

Student Futures Manifesto Theme 6: Pathway to Graduate Outcomes

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Overview

The project started and ended with students. The Student Union along with the Student Consultants and their staff pairs spent months researching and looking into their specialist area finding everything they could about it. Finding parts of the University that we could improve and make student time there better.

Then it came time to find out what you thought about Lincoln and what you think we could improve. So, we set up surveys covering the basic principles we found from our research to see if students agreed or had any better ideas from us. Also, from the beginning we made sure to just speak to students asking questions and getting in depth answers from everybody. Because we wanted to know more, we also set up surveys to really get to the bottom.

We have compiled this report to report on what we have found and what should happen in the future.

This report will go over what, why and how we did this project. Covering what our goals are and what we wanted to look into. As well as showing you what we have on offer at the moment which students can take part in now. To how we conducted our research into this topic from surveys, focus groups and simply talking to you. Looking at all the data we collected and reporting on what we have found and what it all means. Lastly, providing recommendations on what we can do better as a university and how we can tackle these problems together.

For what comes after this report, we want to look at measuring the success of this project and seeing if our proposed solutions have made life better here at Lincoln. We will most likely have more surveys and more groups to see how students are feeling about the changes we have made. Also, a possibility of having new goals set in the future to make sure we are keeping up with the changing times and tackling the issues of the future.

Aims

Pathway to graduate outcomes aims was split into 3 key areas, which cover from what we offer, how we will offer you it, to how we will inform you about the opportunity.

1. Micro-credentials

We want to offer tailored and complementary courses, activities, and opportunities to students to expand their knowledge on their degree and the wider world to prepare for any and all challenges they will face in the future.

2. Integrations

We want to place a precedent on employability and integrate it further into seminars and lectures. Using this time to promote and recommend activities and skills that are relevant to your course, offering workshops, trips out, speakers and job relevant examples.

3. Engagement

We want to tackle the issue of students not knowing what is offered when and how they can access it. We will look at more effective methods of advertising and strive to show you what you want to see. One way is to schedule the most important events on your timetables.

What does the University offer to students?

Lincoln University already has a variety of roles to offer students, one issue we found was that students just didn't know about all the roles and opportunities, which can be accessed online through career and employability website and the Students' Union website. There are options to walk in and talk to staff members who will help students picking what options are best for you.

Student Unions:

- Student Recruiters
- Student Reviewers
- Course Representation
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Teaching and Support Panelists
- Eco Award
- We support with the Lincoln Award
- Make a Difference Projects
- Elections for committee positions with sports and societies
- Community Volunteer for Mary's Meals
- Charity Ambassador
- Retail Assistant Volunteer
- Volunteer Tutor
- Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Volunteer
- There is also a variety of other ambassador roles
- Student Futures Manifesto project

Careers and Employability:

- Careers Guidance
- Workshops
- Employer events
- Live vacancies
- A diverse set of experiential learning, placement
- Internships
- Employer projects
- Industry insights
- Embedded career readiness programme
- Recruitment support
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Support for those from a disadvantaged background
- Global opportunities

Methods

This project is nothing without students. We could have easily set our own objectives and goals, but they might not have lined up with the current needs of our community and students. Which is why we asked students what they felt we needed.

Survey

This was the best way to reach as many people as possible to give us feedback on our specific aims. It covered all our topics where we got to ask you questions which we found the most important.

Focus Group

This provided us with great insight and allowed deeper decisions with students to get to the bottom of what you really want. We did this in pairs pathway to graduate outcome paired with activities.

Talking

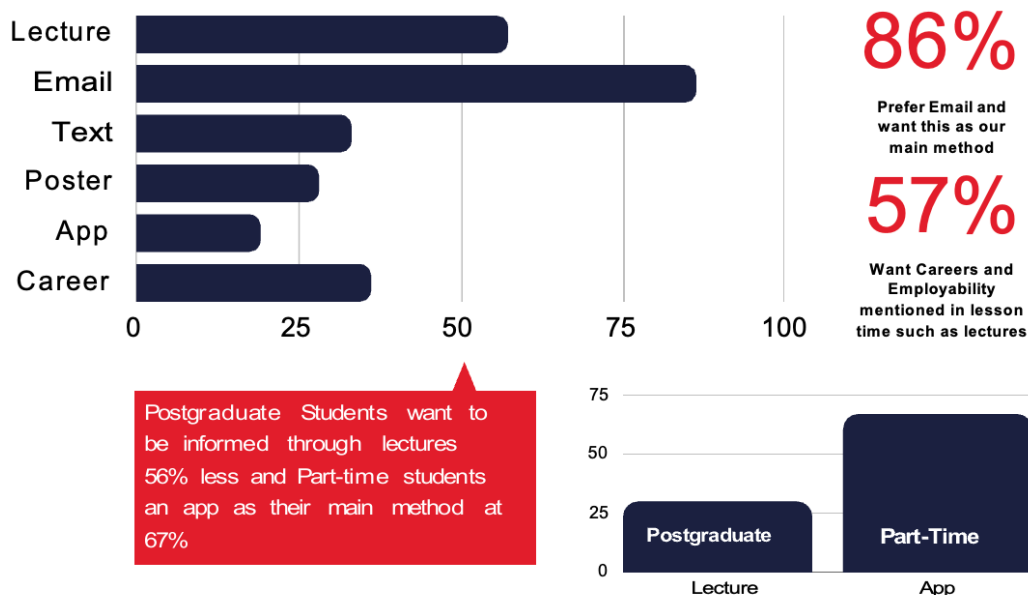
Instead of sitting behind screens or looking at data. It was just as important to find students and get feedback directly from you whilst you were at Lincoln, and they had a lot to say to us.

The data that we collected provided us with such a good insight into what you wanted from our university and how you felt about existing projects and goals.

Results

Part 1

Where would you like to find out about careers and employability opportunities in Lincoln?

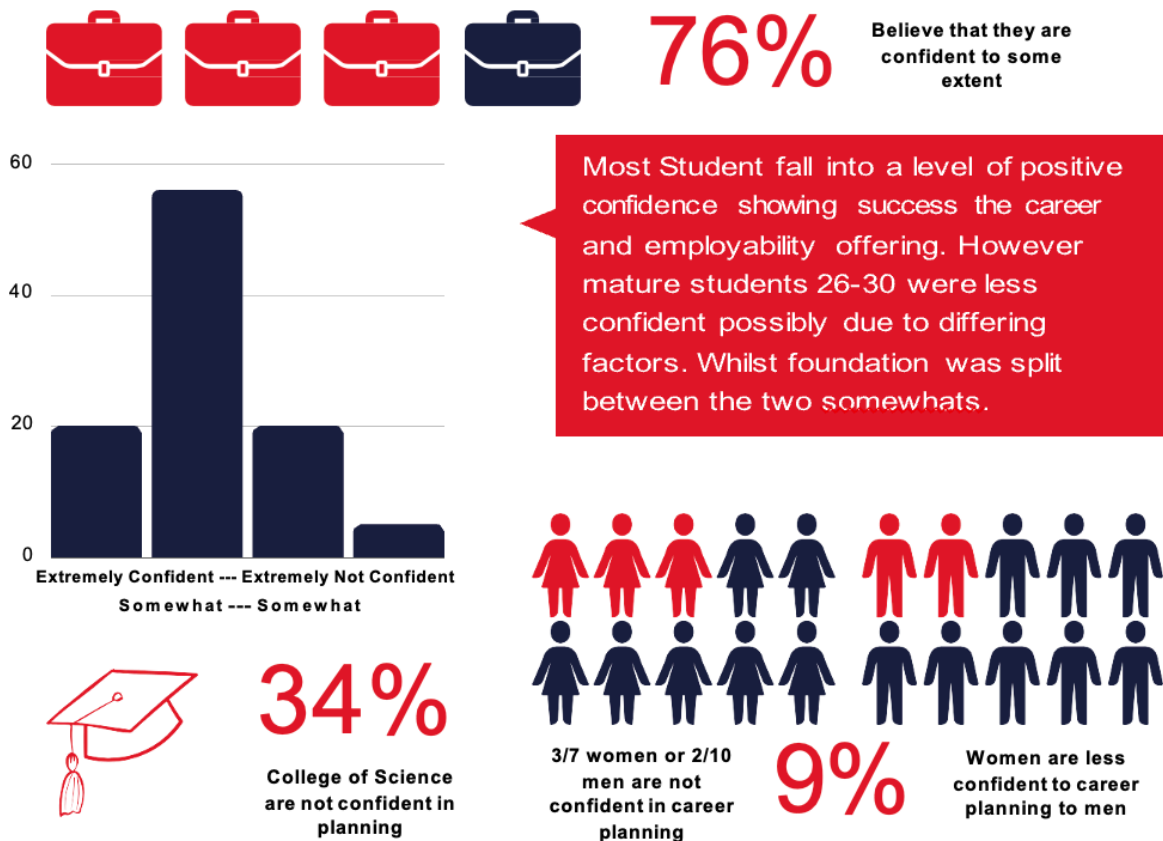


Are you more likely to attend Careers and Employability events and opportunities if a certificate or credential is offered at the end?

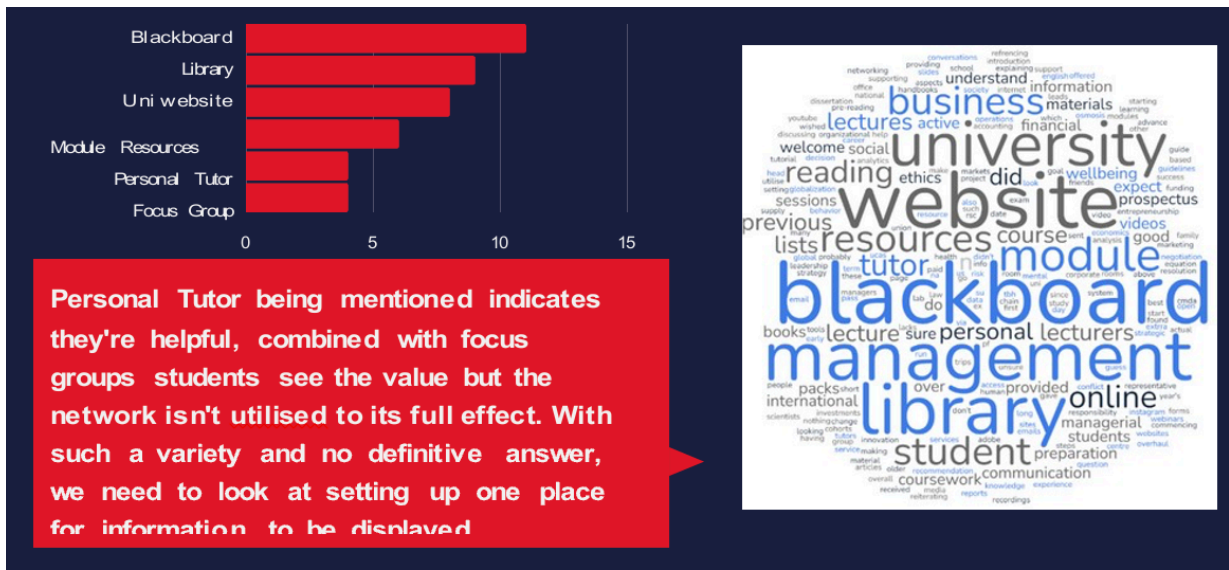


Part 2

Are you confident in your career planning with the tools that the university offers you today?

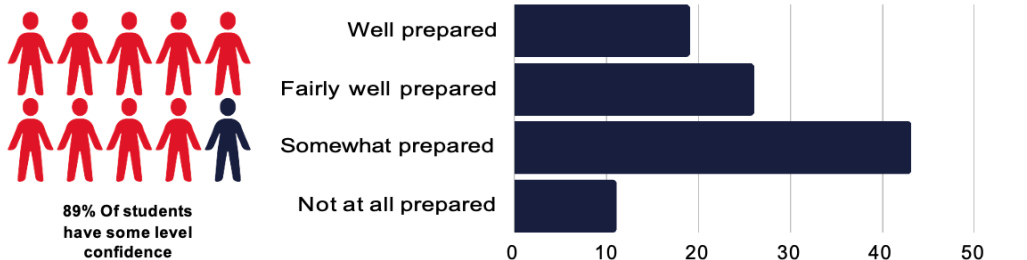


What resources did you find most useful to prepare yourself for your current year of study?



Part 3

How well prepared did you feel for your current year of study?



	Not at all prepared	Somewhat prepared	Fairly well prepared	Well prepared
Year 0	50%	50%	0%	0%
Year 1	18%	45%	36%	0%
Year 2	13%	27%	20%	40%
Year 3 & 4	0%	64%	9%	27%
Post-graduate	5%	35%	40%	20%

46%

of Student are only confidently prepared

33%

Of Part-time student are not prepared at all, with 0% fully prepared

40%

Of year 2 students feel prepared for their current study

Answers varied dependent on year of study. Later years feeling more prepared than earlier years, contrasting to the induction data seen earlier. Possibly indicating that students don't associate induction with feeling of being prepared for their current year. Age follows a similar trend; therefore provision could be improved in this regard.

Everything else you wanted us to know

- Wanting more practical sessions and teaching guides
- More help to be offered over the summer
- Wanting the Student's Union to take more responsibility in university life
- Regular job fairs and more help finding students part time jobs
- Fun and playful activities for free should be offered to help build confidence and to keep students happy

Focus Groups data

The survey gave us an overview on how students felt but we wanted to know more. So, we conducted focus groups, asking about engagement with employers, further integration with lesson time and about micro- credentials.

We found that students do have the opportunity to network with employers. However, they lacked a "follow up" from the University when they completed their internship. This shows that we need to make sure that we help students not only get these opportunities but make sure long-lasting connections are made afterwards. The failure to not communicate effectively with partnered institutions could limit the bridge between employment and student. However seamless the integration, transition and partnership between work and academia could be improved and nurtured to give students lifelong connections.

We found that we need school specific employment support after handing final deadlines in. We also found that we did not offer sufficient support or utilise employment connections to its fullest to help students succeed in their roles. The students responded very well to the idea of having timetabled events and thought that it would help contribute to networking. They wanted to enact curriculum change to enable practice to be reflected in each module to ensure there is an explicit connection of theory/academia to a working environment. They said they wanted to highlight the importance of open communication and staff being responsive to feedback. They brought up the idea of having smaller opportunities in the form of certifications to help contribute to employability and also highlighted the desire to have more connections with the international community and partner with other universities.

Recommendations

1. Micro-credentials

The Issue:

In the United Kingdom alone 33.8% of us will have a level 4 qualification (University degree) that's over 16.4 million. Compared to 1950 with 3.4%, 8.4% in 1970, and 19.3% 1990 having a degree alone won't make students stand out to employers, other important skills are required.

The Solution:

We need at Lincoln more skills and opportunities offered to students training them alongside their degree for their future careers. We need academic skill support, such as offering business students AWS training, Excel, and Word certificates and more that relate to their course which can help them stand out if they choose to participate. Alongside less academic skills like First Aid training, BSL, formative writing, or team working and confidence courses. With all these courses being offered for free or at a fair price for any and all students here at Lincoln.

The Plan:

The University should start by looking at the course and find any skills or certifications available. Then establish what they are able to run or host here at Lincoln and whether or not they can run it for free, if not look at providing students with the best price possible. They should look at emailing course specific skills that are on offer and inform students about it (we recommend course specific skill recommendations as to not flood the student's inbox). However, that's not to say students can't access others. We need to look at the site and expand both the academic offering and the non-academic offering on there for all students to expand their career employability.

2. Integrations

The Issue:

For many courses you will find that careers and employability only have a few lessons a year to help you find a career. We have found that this isn't enough, and we could do better with more time whilst making the most of the time we have now. Many students don't attend dedicated events or lectures with long talks or don't find themselves satisfied with the level of career readiness presented to them.

The Solution:

As such, we want to integrate careers and employability further into lesson time. We want courses and modules to take career readiness more seriously and better prepare their students for the future. Offering days where students take part in workshop style lessons, or have days out to explore their industry with real life examples and more careers fairs. Most importantly we want lecturers to tell students about these events during lesson time when they are relevant to do so.

The Plan:

To achieve this level of integration we will have to make the University re-evaluate its approach to teaching students and allowing more time and effort focused to this approach. We also have set up a system to inform lecturers about events and opportunities to inform students. We also want to look at making teacher re-evaluate their own teaching approach and incorporate a career-focused outcome to teaching offering at least one more instance of advance careers opportunity such as workshops or explore real-life industries.

3. Engagement

The Issue:

Numerous students in the university find difficulty on knowing what's happening in Lincoln for various reasons. This can be due to emails being missed, sessions skipped or missed advertising. This leads to many projects, events, and opportunities missed by a small amount of people.

The Solution:

We want to make sure that the students know what is offered and how they can get access to it. To do this we came up with the idea of adding key events to students' timetables such as career fairs or opportunities out. On top of making sure that the emails sent, which is the most popular choice by far has quality over quantity looking at a more tailored experience for students. Lastly, having lecturers tell students about the opportunities that are happening in Lincoln in lesson time that are relevant to their course and that you might find helpful.

The Plan:

To make this happen we want an improved system in place from the University to be able to better tailor information to students making quality over quantity emails to improve awareness. On top of informing teachers and letting them inform the students themselves. Whilst having a team to make sure that important events are timetabled onto students' timetables with the possibility of having a switch to toggle these events on and off to not overcrowd students' timetables.