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## LTSN Physical Sciences Practice Guide



## Developing Employability Skills



**Della Grice and Roger Gladwin (Editors)**

LTSN Physical Sciences is part of the Higher Education Academy

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The views expressed in this practice guide are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the LTSN Physical Sciences Centre.



## Introduction

Graduates from the physical sciences usually find that their skills are much sought after in the employment market, whether they remain within their subject discipline, or move into unrelated areas. However, as participation in higher education continues to increase, new graduates may find the employment market more competitive. Consequently, students will need to be confident that their investment in higher education, and the associated debt, will be of benefit to them and they may be influenced in their choice of institution and subject by the career prospects on graduation. The growth of student numbers in some disciplines in HE, such as business and media related degrees, has not been evident in the physical sciences. Recruitment to physical science departments may be enhanced if we take a proactive approach to developing the employability of our graduates and provide relevant careers advice.

### What is employability?

Most colleagues are aware of the key skills that employers seek when recruiting new graduates<sup>1</sup>. These include,

- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- C & IT Skills
- Oral and written communication
- Analytical and critical thinking

Although development of these key skills is well embedded in most courses, students often fail to value them or to relate them to an employment context. New initiatives place increased emphasis on encouraging students to relate these essential skills to their future employment<sup>2</sup>. Academics can help students to do this by embedding skills development activities that are clearly employment orientated.

Work placements are a valuable way of helping students to develop work related skills and are highly regarded by potential employers. Those students unable to secure a work placement can be disadvantaged when competing with those who have undertaken placements. Even those students returning from an industrial placement may have gained variable experience due to the wide diversity in the placement experience. Therefore, the provision of department-based activities designed to develop employability skills and career awareness can be justified for all students.

Employability skills cover the following areas:

- Developing key transferable skills
- Planning and personal development skills
- Career planning and gaining employment
- Successfully contributing to the role once acquired
- Continuing to develop within a career throughout their working lifetime

### Helping students to develop employability skills

This practice guide contains some examples of good practice in developing employability skills that are already taking place within departments. The majority of these activities are fully transferable to a physical science context.

The activities address the first three of the points listed above. Table 1 summarises the skills developed by each of the activities. In all the activities, students are encouraged to relate skills developed beyond the context of higher education and look forward to employment. When entering the workplace new graduates should be able to make an effective contribution to their first destination and to continue to develop during their working lifetime.

### References

1. National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997  
<http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/dearing>
2. HEFCE, <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/tinits/esect/role.htm>

Table 1. The skills developed by activities described within this practice guide.

<b>Skills Developed</b>							
<b>Activity Number</b>	<b>IT</b>	<b>Problem Solving</b>	<b>CV</b>	<b>Interviewing</b>	<b>Written or Oral Communication</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Team Working</b>
1	✓				✓	✓	✓
2					✓	✓	✓
3	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
4		✓			✓	✓	✓
5		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
6		✓			✓		✓
7			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8			✓	✓		✓	
9	✓						
10					✓		
11			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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## **1. The Internet Training Company**

### *Summary*

Students undertaking this module set up a 'company' that provides training for other students in web page authoring and web site management. Students attend classes on business skills, including marketing, business plans, financial control and quality. Participating students will be expected to organise the signing up of customers and delivery of the classes. While the business aspect is simulated, the training and/or other services provided by the company will be real and will be evaluated for customer satisfaction. The company report will also be assessed.

### *Subject Area*

Physics

### *Skills developed*

Communication, planning, team working and IT

### *Type of activity*

Business awareness and management

### *Application*

The use of the 'real company' environment for the delivery of the classes facilitates a rapid and effective introduction to business awareness. The nature of the company might be varied. It is also of interest as an activity which is in essence web-based. Without the business aspects it is an example of an activity that genuinely works well as peer teaching.

### *Additional Information*

The course is run as a 5 credit unit (37.5 hours). The business skills classes (6 hours in all) are provided by the Management Centre of the University. Full details are given at: <http://www.le.ac.uk/physics/teach/recruit/year3/webdocs/index.htm>  
Password is: wpd

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## **2. Key Skills and Careers Web Resource**

### *Summary*

This resource is a set of web pages designed for Chemistry undergraduates which illustrate the value of key skills in the context of a University chemistry course and future employment.

The variety of key skills is explained and comments on the skills employers look for in graduates are also provided. An online self-assessment of current competencies is complemented by study skills, teamwork and written communication development resources.

### *Subject area*

Chemistry

### *Skills developed*

Communication, study skills and team working.

### *Type of activity*

Key skills explained. Skills support and resources: skills profile document, skills glossary.

### *Application*

The resource aims to enhance students' awareness of the variety of key skills, their relevance to future employment and the opportunities for development of such competencies within a university chemistry course.

Students can assess their competencies for targeted skills development and further see how they might improve their study skills, team working abilities and writing technique.

### *Additional information*

The Web resource was developed by the author while he was First Year Tutor in chemistry and represents the state of skills development support for undergraduates in chemistry at Southampton up to 2001.

The pages have now been superseded by generic support from the University. Whilst some of the material has migrated to the School of Chemistry web site for continued student use, the complete original pages have been made available through the link below to illustrate the chemistry specific resource. However, please note that these pages are no longer updated and that some external links are broken.

<http://www.soton.ac.uk/~pw/teach/skills>

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### **3. A Computing and Career Skills Module**

#### *Summary*

This is a year-long, level 2, compulsory module in which a popular computing language (C or Visual Basic) is introduced and software written in the first semester. In the second semester, colleagues in the Careers Service liaise to discuss CVs, job interviews, job searching and a Physics Careers Fair is held in the department.

#### *Subject Area*

Physics

#### *Skills developed*

Career planning and management, team working, IT, CV, communication and job application techniques.

#### *Type of activity*

Computer programming, career management.

#### *Application*

We find that half (or more) of the physics students at Level 2 do not have any clear idea of what career they want to pursue after their graduation.

This 10 credit module is our attempt to illustrate to them potential careers for physicists in a wide range of industrial sectors including defence, IT, telecommunications, finance and also R&D both within industry and also in academia and to explain how they could go about searching for a suitable career.

#### *Additional Information*

An analysis of software programming languages regarded as ‘most useful’ in a large number of job adverts led us to the conclusion that we had better forget about FORTRAN as a computing language to be taught on an undergraduate physics course and offer either ‘C’ or ‘Visual Basic’ instead! In this element of the module, the students have to create a number of programs of increasing complexity under supervision at a computer cluster. The weighting of this part of the module to the overall assessment of the module is 60%.

An assessment is made for the Careers Skills part of the module by asking the students to hand in two pieces of work: a CV and covering letter to a potential employer and a mini-project report on job opportunities in either a particular company or in a particular industrial sector. Careers Service personnel organise team building exercises and explore other necessary skills for management of careers. The weighting of this part of the module is 30%.

The Careers Fair (which is held in February) is an opportunity for us to invite back to the department recent graduates from a wide range of sectors. They give a short presentation on the nature of their jobs and/or talk to students on a one-to-one basis at the Fair. We also have postgraduate students from our research groups to present their typical work. At this time of year, some students are also thinking about summer vacation job possibilities or even a Year in Industry at level 3 and so we cater for them too at the Fair.

The third skills element that is an integral part of this module is an essay written on an up-to-date topic like quantum computing or nanotechnology, which is written over the summer between levels 1 and 2. The weighting for this part of the module is 10%.

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## **4. Intrapreneurship: case studies to enhance students' skills**

### *Summary*

Intrapreneurship is the art of working within an organisation to effect change, by developing new ideas, procedures or products, by innovating practice and thereby enhancing the business. Examples of intrapreneurship in businesses are used to create a suite of case materials highlighting real, current workplace practices suitable for use in all disciplines. The cases encourage students to:

- realize that they can be creative, innovative, commercially aware, intrapreneurial and self-motivated within businesses and organizations, and
- build confidence in graduate skills: networking, managing awkward situations, creativity, understanding decision making, negotiation, team working and writing, and ...

The cases make real links with employers, and bring workplace experience to many students consistently. Students need experience of employment, BUT work placements can be very variable, quality control is difficult and learning outcomes vary widely, using these case materials can develop students' understanding of the workplace in a consistent way.

### *Subject Area*

Geography

### *Skills developed*

Team working, writing, networking, decision making and problem solving.

### *Type of activity*

These cases highlight a range of skills, they all involve group work and may be used formatively or summatively. Skills include networking, making decisions with limited data, managing awkward situations, creativity, understanding decision making, negotiation, team working and team writing. Materials are suitable for any class size with groups usually of 5-6 people.

Cases are available to download from:

<http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/courses/other/casestudies/>

The materials include a tutor's pack and a student pack. Materials are either Word or Power point files and can all be photocopied for class use. The aim is to provide materials that can be readily understood and implemented.

In addition to the cases there are 2 lectures and a full reading list to support and embed ideas about intrapreneurship and graduate employability.

### *Application*

Cases may be used within modules. I have used cases in M level hydrology modules, undergraduate modules in hydrology and in careers and employability modules. The sessions have been used as stand alone items in 'skills' sessions by skills officers and in staff training events. They have also been used with the general public and a couple have been used with pre-university groups. Two of the cases were used with Master class summer school groups.

*Additional Information*

These cases were written with funding from the White Rose centre for Enterprise, Context and the QAA National Teaching Fellowship. They may be used by any academic and are deliberately written to appeal to a wide range of students. They are available but please let Professor Kneale know by email if you use them with students so she can report on the usage.

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## **5. Launch-a-Lab: Encouraging Chemists to Prepare for Employment**

### *Summary*

This activity uses a problem solving case study based on a fictitious contract analytical company to encourage undergraduates to consider some of the issues faced by chemists in industry and commerce. It then requires students to apply for a position within the company and to develop CV writing, interview and interviewing skills.

### *Subject Area*

Chemistry

### *Skills developed*

Communication skills, team working, CV writing, problem solving, interview and interviewing skills.

### *Type of activity*

Problem solving case study involving small group work.

### *Application*

This case study concerns a contract analysis company that is tendering for a large contract for the analysis of organic pollutants in ground water. The students act as part of the management team whose task is to ensure that the company can deliver a high quality service with a suitable profit margin if they win the contract. The case study consists of two main sections; industrial and advanced professional skills. These can be used together or individually.

#### **Industrial**

Each group is set one of the following five tasks related to the determination of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in ground water. In the next session, the students feed back their findings.

1. Choosing an instrument
2. Costing and pricing
3. Validation of methods
4. Accreditation standards
5. Designing a laboratory

#### **Marketing**

The students are informed that their proposals have been accepted and that the company is starting an advertising campaign in order to attract lucrative environmental contracts. Each group prepares a two-page brochure which is presented as a poster.

#### **Employing New Staff**

With the new contract commencing shortly, the company has an urgent requirement for new staff. Each group produces an advertisement for a new member of staff in one of the laboratories. The advertisement outlines the qualifications and qualities desirable in the new appointee and gives details of the post and remuneration package.

Students will advertise and recruit a new chemist whilst applying for and being interviewed for a post themselves. The students prepare their own CVs and covering letter. The tutor may run a CV workshop before the students submit their applications. The students apply for a job advertised by one of the other groups. In this way, all students gain experience of being interviewed and interviewing. They find that the interviewing gives them useful insight into what employers may be looking for.

All students take part in one interview panel. They interview other students, give written feedback and make an appointment. At the end of the interviews the interview panel must make an appointment and provide written feedback to each candidate indicating areas for further development. The interviewers must give the justified reasons for their decision. The interview panel must rank the interviewees and this forms part of the mark given by the tutor.

#### *Additional Information*

The interview/interviewing section of this activity could be used together with a wide range of initial activities or as a free standing activity if a suitable advertisement was provided for the students.

The case study is available from Simon Belt or Tina Overton and consists of student handouts, a tutor guide and sample assessment schemes. It is one of a series of six case studies developed within industrial, analytical, environmental, forensic and pharmaceutical chemistry.

see also:

‘A Problem Based Learning Approach to Analytical and Applied Chemistry’, ST Belt, EH Evans, T McCreedy, TL Overton and S Summerfield, *U Chem Ed*, **6**, 2, 2002, 65

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University of Hull, University of Plymouth, the Royal Society of Chemistry.

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## **6. Personal and Professional Development for Scientists**

### *Summary*

This module comprises a flexible programme of materials/activities designed to develop skills that will help make science students the type of resourceful, responsible adaptable graduates attractive to employers. The package consists of five Units of Teaching, an Assignments Booklet, a Student Workbook and a Staff Development Guide.

### *Subject Area*

Physical Sciences

### *Skills developed*

Communication skills, problem solving and team working.

### *Type of activity*

Activities and materials to support the development of effective communications skills including team working, interpersonal interaction, oral and visual presentation and writing skills for a variety of different audiences. Also, the activities are designed to help develop team problem-solving and team decision-making skills.

### *Application*

The materials can be used as a complete unit or module of teaching, including assessment. Alternatively, the package is totally flexible and individual activities can be used to help develop specific skills. Materials and activities have been used at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

### *Additional Information*

Further information on the whole course or any of the various parts may be obtained at: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/che/ppds/> (under 'Introduction and Contents')

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## **7. Geographers and the Workplace**

### *Summary*

This is a level 2 module run at the University of Leeds for geography undergraduates. It is taught jointly with Careers Centre staff who are crucial in keeping the links with external speakers in place. It enables students to value their 'graduate skills' and seeks to show they are sought after in the workplace through sessions with recent graduates and graduate recruiters. This module has been sponsored by businesses for the last 6 years at c£750 per year which is used to pay the expenses of some speakers and as prize money for the group project.

### *Subject Area*

Geography

### *Skills developed*

Team working, communication skills, critical thinking, CV writing, career planning and development.

### *Type of activity*

Many skills are used through the module, group work, thinking and creating answers. Analysis and presenting results within short (20 minute) time spans, handling awkward questions as interview practice. Group research and writing and many others. Five sessions emulate activities at assessment centres and in interviews to give students appropriate practice. The aim throughout is to build self-confidence.

### *Application*

This model can be used in any programme of study. In my opinion level 2 is the crucial time when students can get ahead in researching career options. Internship options are highlighted. Graduate recruiters have proved keen to sponsor the module each year and to speak to the class.

Running this as a 'double act' with an academic giving the subject focus and a Careers advisor with all the very latest information and support materials has been an ideal partnership.

Class size has ranged from 65-130 over the past six years.

### *Additional Information*

On completion of the module, students should be able to:

1. Consider how their Geography degree programme and life at University helps in the development of key skills.
2. Demonstrate awareness of changes in the graduate employment market, both generally and specifically for geographers.
3. Understand the importance and application of their academic, personal and learning skills in the workplace and demonstrate their ability to effectively present their personal and academic qualities against occupational criteria in a manner that is effective in applications.
4. Demonstrate awareness of a range of job search strategies and an understanding of the differing patterns of recruitment in selection in different sectors - SME's, blue chip companies voluntary bodies, etc.

5. Understand decision making criteria in relation to career planning.
6. Evaluate different sources of careers information.

#### Syllabus

1. Introduction; What is a graduate? Placements and internships, essay and log briefing.
2. Guest speaker; What geographers do - destinations and mobility; Understanding decision making; Group project briefing
3. Making applications - CV workshop; Guest speaker
4. Case Study: A day in the Spanish Embassy; understanding how skills are spotted in interviews
5. Personal Development Planning, recording and reviewing is a business activity too.
6. Researching careers for geographers in arts, law, conservation, voluntary work, media, human resources, journalism? - the choice is yours.
7. Group project, refining interview skills.
8. Intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship, theory and action. How businesses evolve and its impact on the employment market.
9. Guest speaker; Teaching, TEFL and financing years out; Learning Log review and advice
10. Exploring career motivation; handling interviews; Changing views of graduateness.

The module is taught as 10 x 3 hour interactive workshops with a range of guest speakers from industries and organizations that employ geographers.

Assessment is by: 1500 word essay (30%), Group Project (presentation and associated display material - 30%); 1000 word reflective log (end of module reflection on the learning using weekly log sheets - 20%); Multipurpose CV and letters (20%).

see also:

Geographers and the Workplace: an embedded module - Sue Hawksworth and Pauline Kneale, *Planet Special Edition 1* - Embedding Careers Education in the Curricula of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, available online at:

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/planet/index.htm#PSE1>

(There are two other publications in that issue that relate to the module.)

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## **8. Career Management Skills**

### *Summary*

This is an online module designed to provide students with an awareness of, and training in, the skills required to successfully commence and then develop their careers after graduating.

### *Subject Area*

Generic

### *Skills developed*

Career planning and developing, CV writing and interview preparation.

### *Type of activity*

Career management

### *Application*

To deliver career management skills online hence allowing a wide group of students to be targeted both on and off campus, without timetabling constraints.

### *Additional Information*

The module covers topics such as: career options, employer research, postgraduate study research and funding, self-assessment, CVs, interviews, assessment centres, psychometric tests, managing your career, action plan for your career.

The only face-to-face contact is an initial training session and a presentation session at the end of the module. However the Merlin virtual learning environment permits participants to get to know one another by use of a “Who’s Who?” feature (which includes the participants photographs and brief autobiographies) and by use of collective and individual e-mail facilities (the Exchange and the Mailbox).

Novel features of the module include:

- audio lecture presentations in each of the 12 stages in the module,
- a 20 minute on-line video,
- an on-line group exercise within a fixed timescale,
- external advisers (representing graduate employers) available via the e-mail facility.

The module has been developed over the last four years in response to the annual quality assessment results (generally very positive) and external examiner comments.

By varying the balance between the compulsory and optional tasks, the module has been delivered as both a five credit and twenty credit module. The format of this generic module, which uses the Merlin online learning environment, is such that it can be easily adapted, if required, to be subject specific.

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## **9. Information Retrieval Skills for Chemists**

### *Summary*

This is a step by step tutorial on the basic knowledge needed to be able to retrieve information from a variety of sources.

The learning objectives of the tutorial are to be able to:

- differentiate between books and periodicals as sources of information.
- identify key databases within chemistry.
- recognise the differences between controlled vocabulary and freetext in literature searching.
- formulate search strategies for a variety of databases.
- recognise the structure of a bibliographic record and cite references using the most frequently used systems in chemistry.

### *Subject Area*

Physical sciences

### *Skills developed*

IT, information gathering, literacy, database use.

### *Type of activity*

Information gathering.

### *Application*

The tutorial could be used as an independent learning tool, or used in conjunction with a hands-on session about literature searching. It can be integrated into a subject or research skills module and is used to facilitate the acquisition of information literacy skills.

### *Additional Information*

Online, freely accessible tutorial. Available at:

<http://www.le.ac.uk/li/sources/subject3/chem/ist/intro.html>

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## **10. Assessing Transferable Skills in Postgraduate Students**

### *Summary*

This is a project which aims to develop and accredit Key Skills development in postgraduate research students. From small beginnings, we have now developed a programme which is available to all postgraduate research students across Durham University and which leads to an accredited award.

### *Subject Area*

Physics

### *Skills developed*

Communication skills, assessment of transferable skills.

### *Type of activity*

Development and assessment of transferable/employability skills in postgraduate students.

### *Application*

The *Key Skills: Making Connections between Higher Education and Employment* project had, as its main aim, to explore the use and application of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) higher level key skills in different settings with learners, higher education, business and industry, namely:

- Whether the meanings associated with the concept of key skills by learners, HE and employers fit with the QCA descriptions;
- Methods and strategies used by learners, HE and employers for developing higher level key skills;
- How the 'meta-skills' embedded in the higher level key skills model facilitates application of key skills for individuals across contexts, for example, from HE to employment;
- The usefulness and value of integrating higher level key skills into personal and professional development strategies used in business and industry;
- Ways individuals can identify and evidence their own key skills through different activities in HE and the workplace and approaches they can use to apply and adapt their skills as part of their personal and professional development.

Here we describe one of the strands which concentrated on skills development in postgraduate students.

The development of transferable skills in postgraduate students is becoming important, especially with the move to use outputs of trained researchers as a measure of the productivity of research programmes. At the University of Durham we are building a programme to develop and assess key skills in postgraduate students. This began as a small-scale pilot in the Department of Physics in autumn 2000, and was developed into a larger scale pilot across the Science Faculty in autumn 2001 and later offered across the whole University. From October 2003 we will offer an accredited programme – the Durham Key Skills Award for Postgraduate Students.

*Additional information*

The project description, approach, findings and ways forward is described at:  
[http://www.open.ac.uk/StudentWeb/keyskills/connections\\_frame.html](http://www.open.ac.uk/StudentWeb/keyskills/connections_frame.html)

The Making Connections project is described at:  
<http://www.open.ac.uk/cobe/projects/keyskills.html>

see also:

P.M. Chadwick, M.O. Crann, D.P. Halliday and T.J.L. McComb “Key skills development for postgraduate students”, in *Skills Development in Higher Education: Forging Links, Proc. 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Skills Conf.*, University of Hertfordshire, July 2002.

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## **11. Enhancing Student Employability Resource Pack**

### *Summary*

This is a structured resource that can be used as a complete module or, as individual activities to support other resources. A wide range of areas are covered, from initial career planning to job applications and interviews. This pack comprises student activities and a tutor's guide with a suggested marking scheme. All of the activities are designed to be directly relevant to the physical sciences.

### *Subject Area*

Physical Sciences

### *Skills developed*

Team working, CV writing, career planning/development, presentation and interview skills.

### *Type of activity*

Career skills development using a variety of activities contained within a structured resource.

### *Application*

The pack is a structured resource that can be used as a complete module or as individual exercises to support other career-based activities. The aim is to provide academics with a range of easy to implement activities that develop undergraduate key skills in an employment context. The resources have been designed specifically for the physical sciences community. The direct relevance of the activities to the physical sciences enables students to relate their skill development to their studies and see the links to future employment.

A Tutor's Guide accompanies each activity. The guide outlines the aim and nature of the relevant student activity and, where applicable, a suggested assessment scheme is included. The student activity sheets clearly set out what is required and contain any relevant additional information as handouts.

The activities are divided into five main categories:

- Considering career options and which skills employers are looking for
- The skills that are needed to obtain interviews and secure employment i.e. CV writing and interview technique
- Developing communication and presentation skills
- Getting the most benefit from careers services and recruitment fairs
- Thinking ahead in a professional way

These relate to the five sections of the resource pack:

- Starting out
- Skills development
- Achieving results
- Finding information
- Looking forward and maintaining professionalism

The activities are designed to be used in an informal workshop style. Some of the activities are individual student activities and some require group work. Depending on the type of activity, students may be required to prepare work outside of the timetabled session. The resource has been successfully trailed with second and third year students.

Contents of Pack

Activity 1	Employability Quiz
Activity 2	Card Sort Exercise
Activity 3	Career Quiz
Activity 4	Skills Audit
Activity 5	Evaluating Visual Aids
Activity 6	One Minute Presentation
Activity 7	Five or Ten Minute Presentation
Activity 8	Press Release Exercise
Activity 9	CV Evaluation
Activity 10	Compiling your CV and Application Forms
Activity 11	Interview Preparation Exercise
Activity 12	Interview Scenarios
Activity 13	Graduate Vacancy Application
Activity 14	An Ethical Dilemma
Activity 15	Professional Bodies and Your Future
Activity 16	Reflective Log
Activity 17	Take away Guide

Table 1 A summary of the main skills developed in each activity.

Skills Developed								
Activity Number	Planning	Team working	Finding information	Oral or written communication	Interview technique or preparation	CVs	Problem solving	Ethics and professionalism
1	✓		✓					
2	✓		✓					
3	✓		✓					
4	✓							
5						✓		
6				✓		✓		
7			✓	✓	✓			
8		✓		✓	✓	✓		
9			✓	✓				
10			✓	✓				
11			✓	✓				
12		✓		✓			✓	
13				✓	✓			
14			✓					✓
15		✓		✓				✓
16	✓		✓					
17	✓			✓				

*Additional Information*

The pack will be available from June 2004 as a hard copy or downloadable from the website. Staff from the LTSN Physical Science Centre will be happy to visit your department and run either, a staff training seminar on using the pack, or a workshop for students. The pack and the support from the Centre are available to all UK Higher Education institutions free of charge.

For more information on the employability initiatives undertaken by the LTSN Physical Science Centre see:

<http://www.physsci.ltsn.ac.uk/employ.htm>

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Graduates from the physical sciences usually find that their skills are much sought after in the employment market, whether they remain within their subject discipline, or move into unrelated areas. However, as participation in higher education continues to increase, new graduates may find the employment market more competitive. Consequently, students will need to be confident that their investment in higher education, and the associated debt, will be of benefit to them and they may be influenced in their choice of institution and subject by the career prospects on graduation. The growth of student numbers in some disciplines in HE, such as business and media related degrees, has not been evident in the physical sciences. Recruitment to physical science departments may be enhanced if we take a proactive approach to developing the employability of our graduates and provide relevant careers advice.

This practice guide contains some examples of good practice in developing employability skills that are already taking place within departments. The majority of these activities are fully transferable to a physical science context.

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## LTSN Physical Sciences

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