



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Employment and Learning

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Inquiry into Careers Education, Information,
Advice and Guidance in Northern Ireland:
University of Ulster

21 November 2012

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Committee for Employment and Learning

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Basil McCrea (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson
Mr David Hilditch
Mr Chris Lyttle
Mr Fra McCann
Mr Barry McElduff
Mr Pat Ramsey

Witnesses:

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| Ms Maria Curran | University of Ulster |
| Ms Moira McCarthy | University of Ulster |
| Ms Shauna McCloy | University of Ulster |

The Chairperson: I remind members that this session is being reported by Hansard. The University of Ulster's commendably brief submission is before the Committee. We have Maria Curran who is the head of employability at the University of Ulster. Would you introduce your team and make an opening statement?

Ms Maria Curran (University of Ulster): Thank you. Beside me is Shauna McCloy, career development manager at the Jordanstown campus, and Moira McCarthy, career development manager at the Magee campus.

The Chairperson: That is a real shame, because we will not get Mr Ramsey shut up. *[Laughter.]* The floor is yours, if you wish to make an opening statement.

Ms Curran: Yes, I do, Chair. Thank you.

On behalf of the University of Ulster, we welcome the opportunity to brief the Committee on the university's careers education, information, advice and guidance.

We will start by giving an outline of careers education, information, advice and guidance at the university and our new strategy. My colleagues are supporting the presentation and will outline what we have done in-house to address some of the issues and developments. I hope that we can deal with questions that may arise.

Central to the university's vision of leading in the provision of professional education for professional life is its commitment to supporting graduates to gain stimulating and fulfilling employment. As part of that commitment, the university's objective is to provide students with learning experiences that will give them the confidence, knowledge and skills to enable them to take up the challenge in employment opportunities and to contribute to the further development of their chosen profession.

Careers education, information, advice and guidance are provided by the employability and marketing department. It is a newly restructured department within the university and was formerly the career development centre and student marketing. The department has an office on each of the main campuses, Coleraine, Magee and Jordanstown, and an information centre on the Belfast campus.

The department provides comprehensive first-class resources and services that are complementary to, and integrated with, the academic provision of the university, enabling our students and graduates to develop, evaluate and implement career decisions and employment plans for the mutual benefit of themselves, employers and the university community.

Last week, the new department was accredited the national matrix quality standard. Continuous professional development is a part of employability and marketing's commitment to quality. There is a focus on ensuring that knowledge skills are kept up to date. All careers education, information, advice and guidance staff are professionally qualified and possess, or are working towards, a teaching qualification, as much of the role of career development and learning is in the classroom.

The university places a very strong emphasis on employer involvement. It places very strong emphasis in its delivery of programmes through placement and curriculum design for its course-planning provision. That engagement with employers ensures that students acquire the skills relevant to the marketplace. The university's links with industry, commerce and the professions are varied and include: university-level activities such as knowledge-transfer partnerships; and the work of the office of innovation and enterprise and employability and marketing. Links are also pursued at faculty, school subject and programme level. Liaison is achieved by the following: involvement of employers in programme planning and revalidation discussions; reference to, and input from, the sector skills councils; seeking employer views on new programme proposals through survey activity; discussion with employers during placement visits; use of advisory boards, industrial liaison panels and programme accreditation by professional bodies.

Employability and marketing organises a series of careers events throughout the academic year, which provide an opportunity for organisations to visit the campus and to meet students, and for students to learn more about the opportunities open to them. Employability and marketing engages with graduate recruiters online using Careers Connect, a new careers management tool supporting the communication to student programmes of employer events and vacancies. Employability and marketing aims to be the principal point of contact for employers in the recruitment of students and graduates, and it uses its quarterly newsletter to support communication.

We have brought a copy of the new employability and marketing strategy for 2011-16 for each of you to take away today. It sets the agenda for embedding employability into the Ulster student experience and provides a framework for the university's domestic recruitment marketing. The employability and marketing strategy sets out a number of aims, and three aims are most relevant to the current inquiry: to strategically support and enhance student and graduate employability delivered through the curriculum and co-curriculum provision of curricular activities; to co-ordinate the development and enhancement of work-related and work-based learning opportunities for students and graduates; and to collaborate with the faculties to widen and strengthen engagement with industry and businesses locally, nationally and internationally to enhance student and graduate employability. The strategy provides employability and marketing with a clear focus on our work going forward.

Performance measures for the new strategy include —

The Chairperson: How are we doing in getting to the bottom of that sheet? Are we getting close?
[Laughter.]

Ms Curran: We are almost there. There are a few performance measures, and that is the key. Increasing the visibility of employability is a core strategic objective for the university. We are also meeting, or exceeding, our Higher Education Statistics Agency benchmarks; enhancing our engagement with students and with schools and colleges and increasing employer engagement when it suits them; and, finally, by 2016, all undergraduates will have the opportunity to undertake some form of work-based, work-related learning during their time with the university.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Colleagues, I would like to take your comments and questions first. I have a few, and if you do not pick up on them, I will ask a few questions. Pat is first up.

Mr P Ramsey: Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson: Can we keep this to less than 40 minutes?

Mr P Ramsey: The obvious question — that Chris is encouraging me to ask you — is whether there is any news on the 500 student additional places across Northern Ireland. I am aware, Moira —

Ms Moira McCarthy (University of Ulster): I have not done my bit yet, Pat, but go ahead.

Mr P Ramsey: With regard to the earlier discussion about involving primary and post-primary schools, will you outline the particular work you are doing to engage with children, in particular, in advance of their coming into the university? Also, I asked a similar question to the representatives of Queen's: do you keep data and statistics on people who come out of college and eventually go on to higher education?

Mr Lyttle: Chair, may I supplement that question to save you coming to me. Would the representatives also mention the Step-Up programme?

Ms M McCarthy: Do you want me to go through what we are actually going to do now? We have a new strategy and a new department. Pre-entry is our new focus. I will run through that very quickly and then take your questions. I will answer your question, Pat.

We are changing our pre-entry provision services for students, teachers, parents and adult returners significantly. That is our focus. I will quickly give you a flavour. Our new Study at Ulster website, with the major focus on developing and providing high-quality, interactive online career development learning resources that can be used in the classroom setting, is a new development that we are taking forward. It will be our main vehicle for delivering our key messages to a number of different groups. We started to develop our online interactive resources to support prospective students in making informed career choices. We will be working in a more collaborative and joined-up way with key influencers, including careers teachers, principals, early-learning communities, parents, local government and community-based agencies and education organisations to facilitate student recruitment and relationship development.

Our big developments include: the development of a career teacher, adviser, parent or guardian's portal; our Study at Ulster website with dedicated information resources; the provision of monthly newsletters and magazines, one dedicated to parents and one dedicated to careers teachers and advisers; the provision of advice and guidance to careers teachers and advisers on a range of professional issues, so we intend to support careers advisers and teachers; and the delivery of continuous professional development, with short courses for careers teachers and advisers. We currently do that but we are going to enhance that provision. We are going to deliver a 2013 spring conference for principals and careers practitioners. We have our open evenings and we do Saturday open days for parents as well as young people.

The Chairperson: I support all of this, but information such as that is more useful to us if it is in written format.

Ms M McCarthy: I will provide that for you.

The Chairperson: Please just talk to us. Tell us what Step-Up is. What is it that you two were going on about?

Mr Lyttle: It is the Step-Up programme. We have raised issues about how to connect learners, who are struggling to connect with universities, with those universities. It seems to me that the Step-Up programme is an extremely creative, effective way to do that.

Ms M McCarthy: The programme is long-established, and very effective. It goes into non-traditional schools and universities. Some 43% of our intake comes from widening participation, so we have a long history of that. We have extended the Step-Up programme to primary schools. We do quite a lot of science engagement and informatics engagement for computers. This is one way of engaging the population that does not traditionally go to university. We are also very connected to FE. We bring through quite a lot of programmes there. The University of Ulster has been, and is, very active in that area, albeit that we can improve.

Mr P Ramsey: I think that it would be interesting to get further figures. The Step-Up programme — and I am not sure whether members know this — is one of the most creative and innovative projects involving the most marginalised people. It stimulates and encourages them regarding the importance of higher education, and it is effective. People are coming from secondary schools rather than grammar schools. It is not the big achievers in A levels who are getting in. You are getting people across the line. Perhaps information would help, because part of the inquiry will look at good practice and at models that get people into higher and further education.

The Chairperson: I support what you are saying about that, but the rest of the Committee does not know what it is. We need to find some way of getting that information to us. It is not just a matter of saying that this is done, and it is very good. I am a believer that we need to see it.

Ms M McCarthy: We can provide that.

The Chairperson: We just need to find some way to getting this through. We have the benefit of people who know about it, but the rest of us need to have a look at it.

Mr P Ramsey: Could we have a follow-up report listing the schools involved and how often engagement happens? I know that the university does peer mediation programmes with the schools as well, which is unique. Maybe we could get some information on that later.

Ms M McCarthy: Certainly.

Mr Lyttle: Chair, you are asking what it is, which is the right question, and we should try to get some more information. In a nutshell, it is a creative use of double-award GCE applied science, is that right?

Ms M McCarthy: It really supports young people. It was set up to widen participation. It really supports young people and their families who, traditionally, do not go to university. So, there is a lot of support for parents. The programme links people very quickly with employment and work experience. They come on site at the university, and various mechanisms are used. The applied A levels are probably used slightly more, but people do have to reach the grades in order to get into the disciplines as well. It is not a soft option, but it is a very well supported option.

The Chairperson: No doubt, we will work out how we can get to know more about this and the right way through it. I call the author extraordinary.

Mr McElduff: Thanks, Chair. I am fresh from my book launch.

The Chairperson: I heard all about it. My staff even bought a copy; did you know that? I gave them instructions not to, but — *[Interruption.]*

Mr McElduff: Is the University of Ulster strong at instilling entrepreneurship among students?

Ms Shauna McCloy (University of Ulster): Yes. One of the new initiatives that we have just launched is an enterprise development module, which our second-year students can undertake in preparation for a self-employed placement year. This means that they can collaborate and do business venturing as part of that period of work-based learning. It is a new initiative that we are doing to support that.

Mr McElduff: Does the initiative have a high profile among the student population? Is it relatively new or is it embedded?

Ms McCloy: It will be embedded. We are running it now in the second semester, and it will be a preparation module for self-employment. We are working with Invest Northern Ireland and other partners in this, and it will be accessible to all students on all campuses. We have a lot of students from the creative arts and even in the Ulster Business School who want to do business venturing for their placement year or even test it over a summer period. We want to put support in place for them to put together a business plan to see whether they have the entrepreneurial skills and all the other resources required to undertake a successful period of enterprise development.

Mr F McCann: The last couple of questions were on the Step-Up programme, and Barry asked the question that I posed to the folk from Queen's University. The explanations and answers given by the University of Ulster describe the sort of information that I was looking for. There are quite a number of neighbourhood renewal partnerships across the North in which there is concentrated poverty and deprivation and where many people will not go on to university or college. How proactive are you in going to those areas and trying to encourage people to take up the option of education and careers as the way forward?

Ms Curran: Employability and marketing have a very clear plan for the Northern Ireland marketplace and for the schools and colleges that are spread across Northern Ireland. We have engaged in the past — that is well-documented — and we get students from schools where, historically, we have maybe not recruited as many students. All schools in all geographies are covered and targeted to ensure that students are invited to open days or that our staff go out to do presentations. Moving forward, we will utilise the online tools in the classroom and for parents and students.

Ms M McCarthy: As part of the strategy going forward, we intend to upskill as much as we can. I am not saying that the Careers Service is not skilled enough; I am saying that we intend to strengthen what it is doing by supporting it. We really need to raise people's aspirations and give them a vision of where they can go. Non-traditional routes are very frightening for people, and this is really about supporting careers teachers and advisers and giving them a pathway in. We can go out to the community and deliver that, and we do so and bring the community in. It is really about raising aspirations and showing people that this can be for them. That is definitely an area that we intend to focus on.

Mr F McCann: I raised this point earlier. A focus of this Committee's work has been on the number of people who leave school every year without any qualifications and with no expectations and no aspirations. It seems that nobody goes after them to encourage them back into education or to offer them the possibility of a career. I work with some community organisations and I have seen them working with people who have left school and for whom the schools have given up the ghost. They have been encouraged back, achieved GCSEs and gone into further education. That mechanism does not seem to be there, and it seems to be fairly difficult for people to take that leap. A lot of assistance is needed. Most of it is based in those neighbourhood renewal partnership areas, and there are groups there that would welcome any assistance and help that we can give them.

Ms Curran: Our new strategy is one of not necessarily bringing students to campus, because that, once again, may be a barrier. The strategy involves going to other locations, be they hotels or facilities in other areas, as some parents may find it more accessible to go 15 minutes up the road rather than spend an hour and a half going to Jordanstown. Part of our plan is to deliver more sessions to bring students, parents and careers teachers to an environment that is closer to home and where they may be more comfortable.

The Chairperson: Fra's key point is that there is a section of our community that does not understand why education is important. It will not be the school system that will convince them of that importance, because that is the very thing they are rejecting. Given the resources at the disposal of the further and higher education sector, that is something that you ought to take on board, and I want to hear more details in answer to a few questions that I will ask you. We are edging slightly away from the careers issue, but the point brought up was important.

Mr F McCann: A number of groups in west Belfast and other areas organise careers days to which they invite universities, colleges and others. The way in which you said you do this is good, but if you are planning a careers day, I am sure that Divis Community Centre does not pop into the middle of your thoughts. You do not consider going into Divis to look at how they do it or into Ballybeen — right to the heart of the communities.

The Chairperson: We take the point, and let me come back to it. Sydney has a question here as well and others have a few points to make.

Mr Anderson: Thank you for your presentation. My question to you is, as it was to Queen's, on the theme of parents, but I want to focus on a different aspect. We are trying to get students to connect and to choose the right career path. Moira touched on the fact that you will go a certain distance with a student who is on the wrong career path and say, "Look, you are in the wrong career path and you should maybe make a choice". Is there a large or increasing rate of drop out of students who fail to complete degrees at your university?

Ms M McCarthy: I do not know the figures.

Mr Anderson: It may be in a different area here, but —

Ms McCloy: The figures are decreasing. Retention is a key area in all higher education systems, and one of the things that we have done in our careers education provision is to put on a first-year module that looks at the transition to university. It makes sure that in the very early days of their higher education experience, students explore the start-to-finish programme, are aware of the professional bodies and employers in the programme, and put together some form of action plan and careers report that we can assess and give feedback on. That is part of the opting —

Mr Anderson: That is where I am coming from. If students find themselves in the wrong career or course, how quickly is there intervention to change that before they perhaps drop out of that course?

Ms M McCarthy: We see anybody who is in any difficulty straight away, and we try to get —

Mr Anderson: Is that identified quite quickly?

Ms M McCarthy: Yes. We see them within the first half of the first semester.

The Chairperson: Do you pick up on people who are starting to miss lectures?

Ms McCloy: That is more at programme level. A course director or module co-ordinator is responsible for keeping attendance records, and they pick that up.

Mr Anderson: Is there much evidence of that in the university? That is what I am trying to find out.

Ms McCloy: There is attendance monitoring, and that does —

Ms M McCarthy: I keep attendance records for every one that I deliver — I came from a different place. I mark everybody in. You see the people who struggle clearly and very early; you pick up on them within the first three to six weeks.

Ms Curran: The university has integrated an induction week, during which first-year students are brought on campus before everybody else. Part of the purpose of doing that is to ensure that they get comfortable with the setting, know the course that they are signed up to and understand the different facilities that are available to them. Our department presents at part of that induction week to ensure that students know what we offer and where they can find us, so that they can come to us if they wish. Sometimes, a member of staff requests us to meet a first-year student, so meetings can be arranged from two different directions. Part of our charter is to meet that student.

Mr Anderson: Is it an area in which improvement could be made? Are you happy with it in your setting, and are you happy that enough is being done? I ask this because places are filled at the start, and students may take the wrong course just to get a place at university. That needs to be picked up on. I wonder whether it is being picked up on quickly enough and whether more can be done to ensure that less of it happens.

Ms McCloy: That is the key thing that we are trying to address through the new strategy. We offer information, advice and guidance to students before they come to the university so that they do not just choose a course but understand the academic and employability aspects of that course. We pick that up again in the first couple of weeks when they have come into the university in order to reinforce

that message. We ask them whether they are sure that they know why they are at the university and where their course will take them. We take retention extremely seriously. In the strategy document, we have lots of initiatives in place —

Mr Anderson: Is there a focus on employability at the end of the course?

Ms McCloy: Absolutely.

Ms M McCarthy: We kind of start from the perspective of cost. We tell students that they are investing up to £20,000 in themselves, and we ask them whether they know where they are going to be in three years time. If you take this issue from the end point, it gives you a very good point from which to start and it is very real. We start our delivery from that point. We are very tuned into the fact that students are paying significant amounts of money and that they need a return. That return is employment.

The Chairperson: One of the issues — sorry, Sydney; have you finished?

Mr Anderson: That is fine.

The Chairperson: The Open University will present to us shortly. They do not do a huge amount of pre-entry careers guidance, but they do some. You talked about making people understand that they are making an investment. We do not really talk to them about that. There is a view, rightly or wrongly, that a lot of people go to university just to have a good time, and that when they have had that good time, they then look for a job. People need to understand that they are entitled to take whatever subject they want —

Mr McElduff: That is the way that we were.

The Chairperson: That may have been the way that we were, but it is not like that any more. For Hansard's purposes, those voices are coming from my left.

Mr Lyttle: Not in my day, Basil.

The Chairperson: How do we get better advice to our young people so that they take a subject that is suitable for them and that gives them a reasonable chance of making a living? Is it something that you should look at as a university? Is it part of your remit, or is it part of someone else's remit?

Mr F McCann: Chair —

The Chairperson: Hold on. I want to see if there is an answer coming here.

Ms Curran: Our new employability and marketing department defines student marketing and employability and brings them together. We have staff with a careers background who go to schools and colleges and provide good advice to careers teachers and students. As I said, their remit is also to build a lot of online resources for classroom delivery or for parents or individuals to do at home.

Mr F McCann: Following on from what you said and what Sydney asked about during the previous two presentations, it is interesting that, after three or six weeks, you are able to identify whether people are falling into difficulties. At that stage, does someone work with those young people to find out whether they have chosen the right course and redirect them?

Ms Curran: The way the department is structured is that staff are allocated to particular schools. For example, I speak to first-year students in the schools of engineering, computing and law, and I am with them for the full journey over four years. That is why it is very important for us to be present in induction week and in weeks 1 and 2 of semester 1 of year 1 to take them through that journey. First, it allows them to see us as being approachable. Secondly, we understand the marketplace and have a good relationship with industry and our academic partners in the university.

The Chairperson: As no one has any other questions, I will rattle through a few. You gave us a one-page submission and then gave us quite a lot of information verbally. I quite like focused information, but the danger of having that is that we need to know more. Beside everything in your paper, I have

written, "I need more detail." I am interested in the personal development planning process. You gave a link to a website, which I had a look at. It is great. How many employers get the link? How far is that working?

Ms McCloy: As a Department, we invest significantly in technology and online support tools for our careers education and personal development planning. We have developed that bespoke, in-house professional and career enhancement tool. It is an individual facility for all students that they can use to store, record and reflect their achievements and results as they go through university.

The Chairperson: How new is it? Is anybody using it yet?

Ms McCloy: We updated it last year; before that we had the PDS system. It is something that we have had embedded in the university for quite a few years.

Ms McCarthy: It has been running for about eight years.

The Chairperson: It would be interesting to see a demonstration of how it works. I would also like figures for the utilisation of it. In particular, I want to know whether employers use it, because the only thing that seemed a wee bit cumbersome to me was that if you were an employer, you should have already been given a password.

Ms McCloy: The purpose is for a student to share certain information with employers so that they can use it. It is an individual student facility that they can use to do things such as personality profiling.

The Chairperson: I get the concept; I just want to know whether it is working.

Ms McCloy: It does work. From an employer's perspective, the students select the key parts of what they have used to send to employers, whether it is a CV or something else.

The Chairperson: Let us see how we can get to see it work. Tell me about the EDGE award, which I had a look at.

Ms McCloy: In 2011, the National Higher Education Report was introduced. Our response was to introduce an employability award that would allow students to engage and to get recognition for a wide range of extra and co-curricular activities, such as our partnership work with the Students' Union and the Ulster Sports Academy, volunteering and students even getting accreditation for their part-time jobs. It is a framework whereby students can get credit for a range of activities that they undertake. The EDGE award is presented on graduation day.

The Chairperson: It is similar to Degree Plus.

Ms McCloy: There are about 80 UK higher education institutions that have employability awards, and that figure is growing.

The Chairperson: I would like to see whether we could do something a wee bit more unified.

Item 4 of your paper states:

"While recognising the strength of CEIAG provision within Ulster there are challenges in relation to the quality and timeliness of the careers information and guidance available to young people".

What are the challenges in relation to quality and timeliness?

Ms M McCarthy: I take it that you mean pre-entry.

The Chairperson: You said in your paper that there are challenges; I am just asking what they are.

Ms M McCarthy: When students come in, we face a challenge in trying to find out whether they really know why they are doing courses. Time and time again when we ask students why they selected a course and what influenced their choice, they do not seem to know or to have articulated an answer. That is worrying for us.

The Chairperson: That is the most interesting statement of the entire inquiry thus far; you may find yourself at the front of the report if you carry on. Tell us more about this. Why do they not know?

Ms M McCarthy: For instance, we did a keynote address at one of our large grammar schools, St Columb's College. Many of that school's high-performing students want to go into law or go on to be doctors. Therefore, we took the report, with the principal, Mr McGinty, and presented new and innovative jobs in areas such as energy from fusion, renewables, engineering and space innovation. It was received very well. However, all those high-achieving students wanting to go into law and medicine is an issue for us as a university and for Northern Ireland. That is where we see ourselves as strengthening careers teachers and advisers — through professional and occupational information.

Having looked through the report, I wanted to pick up on the fact that you talked a great deal about labour market information. Labour market information is good, and it is very interesting. However, it is not an exact science. It is really about labour market intelligence and working many sources in that area to come to conclusions and then present jobs.

The people from Queen's University articulated very well that we are training people for jobs that are not here yet; that is why we moved to broad skills and employability skills. Students at pre-entry need to know why they are selecting courses and where they can go with those courses. We need to strengthen the role of the adviser at pre-entry.

The Chairperson: I note that that is the only bit in those sections that did not have a hyperlink to the resources to go and do that.

Ms M McCarthy: We can give you it now; the new site is up.

The Chairperson: OK. I would like more information, but we do not have time to do that now. There is a problem, as you have outlined. The Committee wants to know how we can bring people together using modern technology. This is one of the areas in which we can do that because you are dealing with people who are comfortable with the web. That ties in with space and some of the other inspirational things.

We talked earlier about the difference between humanities and the STEM subjects. It is not that there is no role for people who are doing humanities or anything else; it is just that people need to make considered choices. If that is where a person's strengths lie, he or she should do that and look to see how they might find a career through it. Equally, however, they need to understand that if they just wander around in a daze, they will find it more difficult to get a job.

You might reflect on how you get the information about what you are doing in more detail back to us. We can talk to the Committee Clerk about how we will do that.

I would like you to talk to Queen's University and to the Open University to see what we can do in Northern Ireland in relation to best practice. Some of what Queen's University is doing is great, but there are some things that you do that are interesting as well. The Committee will not stand for academic ring-fencing; we are trying to get the best for the people of Northern Ireland.

In your submission, you talk about enhancing personal development skills. Does anyone tell students that they need to know how to talk to people or how to make decisions? Does anyone give them real-life skills?

Ms M McCarthy: We certainly do.

Ms Curran: In the modules that we deliver towards the EDGE award, there is three hours' contact time; the rest is online and comprises a great deal of practical exercises. We also do much of our class delivery in lecture rooms where there are no tables. It is about doing practical exercises and getting students to work in groups on business scenarios. Employers are forever saying to us that students are academically strong and have experience but their business awareness is a bit lacking. We try to bring that into the delivery as much as possible throughout their four years with us.

Ms M McCarthy: We also bring employers into lecture theatres to deliver the same message, which is that although the qualification is what they need as a passport, the employability skills of

communication, teamwork and being able to work from Monday to Friday, as well as problem-solving and creativity, are the most important. Employers do that in order to reinforce our message as well.

The Chairperson: Pat Ramsey will ask a question in a moment. I want to come back on what you said. It is not enough to say that this is what is required; that is a step forward, and at least they know that. However, in addition to giving them the academic skills that they need for the course, you have to give them training in how to improve their potential development needs.

Ms McCloy: We do that through our careers education programme. We have a framework of careers education that enables it to be delivered in many different formats. It can be through accredited career management modules at 5, 10 or 20 credit points, where they undertake assessments so that we can measure the skills that you talked about.

The Chairperson: You have whetted my appetite, but I need to see it to make sure that it is not just tick-box stuff.

Mr P Ramsey: I was following your train of thought and reflecting on Moira's comments. I visited Thornhill College, which is an all-female grammar school, and I met a class of eight girls, some business people and some civil servants, and we went through mock interviews. Of those eight girls, six wanted to be teachers. However, I am not sure whether the children wanted to be teachers or whether their mummies and daddies wanted them to be teachers because it is a good, respectable career. Moira related that too in St Columb's College. Barry is not here now, but he will know that I spent my first few years in Stormont on the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee, which was undertaking an inquiry into the creative industries. Reflecting on Moira's point, people will tell you that 40% of the jobs that will exist in 20 years' time have yet to be created, so the question is this: what is being done to meet industry needs or future needs? What co-operation is there with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and Invest Northern Ireland to look at the careers that are necessary for the next decade? Is there any development there?

Ms Curran: When a university programme is up for revalidation, sector, industry and professional bodies are all integrated in the process so that the programme for the next four years has those changes embedded in it. Therefore, be it a change of a title, new modules, different modes of assessment, or making a year out compulsory, that is when the revalidations occur.

The Chairperson: I will do what I have done to others and invite you to review the Hansard reports, not just of this session but of some of the other sessions. You may wish to make another submission or find some other way that we can get to see what is happening. At the end of our inquiry, we may want to showcase some things so that we can walk people through, but you need to think about how you would do that. It is as much a challenge to educate my colleagues and myself as it is to educate pupils and their parents. We need to find a way of doing that. Thank you all very much for your time and for your presentation. I hope that you found it useful. We are looking for solutions, so do not be afraid to tell us anything and to point things towards us.