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## Employability framework and personal development planning: closing the loop

### Conference or Workshop Item

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# Supporting Student Employability

The Open University's approach to PDP

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## INTRODUCTION

- Why a framework for employability?
- FutureYOU – an innovative PDP tool to support a diverse student body
- Evaluation and monitoring of impact of the Employability Framework and FutureYOU on students understanding of employability development
- Key messages
- Points for consideration



‘A set of capabilities and achievements that support students in developing their careers, raising their aspirations and enhancing their contribution to society’. *Open University definition of employability, 2019*

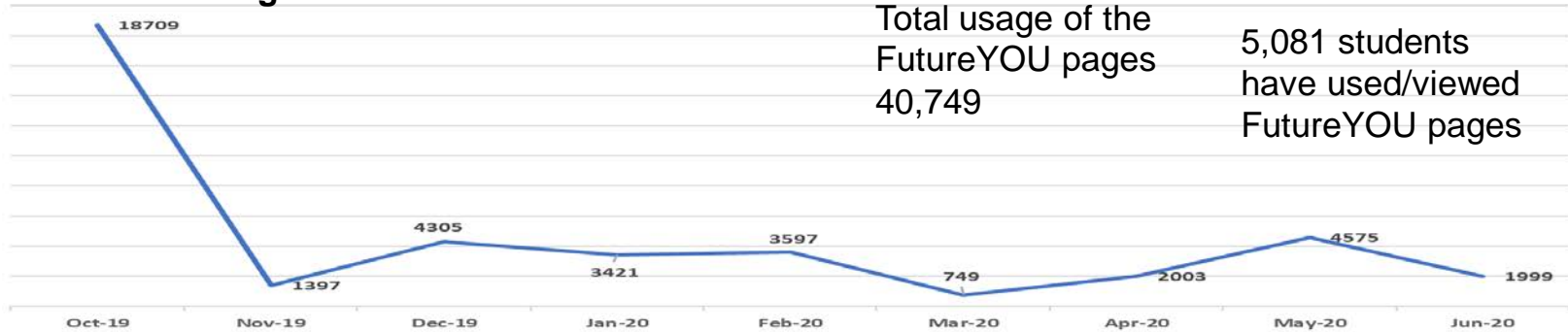
- Employability is a vital component for Student Success and the Open University's Student Employability Strategy recognises the diverse employability needs of our students
- HEA Review into employability coverage (2017)
- Development of the Employability Framework
- Mapping of curriculum against the Framework
- To date, 155 modules and over 20 qualifications have been mapped, enabling:
  - qualifications to be viewed through an employability lens, highlighting gaps and areas of best practice
  - embedding of employability into curriculum design
- Mapping process and synthesis of outputs, particularly in relation to interdisciplinary students, was discussed at the AdvanceHE Employability Symposium 2019 and available in *Enhancing Graduate Employability: a case study compendium* Edited by Stuart Norton and Roger Dalrymple

- A PDP web resource designed to support students in identifying, planning, developing & achieving their goals
- Available to all students on mapped qualifications
- Partnership approach
- Designed for students with all types of study motivation
- Plays back Employability Framework mapping
- Includes skill review activity, learning logs, a OneNote eportfolio template
- Designed for use across whole student journey
- Optional activity
- Range of messaging developed, including from module sites
- Employability champions

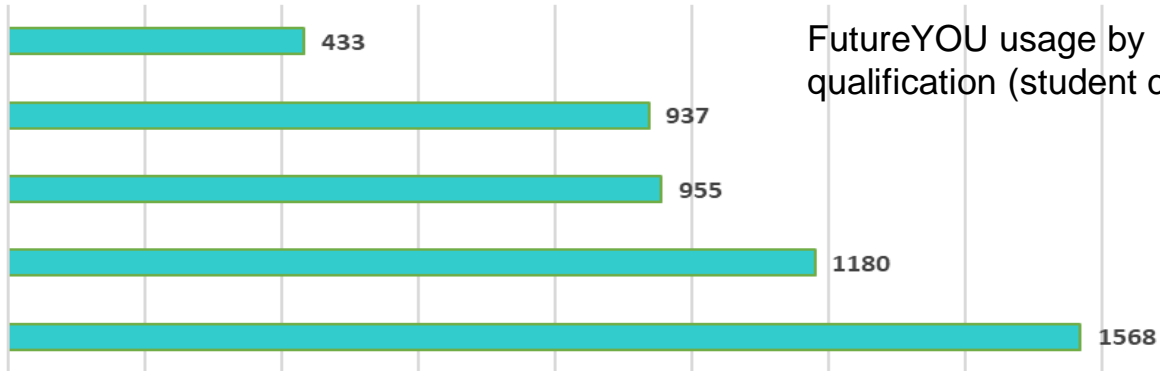
# FutureYOU



## FutureYOU usage since launch



Sports & Fitness  
Psychology  
Arts & Humanities  
Law  
Business Mgmt



FutureYOU usage by qualification (student count)

## Student Panel Feedback

- FutureYOU content reviewed by 30 students
- Students from a range of qualifications
- In depth feedback provided
- Informed communication plan and updates

*FutureYOU has definitely helped me to think about goals and my employability. I am about to start my last undergraduate module with the OU and I really wish I could have had access to this at the beginning of my OU journey.*

*It's very easy to forget how many skills and experiences one accumulates through life. The site allows you to lay out what you've achieved so you can match the necessary skills to your goals.*

## Evaluation by qualification teams

- Subject-based student consultation forums used to review employability and PDP provision
- Insight into the requirements of stakeholders in specific areas

## Impact survey on use of the Framework and FutureYOU


- Provide baseline metrics for institutional purposes
- Gain insight into student understanding of employability and their use of FutureYOU

### Highlights of findings

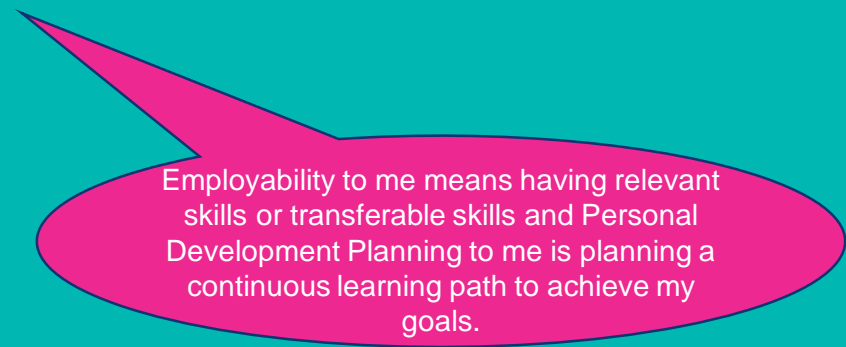
- Students perceive the development of specific areas of the Framework to be useful in relation to different learning goals:
  - Core skills and competencies associated mostly with academic goals
  - Personal attributes and behaviours associated with all three goals (academic, career and personal)
- Survey results suggest that students place differential value on their academic, personal and career goals as their studies progress.



- In attempting to understand the value that students place on development of employability; we need to ask the right questions. For example –
  - Majority of students surveyed understood 'employability' as being about employment **but**
  - Asking students to think specifically about development of skills and attributes elicits responses that demonstrate they see the value in the elements of the Framework and the opportunity that FutureYOU gives to construct their employability narrative.



Awareness of skills I have acquired and using them to my advantage in employment. Precision in highlighting those skills.



Employability to me means having relevant skills or transferable skills and Personal Development Planning to me is planning a continuous learning path to achieve my goals.

## Key messages

- Approach is effective due to simplicity
- Embedding into **curriculum design processes** ensures implementation and a mechanism for institutional measurement and reporting
- Embeds employability development throughout the curriculum
- The approach meets the needs of the diverse student body, including interdisciplinary students
- Consistent messages
- Owned by faculty areas with flexibility to adapt
- Continual stakeholder engagement maintains momentum

## Points for future consideration

- Ensuring that the Employability Framework is kept current, reflecting the needs of the university, students and employers in the light of e.g. Covid and BLM?
  - Ongoing stakeholder engagement and horizon-scanning
- Student and Alumni testimonials to motivate further use of FutureYOU
- A scaffolded narrative in FutureYOU as students progress through study, reflecting different needs, to achieve goals.
- Optimising the value of monitoring and evaluation data institutionally for TEF/GO reporting, internal Quality Assurance and Enhancement, external regulations requirements e.g. professional body

# THANK YOU

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