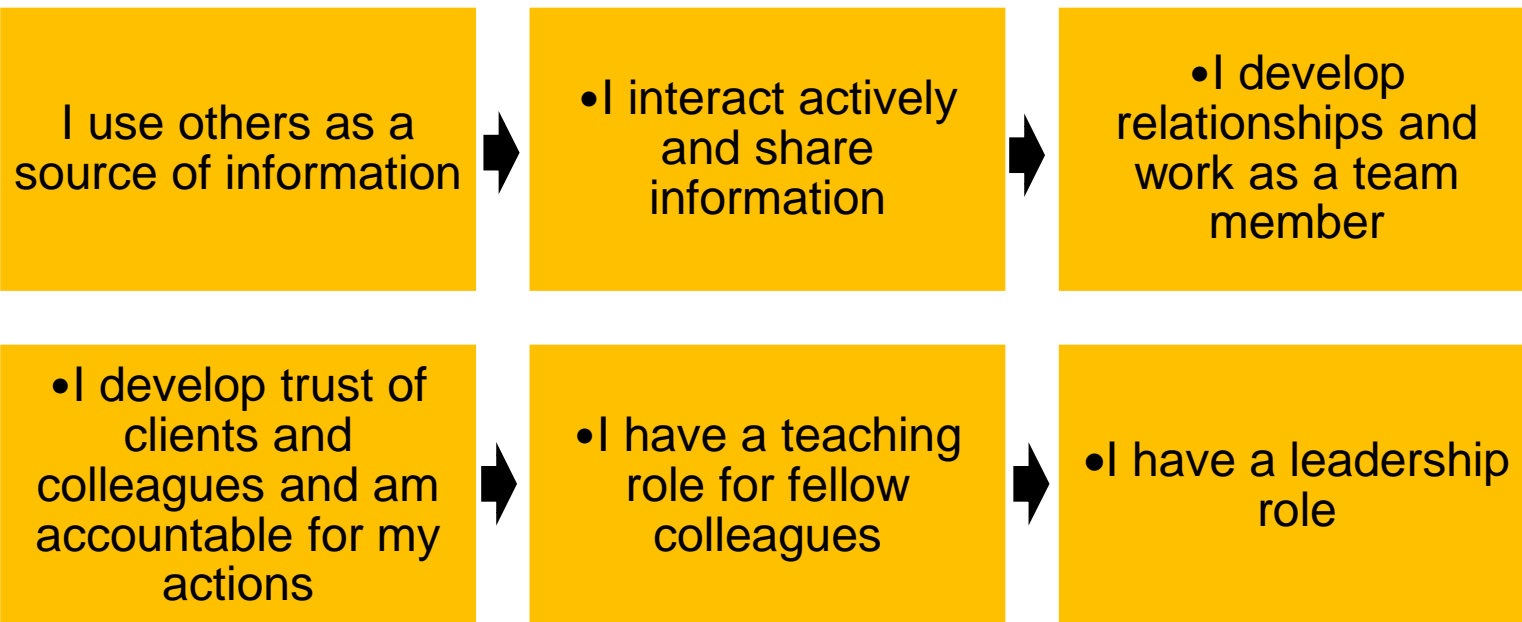
Becoming an effective insurance information user



2

in development and maintenance of relationships with patients, patients' families, colleagues and other professionals

Making the most of the links between people and insurance information



2

in development and maintenance of relationships with patients, patients' families, colleagues and other professionals

Making the most of the links between people and insurance information

I am successful at identifying friendly experts who are able and willing to efficiently feed relevant information and advice



•I **participate** in knowledge sharing processes across work **silos** and externally in order to provide clear information which informs business requirements



•I **interact** with other team members to circulate a **broad** and **deep stream** of relevant business information through the company

•I can reliably provide **competitive** service and prompt and accurate information to clients and colleagues, which is **presented** in a **focused** way so it can be easily **understood**



•*Develop a teaching role and function as a teacher for junior colleagues and other members of the team*



•*Develop a leadership role and am becoming a client advocate and am fulfilling a leadership role within the team*

2

in development
and
maintenance of
relationships
with patients,
patients'
families,
colleagues and
other
professionals

Making the most of the links between people and insurance information

I am good at identifying helpful experts who are able and willing to give me relevant information, support and advice. I seek guidance from people who know more than I do, like my lecturers, coursemates, friends, and library staff. I ask questions and request feedback on my work from lecturers, in order to perform **better**



I have discussions and debates with my peers, and sometimes with my lecturers. I share my ideas and knowledge around assignments, and benefit from theirs



I am part of informal or formal peer networks with other students. We interact, collaborate and exchange ideas, supporting each other to keep our individual or joint work moving in the right direction. My peers value my input and ask for my help

I participate in collaborative groups, and I make an effort to ensure my peers trust me to perform my role. I have my own opinions, and my peers and lecturers allow these to influence the direction of my work and the work of others



- The seven TEAs provide a deep, rich and detailed picture of effective information use within this workplace context and allow some comparison between the nurses, the insurers and the students.
- They provide evidence that the OTM participants experience variations of dimension similar to those of Forster's nurses, and while these variations differ in detail, still group together under similar themes.
- Self-development, information sharing, best practice and evidence-based practice, information gathering processes, principles and conceptions are all part of the picture in this context.
- Naturally the details of these differ, and these differences are made more explicit in OTM by the use of the participants' own terminology, a novel approach which gives voice to the community.

Forster personas

- The passive minimalist (creating knowledge to perform specific basic tasks)
- The knowledgeable goal achiever (creating knowledge for specific goals)
- The focussed, competent and evolving professional (creating knowledge to develop professional competence – to function effectively in particular day to day roles)
- The confident and trusted promoter of justifiable change (creating knowledge that can be used as an agent of change through an understanding of situations and contexts)
- The teacher and promoter of an evidence-based culture (developing knowledge infrastructures which allow specific roles to be performed of the kind which must be based on a complete or almost complete understanding of a context or activity)
- The leader, philosopher and strategist (developing knowledge infrastructures which allow one to act as an established source or vector of ‘wisdom’ in various specific contexts)

The passive minimalist



“This category describes experiences of information literacy in which ‘the facts’ are obtained to deal with the immediate and simple issue or context. Passive information absorption occurs as frequently as information gathering; the latter may frequently be of the ‘scavenging’ type.” (Forster, 2015)

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The knowledgeable goal achiever



“This category describes a way of experiencing information literacy in which the employee is focused on specific goals. Information is sought out, identified and applied in the context of specific professional requirements; this is done in conjunction with a developing background knowledge which allows the employee to know how to address these aims. Skills and relationships are developed with such goals in mind.” (Forster, 2015)

The focussed, competent and evolving professional



“In this category information literacy is experienced in processes of professional effectiveness and achieved functionality. This is governed by a widening awareness of the value of finding and applying evidence and the ability to do so in terms of what can be achieved in improved practice and business outcomes.” (Forster, 2015)

The confident and trusted promoter of justifiable change



“Information literacy is experienced as one of the means and stimuli of an incipient tendency to think abstractly and strategically and as a leader: confident, trusted and with that increasing grasp of the parameters of practice which results in an understanding of the potential value of change and where and how it may usefully occur.” (Forster, 2015)

The Teacher and Promoter of an evidence-based culture



“Information literacy is experienced in contributions to the performing of roles in which a wider strategic focus is beginning to operate; evidence is skilfully obtained and applied towards the development of policy. A leading contribution is made to the development of an information rich culture, often in a teaching role, especially with junior staff.” (Forster, 2015)

The Leader, Philosopher and Strategist



“The most sophisticated level of experience of information literacy operates in the context of the employee as leader, through its part in the promotion of the development of the ability to think strategically and philosophically. The ethics of obtaining or failing to obtain the evidence for best practice, the relationship of evidence to knowledge and experience and the strategic use of evidence and other information are amongst them challenging contexts in which information literacy is experienced in this category.” (Forster, 2015)

- From these examples it can be seen that some progression is required to move through Forster's categories of description, from passive minimalist towards leader, philosopher and strategist.
- The student personae also provide insights into the semantic gap between their conceptions and those within this workplace context.
- The tool is designed to demonstrate the terminology used within the workplace and education in order to support efforts of transition from HE to insurance work.
- This framework and the online tool could be used within the workplace to identify and to develop this progression as an element of workplace learning and staff development.

On The Move wishes to thank:



The library
and information
association



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