



Graduate Retention Initiatives in the West Midlands

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Graduate Advantage

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Introduction

“The competitiveness of the West Midlands depends on the ability of the region to retain and attract graduates who can bring innovative ideas that will encourage business growth.

Graduate Advantage was set up in order to provide a coherent and strategic approach to graduate retention and utilisation across the region, with particular emphasis on the needs of small to medium sized businesses. AWM and Partners should be working together to deliver the region’s priorities, fill gaps in provision and build capacity to meet demand across the West Midlands.

The Regional Skills Partnership is key to aligning the supply of training and related business support to the current and future demands of employers and individuals; and ensuring that employers understand their future skill needs, and that employers and individuals play their role by investing in skills.”

David Lampitt, Learning and Skills Policy Manager, AWM.

Scope

In February 2005 Graduate Advantage received a request from AWM to: identify and map the existing graduate retention provision taking place across the West Midlands region and the partners involved in the delivery of this activity, and to ensure the package of benefits on offer be identified to graduates and employers in the region.

Methodology

To identify the organisations and initiatives featured in this report we conducted primary research in the form of an open email requesting information on initiatives offering support for placements or any other activity that would assist with graduate retention. We sent this email to regional business intermediaries, Higher Education

Institutions and other contacts, requesting collaboration in identifying organisations.

On receipt of referrals and together with our own web and anecdotal research, we researched each of these organisations by web search and direct contact to establish the nature and extent of the graduate retention activity and if it was within the scope of the survey. This research lead us to the organisations and initiatives featured in the report, who are our partners in delivering graduate retention provision in the West Midlands.

To map the existing provision in a collaborative way we sent out a questionnaire to the identified initiatives and an explanation of the purpose of the information request. The responses to the questionnaire were collated and evaluated over several months. The information we received enabled us to create a comparative matrix of data and material for an individual factsheet on each initiative. Once compiled, we sent factsheets back to each organisation for approval.

An important part of the process was giving each organisation the opportunity to finally review and approve its own factsheet and the template of the report before publication.

How to use this report

By publishing this information Graduate Advantage anticipate that it will give employers, students and graduates a single place to look to see the complete picture of placement initiatives in action across the West Midlands region.

The report is split into two sections:

- 1) Business Intermediaries, with a quick comparison matrix followed by a full description of each service.
- 2) Higher Education Institutions, with a quick comparison matrix followed by an explanation of the different placement related activities offered.



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Business Intermediaries Matrix

Business intermediaries can be split into those who have their own placement activity and those who give advice and refer onto other regional programmes.

This table contains only basic information so please see the supporting sheets for any organisation that you require more details on.

Unless specified, these programmes are available across the whole West Midlands region and relate to students and graduates of Higher Education only.

	Refer on only	For Student / Graduate	Free service	Students / Graduates Paid?	Subsidies for SME's
Grad Central		Graduate	Yes – First Use	Yes	
Graduate Advantage		Both	Yes	Yes	Yes
Knowledge Innovation Technology Transfer Scheme (KITTS)		Student / Graduate	No	Yes	No
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP)		Graduate	No	Yes	Yes
REGEN WM		Both	Yes	Yes	
Shell Technology Enterprise Programme (STEP)		Student	Yes	Yes	Yes
SPEED		Student	Yes		N/A

	Refer on only	For Student / Graduate	Free service	Students / Graduates Paid?	Subsidies for SME's
Engineering Employers Federation (EEF)	✓ *				No
Contact – The Knowledge Exchange	✓		Yes	N/A	N/A
Manufacturing Advisory Service – West Midlands	✓		Yes		

* refers onto EEF members only.



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Contact – The Knowledge Exchange

Lead contact details	Rachel Du-Croz 0121 331 5661
Website	www.contactke.co.uk
Start Date	September 2004
Finish Date	September 2009
Regional coverage / availability	West Midlands
Key activities	Promotion of HEI commercial and business services to West Midland organisations (public and private sector)
Placement activity in detail	Signposting activity to all other regional programmes including KTP, STEP and Graduate Advantage
Collaboration with GA	Mutual referral, joint events projects and reciprocal promotion of services. Contact used Graduate Advantage to recruit STEP placement student. Partnership agreement
Source of funding	HEFCE fund Contact, but Contact can access appropriate funding for business needs.
Duration	N/A
Availability in year	N/A
Graduate / student eligibility	N/A
Company eligibility / target organisation	N/A
Sector focus	N/A
Academic input	N/A
Training provided to student / graduate	N/A
Employer commitment required	Prior to any scheme being identified, employers will undertake a needs analysis.



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Grad Central

Lead contact details	Lucy Dinsdale 01675 468
Website	www.grad-central.co.uk
Start Date	January 2009
Finish Date	On-going
Regional coverage / availability	West Midlands
Key activities	Graduate recruitment service aimed getting graduates into jobs across the West Midlands
Placement activity in detail	<p>Grad Central will help any company to recruit graduates. The first graduate placed will be on a fee-free basis with a charge of £1500 per graduate placed thereafter</p> <p>Graduates from any location can access the service</p>
Source of funding	Advantage West Midlands
Duration	Permanent graduate roles
Availability in year	All year round
Graduate / student eligibility	Any graduate wishing to work within the West Midlands
Company eligibility / target organisation	All West Midlands businesses who can declare less than £120000 of State Aid funding over the previous 36 months
Sector focus	All
Academic input	None
Training provided to student / graduate	None
Employer commitment required	Business must employ the graduate and pay their salary



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Graduate Advantage

Lead contact details	Nicola Turner 0121 204 4767
Website	www.graduateadvantage.co.uk
Email	enquiries@graduateadvantage.co.uk
Start Date & Finish Date (Phase 1)	January 2003 – December 2007
Start Date & Finish Date (Phase 2)	January 2008 - February 2011
Regional coverage / availability	All West Midlands
Key activities	Made up of a consortium of 12 Higher Education Institutions in the West Midlands, Graduate Advantage promotes graduate retention in the region, especially to small and medium sized enterprises. Through its website the project offers graduate and student placements and training opportunities.
Placement activity in detail	Graduate and student placements
Source of funding	Advantage West Midlands
Duration	Graduate and student placements range from 4 weeks to 12 Months, full and part time.
Availability in year	All year round
Graduate / student eligibility	Both
Company eligibility / target organisation	Services open to all West Midlands businesses who can declare less than £120,000 State Aid funding. Subsidies for SMEs.
Sector focus	All
Academic input	None
Training provided to student / graduate	Project aims to give “on the job” training and development to participating students and graduates, supported by extensive, tailored training.
Employer commitment required	Supervision of and payment for student / graduate. Availability at pre-placement and final visit meetings.



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Knowledge Innovation Technology Transfer Scheme (KITTS)

Lead contact details	Ms Julie Lappin 01902 321411
Website	www.kittsgraduate.co.uk
Start Date	November 02
Finish Date	February 2008 (This project is currently suspended while funding is sought)
Regional coverage / availability	Advantage West Midlands region
Key activities	KITTS is made up from a consortium of 10 partners within the West Midlands who are working together with AWM to match small and medium sized enterprises with graduates. Through its website KITTS offers a service for companies to publicise potential projects and for graduates to register their CV and identify potential opportunities.
Placement activity in detail	KITTS aims to match the skills of qualified graduates with the specific needs of West Midlands based small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) by giving graduates the opportunity to put theory into practice through a real work based project in industry. The project should last roughly 10 weeks.
Collaboration with GA	Mutual referral, represented on each others' Steering Groups, Graduate Advantage offers use of website service to advertise KITTS vacancies
Source of funding	AWM
Duration	10 weeks
Availability in year	Throughout the year
Graduate / student eligibility	Graduates resident in the West Midlands region only
Company eligibility / target organisation	The KITTS scheme is open to all West Midland businesses. A subsidy is available for SMEs. There is some funding available for larger businesses.
Sector focus	All
Academic input	There is no formal academic supervision for the graduate



Knowledge Innovation Technology Transfer Scheme (KITTS)

Continued

Training provided to student / graduate

KITTS is designed to give graduates 'on the job' personal development through the delivery of a specific project with clearly identified objectives.

Employer commitment required

In addition to the financial commitment the company is expected to provide a safe environment for the graduate and the necessary facilities / resources to achieve the objectives set out in the project application form.



Profile Page

Knowledge
Transfer
Partnerships

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP)

Lead contact details	Martin May – 0121 204 4253
Website	www.ktponline.org.uk
Start Date	1976
Finish Date	Ongoing
Regional coverage / availability	UK wide project
Key activities	Knowledge transfer / industrial collaboration
Placement activity in detail	12 - 36 month projects where a graduate earning a competitive salary works full-time at a company's premises under the mentorship and supervision of an academic.
Collaboration with GA	Mutual referral and promotion, Graduate Advantage offers website service for advertising KTP vacancies
Source of funding	Technology Strategy Board, Research Councils, Regional Development Agencies, some Government Departments
Duration	University supervised projects run for between 18 and 36 months. FE College supervised projects run for between 12 and 18 months
Availability in year	All year
Graduate / student eligibility	2:1 or better
Company eligibility / target organisation	Almost any – care needed for very small <5 employers, very large or very new <18 months
Sector focus	Almost all – check with M May
Academic input	1/2 day per week at the company premises
Training provided to student / graduate	3 weeks residential management training £1750 per year training budget in addition Opportunity to read for higher degree
Employer commitment required	½ day / week supervision and financial contribution

KTP Partnerships receive financial support from the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships programme (KTP). KTP aims to help businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the UK Knowledge Base. KTP is funded by the Technology Strategy Board along with the other government funding organisations



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Manufacturing Advisory Service – West Midlands

Lead contact details	Huw Jenkins 0845 245 0845 – hjenkins@mas-wm.org
Website	www.mas-wm.org
Start Date	
Finish Date	March 2010
Regional coverage / availability	West Midlands Region
Key activities	Advice and support for Manufacturing companies
Placement activity in detail	Where appropriate referral to GA, KITTS, STEP, KTP
Collaboration with GA	Mutual referral, joint events, attendance at quarterly Associates Day
Source of funding	AWM
Duration	Current contract to Mar 2010 with 2yr extension option
Availability in year	Full Year
Graduate / student eligibility	Unrestricted, preference for HEI's located in the region
Company eligibility / target organisation	Can work with any but funded intervention for SMEs only
Sector focus	Any manufacturing activity located in West Midlands
Academic input	N/A
Training provided to student / graduate	N/A
Employer commitment required	N/A



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Regeneration Placement Service - Regenwm

Lead contact details	Elaine Bird - elaine.bird@regenwm.org 0121 202 3260
Website	www.regenwm.org
Start Date	January 2004
Finish Date	Ongoing
Regional coverage / availability	West Midlands Region
Key activities	Broker placements for graduates and undergraduates in regeneration related organisations and advertise opportunities
Placement activity in detail	There is no set formula for placements. They depend on what organisations can offer. We have 140 graduates / undergraduates on our database
Collaboration with GA	Referral process, further collaboration under development
Source of funding	Advantage West Midlands
Duration	Varies
Availability in year	Varies – on demand service
Graduate / student eligibility	An interest in regeneration
Company eligibility / target organisation	Organisations involved in regeneration: public, private and voluntary sector
Sector focus	Regeneration sector
Academic input	
Training provided to student / graduate	Informal
Employer commitment required	Commitment to developing student / graduate informally is required



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STEP

Lead contact details	To find your local agent go to www.step.org.uk
Website	www.step.org.uk
Start Date	1986
Finish Date	Ongoing
Regional coverage / availability	All UK
Key activities	Nationwide network of agencies promoting and delivering work experience placements for students. Find your local agency through www.step.org.uk
Placement activity in detail	STEP offers quality work experience in SMEs. Most popular is the 8 week placement starting in July for 2 nd year or penultimate year students.
Collaboration with GA	Referrals if projects or students do not fit STEP or KITTs criteria, joint events, Graduate Advantage promote STEP at all consortium universities and to businesses in the West Midlands region
Source of funding	DTI/AWM/Business Link/Various
Duration	8 -13 weeks
Availability in year	Mostly summer. Some agents also offer placements from part-time to 1 year.
Graduate / student eligibility	2nd year and penultimate year students only
Company eligibility / target organisation	SME status
Sector focus	All
Academic input	None
Training provided to student / graduate	Supported programme featuring induction, mid term training day and competition day at the end of the placement.
Employer commitment required	Supervision and payment of invoice. Availability at pre-placement and mid-term visit meetings and on local competition day.

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SPEED

SPEED - Student Placements for Entrepreneurs in Education

Lead contact details	SPEED@WLV.AC.UK – 01902 518960
Website	www.wlv.ac.uk/speed
Start Date	?
Finish Date	Ongoing
Regional coverage / availability	The University of Birmingham, University of Wolverhampton Staffordshire University
Key activities	The basic premise of SPEED is to enable registered students at the University to start their own business alongside their studies.
Placement activity in detail	As part of the SPEED programme, you will have access to experienced mentoring support, tailored training and networking opportunities, plus full control of your own budgeting decisions.
Collaboration with GA	?
Source of funding	?
Duration	The programme lasts for a period of 36 weeks and acts as an integral part of the University experience; it is designed to either offer an alternative to the traditional work-based placement or to run alongside your degree without taking a break from your studies.
Availability in year	?
Graduate / student eligibility	Registered students at the participating Universities
Company eligibility / target organisation	N/A
Sector focus	All
Academic input Training provided to student / graduate	Students will receive training and access to a variety of internal and external resources to give them the best chance of generating an income from their business and will be coached at each stage of their development
Employer commitment required	N/A



Higher Education Institutions Matrix

For explanations of section titles please see next page

Institution	Prospects Website	Jobshops	Sandwich Placements	MSc/MBA projects	Short on course placements	W P / Outreach Projects	HEIF funded projects
Aston University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The University of Birmingham	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University College Birmingham	✓	x	✓	x	✓	x	x
Coventry University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Keele University	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x
Newman University College	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x
Open University	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Staffordshire University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
University of Warwick	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University of Wolverhampton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
University of Worcester	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	x
Birmingham City University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Matrix section title explanations

Prospects Website

Prospects.ac.uk

This is the UK's official graduate careers web site. It allows students and graduates to explore careers, postgraduate study and graduate jobs in the UK. They can also explore work and study overseas-Prospects have information on over 50 countries. There is detailed information on the graduate labour market including both local and national trends, information on careers fairs and links to all HE Careers Services in the UK.

Prospects.ac.uk also provides a range of advice for both UK and international students on; employers, options with different subjects, jobs sectors (29 covered), career planning, finance for study, leaving/changing courses and handling discrimination.

Other services offered through the prospects website include;

Prospects Planner

Allows students to access an interactive career exploration system. This is also available on PCs within most HE University Careers Services in the UK.

Graduate Career Development Service.

This is also available through Prospects. It is an interactive service for graduates requiring on-line careers advice and support. It provides access to a range of information including labour market information

My Prospects

Allows students and graduates to create their CV and receive vacancies and news by e-mail

Recruiters Desk

Allows recruiters to advertise their vacancies. Also includes a CV matching and e-mail messaging service to target the best candidates.

Law Careers Advice Network (LCAN)

Information on education, training and recruitment, prospects, skills required etc for the law profession.

Regional Graduate Services

Students/graduates can explore regional projects. For example, by using the West Midlands Region link students/graduates can find out more about the West Midlands On-Line Employer Directory (Network) where they can find details of job opportunities in the region and have access to labour market information.

Work Experience and Placements

Links students and graduates to the National Council for Work Experience where they can explore work experience/placement opportunities.

Jobshops

A service for advertising part-time and vacation jobs to students. The service tends to be popular and is well used by students. Jobs advertised here may range from menial and factory work to skilled and more career focused work. They vary from institution to institution and can be run by the Careers Service, Students Union or an external company. Charges may be applicable. An example of those across the West Midlands are:

Aston Students' Guild JobShop www.astonguild.org.uk

Birmingham Students' Guild Job Zone www.bugs.bham.ac.uk

Coventry – futureworks www.thefutureworks.org.uk

Keele University Students' Union Jobshop www.kusu.net/DisplayPage.asp?pageid=804

Staffordshire University Workbank www.staffs.ac.uk/workbank or www.theworkbank.co.uk

Warwick University Careers Service use Unitemps

<http://neo.warwick.ac.uk/unitemps/public/default.asp>

Wolverhampton Student Union Jobshop www.wolvesunion.org/sections/intro/pages/jobs.htm

Sandwich Placements

A placement of up to one year that forms part of the curriculum of an undergraduate degree course. The aim of these work placement years is for a student to:

- Gain Real Experience with Real Responsibility
- Try out a Career Path
- Improve your Graduate Employment chances
- Earn some money

MSc/MBA Projects

Post graduates on Masters courses may seek placements to enhance or base their studies around. Durations can vary.

Short On-course Placements

Typically, students on undergraduate courses who may undertake multiple short, practical placements throughout their degree course. E.g. Nursing, Physiotherapy.

Widening Participation / Outreach Projects

Specific involvement varies between institutions but might include:

Student Tutoring: Students volunteer to support pupils in the classroom for half a day a week in the spring term, under the supervision of the classroom teachers. Students provide whole class, small group and one-to-one support.

Student Mentoring: Mentors assist secondary school pupils in danger of not achieving their full potential, to be successful in their studies and to progress to higher education. Students work on a one-to-one basis for an academic year with up to four mentees, providing study skills, support and pastoral support.

Active Community Engagement (ACE): Student volunteers support sports, drama, art, music and other projects in local schools and community groups.

Higher Education Innovative Fund (HEIF) Funded Projects

The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) supports higher education institutions (HEIs) in knowledge exchange and productive interactions with business, public sector organisations and the wider community, for the benefit of the economy and society. For more information please see www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout/heif

While every effort has been made to identify all current initiatives contributing to graduate retention in the West Midlands, we accept there may be further activities taking place that we have not covered in this report. Graduate Advantage are keen to be made aware of any such initiatives through enquiries@graduateadvantage.co.uk

Furthermore, if you find the information provided here is out of date or inaccurate we welcome feedback and updates.

We hope you find this report useful and informative.

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