

AccessHE Student Ambassador Forum Project Proposal

AccessHE Student Ambassador Training and Development Programme

Context

Discussions between AccessHE and the Student Ambassador forum have identified a gap in current provision of training to student ambassadors when it comes to the practical application of their ambassador skills and experiences. As most training programmes delivered in-house by HEIs necessarily focus on core elements of the ambassador JD and/or practical issues such as safeguarding, there is little scope for ambassadors to learn how to present their work and achievements in this role to potential employers, for example in the context of a job interview or covering letter. A dedicated training programme coordinated by AccessHE and focussed around employability could therefore complement existing training offered by HEIs, assist towards student 'success'/ 'progression' access and participation targets and add further value to the ambassador experience.

Project Aims

The project (proposal below) aims to provide Member student ambassadors with:

1. A bespoke package not offered by Careers and Employability Centres: ambassador-specific training on how to use their experiences in the role when applying for jobs (both at point of application and at interview)
2. An ambassador-led project that will enhance transferrable skills (e.g. problem solving, team work, time management, organisation, public speaking) and provide additional experiences to talk about at interview
3. Interview practice (testing key competencies) with graduate employers to access top tips and advice
4. Experience of networking with graduate employers when showcasing their work
5. An opportunity to feed into the work carried out by their WP team at their HEI

Proposal

We propose a pan-London, member-wide student ambassador training and development programme. Aimed at newly recruited and experienced student ambassadors who are close to graduating, it will prepare participants for the process of applying to jobs and graduate schemes and encourage them to reflect on the transferable skills they have gained through serving as an ambassador.

The programme will be offered to cohorts of ambassadors at participating AccessHE members. It will take the form of group-led project work, supported by AccessHE, and will culminate in a celebration event that showcases the student projects and gives participants in the programme the chance to engage with employers. Each group will be expected to create one output; these will be developed by the ambassadors themselves and can take whatever format the project groups deem appropriate, but they should revolve around an aspect of being a student ambassador, for instance around a skill acquired/refined in the role. They should therefore offer a professional development opportunity for all members of the group, but at the same time constitute a useful resource for the home HEI. Some examples of group projects are:

- Promotional resource selling study at [home institution] to prospective applicants
- Training resource to support staff working with young learners in an advocacy role
- Digital communications campaign focussed around an aspect of student life

The projects should leverage training and services available at the home HEI. AccessHE will assist student groups in shaping their project, as well as with sourcing external training where necessary. We expect the majority of training the ambassadors will require for their projects will be accessed through the launch/celebration event. AccessHE will organise the celebration event at the end of the programme, including reimbursing travel arrangements for participating students.

Timeline

We propose launching this programme in the academic year 2019/20. An indicative project timeframe is provided below:

- **Early Oct 2019: project launch (decentralised launch events, possibly clustering participating HEIs by geography).** AccessHE staff to outline project milestones, facilitate project ideation workshop with HEI staff/ambassadors, elect 'project leaders' per ambassador team, facilitate Careers services-led session on 'using your experiences to get the job you want'
- **Mid December 2019/early February 2020: project deadline.** Groups to decide on projects
- **1st or 2nd week in April 2020: project showcase/celebration event.** Involving project exhibitions, employer networking and training incl. mock interview/mock assessment centre sessions

Indicative Costings

The programme would be pool-funded by modest member contributions and offered at no cost to student ambassadors. HEIs will be responsible for recruiting ambassadors to the programme. Though there is no limit on the number of ambassadors that each institution can nominate, the model above assumes an average cohort size of 20 student ambassadors for the purposes of an equitable and manageable spread of work across the project groups, whilst ensuring as many ambassadors as possible can benefit from the programme.

23.05.2019 update: In light of discussions at the information webinar on 21.05.2019, AccessHE will explore an alternative costing model with 'fixed costs' (project launch/employer showcase) and 'institutional-specific costs' (ambassador projects and associated support) and ask institutions to propose their own costings.

Next Steps

AccessHE will record Member involvement in participating in this project and refine the details at the 6 June Forum and beyond.

AccessHE is a division of London Higher