

Applicant Information

Introduction

The University of Sunderland is a life-changing Top 50 university that is student-focused, professions-facing and society-shaping. With campuses in the North East of England, London and Hong Kong, and with many other educational partnerships around the world, its student body is diverse, its reach is extensive and its opportunities are truly exciting.

Graduate employability and enterprise are amongst its highest priorities in its Student Success Plan and following a major and multi-phase investment from the University's Executive, we're offering you the opportunity to join us as a key part of the development of our new Centre for Graduate Prospects (CfGP).

Created in March 2022, the CfGP initially drew together the University's Careers and Employability Service, (known as Sunderland Futures), its Enterprise Place and Digital Incubator support for freelancers and the self-employed, as well as its Graduate Internship scheme and support for non-statutory work placements.

The CfGP has since been restructured into five functional areas: Information, Communication & Engagement, Student Opportunities, Entrepreneurial Development, Career Development & Academic Support, and Partnerships & Work-Integrated Learning. Supported by Academic Champions for Employability & Enterprise (ACEEs) and student Development Coaches, the core CfGP team is growing from just over 23 full-time equivalent staff to approximately 33 by the end of the 2022/23 academic year, with further investment following in subsequent years to help it realise its purpose and vision, and deliver its mission.

Purpose and Vision

Motivated by the belief that every student has the potential to achieve life-changing success and make a society-shaping impact, the CfGP will embed employability and enterprise across the University of Sunderland, creating confident and motivated students who develop into professional, adaptable, and engaged graduates with rich and rewarding life and career prospects.

To enable this, the CfGP is developing an innovative and integrated offer that supports students to:

- test and invest in their personal skills, knowledge, and aspirations
- explore and experience graduate-level work-related opportunities
- generate economic, social and/or cultural value for others with whom we work

Three-year Mission

Our mission over the next three years we will be to:

1. increase the proportion of our graduates in graduate-level work or further study
2. increase the proportion of our graduates creating their own graduate level work through self-employment, company creation or professional portfolio development
3. increase the proportion of our undergraduate students engaging with knowledge exchange through work-integrated learning and/or co-curricular innovation and enterprise opportunities
4. reshape student perceptions of careers, employability, and enterprise from being seen as additional and optional elements of the university experience, to being core, confidence building and value creating aspects of their preparation for graduate life, that they advocate for amongst their peers

5. facilitate an internal and external stakeholder perception of its work that is innovative, based on creative, mutually beneficial partnerships, and increasingly distinctive in its aims and aspirations to support the people, places, and organisations at its heart.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

Fulfilling the purpose of the CfGP and delivering its initial three-year mission will involve strategic developments integrating the relevant objectives of the Student Success Plan and those of the University Graduate Progression Committee with new projects and initiatives structured around the following strategic themes:

1. Empowering Students and Graduates: The CfGP will bring together and refresh student and graduate facing employability and enterprise initiatives to present accessible, comprehensive, coherent, and engaging co-curricular support in-person and online; through which career options can be explored, attributes and skills developed, and achievements recognised at scale.
2. Enabling Academics and the Curriculum: The CfGP will support Schools, Faculties, and campuses to develop and embed sustainable and tailored employability, enterprise, and work-integrated learning initiatives into all stages of the student experience to provide a rich and transformative, career-focused curriculum to all students.
3. Engaging Business and the Community: The CfGP will enhance involvement with alumni, businesses, and community organisations to grow the availability, diversity, uptake and impact of work-integrated learning and student knowledge exchange initiatives, and benefit from external labour market insights and professional development opportunities.
4. Establishing an Enhanced Infrastructure: The CfGP will develop the infrastructure and ability to create opportunities for, and generate information about the benefits and effects of, employability and enterprise support to better engage stakeholders in creative and innovative partnerships and understand the impact of our work.

Governance and Leadership

The Head of the CfGP is a member of the University's Learning & Teaching Senior Management Group, reporting directly to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning & Teaching, Prof. Abigail Moriarty. This academic leadership supports the Centre in the embedding of employability and enterprise into the curriculum and co-curricular student experience.

The business of the Centre is steered by the University Graduate Progression Committee which is composed of academic and professional stakeholders, meets monthly, and reports into the Student Success Committee chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Prof Michael Young, and responsible for the delivery of the Student Success Plan of the University.

The Head of the CfGP and chair of its leadership team is Gareth Trainer. Having spent over 20 years developing employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship at Newcastle University, Gareth joined the University of Sunderland in March 2022. He was a Director of Enterprise Educators UK (EEUK) for nine years, serving for two years as its Chair, and was co-author of the guidance on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education originally published by the UK's Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in 2012.

Gareth is a full member of the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), an assessor for the Small Business Charter, and holds an MBA alongside a degree in physiology and qualifications in management coaching and mentoring.

He can be contacted for informal discussions about the CfGP and its opportunities by emailing gareth.trainer@sunderland.ac.uk.