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Exploring the Impact of Change on University Careers Services: Death of a Service or Surviving and Thriving?

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Abstract

This Dissertation takes the form of a case study exploring the position of university Careers Services working under a neo-liberal paradigm. The study was motivated by a wish to explore the changes that have taken place in university Careers Services since 1997 in order to understand the changed landscape, and to provide a snapshot of the current setting that might be of use to those considering entry to and those working in careers advisory work. Additionally the study was intended to inform my own professional practice and understanding. I consider the position of Careers Services through the commentary of eight University Careers Advisers from four institutions in Scotland. Through semi-structured interviews I explore their perceptions and views about their work and the environment in which they work. Specifically, changes to work in the areas of careers education, careers information and careers guidance are considered alongside changes to the concept of career, changes in graduate employer practices, and the students and graduates organisations seek to employ. The study highlights the challenges faced by the Careers Service in universities in Scotland and explores the experiences and views of the professionals that work in that Service against a backdrop of an employability agenda and increasingly instrumentalised expectations. Giroux's (1993) notion of education as a vehicle for individual empowerment and Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Approach provide the theoretical framework to support the analysis of the state of university Careers Services and to offer a defence of the importance of careers advisory and guidance work. My data confirms that the role of university Careers Services has changed significantly post- Dearing (1997) and that, increasingly, Services based in traditional research lead universities and those in newer institutions are differentiated. The changing landscape has allowed Careers work to flourish and gain a more prominent role in some institutions, raising the profile of those Services. However, some Careers Services, the study indicates, have struggled to carve out a niche for themselves and these Services risk becoming marginalised within their institutions. A Careers Service that contributes to its university's graduate employability objectives may secure a strong institutional position but raise questions about its activity with respect to long held underlying assumptions about careers guidance work and the ethical purpose of the activity of the Careers Service. I conclude by anticipating possible futures for the university Careers Service with a call to maintain and strengthen the function of guidance and advisory work within these Services.

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My darling husband, Lawrence, and our lovely children, Louis and Anne.

Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this Dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

K. BARBOUR

Chapter 1: Outline of the Work

Tony Raban, then Director of the Cambridge University Careers Service, in his foreword to Waters et al.'s (2002) centenary history publication of that Service, suggests the birth of the university Careers Service was not without controversy and only its willingness to respond to change would allow it to flourish into its second century and beyond. This study focuses on university Careers Services, Careers Advisers[1], and their role in an environment which increasingly expects a return on investment. Viewed at their conception at the turn of the last century as a support service akin to the university Counselling Service, Careers Services became increasingly important and relevant as the Higher Education[2] environment became progressively marketised from, arguably, the late 1970s (Brown with Carasso, 2013). While the changing environment has offered opportunities for Careers Services, simultaneously it has presented threats. Services which responded to calls for improved graduate destination statistics and evidence of embedding employability in the university curriculum raised their profile and increased their reach. But an increasingly instrumentalist Service ran the risk of weakening or even entirely losing the role a Careers Service plays in helping students find their way to a fulfilled and happy life which goes beyond work and income generation.

This study explores where university Careers Services were twenty years ago and where they are now, and it is informed by interviews conducted with a group of Careers Advisers based at four Scottish university Careers Services. Examining changes that have taken place in the Scottish university Careers Services, the study draws on this interview data, augmented by my own personal experiences and perceptions, synthesised with relevant theoretical and policy texts drawing on both Scottish and UK wide policy. I consider the changes that have taken place particularly from 1997 as this was a year of critical events relevant to this study. It was the year in which New Labour, under Tony Blair, won a landslide victory in the General Election[3] winning 419 seats (56 of 72 seats in Scotland). Additionally in 1997 Dearing reported on the National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education, recommending the introduction of fees for university tuition. Hence the study

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[1] Throughout the work 'Adviser' is used in place of 'Careers Adviser' and 'Service' used in place of 'Careers Service' from time to time.

[2] Higher Education includes colleges, specialist art institutions, business schools and agricultural colleges as well as universities. See http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/higher-education-universities-colleges/.

[3] 1 May 1997 General Election figures. See: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/politics97/background/pastelec/ge97.shtml

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draws on UK-wide policy but is located, with respect to empirical interview data and my own experience, in the Scottish context. Focussing on changes to university Careers Services seems timely now as the approaching Teaching Excellence Framework Green Paper (Johnson, 2015a) draws attention to graduate destinations, a key concern of those Careers Services and a proposed measure of teaching excellence.

The first chapter introduces the study, providing background and exploring the impetus behind the study itself. Setting the Careers Service in its historical context, I consider key reviews of Higher Education Careers Services and examine the changing landscape, including the introduction of a neo-liberal agenda and the response of the Service to its modern setting. The second chapter explores the methodology used and explains the theoretical stance of the work including an exploration of my own positionality with respect to so called 'insider research'. The main findings of the research are explored in Chapters Three, Four and Five with each of these chapters focussed on a particular theme which arose from the research. In the third chapter, Changing Career Patterns, I examine the concept of a shift from linear to more fluid and flatter career structures. I consider what commentators have to say about changing career trajectories and explore the ways in which the Careers Advisers in this study perceived related changes and the impact of the changes on their work. The chapter goes on to look at the Advisers' professional careers identities and the development of professional education for Higher Education Careers Service staff. This third chapter ends with an exploration of the central concept of employability, and its impact on Careers Services in a post-Dearing (1997) context. Chapter Four looks at three key areas of the Careers Adviser's work: education, information and guidance and here I examine the changes that have taken place in each of these areas, in light of the employability agenda previously explored. Chapter Five starts to explore changes from the point of view of other stakeholders: the employers and the students. It explores the shifts in employers' selection processes and the impact of these on the students they strive to attract which, in turn, has resulted in further changes to the Careers Services working with both employers and students. Chapter Six draws together the conclusions to the work. I briefly re-visit the research story and explore what has been learnt from carrying out the research. I outline the limitations of the study and suggest areas of further research. Finally, I explore how my own perspective has changed and explore ways in which this study might contribute to an enhanced understanding of the position of university Careers Services both now and in the future. For the moment, here, I outline my own story of the research and explain why I undertook this study.

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The Story of the Research

I have worked in university-based student support for 25 years with most of that time spent in Careers Services working in a variety of roles including Information Officer, Careers Adviser, Head of Careers Service and then as a manager (Deputy Director of Student Services) overseeing the running of Careers and other Student Support Services. Through those years the Higher Education landscape has undergone significant change. These changes have impacted across Higher Education Institutions (hereafter HEIs) but, I suggest, have had a very significant impact on Careers Services due to the very nature of, and reasons for, those changes. This study seeks to explore the impact of those changes on the university Careers Service through the eyes of those working in a key role within the Services: the Careers Advisers.

Before I undertook this research it was my belief that Careers Services in universities were at risk. Having completed this research, this remains my belief. The introduction of changes to education under a neo-liberal agenda (which I will discuss later in this chapter) directly positions the Careers Service as a tool to help realise the goals of the institution and, arguably, a wider societal agenda. The Careers Services which fail to deliver those goals risk being side-lined or even extinguished entirely. Reducing or removing the Careers Service arguably puts students at risk at a time when their need for guidance and support is greatest as they transition from education to the world of work and life beyond the university. My concern about this was a significant motivating factor in setting about this study.

The Impetus

As noted, the motivation to carry out this research came from my own experience of Careers work in universities. In particular, in one Careers Service I had witnessed the reduction of services and activities to the extent that it no longer resembled the Service I had first joined. It no longer operated as what I deemed to be a functioning Careers Service offering the full complement of activity (and I develop this in Chapter Four) and other parts of the university conducted its Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey (discussed in more detail below). Other parts of the university also managed the vacancy process in which it advertised opportunities from and provided services to employers. Other parts of the university delivered workshops and academic based activity. In short, it was a shell of the Careers Service it had been. I wanted to understand what had taken place and to consider the consequences of this.

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No-one whose career spanned the 1990s onwards could fail to be affected by the developments in IT and communications. When I began my career as an Information Officer in 1990, no-one in that Careers Service had a computer or any electronic support. A pool of 'typists' was maintained and they would undertake such tasks as typing up a weekly vacancy bulletin which would then be photocopied, put into the backs of cars and taken to various 'drop off points' around the campuses of the university. The same activities took place with application forms, brochures and promotional material from employers with much thought put into developing systems to allow students to request particular brochures and then ensure the right package reached the right student. All UK university Careers Services operated on a similar basis, each producing their own job listings. However, as developments in IT and communications emerged, people began to be freed up for other activities. Additionally, and as I will discuss in later chapters, as successive governments turned the spotlight on universities and their role, calling attention to the links between education and economic viability, university Careers Services began to change and differentiate. Once fairly homogenous with respect to activity and differing only in aspects such as size and reach, they became very different entities within their own institutions. Differences often depended on the way they had progressed and evolved and on ways in which they had been encouraged to develop in particular institutions. This meant that some Careers Services continued in a similar form, with Careers Advisers carrying out the triad (explored in Chapter Four) of information provision, careers guidance through interviews and one-to-one appointments, and careers education realised through workshops and group activity. Others became more focused on teaching, sometimes delivering accredited modules or part modules, with a shift of emphasis that meant this became the major activity of their Service. Others concentrated on delivering services online or focussing on another aspect of activity, such as mentoring or employer liaison. Wanting to explore these changes and understand the transformations that had taken place, I started to articulate this to myself as the wish to carry out a piece of empirical research to explore these changes in different but related environments.

Emerging questions focussed on whether other Career Services based in different universities were undergoing similar changes, whether other practitioners were experiencing similar changes in their work and how Careers Advisers felt about these changes. In particular, it was apparent that, in some institutions, Careers Services were leading on the employability agenda, giving their career practitioners an institution-wide, high profile role. But at other institutions the Careers Service played only a minor role in

the delivery of that employability agenda. Additionally, although a focus on leading an institution's employability agenda seemed to heighten a Careers Service's reach and role that focus ran the risk of forsaking other traditional careers activity.

Initially I wanted to explore the opinions of staff within Careers Services, to ascertain the changes that were taking place and to better understand the impact of these on those individuals and their Careers Services. My own experience told me that the landscape was changing and that was having an impact on the work of the Adviser. For example, employability was a concept we grappled with on a daily basis and I wanted to understand if changes were as apparent as I believed in the three traditional areas of the Careers Adviser's work: careers education, information and guidance. I wanted to understand, too, if such changes mattered to Advisers. In order to contextualise these changes, I will now briefly outline university Careers Services from their very beginnings.

Background

The origins of 'university appointments boards', as Careers Services were formerly known, can be traced back to 1892 (Weston, 1994). By the mid-1950s all universities had such a service, offering advisory interviews, information about careers, employers and jobs, and placement activities (Heyworth, 1964). 'Universities' however, were restricted to the 23 or so institutions that existed across the UK and comprised the ancient universities and so called 'red-brick' universities. The Heyworth Report (1964) describes how university Careers Services prior to the late nineteenth century did not exist. In a chapter entitled 'The need for appointments boards', the report describes how graduates, almost exclusively male graduates up until the end of that century, had no need for such services because they did not have a vast array of opportunities open to them. They mostly became vicars, schoolmasters or civil servants or had no need of employment, if they were of independent means. Heyworth writes:

> … the older universities were part of a social pattern in which dons, undergraduates and parents all knew what careers were approachable from the university and how to get into them (Heyworth, 1964:2).

Similarly Weston (1994:17), in his exploration of the Oxford University Careers Service, describes career destinations prior to the establishment of a Careers Service at Oxford, to be in 'service of the Church and State … landownership ... on the Bench and in the Commons ... teaching or law'. Indeed, Weston shows that, before 1850, almost three-quarters of Oxford graduates were ordained, but that this reduced to a fifth by the turn of

the century (Weston, 1994:19). Complementing the decline in employment in the Church was the rise of commerce and industry and what Heyworth (1964:2) calls 'the managerial society'. It became apparent that graduates 'could be useful to business' (Heyworth, 1964:2) and a more occupational focus was required. The need to facilitate that focus resulted in the beginnings of a Careers Service at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. In these universities Careers Services were rudimentary affairs at their start. The focus began with teaching and Cambridge University's William Lewis, who held the Chair of Mineralogy from 1888, set up the 'Scholastic Agency' which worked to place graduates in teaching jobs. Robert Raper established a similar agency at Oxford University and then went further, setting up the first Committee meeting in December 1892, of what was to become the Oxford University Appointments Board. This was the earliest agency established in a British university to help graduates find jobs and so, in effect, was the very first Careers Service based at a HEI. Although some universities have been in existence for hundreds of years[4], the Careers Services based in those institutions have been established for only a fraction of that time. By 1914, Appointments Services had been set up at only seven of the 23 universities in the UK but by 1939 most had some sort of careers related service (Heyworth, 1964:3). In Scotland there are now 19 HEIs[5], 14 of those are universities, and all have some form of Careers support. In newer universities developed from Central Institutions in Scotland[6], Careers Services are considerably more recent and so less well established. This will become important in this study and I shall suggest that the Careers Service as an entity is fragile, ephemeral and not particularly well established. Perhaps connected to its transient nature, the university Careers Service does not have a canon of literature and research associated with it. There is not an abundance of relevant published literature surrounding the function of careers guidance in general and research is more scant when considering university Careers Services. Reflecting this, university Careers Services have been reviewed infrequently since their beginnings but it is interesting to consider the reviews that have occurred because they provide an insight into what others thought of university and Higher Education Careers Services at certain points

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[4] University of Oxford, founded 1167; University of Cambridge, founded 1209; University of St Andrews, founded 1410; University of Glasgow, founded 1451; University of Aberdeen, founded 1495, and University of Edinburgh, founded 1583.

[5] The 19 HEIs are the Universities of Aberdeen, Abertay, Dundee, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Heriot-Watt, the Highlands and Islands, Queen Margaret , Robert Gordon, St Andrews, Stirling, Strathclyde, Open University in Scotland, University of the West of Scotland, and Glasgow School of Art, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and SRUC (Scotland's Rural College).

[6] Equivalent to what were polytechnics in England.

in time, and so enable the identification of shifts and changes that have occurred. Accordingly, I shall now examine three reviews of Higher Education Careers Services.

Related Reviews

This study makes reference to three reviews which have a bearing on the work here. The first seminal review of the university appointments boards (Careers Services), took place in 1964 through the University Grants Committee (Heyworth, 1964). There was then a lull of some 33 years before Tony Watts produced a report prepared for the professional body, the 'Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services', that was entitled 'Strategic Directions for Careers Services in Higher Education' (Watts, 1997). In 2000, Tessa Blackstone, then Minister for Higher and Further Education, requested that a review of HE Careers Services in England be undertaken and this was chaired by Martin Harris, with the resulting review commonly referred to as the Harris (2001) Report. I will briefly consider each of these reviews in turn to examine the developing role of the university Careers Service.

Heyworth (1964) indicated that the work of the university appointments boards involved three main elements:

  (a) Advisory interviews between appointments officer and students,
  (b) The provision of information about careers, jobs, employers,
  (c) Machinery for:
      (1) notifying vacancies to students,
      (2) arranging interviews between students and employers,
      (3) dealing with employers' enquiries (Heyworth, 1964: 5).

It is apparent that, in 1964, the function of the university Careers Service focussed on guidance in the form of advisory interviews, information to help facilitate the process of career choice and activity to help facilitate the job search process. Tony Watts, in his strategic review some 33 years later, comments on Heyworth's summary of careers activities suggesting that: 'Arguably, these still provide the core' (Watts, 1997:33). Watts goes on to explain that, from 1997, guidance is offered not only through interviews but also through group sessions and that the links with employers extend beyond placement:

> The Heyworth triad can therefore be redefined as comprising: (i) individual and group guidance (ii) information, and (iii) employer liaison and placement. Around these can be built a variety of other activities (Watts, 1997:33).

Watts does not specifically include careers education at this point although that could perhaps be inferred through 'group guidance' and Heyworth's triad obviously relates to the

Careers Adviser's triad of education, information and guidance. Watts explored the implications of the role of Services depending on where they were placed within institutions noting that the Service could be aligned with other student services, with other academic services or with other marketing services. Aligning to student services emphasised the personal support and guidance role of the activity but could marginalise the service with respect to its employer and external activity. Aligning to academic departments brought the teaching and consultancy roles to the fore and alignment to the marketing functions emphasised the employer relations role and heightened the Service's contact with potential students, focussing on its alumni and where they secured future employment (Watts, 1997:8). Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the review with respect to this study is that Watts started to explore alternative locations for university Careers Services. At least in some universities the Service began to emerge from its traditional home aligned with other welfare and support services to relocate to academic or marketing environments and perhaps to survive, it had to do this.

The Harris Report of 2001 was commissioned by Tessa Blackstone, then Minister for Higher Education in the Labour Party cabinet lead by Tony Blair. The report took a different approach from those above and resulted in a series of recommendations rather than focussing predominantly on what was currently happening within English HE Careers Services. Hence it examined what *should* be happening through a series of 41 recommendations to the various 'principal target audiences' (Harris, 2001: 6) which included Careers Services. The findings were not based on a systematic review but instead identified 'cameos' and examples of what was deemed to be good practice from different universities and HE institutions. Being government lead and an example of government intervention into HE provision, the underlying premise of the Report suggested that Careers Services had a specific role to play and intimated that this was not always being fulfilled. The Harris Report found a very different Higher Education context to that of the previous review of 1964. In 2001, Careers Services were urged to strengthen their engagement and role within the sector. The Report noted that the prime function of HE Careers Services was to help the institution to produce graduates who could manage their own career learning, and to help students to be able to 'do it for themselves' in the sense of career now being about 'lifelong learning'. Emphasis also fell on the exploration of HE institutions as 'large-scale businesses' (Harris, 2001:16). A modern business culture was emphasised as was the need for 'modern management processes' (Harris, 2001:16). Careers Services needed to 'understand their mission' (Harris, 2001:16). They needed to

'play their part by reviewing and where necessary modifying their services' (Harris, 2001:14). 'Imaginative responses' were required (Harris, 2001:14) and a new relationship with employers and students sought because 'students and their parents … see themselves as customers … wanting more and better information on the benefits of their investment' (Harris, 2001: 15). The Harris Report also stated that 'clarity of mission, lines of accountability, performance measurement and adequate resource allocation need to underpin every Higher Education Careers Service' (Harris, 2001:16). The Harris Report stressed the need for HE and therefore university Careers Services to understand that their role was to support the purpose of the university to stay competitive and help produce the graduates required by employers. Quite rapidly then, the Careers Service had moved from Watts' (1997) suggestion that it may be housed outwith the student service environment, to being directly instructed on its instrumentalist role in 2001. The changing nature of Higher Education identified in Harris is a major theme that is explored throughout this study, but particularly in this chapter and the next. Related to this is the question of the key stakeholders for the Careers Service. Is the main stakeholder the institution or the student? I shall explore this later in this chapter but this question is related to a broader and deeper question with regard to the role of universities and, in this study, the role and purpose of the Careers Services in universities. I consider this via my theoretical stance outlined in the following chapter but, for the moment and in sum, it is apparent that fundamental changes have taken place with respect to these issues with major shifts from 1964 to 1997 to 2001 and beyond. To examine these shifts in context I will now start to consider the politico-economic environment in which the Careers Service and universities are located, starting with the neo-liberal agenda that, I suggest, characterises that environment today.

A Neo-Liberal Agenda in Universities?

Liberalism as a political ideology is focused on the individual and the freedom of the individual. Liberalism in the economic field can be understood through the principles of *homo economicus* (economic man) which regards humans as rational and self-interested beings. The limitation of state intervention so as not to impede individual freedom is a fundamental focus of liberalism. Such concepts are encapsulated in Adam Smith's (1776) work, referred to as 'The Wealth of Nations' for short, which proposed minimum regulations from government as the best way for a country to develop economically. By contrast, neo-liberalism, Thorsen (2009) suggests, is a loaded term and often used pejoratively and so it seems important to develop the definition. Olssen and Peters (2005: 315) suggest neo-liberalism shares central presuppositions with classical economic

liberalism, namely the 'self-interested individual', 'free market economics', 'a commitment to laissez-faire', and a 'commitment to free trade'. However, they identify a significant difference between neo-liberalism and classical liberalism in the role of the state. While classical liberalism suggests the state is something from which the individual needs to be freed, neo-liberalism, they argue, regards the state as the very instrument through which the 'conditions, laws and institutions necessary' (Olssen and Peters, 2005: 325) for neo-liberalism will be created. In addition:

> In classical liberalism the individual is characterized as having an autonomous human nature and can practise freedom. In neoliberalism the state seeks to create an individual that is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur (Olssen and Peters, 2005: 315).

On this account, neo-liberals see education as another service to be analysed and market principles applying to this education service as much as to any other in pursuit of enterprising, competitive, entrepreneurial individuals. Inevitably a neo-liberal agenda can be seen to have impacted on Higher Education and its students. A number of theorists have suggested that Higher Education has undergone such significant change in the last two decades that this can be identified as a 'seismic shift' (Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006:6). There has been a rapid increase in the pace of change with that change being radical. Although Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) describe this shift in the context of the American university, there are broad parallels that can be observed across the Higher Education sector in wealthy countries across the globe. This shift has come about by a confluence of factors including technological advances, an increase of tertiary sector students and an increasing introduction of market forces on the Higher Education sector, particularly evidenced by the increasing introduction of fees, notwithstanding Scotland's position[7]. These changes indicate a shift to a neo-liberal model with education viewed as another service to be delivered with individuals encouraged to seek learning and credentials as a way to progress and develop their job roles and careers. These seismic shifts, write Schuster and Finkelstein:

> … are profoundly changing how knowledge is acquired and transmitted …and changing the face - even the very meaning - of higher education (Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006:6).

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[7] Tuition fees were introduced across the UK in 1998 under the Labour Government but following devolution were abolished in Scotland, for Scottish and EU students studying in Scotland, in 1999.

Chapter 1: Outline of the Work

The 'meaning' of Higher Education has changed ideologically from the 'traditional liberal ideal' of education, valued for its own sake as a cultural good to a role as an 'economic' resource (Wilton et al., 2004:3). This resource should be organised in a way that:

> … maximises its contribution to Britain's industrial development. From this premise it follows that socially relevant, or applied knowledge is more important than pure knowledge, that higher education institutions should be responsive to economic needs, and that it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that these institutions are held accountable for carrying out their economic role correctly (Salter and Tapper, 1994:12).

In this model, employability and the preparation of graduates for the highly skilled jobs that are deemed to characterise the 'knowledge economy' (Drucker, 1967) becomes the role of Higher Education. HEIs, Watson and Bowden (2000) suggest, are coming to be regarded increasingly as part of the structure of government and expected to deliver on agreed social policy priorities. As governments viewed HEIs and universities less as a public service and more of an investment with expected returns, they sought ways to ensure institutions demonstrated their worth and accounted for the use of public funding. For example, the introduction of performance indicators into Higher Education can be seen as a highly political process. Cave (2006) writes that governments, through this activity, were striving to impose on Higher Education the same principles that they wished to see across other public sector bodies:

> Strong central direction; accountability for the economic, efficient and effective use of public money, the measurement of performance against outcome criteria and the substitution of the concepts and methods of management for those of administration or professionalism (Cave, 2006:3).

A significant performance indicator relevant to Careers Services is the outcomes of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education exercise; a survey conducted annually reporting on the activities of its graduating body and I shall turn to this now.

Graduate Destinations as a Key Performance Indicator
From the early 1960s every university in the UK was charged with the collection of the 'first destinations' of its graduates annually, with the universities' Careers Services responsible for the collection of the data. This lead, even in the 1980s, to the production of 'league tables' (Taylor, 1986) showing which universities did well, and which less well, at securing relevant jobs for its graduating population. This activity and the increasing use of university league tables can be seen as part of the neo-liberal agenda, ensuring institutions report on the 'effectiveness' of Higher Education, measured through job destination data. Initially, the professional careers body, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory

Services (AGCAS), provided a core questionnaire in an effort to ensure some sort of uniformity to the questions being asked across universities and to allow the data to be more easily compared. However, there was great variation in the diligence applied in the collection of the data, the timing of the survey and the way in which the data was collected and there was no audit undertaken on the survey. Since 1994, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) has undertaken the collection of information from all HEIs in the UK, again generally via Careers Services with those, in most UK universities, charged with carrying out the data collection exercise. Increasingly, what has now become the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey is used by public bodies, the university, those working in the Careers Service, and prospective students and their parents to make decisions and judgments about different academic programmes and institutions. The first destination employment data has become a 'key performance indicator' (KPI) in many universities to help ensure that the Careers Service continues to fulfil its role supporting the overall goals and mission of the institution. This also means that the destination exercise is increasingly used as a marketing tool, to help promote the university, rather than simply as a guidance tool allowing Advisers to understand the programmes of their student body and use the data as part of the guidance process in one-to-one interactions and workshops. Such an emphasis on performance indicators and outcomes shifts the purpose and role of the Service, and the focus of the people who work in it. Management of what has become a key measure of the effectiveness of the university process, the outcomes presented in the DLHE data, raises the profile and influence of the Careers Service. But a focus on the outcomes potentially dilutes the independence of the Service and the previous emphasis on the career guidance process. Nijjar (2009) explores the pressures of accountability at a time when the Careers Services' traditional area of concern, now described as employability, is being linked to strong institutional agendas. She describes the business models increasingly driving university management, with Vice-Chancellors and Principals expecting a rate of return from all parts of their university, including the Careers Service. As a result, Careers Services are under increasing pressure to demonstrate their value and show the ways they contribute to the agenda of the institution. Perhaps then, and as a result of such changes, it is inevitable that the traditional focus on the student as the key stakeholder of the Careers Service has shifted.

Changing Stakeholders
In the 1990s Watts reinforced the concept that the Careers Service saw the student as its key stakeholder rather than the institution or the wider global economy. He states that

'most Careers Services view the students as their primary client' (Watts, 1996a: 136) echoing Heyworth 32 years earlier: 'We think that the Boards' primary responsibility is to the students' (Heyworth, 1964:8). Yet even in 1996 Watts does identify a requirement to reconcile the institutional role with the guidance and support role. If institutions are to continue to fund Careers Services:

> … there is increasing pressure for the benefits of such services to be argued in such terms as not only of private benefits to individual students but also of organisational benefits to the institutions themselves (Watts, 1996a:136).

Elsewhere Watts has commented on the increasing pressure starting to become apparent, for university Careers Services, to show congruence between institutional goals and the Service's goals (Watts and Sampson, 1989). The requirement for the Careers Service to act on behalf of the organisation - to have the organisation rather than students as its key stakeholder - significantly changed the priorities for the Careers Adviser and others working within the Careers Service. Performance indicators around employability, demonstrated through the DLHE figures, reinforces the commitment to the neo-liberal agenda (further explored in Chapter Two) in which, Giroux (2009a: 46) suggests, the university 'now narrates itself in terms that are more instrumental, commercial, and practical'.

An institutional response to the new landscape might be to place responsibility for Employability[8], a key concept in the discussion that will be interrogated in this study, with the institution's Careers Service as the agency most directly concerned with its graduates' destinations and the external environment. Many will look to their Careers Services to lead the way on Employability and so the work of the Careers Service, for long in the wings alongside other support services such as counselling, funding, and disability, starts to shed its support and guidance mantle and move centre stage. In so doing it may take on a far more rigid exterior as a unit that proactively helps the institution to establish and drive through its Employability agenda. In this scenario the Careers Service is now aligned with the marketing function of the university engaging with graduate employers to develop relationships and market its product: the student. The 'peripheral' education service (Killeen and Kidd, 1996:165) or, as described by Baroness Blackstone in her announcement of the Harris review (2001), the 'Cinderella' service, has moved to the foreground and taken a proactive role in the developing agenda of the institution. The role and purpose of a university Careers Service might have started, in 2001, to either shift,

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[8] I have opted to capitalise 'Employability' hereafter when referring to it as a key concept.

respond and adapt its provision. Alternatively the opportunity may have been created for other units and services within the university to take on and drive through the Employability agenda leaving the Careers Service with a reduced role and influence. For example, in 2009 and with funding from The Big Lottery Fund, Edinburgh Napier University developed its 'Confident Futures[9]' programme which aimed to develop Employability skills sought by employers. This was housed not in the University's Careers Service, but in a parallel unit described as delivering personal and professional development while the Careers Service continued but delivered a reduced service.

In summary, it is apparent that Careers Services have undergone and are undergoing massive change. Watts and Butcher (2008) in their report 'Break Out or Break Up? exploring four universities' responses to institutional drivers state:

> In seeking to address these agendas, some institutions have looked to their Careers Services to take a strong lead. But some have not. (Watts and Butcher, 2008:3).

As noted, this study seeks to explore the Services, focussing on their activity in reaction to the agendas and the changes taking place, and to suggest ways in which such changes might be important. To set this in context, the next chapter begins to explore the theoretical stance I have taken and outlines the research methodology used, with attention to the study's participants and the data they provided.

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[9] Edinburgh Napier University's Confident Futures programme. See:
http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/corporateaffairs/exchange/Documents/Graduate-Employability.pdf

Chapter 2: Framing the Study

The previous chapter outlined the impetus for this piece of work and began to sketch the development of university Careers Services from their inception to their current situation. This chapter unpacks the role a Careers Service performs and, leading on from the institutional response of the previous chapter, questions where the Service sits with regard to its arguably 'instrumental' purpose. The chapter then describes the theoretical framework embraced by the study, moving on to describe the methodology deployed. Here I explore how to measure the 'goodness' of the work and its trustworthiness within the parameters of the approach taken. I discuss insider- outsider research and conclude the chapter with a commentary on how I set about making sense of the data to form the subsequent 'findings' chapters.

As indicated in Chapter One, the university Careers Service was traditionally seen as a provider of advisory interviews, information about careers, employers and jobs, and placement activities (Heyworth, 1964). It often describes itself, in publicity material or on websites, as an impartial service, suggesting it is without an 'agenda'. For example, the University of St Andrews' Careers Service[10] states on its website, that it is 'committed to offering impartial and objective advice and guidance'. Under a neo-liberal agenda this impartiality might be questioned. As the role of Careers Services increasingly comes to serve the institution and a socio-economic purpose, the Service, some argue, is at risk of becoming an 'agent' of the neo-liberal state (Irving, 2010: 50). For many, careers work is exactly this: the mechanism to allow a smooth transition from education to the world of work in pursuit of a particular government lead agenda. On that view, those working within a Careers Service might be regarded as helping to maintain an instrumentalist purpose with the Careers Service part of the 'social control apparatus' (Gothard et al., 2001:28). Conversely, or in addition, can we can see Careers work as an agent of social change, what Plant (2005: xx) has described as a 'Trojan Horse' in a 'society that salutes globalization and capitalism'? The Careers Service might work from within to challenge the power structures and work to further the social justice agenda. Data from this study and my own view suggests that the purpose might lie somewhere between these two extremes,

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[10] University of St Andrews (2015) 'About us' Careers Service statement. See:
http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/careers/aboutus/

and I will go on to explain this later in this chapter. How I understand this purpose for the Careers Service is inevitably linked to my theoretical stance and so I shall now outline this.

The theoretical framework connecting my considerations of careers work to the work carried out here, to my own experiences and to my readings of relevant literature draws largely on two different, but, I would argue, potentially relatable theoretical perspectives. The first perspective is Critical Pedagogy, as developed by Freire and taken up by Giroux. The second is Sen and Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (with a particular emphasis on Nussbaum's work). The Critical Pedagogy tradition sees society as fundamentally unequal and seeks to enable learners, including 'teachers', to understand and change an unjust status quo. It seeks to understand and then challenge how systems of belief reinforce unequal power structures which might involve the unequal division of society based on class, race and gender. Educational systems, including universities, might be places that foster and reinforce such beliefs (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Apple, 1979) and so Critical Pedagogy might be understood as follows:

> An effort to work within educational institutions situations and other media to raise questions about inequalities of power, about the false myths of opportunity and merit for many students and about the way that belief systems become internalised to the point where individuals and groups abandon the very aspiration to question or change their lot in life (Burbules and Berk, 1999:50).

Careers guidance work, situated as it is at the intersection between the graduate and the employer, is well located to make a difference to the lives of those making use of its services and to work to play a part in questioning and equalizing life chances. Careers work can help students to think critically about their situations, to see connections between their experiences and contexts of where they are, and it can, potentially, enable students to think aspirationally about hitherto internalised belief systems. The purpose of Critical Pedagogy, according to Freire (1970), is to engage learners in the act of what he calls conscientização. This may be translated as 'critical consciousness' but is defined by Freire (1970:17) as 'Learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality'. The teacher or, I might suggest, the university Careers Adviser, enables those oppressed by social and political structures to be aware of their oppressed situation in order to start to develop a liberating praxis. 'Critical consciousness is brought about not through intellectual efforts alone but through praxis – through the authentic union of action and reflection' (Freire, 1970: 48). Giroux (1983:160) develops this idea of praxis through his description of a 'language of possibility' seeing the

potential of education to bring about social and political change. Of course, I cannot claim that all, or even the majority, of students making use of the Careers Service are 'oppressed' although the impact of gender, nationality, age, sexuality and race on career choices and aspiration is acknowledged. Moreover, I question whether the increasingly instrumental and performance measurement environment enables the capacity of flourishing for each student. I question, too, if the Careers Service is simply promoting a status quo in which, to return to Burbules and Berk (1999:50), belief systems of the prevailing environment have become internalised.

A critical pedagogical framework for careers work would move the concerns of the careers practitioner beyond considerations of instrumentalism and the development of skills in students intended exclusively, or even mainly, to satisfy employer and institutional demands. Instead it would aim for careers activity to develop critical individuals who, not only engage economically, to create and build their own professional lives but who also aspire to question or change their lot and the lot of others. To this extent this study embraces a critical pedagogic stance and while I do not agree entirely with Giroux to the extent of his overtly political stance, I have found his writings on the purpose of the university and the importance of a critical education valuable in this study. This leads of course to a consideration of the wider role of the university and Higher Education.

Skelton (2005: 21) distinguishes between two distinct views of Higher Education; what he describes as the dominant and the alternative. The dominant view is that apparently embraced by the Scottish government. Universities Scotland[11] describes it as a priority to produce 'skilled graduates and a strong talent pool for Scotland to fill jobs and attract more businesses to invest in the country'. Higher Education exists to produce the new workers to help the economy and ensure its citizens contribute to the competitiveness of their country. Whilst certainly not endorsing it, Habermas describes this as follows:

> Ethical obligations to one's calling give way to instrumental attitudes
> toward an occupational role that offers the opportunity for income and
> advancement, but no longer for fulfilling oneself in a secular sense (Habermas,
> 1987:323).

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[11] Universities Scotland website. See:
http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=214&cntnt01origid=18&cntnt01returnid=23

The alternative view is summed up by Barnett (1990) who describes the aims of Higher Education as follows:

> The pursuit of truth and objective knowledge; research; liberal education; institutional autonomy; academic freedom; a neutral and open forum for debate; rationality; the development of the student's critical abilities; the development of the student's autonomy; the student's character formation; providing a critical centre within society and preserving society's intellectual culture (Barnett,1990: 8-9).

This description seems to pointedly omit any idea of the economic purpose of the university. Despite its detail, it steers clear of, following Skelton, the 'dominant' view and, instead, regards Higher Education as holistic and liberating. It follows the tradition of Critical Pedagogy espoused by Giroux and others (including Nussbaum, as I will suggest below) who write of the empowering nature of Higher Education, or more often, the need to protect this:

> The increasing corporatization of higher education will most certainly undermine its role as a democratic public sphere and a vital site where students can learn to address important social issues, be self-reflective, and learn the knowledge, values, and ideas, central to deepening and expanding their capacities to be engaged and critical agents (Giroux, 2015: 106).

I fully endorse the role of the university as a democratic public sphere in which a space is provided for students to become engaged and critical agents. Further, I consider, the Careers Service to have a crucial role in that activity, situated as it is at the interface between the student and the employer. However, some have argued that careers work is not the place to establish a critical agenda. Writing at length on the role of the Careers Service, Roberts (1977; 1997; 2005) certainly suggests that careers work is not impartial because, he suggests, either Advisers direct students into jobs they must have or they encourage them to develop occupational ideas which jar with the occupational areas available to them. It might not be neutral work and yet he suggests its reach is nonetheless negligible. He believes that the opportunity structure means that students do not have real choice, rather their career prospects are confined by their social class and Careers Advisers and guidance practitioners are 'circumscribed' (Roberts: 1977:4) by this as much as students. More recently Roberts has also suggested that it is not the role of the Careers Adviser to question the status quo:

> Challenging the powerful is not a realistic agenda for early twenty-first century career guidance. How can guidance hope to succeed when trade unions and political parties of the left have failed? …but the crucial point remains: career guidance is simply not an appropriate weapon (Roberts 2005: 141).

Others, most particularly Daws (1977) and more recently Sultana (2014), have argued against Roberts. Sultana (2014: 319) comments on Roberts' viewpoint, arguing that to:

> … deride career guidance practitioners for doing what, at the one-to-one interactive level can be done, is as ungracious and perverse as putting down ambulance workers who attend to the wounded, criticizing them for not stopping the war' (Sultana 2014: 319).

Freire (2004:15), through his partner and wife Ana Maria Arujo, writes that education 'makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves'. In Freire's 'education', I would include careers education and guidance although it is questionable if guidance work can adopt a fully-fledged radical approach in which the collective lot of communities can be enhanced. Careers work focusses, at heart, on the individual. However, Sultana (2014: 318) argues persuasively that it is at a micro and meso level that it is 'sustainable' to claim that careers guidance does make a difference.

Careers guidance and the Careers Service certainly 'work within the system' (Sultana, 2014: 317) but my own core ideas have much in common with Amartya Sen's (1990; 1999) development paradigm and the Capabilities Approach. A winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1998, Sen's central premise is that ensuring and promoting freedom is a way to achieve development but freedom comes not only from, and should not only be evaluated by, economic considerations. His Capabilities Approach (hereafter CA) suggests the basic concern of human development is 'our capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value' (Sen, 1999:285) in preference to the usual concentration on increasing Gross Domestic Product and the economic competitiveness of the country in focus. The ways of life that people might value are varied and not dependent only on wealth and possessions. 'Valued doing and being' (Sen, 1990: 43) means getting past the basic requirements of life such as Maslow's (1943) shelter, food and so on to convert human 'functions' into 'capabilities': the things people value being or doing which contribute to their well-being. This focus on the potential, and the future possibilities overlaps with the function and concerns of the Careers Service, concerned as it is with the future possibilities of its students. A fulfilling life, what Aristotle called *eudaimonia* translated as 'happiness' or 'flourishing', is grounded not in 'acting on someone else's behalf…in light of someone else's goals' but rather in pursuing 'one's own values and objectives' (Sen, 1999: 18-19). Similar to the progressive critical pedagogy stance described above and developed through this Dissertation, Sen's approach '… focuses on

the agency and judgment of individuals' (Sen, 1999: 288) and working with the individual is a fundamental aspect of careers guidance work. Sen's work on a CA helps me to see the Careers Service as a place to enhance students' freedom to do things and become things. If the objective of careers guidance work is to develop and mature people's 'capabilities' , the things they value doing or being, then helping students understand available options, work out what they want and what suits them and supporting career decision making, is a good, appropriate and, I would argue, necessary activity. Nussbaum (2000; 2011) extended Sen's CA by identifying a list of ten Central Capabilities[12] arguing that 'The core idea is that of a human being as a dignified free being who shapes his or her life in co-operation and reciprocity with others' (Nussbaum: 2000: 72). In Nussbaum's version of the CA, she calls for the essential human Capabilities to be guaranteed by governments and institutions for every person. Like Sen, she believes that Capabilities secure a life that an individual can value. However, while Sen advocates for equality of Capabilities, Nussbaum argues for a threshold of her ten Central Capabilities in order to secure what is essential for a life worthy of the dignity of a human being. She suggests that if:

> … people are below the threshold on any one of the capabilities, that is a failure of basic justice, no matter how high up they are on all the others (Nussbaum 2006:167).

She thinks that a fully human life is only possible if the Central Capabilities are constitutionally guaranteed for all and the Capabilities Approach:

> … is fully universal: the capabilities in question are held to be important for each and every citizen, in each and every nation, and each person is to be treated as an end (Nussbaum, 2006:78).

The focus on valued beings and doings resonates strongly with the work of the Careers Service, particularly when considering Sen's and Nussbaum's approach at the level of the individual. Robertson (2015), programme leader for one of the Scottish postgraduate careers guidance programmes, suggests questions around identity and occupation are fundamental to educational and vocational guidance. Identifying the 'beings and doings' that are important to the individual is surely a core task of guidance. The ten Capabilities are crucial to a flourishing life and include being able to 'engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life', being able to 'work as a human being' and enter into 'meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers' (Nussbaum 2011: 34).

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[12] The ten Central Capabilities are: 1.Life, 2. Bodily Health, 3. Bodily Integrity, 4.Sense, Imagination and Thought, 5. Emotions, 6. Practical Reason, 7. Affiliation, 8. Other Species, 9. Play, 10. Control Over One's Environment.

Economic participation, then, is certainly covered by Nussbaum's Central Capabilities but the focus is much wider than simply finding and securing work. Her CA has a focus on personal development. Implicitly, at least, on her account then Higher Education is a place for women and men to develop themselves to take part in an active life in their communities, enabling them to shape their own destinies and their own society, much as described by Barnett (1990) earlier. Nussbaum (2010: 149) makes this explicit when she claims that: 'Higher Education prepares students in two distinct ways: for a career but also for citizenship and for life'. The Careers Service must surely play its part not only in preparation for career but also in preparation for citizenship and life; it speaks to the economic purpose of education but, I suggest, it speaks too, to the ethical purpose of education with respect to enabling capabilities and flourishing.

This being and doing, or their exploration, might take place in various places and spaces across the university. One such place might be realised by Parker Palmer's idea of paradoxical spaces in which a creative space for learning might be built (Dowson and Robinson, 2009: 161). Palmer (2007) suggests such spaces have six characteristics. They should:

> (1) Be both bounded and open
> (2) Be both hospitable and charged
> (3) Invite both the voice of the individual and of the group
> (4) Both honour 'little' stories of those involved and the 'big stories of the disciplines and tradition
> (5) Both support solitude and surround them with the resources of the community
> (6) Welcome both silence and speech (Palmer, 2007: 76-80).

Stanbury (2010:108) suggests that these spaces can take many forms within the curriculum from whole modules to 'moments' within modules, to virtual places and that 'co-curricula could also play a part', meaning learning experiences that complement the academic experience. One such space is the Learning Grid[13] housed in the library at the University of Warwick and described as 'a resource for you to connect, explore, learn and innovate'. Stanbury (2010: 110) goes on to suggest 'new and emergent curriculum spaces' identifying that 'work experience portfolios…mentoring schemes…careers education and lifelong learning activities' could all be 'conducive to creating paradoxical reflective spaces'. I contend that the Careers Service is one such place where this could happen and might be

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[13] The Learning Grid is based in the Library at the University of Warwick.
See: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/libspaces/learning_grid/

described, ideally, as a paradoxical space (Palmer, 2007). It is paradoxical because following Palmer's six tensions or paradoxes the Careers Service as a learning space, can help to provide a framework for the careers journey that allows a journey or journeys beyond a single destination. It is a hospitable space but it is ready to challenge. It gives space to both the individual and the group; it connects with the individual's story but also sees the 'big picture' of the world external to the Service and the university. The Careers Service allows individual solitude and space but also encourages connection with the wider community. And finally, the space could encourage reflection but asks students to verbalise and make real their thoughts and plans. It is a paradoxical space in which the individual is valued but the collective is crucial. It is a space which might exist to develop critical individuals to contribute to and be part of the wider good in society.

The creation of such a space takes us to the heart of education and the role that the Careers Service might play in universities. Palmer (2007) suggests that while education is, of course, about pursuing an intellectual path, the emotional and the spiritual are also requirements. The emotional is important because feelings can 'either enlarge or diminish the exchange between us' and the spiritual features because of the 'diverse ways we answer the heart's longing to be connected with the largeness of life' (Palmer, 2007:5). From different theoretical perspectives, Palmer, Nussbaum and Giroux would all suggest that learning in Higher Education is not simply a tool to improve personal, employment focussed development or a means to increase a university's rating in a league table. Instead, learning should be about developing the critical being, of finding out who you are and how you can lead a worthwhile and fulfilled life. The Careers Service is one space in which this activity could occur but it will need to tread a careful line, attracting attention due to its position between student and employer, charged with producing effective employees who are also people who care about and influence their future world. My position is that these two aspects are reconcilable and indeed that the two have to be reconcilable. Moreover, the Careers Service can play an important role, and perhaps a unique role, in striving to ensure the university plays its part in producing successful, critical citizens of the future and I shall return to this in the final chapter of the study but I will now turn to the research methodology aspect of the theoretical framework I made use of in my study.

Chapter 2: Framing the Study

The Framework

A theoretical framework for research, distinct from theory, is sometimes referred to as a paradigm from the Greek word *paradeigma,* meaning pattern. A paradigm can be defined as the:

> … set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organized study of that world (Filstead, 1979:34).

More simply, Cresswell (1994:74) describes it as a 'basic set of beliefs or assumptions' that guides the research. In first thinking about this study, I had the option to consider what pattern and set of beliefs I was going to use and how I was going to approach the central topic. I wanted to explore the changes that were taking place in university Careers Services but was I to do that as a purely desk based piece of research or as a piece of empirical research? I love reading and writing so a conceptual approach held some appeal but at the time of starting the research it had been ten years since I had worked directly in a Careers Service. Although my working life was still in universities, I felt that to adequately explore what was happening to Careers Services I needed to explore the views of those working in the Careers Service. As noted, my starting assumption and belief was that Careers Services were undergoing significant change, and that those changes were affecting the whole service and threatening the very existence of that service. I 'knew' this from my own experience but what did others, those actually doing the job, think about this? What did they 'know'? In the very broadest sense then I knew I wanted to conduct empirical research in which I would collect data and explore it in order to address the research issue from both the 'inside' and 'outside', as I will explain later in this chapter.

In a previous role I had, in my position leading a university Careers Service, been heavily involved in the management of what became the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey, described in the previous chapter. The 'First Destination Supplement to the Student Record', as it was known in the 1990s, was considered a key, and perhaps for my senior university managers, *the* key activity of my role. Securing a good rating on employment and further study of leavers 'six months after graduation' (HESA, 2015) became a significant marketing tool for that university and so I found, increasingly, that my role was to provide accurate statistics and manage the survey exercise in order to provide top-line data. This meant that I was familiar to some extent with the positivist tradition of enquiry. Gephart (1999) suggests 3 traditions of research: positivism, interpretivism and critical postmodernism while Guba and Lincoln (1994) distinguish

between positivist, post - positivist, critical theory and constructivism. Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest that any paradigm has three components: ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology is concerned with what reality is and how people perceive it (Crotty, 1998). So, in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education exercise, the underlying ontology is that there *is* a real reality and an assumption that the figures collected represent that reality. Epistemology is concerned with knowledge and the 'nature of the relationship between the knower, or would be knower, and what can be known' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108). In the destination exercise, the epistemology is objectivist because as the researcher, I have no influence on the results or outcomes. The methodology of the destination exercise is such that it allows quantitative data to be collected and analysed and statistical inferences made: the knowledge gained is seen to be hard and real. Although I had some experience in working with surveys and statistics, in this study, in which I wanted to look at the situation of Careers Services, positivism was not the paradigm to use as I shall explain.

As noted in Chapter One, the study seeks to explore the changes that have taken place in university Careers Services drawing on the views of Careers Advisers working in four university institutions. This renders my study a form of social research which, according to Blaikie (2009: 36), is 'the use of controlled enquiry to locate, describe, understand, explain and evaluate patterns in social life'. Rather than conducting research in the positivist paradigm I needed a way of working that would allow me to examine and to value the subjective views of practitioners and analyse their views and opinions of Services. Hence this research is undertaken from an interpretivist stance, a stance that looks at how people understand the world around them. It sees reality not as something that is objective but as something that is constructed in multiple ways because, of course, we do not all see the world in the same way. This sits in contrast to the positivist paradigm which sees research as a tool for uncovering general laws and truths. Olson (1999: 3) states 'the subjective researcher seeks to know the reality through the eyes of the respondent'. The ontology is that 'the social world can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated' (Cohen et al., 2007: 19). I wanted to enter the world of these Careers Advisers and understand their world from their point of view. This was unlikely to expose just one reality but a number of realities constructed by the Advisers and that very multiplicity was what interested me. Moreover there would be multiple interpretations of the data and revealing and making sense of these interpretations to deepen my understanding was my aim in the study.

Chapter 2: Framing the Study

The epistemology fits with Guba and Lincoln's (1994) description of constructivism: knowledge is not objective but is created. The study aimed to engage with Careers Advisers and understand their position and views of the structures they worked from. The kind of knowledge created by my research is not objective and verifiable by experimentation or hypotheses, rather it is understanding reached by listening to the Careers Advisers in the research, seeing patterns in what they say and developing my understanding through their words. To this extent my study is interpretivist but, following Guba and Lincoln (1994), has elements of constructivism with regard to co-created knowledge. In her explanation of qualitative research, Lather (1992) suggests there are three overlapping perspectives: understanding (the interpretivist stance), emancipation (critical and feminist perspectives), and deconstruction (post modern). It is clear to me that my work falls into the interpretivist perspective because it seeks to develop my understanding of the subject area whilst I hope that my increased understanding might lead, ultimately, to a more emancipatory perspective. Moreover, the study is set, arguably, in a post-modern environment and a degree of deconstruction will be required. In that respect, the study draws upon all three of Lather's (1992) overlapping perspectives.

Methodology
Once I had established my theoretical stance and paradigm I needed to consider methodology which might be understood as 'the activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating, and justifying the methods used' (Wellington, 2000: 22). Following the interpretivist paradigm, I needed a methodology which would develop my understanding of the research area. Ontologically the object, the Careers Service, and the subject, the Careers Adviser, are not separate but related. My focus is the relationship between Service and Adviser and the perceptions the Adviser has of the Service and her or his work within it. I am working inductively, starting with the views of the Careers Advisers and developing themes and concepts as I work through them. However, I am also working deductively because I am setting the research objectives and questions and, inevitably, I am influenced by both theoretical and policy perspectives in the field.

Cresswell (1998) suggests there are five traditions within interpretative research: ethnography, biography, case study, grounded theory and phenomenology. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest eight, adding clinical, historical and participatory to Cresswell's five. In considering my study I knew that I wanted to look at how changes in the higher education environment had shaped Careers Services and their Careers Advisers. It seemed

clear that I required a form of exploratory research which would allow me to look in depth at, and present detailed information about, a group of participants who formed part of the entity that is the Careers Service. I knew I wanted to hear and to give voice to these individuals and I would need to draw significantly on the accounts of the participants themselves and to do so via semi-structured interviews. Accordingly, I chose a case-study methodology because, following Yin, a case study is an empirical inquiry that:

> Investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident (Yin, 2014: 16).

The case study approach would help to explore and describe, in depth, the entity or 'case' being considered, which, here, is the university Careers Service. It would allow an exploration of the circumstances of the Careers Services with particular attention to the people, the Careers Advisers, involved in realising it and making it a 'Careers Service'. Additionally, I would explore with my participants the nature of the community in which their work is located.

Of course, and in common with almost any research approach, case studies have limitations and drawbacks. Flyvbjerg (2006) has commented on 'misunderstandings' about case study work, specifically commenting on five perceived drawbacks:

(1) Theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge
(2) One cannot generalize from a single case, therefore the single case study cannot contribute to scientific development
(3) The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, while other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building
(4) The case study contains a bias toward verification
(5) It is often difficult to summarize specific case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 219).

Taking these points individually in my own context I would suggest that firstly, Flyvbjerg's initial perceived drawback assumes that the case study method privileges practical over theoretical knowledge. However, my work here uses theory as well as practical knowledge and I would suggest that using the case study method has allowed me, rather than seeking to 'prove' anything universal, to understand a situation better. I am not seeking, and do not claim, that my data offers a generalizable, universal or consensual understanding of the changes that have taken place in careers work. I wanted to look at real life situations and look at them in depth, to better understand what has happened in context and to do so in ways that, I knew, might reveal very different understandings and

perceptions. Considering Flyvbjerg's (2006: 226) second point on generalisability he argues convincingly that 'In social science the strategic choice of case may greatly add to the generalizability of a case study'. However, he goes on to make it clear that generalisability is not the only legitimate form of scientific enquiry and that other forms of research (he mentions a descriptive phenomenological case study and I would suggest an interpretative case study as presented here) can just as well add to knowledge and understanding. Following on from this, and considering Flyvbjerg's third point, the case study as used here is not striving to generate or to test hypotheses but to illuminate the situation of the Careers Advisers in the universities in the study and to do so as articulated and described by those Advisers working in them at that time. Related to issues around generalisability are issues of what Flyvbjerg has called 'verification' in his fourth point in which he notes that all social research methodology, not just the case study, is subject to the accusation of bias and subjectivity. Again, in my study, I accept that the work is subjective to the extent that is describes the views and opinions of a group of individuals but I defend this through the overall approach of interpretivist, qualitative research and discuss credibility, transferability and dependability as appropriate measures of rigour in more depth later in this chapter. Finally, and in consideration of Flyvbjerg's fifth perceived drawback, I would agree that because the case study goes in to depth, summarising can be problematic because it loses detail and the context and detail are what aid understanding. Again, this perceived drawback seems to relate to a call for generalisability but in my case it is not desirable to summarise or generalise the work; instead it aims to tell a story or offer a snapshot to aid understanding of the condition of university Careers Services and those working in them. This leads to consideration of the Careers Advisers taking part in the study. Yin stresses the importance of selecting participants so I will turn now to a discussion of those involved and how they came to be part of the study.

The Participants
Knowing I wanted to speak with and hear from practitioners, I wanted to select people who might have the most to say about this area of study: participants who would provide rich insights, from which, together, we could try to seek meaning. That meant selecting Careers Advisers as participants because the pivotal role within a Service is, arguably, the Careers Adviser who acts as a conduit between the institution and the world of work and students and institutions. From my years in careers work I believed it was this role that had been the most changed. All Careers Services encounter the role of Careers Adviser within their Service, while not all Careers Services include an Information Officer role, Employer

Liaison roles or even a Head of Service. From the time of their conception, through to the Heyworth Review (1964) and beyond into the 1990s, the critical and fundamental role within the Service is that of Careers Adviser. I decided then that I wanted to ask Careers Advisers to be participants and I wanted to talk to Advisers from different universities and Careers Services to widen the richness of possible understanding. I wanted to gain a range of views so deciding upon a range of universities, rather than just one institution with a number of Careers Advisers, made sense because I knew the institution type might influence the experience of the Adviser.

Hence I made the decision to focus on two modern Scottish universities in which, from experience, I knew changes were taking place to the careers activity. I wanted, also, to include a university in which the Careers Service was involved in delivering credit based careers education, as this is an important activity for some Careers Services and so I chose one of four institutions involved in that work in Scotland. In order to ensure variety of 'type' of institution I also decided to include one of the four 'ancient' Scottish universities. Accordingly and in order to gain insights from those working in a variety of institutions, ancient/traditional; 'new' and plateglass, and large and small universities are all represented in this study although, as I explain below, I am seeking variety and not representativeness. Ancient universities refers to institutions formed before the end of the sixteenth century. 'Plateglass' refers to institutions established in mid twentieth century. Modern refers to institutions formed post 1992. As a result of these decisions, I did, to an extent, use 'purposive sampling'. I am aware that this phrase is not entirely consonant with an interpretivist approach and I note this below, but it serves here to make explicit my selection of participants. I selected eight Careers Advisers from those four institutions. Four participants were female and four were male, but sex was not a criteria for selection. They also varied in age up to sixty five. In inviting Careers Advisers to be participants I wanted to ensure that all had a reasonable amount of careers work experience in order to be able to comment on perceived changes. Each participant had at least five years careers work experience and most had ten or more years careers work experience. Purposive sampling suggests the researcher selects the participants, cases or organisations in order to make generalisations and there are a range of purposive sampling techniques (Patton, 1990) available. Interpretative studies, seeking to understand, rather than to explain and generalise, do not sit well with such concepts of purposive sampling. While I selected a range of different universities, this was to give variety, not to draw generalisations from that selection. The choice of participant, too, was not to lead to generalisations about

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Careers Services and their Careers Advisers but to explore what these Careers Advisers, in these universities, felt and noticed about their changing environment. Hence the study offers a snapshot, and does not suggest that, had different institutions and participants taken part in the study, the same outcomes, opinions and conclusions would have been reached.

I decided to restrict this study to Scottish institutions. While much of what I might uncover could be pertinent to England, or even further afield, Scotland was where my own experience lay and Scotland was unique in its particular political positioning with its devolved parliament and different Higher Education funding mechanism. Since devolution, Scotland has not followed England in introducing up-front tuition fees or top up fees and, according to Keating (2005), this is indicative of an overall divergence in public service provision in Scotland in comparison with England. My own experience told me that the role of Adviser in its unique Scottish context was undergoing significant change which deserved its own exploration. The table below briefly summarises the participants offering pseudonym, type of institution, careers work experience, date band completion of the Diploma in Careers Guidance qualification and the type of contract worked by the Adviser at the time of the interviews taking place. It does not provide potentially identifying information as that would invalidate ethical assurances of confidentiality. In the data chapters the words of the participants are italicised throughout to clearly identify their commentary as verbatim quotes.

Table 1: The participants

Pseudonym	Institution	Careers work experience (rounded upwards to 5 years)	Diploma in Careers Guidance (DCG) completed	Contract
Emily	Modern, post 1992	15 years	Mid 1990s	Part time
Harry	'Plateglass'	20 years	Early 1990s	Full time
Isla	Modern, post 1992	10 years	Late 1990s	Full time
Jack	Ancient/traditional	30 years	Late 1970s	Sessional, full time
James	Modern, post 1992	15 years	Mid 1990s	Full time
Lewis	'Plateglass'	20 years	Early 1990s	Full time
Olivia	Ancient/ traditional	30 years	Late 1970s	Part time
Sophie	Modern, post 1992	5 years	Mid 2000s	Part time

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As noted, I knew I wanted to interview the Careers Advisers in what has been described as a 'purposeful conversation' (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982:135) and so I turn, now, to these interviews.

Semi - Structured Interviews
There are three possible categories of interview: structured, unstructured and semi-structured. The structured interview might be best used to report 'how many people do this and how many people do that' (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982: 70) and is perhaps better suited to a quantitative query and would not, I decided, yield the rich data I was seeking. The unstructured interview risked too wide a canvas and demanded an expertise in interviewing that I might not possess. Semi-structured interviewing seemed the most appropriate option. I wanted to gain what Schutz (1967: 20) has called a 'subjective understanding' or an interpretive insight but one that was focused on specific areas of enquiry. In particular I wanted to ask Careers Advisers about Employability, about their work in education, information and guidance and hear about the changes they identified around them and so I designed a semi-structured interview schedule to focus on those themes (see Appendix B for an outline of the themes covered).

The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and were spaced out over a four week period. The interviews took place within the participants' respective Careers Services or in hired office space. All of the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. I initially considered using software such as Dragon 12 which would require me to record the interview, download it to the laptop and then listen to the recording through headphones and speak it or 'parrot' it to the Dragon microphone which would transcribe the audio into words. In the end, though, I transcribed each interview myself, section by section. This was time consuming, painstaking work, as described by Du Bois et al. (1993) in their discussion on discourse transcription, but it allowed me to really 'know' the eight interviews and to identify patterns, links and contrasts between the recordings. Semi-structured interviewing seemed the right tool with ethnographic research but how could I be sure the interviews uncovered the participants' 'realities' rather than my own? Moreover, how was I to assess the 'goodness' of my research?

Measuring 'Goodness'?
A question that concerned me was related to whose meaning I was representing or reporting in this study. While I might strive to minimise my influence, I am asking the questions, I am in dialogue with the participants and I select the material to help form the

basis of this Dissertation. Mishler (1986: 52) suggests that the meaning is 'jointly constructed' by interviewer and participant and, as noted above, to this extent my study was a co-creation or co-construction of understanding. I knew I was striving to represent the participants' views but ultimately I order, select and prioritise and make sense of the material to form the chapters of the Dissertation. I decided upon the chapters and themes for a combination of reasons. Some of the themes were arrived at in a deductive manner. I knew that I wanted to ask about changes in the role of Careers Services and in particular the roles of the Careers Adviser and so my initial questions in interview reflected that line of thought (See appendix B) for example: Do you think the role of Careers Services has changed since you began careers work?'; 'Has the Careers Adviser's role changed?'. In thinking through my research initially I considered how the Careers Service was under threat; my own experience had shown a Careers Service that was curtailed and reduced by other departments. I strongly believed in the value of careers guidance interviews and was concerned to see this being limited in some Careers Services and slashed in others. I also believed the Employability agenda had a significant impact on the work of the Careers Service and I therefore asked related questions such as 'Is Employability high on the agenda at your institution?'. This question indicates that a shared understanding was assumed between us and that helped move the interview to areas I wanted to explore. Both myself and the participants had an idea of 'Employability' but how participants answered that question showed the different interpretations of the concept and I made sure not to define the concept or to overlay the discussions with my own interpretations and views but to allow the participants to explain their own interpretations and opinions. I wanted to obtain each participant's comments and understandings without putting 'words in their mouth' or allowing my own thoughts and considerations to bias or lead the discussion. Still, however, it was essential to consider ways of ensuring the 'goodness' of my study and its reporting and interpretation of the data with respect to its trustworthiness.

The Trustworthiness of the Work

The trustworthiness of a piece of qualitative work is often questioned by those in the positivist tradition because the concepts of validity and reliability they hold dear cannot be addressed in the same way. Positivist research seeks consistent repeatable results and wants to measure how truthful the results are. Qualitative work will not give consistent results and it is difficult to say that the results are truthful. Such positivist concepts do not work in the interpretive paradigm. Replicating and generalising from 'results' is not a desired outcome. Claims for generalisability are not an aim and there will be no 'single'

unassailable truth. Guba (1981) suggests three constructs need to be addressed in relation to the sort of qualitative research I undertook in this study and these are: credibility; transferability, and dependability. I will take each of these in turn and examine them with reference to my study beginning with credibility and insider research.

Credibility and Insider Research

Merriam (1998: 202) states that credibility, which she likens to the qualitative researcher's 'validity', answers the question: 'How congruent are the findings with reality?' Credibility is crucial to establishing trustworthiness and there are a number of ways in which I sought to ensure this within the study. Firstly, I used a well-established research method for qualitative research by utilising semi-structured interviews and within them asking a series of open questions, allowing participants to respond with some detail or prompting until detailed responses occurred (see Appendix B for the themes and questions). I tried to ensure that my own views did not form part of the discussion; I did not ask 'leading' questions to steer participants towards my own views on the state of careers work in universities. The questions were kept open and in order to elicit more data I followed responses with probing questions (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) such as 'In what ways?' and I sought specific examples with probe questions such as 'How has your role changed?' I wanted some of the topics to come from the participants themselves and this occurred. In particular, the themes of employer and student came through the data prompting me to give these subjects a separate chapter in the Dissertation.

Secondly, to establish credibility it is important that the researcher is familiar with the participating organisation, its culture and modus operandi. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 304) suggest that the researcher should have 'prolonged engagement' and 'persistent observation' with the phenomenon being studied in order to deepen understanding of the organisations and their culture. I have spent my own working life working in Careers Services, with most of that in the university sector. I have worked in four different Scottish universities' Careers Services, and carried out research visits to university Careers Services further afield in Australia and USA and so feel I have built up a rich understanding of the culture and ethos of the work of university Careers Services. I was entering this research exercise then, as 'one of us' as someone who understands the work and its pleasures and frustrations. This helped establish an atmosphere of trust between me and participants but such familiarity has been described as a double edged sword by some such as Mercer

(2007) and it raises issues around 'insider and outsider' research and how this may affect the study.

My relationship with the participants was potentially problematic. I knew some of the participants relatively well; I had managed some and had worked alongside others. Some I had met and worked with in cross university projects. Others I knew of but had not met. It is pertinent to explore the impact this may or may not have had on the study. The situation I encountered might mean I was conducting 'insider' research, in contrast to 'outsider' research. Griffith (1998: 361) describes the insider as 'someone whose biography (gender, race, class, sexual orientation and so on) gives her a lived familiarity with the group being researched' while the outsider is a researcher who 'does not have any intimate knowledge of the group being researched, prior to entry into the group'. Following this definition I was certainly conducting insider research but it seems more complicated than this and the label seems too simplistic and one dimensional. There are also levels of 'insiderness'. I had worked with some of the participants, (but in some cases not for more than ten years) and I was initially concerned that this might weaken a claim to term this 'insider research' in this respect. However, many argue against the binary of insider and outsider and instead suggest a continuum making researchers 'multiple insiders and outsiders' (Deutsch, 1981:174) with the researcher 'moving back and forth across different boundaries' (Griffith, 1998: 368). I had worked with one of the participants at a time when the institution was in the throes of re-organising its Careers Service and for a time emotions had run high as regrading and classifying of job roles and salaries occurred. In establishing contact again through the research exercise I could see that, with this particular individual, I was more closely aligned to the insider end of the continuum rather than the outsider but this was not the case with every participant. Generally, I was probably seen as more of an insider with those whom I had worked than with those with whom I had not. I also felt the level of 'commonality or difference' could fluctuate within a single interview (Kelleher and Hillier, 1996:86). For example, with one participant I felt the level of connection shift away when we spoke of what was sought in Careers Advisers and, perhaps, this was because I had fairly recently applied unsuccessfully for a role in that participant's team and this would arguably have been in his mind as he responded. In sum, while my research could be classified as insider research, I will not claim that greater understanding was gained or description was richer from those participants with whom I shared more characteristics. Being familiar and being known to be familiar with university Careers Services probably did help to build rapport rapidly with each participant. But I was

mindful of the potential influence this familiarity might have and wanted to be sure to conduct research rather than have a professional discussion. Therefore I strived to retain the role of researcher and remember what the task was before me.

After the initial ice breaking I did not offer any of own views in the interviews. Of course I used nods, smiles and encouraging 'uhuh' and 'mms' but I did not share a similar story or reciprocate with my own ideas or thoughts. Holstein and Gubrium (2003:13) suggest that 'Interviewers are generally expected to keep their selves out of the interview process. *Neutrality* is the byword' and I wanted to be sure that I was not leading the participants but allowing them to speak freely and not say what they might think I wanted to hear. As a practitioner and a Careers Adviser I am well used to conducting interviews, as are the participants in my study. All were aware of interview techniques such as ice breaking, rapport building, probing, introducing questions and follow up questions, and open and closed questions. But the unusual scenario of a Careers Adviser with another practitioner, in the form of me as the researcher, helped to keep the participants and myself aware of the unique exercise we were undertaking. The very fact that I was carrying out a piece of research, that this role was one that was very different to any other contact I have had with some of the participants, changed the dynamic between us. We were aware, because of the ethical procedures and the more formal nature of an interview, that this was a process distinct from that of any other relationship we may have previously encountered. In this way I believe the responsibilities of researcher and practitioner were as clear as they could be accepting my relationship and history may, of course, have influenced responses.

Thirdly, credibility is augmented when similar results are gained from different sources. According to Hammersley (2008):

> The original usage of 'triangulation', within the literature of social science methodology, referred to checking the validity of an interpretation based on a single source of data by recourse to at least one further source that is of a strategically different type (Hammersley, 2008: 23).

I employed site triangulation by selecting the applicants for the study not from one Careers Service alone but from four in order to allow for a mix of institution and Careers Service, reducing the influence of particular factors that might be affecting just one university. This selection of a range of people underpins Dervin's (1983) concept of 'circling reality' which she describes as:

> … the necessity of obtaining a variety of perspectives in order to get a better, more stable view of reality based on a wide spectrum of observations from a wide base of points in time-space (Dervin, 1983:7).

Selecting a diverse range of institution helped to ensure a multiplicity of perspectives to contribute to a richer source of data. I then approached Careers Advisers within each of those Careers Services: the choice of institution steered the choice of Careers Adviser. I selected practitioners who were not new entrants to Higher Education careers work because to address questions about change the participants had to have a reasonable length of experience to comment and reflect on any changes that had taken place. In three of the four institutions the selection was obvious as there only were two practitioners who had amassed enough experience and whose roles were clearly delineated as Careers Adviser. In the fourth institution I decided to approach two participants who had worked in university Careers Services for a significant number of years; if they did not want to take part I could consider other participants from that institution. In fact, all the participants approached readily agreed to take part in the research and this motivation may have contributed to their readiness to speak openly during the interviews.

Fourthly, confidentiality was stressed, both in my initial approach in setting up the interviews and through the ethical procedures paperwork (see Appendix A) and then verbally at the start of each interview. It was made clear that participants might withdraw at any point without explanation and each participant received a copy of the interview, once it had been transcribed. I also stressed that pseudonyms would be used and that any markers, for example the names of institutions where they worked or other identifying features would not be used in the Dissertation. In summary, credibility or trustworthiness was secured through using the appropriate research method, my own deep understanding of the object of interest, by 'site triangulation' and by establishing trust through the guarantee of confidentiality. However Guba's (1981) second construct of reliability, transferability, seems more challenging in interpretivist work.

Transferability and Dependability

According to Merriam (1998: 207) external validity 'is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations' but this kind of transferability seems impossible to show and arguably not even desirable in qualitative interpretive work. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and others suggest the responsibility lies with the researcher to give enough context to allow the reader to see any transference to her own situation. Ultimately the results of the study must be understood within the context in which the

work was carried out. For my work that means the study must be understood within the context of the university Careers Services based in Scotland that took part in the research. Any further work carried out in other environments, particularly in other university Careers Services and using the same methods (but perhaps seeking opinion from others, apart from Advisers, working within Careers Services, or from students, academics or employers) might help to assess whether the findings here are transferable. The aim, as in other qualitative work, is not to make the results transferable but to aid understanding and in this case, aid understanding of the context in which university Careers Services and the particular participants in this study find themselves. Finally, I turn to dependability, the third construct offered by Guba (1981) which needs to be addressed in consideration of the 'goodness' of the study.

Reliability in the positivist paradigm strives to show that if the work was repeated in the same way, using the same methods and same participants, the results would be the same. However, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) note, with a qualitative approach, this is patently not the case and neither is it necessarily desireable: the phenomena and the participants comments may constantly shift and change. Stenbacka (2001: 551) suggests that reliability is a concept to evaluate quantitative work with a 'purpose of explaining' but quality in a qualitative study has the 'purpose of generating understanding'. The qualitative researcher must show the results are 'dependable' according to Shenton (2004: 71) by describing the 'research design and its implementation; the operational detail of data gathering and reflective appraisal of the project'. The remainder of this chapter explains what was planned and how it was carried out with the following chapters, and particularly the final chapter of the Dissertation, offering an appraisal of the effectiveness of the study undertaken. Here, I turn to the transcribing of the interviews.

Transcribing the Interviews
The first step after conducting the interviews was to listen to them and transcribe them as text. I had naively thought that transcribing a small number of interviews would be simple in itself; it might take a number of hours to transcribe but it would be a simple task of plodding through and getting the words down. In fact, I found it a fascinating but extremely challenging activity. As Mishler (1991) states:

> There are an endless number of decisions that must be made about re-presentation of speech as text, that is, as a transcript, which, although apparently mundane, have serious implications for how we might understand the discourse (Mishler, 1991:261).

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The way we speak is very different to the way we write; I immediately had a set of problems some of which Hammersley (2010) discusses in his article 'Reproducing or Constructing'. This gives a hint of the crucial nature of the activity; what is chosen and how it is represented has significant impact on the interpretation of the ensuing work. Hammersley suggests there are a number of issues to cover. The first is 'how much' to transcribe; 'whether to start at the beginning of the recording, or instead when the 'real action' begins' (Hammersley 2010: 567). Even this I found troublesome. Should I record the chit chat, should I transcribe my introduction describing the exercise and the confidentiality around it, emphasising ethical issues of ability to withdraw and so on and record their agreement or start transcribing with the first questions around changes that have occurred in the Careers Adviser's world? In the end I took a half way measure. I did not transcribe my introduction and discussion of confidentiality but started the transcribing from the warm up, introductory questions in which I sought background information of each participant: '(tell me your background before coming into Careers work' and so on (see Appendix B). Hammersley also explores how to represent the recorded talk (to include dialect, for example with my sometimes broadly Scottish participants or to include non-word elements, the 'mms' and 'uhuhs', coughs and the pen I can hear tapping in one of my recorded interviews). Hammersley (2010:557) also asks how silences should be dealt with and questions if the silence should be timed; he discusses 'notable silences and significant pauses' but then points out: 'significant or notable for whom?' I took decisions on all of these points and have summarised these briefly (see Appendix C). Paying attention to the detail of the transcription helps to ensure the trustworthiness of the study by paying due attention to the way I approached making sense of the data. Once the interviews were transcribed I then had to consider how to understand or comprehend the material.

Making Sense of the Data

According to Ryan and Bernard (2003) analysing text involves several tasks:

(1) discovering themes and subthemes
 (2) winnowing themes to a manageable few (i.e., deciding which themes are important in any project)
 (3) building hierarchies of themes or code books
(4) linking themes into theoretical models (Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 85).

They suggest themes are 'abstract, and often fuzzy, constructs' (Ryan and Bernard, 2003:87) some of which I arrived at inductively through the material and some of which I

had decided in advance from theory and policy literature and experience. As Dey (1993) suggests:

> Investigators' decisions about what topics to cover and how best to query informants about those topics are a rich source of a priori themes (Dey, 1993:98).

Ryan and Bernard (2003:89) go on to suggest that arriving at themes involves 'pawing through' the material searching for amongst other things, repetitions, similarities and differences. Repetitions or what Guba (1978:53) calls 'recurring regularities' formed the main themes within my work. Under the a priori theme of careers information, for example, I constantly came upon the notion, repeated by every Careers Adviser, of the impact of technology and how technology had influenced and changed aspects of the careers information activity. This then became a minor theme under the broader theme of careers information and changes that had taken place there. Patton (1990) discusses what he calls 'indigenous' themes and 'analyst constructed' themes. Indigenous refers to themes that come from the participants themselves, and includes exploring aspects of understanding common to the university Careers Adviser. In this work concepts around 'one-to-one careers guidance interviews' and 'short' or 'duty' interviews became important themes, understood very specifically by the participants to be specific types of careers guidance which were in the process of changing, under the *a priori* theme of careers guidance. The overarching themes of careers education, careers information and careers guidance were 'analyst constructed' themes: aspects that I knew I wanted to explore because they form the triad of the Careers Adviser's work. Glaser and Strauss (1967:101–16) suggest the 'constant comparison method' involves searching for similarities and differences by making systematic comparisons across the data and this was an aspect of how I made sense of the interview material although I was not using Grounded Theory. So in considering changing career patterns, for example, I looked at what each of the Careers Advisers said around this topic and looked at which Advisers believed there to be significant changes in career patterns and those who suggested the claims of 'careerquake' were overblown. While I did not use a pure Key Words In Context (KWIC) (Luhn, 1957; Fielding and Lee, 1998) technique, as I was not using any software in the study, I did make use of its concept so I could start to identify what each participant had to say about a particular topic. This meant that I identified key words which I wanted to explore. These included employability, guidance, information, and education. Each time I found an instance of the word I looked at its meaning by noting the other words around it, or its context. I could then sort the different examples into groups and start to build the picture of

what that word or concept meant to the participants in the study, in the different contexts where they had used that particular word. For example, in exploring the word 'employability' I could start to identify its different interpretations (graduate destinations, transferable skills) and analyse the meanings attached to it (it was a lever, it was owned by the institution, the Careers Service owned it, it was used pejoratively). Metaphors, although appearing infrequently in the interviews, often offered a rich insight into a particular theme identified. For example, one Adviser commented that his manager advised that the Careers Service provided could not be 'Rolls Royce' suggesting that the service his manager deemed appropriate was to be inferior in quality, and, it could be surmised, therefore cheaper. The metaphor here allowed me to understand how the Careers Service was understood and valued in that particular institution.

Developing the Chapters

After reading and re-reading, 'pawing' and sorting the interview material I moved to what Ryan and Bernard (2003: 95) call 'cutting and sorting'. This involved taking a particular theme, professional development for example, and looking at what the participants had to say about it. In this way meaningful comment was identified and compared with my own experience of professional development and what the literature told me about it in the context of careers work. This one document then formed the basis for the development of the theme of professional development which eventually provided a sub-theme under the overarching theme of changing career patterns. With the small number of interview transcripts I built up the development of a range of themes which then became the key themes (the chapters) and sub-themes (sections within chapters) of the work. I took each theme and examined it in light of what commentators and theorists reported, what the Careers Advisers said, and what I had experienced. Each of the following data chapters, then, is made up of a blend of theory from academics and commentators in the field and verbatim quotes from the participants who took part in the study. Each theme starts with an exploration of the commentators' viewpoints before examining the Careers Advisers' comments, leading to discussion, comment and analysis on each theme explored. The flowchart below shows the process undertaken to develop themes from the participants'

data:

Familiarisation of the transcripts gained from participants	Identifying the key word or concepts for each participant: searching the data for both 'indigenous' and 'analyst constructed' themes (Patton, 1990)	Sorting data to respond to particular themes and concepts
Producing charts across the data set to represent the data gathered	Interpreting data and writing up the chapter	
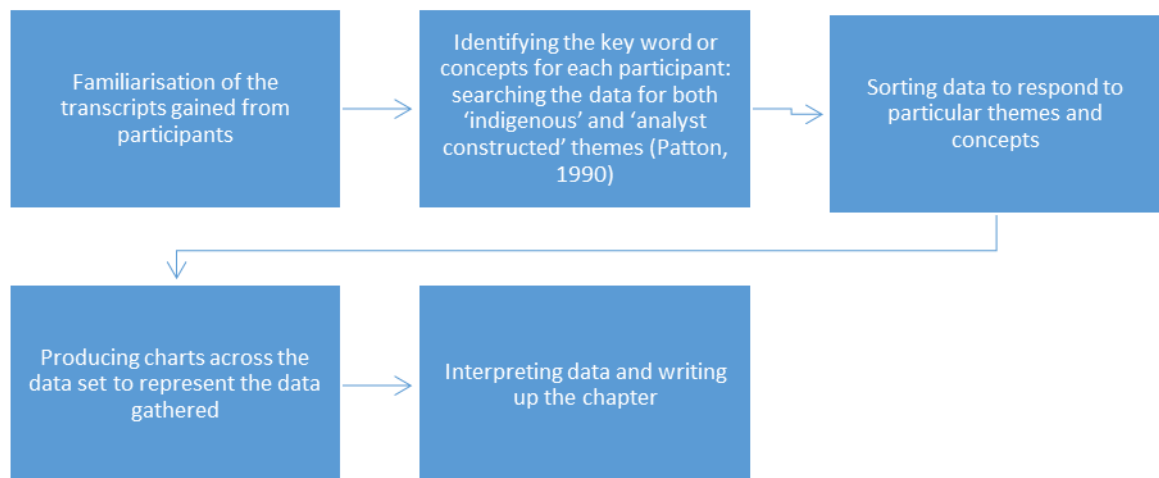
For an example of how I coded the data, using the theme of Employability, see Appendix D.

In summary, this chapter has examined my theoretical stance and explained the methodology of the study. I have explained how the participants were chosen and described the semi-structured interviews which form the basis of my data and how I tackled the data to form the Dissertation. The chapter has investigated what makes for trustworthy research and has indicated the credibility and worth of the study under an interpretative paradigm. I return now to the subject of the work. Careers Services are being prompted to change their activity and stance with the changes that have taken place in Higher Education and employment practices. The traditional guidance model of service is giving way to a new model of service which does not necessarily have guidance at its core. This has implications for what being 'a Careers Adviser' means and what is considered the work of a university Careers Service. I explore this phenomenon through eight semi-structured interviews with Careers Advisers based in Scottish university Careers Services; my own observations having worked for 25 years in university student support and through supporting literature and policy documents. Watts suggests that, in 1997, the core of HE Careers Services, based around interviews, information and placement activities, was still in place but the nature of each part was being transformed. In addition, most Services were undertaking a range of additional services which could potentially lead to a major restructuring of these Careers Services. This study explores the extent to which Careers

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Services have been restructured through exploring the views of the Careers Advisers who work in them through three key themes: changing career patterns; careers education, careers information and careers guidance; and employers and students. This Dissertation considers each of these themes in turn and examines them through related literature and policy documents, my own experience and knowledge, and the words of the participants in the study. The following chapter considers the first identified theme of changing career patterns.

Chapter 3: Changing Career Patterns

Having contextualised this study and explained the theoretical stance, methodology and methods employed in the research, this chapter starts to explore the data. Following my exploration of the Higher Education environment in the preceding chapters I consider, here, the impact of that environment on the work of the university Careers Adviser. I focus on how the external environment and changes to 'career' influence the way in which a Careers Adviser might work and might perceive her or his work. I then look at the Careers Adviser's professional identity and development and how the initial education undertaken by many Careers Advisers does or does not reflect and relate to today's university careers guidance environment. Finally, the chapter explores the concept of Employability and its impact on the development of university Careers Services. Initially, I will consider changes to the idea of 'career' from its early development to the present day.

Changes to the Concept of Career

 Prior to the industrial revolution (Toynbee, 1884), considered to span 1750 to 1850, ways of working were hereditary and fixed, with son following father, often for generations, into the same line of work. And it was all about men; women were still being kept in the home prior to the changes brought about by industrialisation, wars and changing social attitudes (notwithstanding unpaid work of managing land and animals and working in the home). Industrialisation allowed a move away from an agrarian society to people working in large groups, often in factories. Through the growth of industrialisation and as societies became more complex, an increasing division of labour in occupational areas was allowed. This division of labour was first described by Adam Smith (1776) who described the optimum organisation of a pin factory (dividing up different processes into different stages so workers focus on different elements) leading to increased efficiency and higher production. Industrialisation meant women, too, entered the workplace and endured what Nussbaum (2011: 10) has called the 'double day' of a job plus responsibility for domestic work, and care of children and elders. The workplace was driven by an increasing use of technology leading to mass production of materials and new divisions of labour creating more choice and job roles. The subsequent diversity of roles and different activity across different job sectors allowed for, ultimately, the development of careers. Traditionally, careers were thought to evolve within the context of one or two companies or firms and were conceptualized to progress in linear stages (Super, 1957; Levinson, 1978). In the last decades of the 20th century, actually choosing between different roles in society, jobs and

careers, began to be possible. A range of different professional areas with different paths, routes and levels allowed the possibility of planning a career and around this process developed the role of a Careers Adviser or Careers Counsellor to help facilitate this, with the Adviser often acting as a link between the employer and potential employee. Watts (1996b) agrees that both the concept of the career and the practice of careers guidance to which it relates have essentially been creatures of industrial society. This activity, within the university, was housed in the Careers Service, as described in Chapter One, with the first Careers Services appearing at the turn of the last century. The Careers Service ideally provides a space in which to explore identity and plans for life, for Sen's (1990:43) 'being and doing' to take place and of course, being and doing might refer to plans and discussions around 'career', which is, in itself, a slippery concept.

The Collins English Dictionary (2015) defines career as 'a path or progress through life or history; a profession or occupation chosen as one's life's work' thereby implying a possible link with 'being and doing' but not, by definition, embracing Aristotle's flourishing. However, 'career' can also be linked with education as much as with employment, or indeed with all the social aspects of one's life. Goffman (1961:119) has been particularly influential in his articulation of the different meanings bound up in 'career':

> Traditionally the term career has been reserved for those who expect to enjoy the rises laid out within a respectable profession. The term is coming to be used, however, in a broadened sense to refer to any social strand of any person's course through life. […] One value of the concept of career is its twosidedness. One side is linked to internal matters held dearly and closely, such as image of self and felt identity. The other side concerns official position, jural relations, and style of life, and is part of a publicly accessible institutional complex. The concept of career, then, allows one to move back and forth between the personal and the public, between the self and its significant society.

While a job might be described as an activity undertaken to earn money to live, career has the sense of a number of jobs over a particular lifespan and a commitment and interest in the occupational area. During the 1990s, as societies moved into a post-industrial phase, much was written about changing career patterns, with many suggesting that 'career', understood as a progression or course through life, through a series of progressive steps, had undergone a significant shift. Hall (1996: 13) claimed 'the nature of careers has changed fundamentally' entitling his book 'The career is dead: long live the career'. Hall had first identified these changes in 'Careers in Organisations' in which he described the

evolution of the 'Protean career' (Hall, 1976: 201). 'Protean' because, following Greek mythology, Proteus the sea-god could assume many shapes against adversities and so a Protean career suggests a versatility and flexibility in response to the surrounding, sometimes hostile, environment. During the 1970s, sociologists began to comment on significant changes that were seen to be taking place in society. Bell (1973) popularised the term 'post-industrial', noted the shift from manufacturing to service industries and the rise of the so-called 'knowledge worker'. David and Foray (2003:1) argue that knowledge has always been at the heart of economic growth but that the 'knowledge-based economy' is a recently coined term signifying a 'sea change' from earlier economies. Perhaps this suggests a more muted change from the 'seismic shift' (Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006:6) identified in Chapter One. Social scientists have described this change as a move to a 'learning society' (Husen, 1974), a 'knowledge society' (Stehr, 1994), 'reflexive modernisation' (Beck et al., 1994), an 'informational society' (Castells, 1996) as well as Bell's (1973) 'post-industrial society' noted above. Lyotard (1984: 3) wrote how the status of knowledge is changed as 'societies enter what is known as the post industrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age'. He goes on to discuss the view of knowledge as a commodity:

> Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its 'use- value' (Lyotard, 1984:3).

Giroux points to a similar concept of knowledge as commodity, suggesting neo-liberalism's influence has lead to the confusion of education with training and promoted a logic that 'views schools as malls, students as consumers, and faculty as entrepreneurs' (Giroux 2010:5). It might also be seen that the neo-liberal agenda has helped to foster the understanding that Careers Services, as an entity, are required, to help ensure that students secure relevant, graduate employment and fulfil the role of the university as a key player in the exchange of knowledge from university to the economy, from graduate to useful employment.

However, the university and its Careers Service can surely still be regarded as places that nourish the capability of individuals to live, and work, together whilst they may also fulfil the above purpose of linking the graduate to work. Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (2011:33) is relevant here. In particular, the Capability of Affiliation is described as: 'Being able to live with and toward others' and she suggests that protecting this Capability

means 'protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation' (Nussbaum, 2011:34). Her Capability of Practical Reason which she describes as being able to '… engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (Nussbaum, 2011: 34) can be directly related to careers guidance, concerned as this is with helping people work through what is important to them, with respect to their interests, skills and values in order to manage their future occupational lives. Nussbaum's CA also holds significant implications for the world of work, as well, of course, for life beyond work. In her account, work is specifically located within the core Capability of 'Control over one's environment', in the 'material' sense which she describes as:

> … having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others …being able to work as a human, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers (Nussbaum 2011:34).

Work can also be seen as the location for the fulfilling of some other of the Capabilities. The core Capabilities of Life and Bodily Health, the requirement to be adequately nourished and to have secure shelter are supported by or realised through securing work to pay for food and shelter. The Capability of Bodily Integrity including 'being able to move from place to place' might be required to undertake suitable work. Her third Capability of Senses, Imagination, and Thought she describes as 'being able to use the senses to imagine, think and reason' through an 'adequate education' and 'experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice' (Nussbaum, 2011: 33). This relates to choosing work and finding satisfaction in work. 'Being able to use one's mind' (Nussbaum, 2011: 34) also suggests the possibility of being able to choose a work role and activity in life informed through educational experiences. The fifth Capability of Emotions, described as 'Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves' (Nussbaum, 2011:33) might refer to finding fulfilling, stimulating work. It can be anticipated that the Careers Service will allow for the satisfying of some of the Capabilities and particularly those which relate to seeking and securing work. The extent to which the Careers Service satisfies the Capabilities of Senses, Imagination and Thought, Practical Reason and Affiliation may be challenged in an increasingly marketised environment, as described above and as suggested below.

Arthur and Rousseau (1996) have written of the boundaryless career, which flourishes in the information or knowledge economy. Boundaryless careers show 'independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organizational career arrangements' (Arthur and

Rousseau, 1996:6). 'Boundaryless' careers might suggest a new form of careers guidance is required. Guidance in this environment is less likely to involve a one-off activity to match an individual to an occupation or profession and instead require a more nuanced process helping to realise Nussbaum's (2011:34) requirement for Practical Reason to help students work out and plan their professional lives through many iterations. Having explored some commentary from theorists about the changes taking place in work and career and having briefly explored Nussbaum's CA I will turn now to examine ways in which this relates to participants' commentaries in this study.

Careers Advisers' Views on 'Career'
Seeming to pick up on the trends and changes summarised above, this Careers Adviser, one of two to directly comment on changes to 'career', comments:

> *I think the changes to career certainly change the advice and guidance you give to students which is very much along the lines of portfolio careers and to be imaginative about the jobs you do and how to find them.* (Emily)

The Adviser is suggesting that the changes to the traditional or organisational career have influenced the way she delivers her careers guidance. She suggests that she discusses the manifestation of a 'portfolio career' with her students, which can be seen to be related to the concept of a boundaryless career, in contrast, perhaps to an established 'career ladder'. Two other Advisers were cynical about the supposed changes that had taken place. One in particular felt vehemently that the idea of 'careerquake' (Watts, 1996c) was overplayed.

> *I suspect it hasn't changed as much as the talk has suggested. There has been some shift but I never believed in 'death of career' and right from the start of people saying there is no such thing as a career for life, employers started saying 'these are permanent jobs we are advertising and we want you to stay indefinitely.* (Jack)

These thoughts chime with Bimrose's (2006:3) criticism of the 'rhetoric' promoted ten to twenty years ago, in which we were told of the 'grand vision of labour market change', of paperless offices and portfolio workers 'espousing an ideology of lifelong learning to ensure the supply of knowledge workers'. She suggests that this scenario has fallen short and that the 'grand vision of labour market change, focussing on overarching trends' has not come to pass and instead:

> Most of us still work in permanent, full time jobs in hierarchical organisations, where job descriptions are still written and training courses offered (Bimrose, 2006:3).

Similarly Morris (2004: 273) writes that purported radical transformations have not taken place; the changes to work and organizational change 'hardly represents a regime change'. Commentators are divided between those who believe the 1970s predictions have now come to pass and those who believe these to be overblown. This contradiction is echoed in the recent debate between those who support the argument of a 'paradigm shift' in work and career, such as Watts (1996b; 2000), and those such as Bimrose (2006) and Keep and Brown (2005) who argue that, as evidence for changes in patterns of employment is contested, then this alone is proof that the way social scientists think about these issues has not, as yet, undergone a 'paradigm shift' in the Kuhnian (1962) sense of one model being replaced by another.

The Careers Adviser who questioned the 'death of career' above puts himself firmly in the position of questioning the supposed changes stating:

> *It must be 10 to 15 years ago the phrase 'the status quo is not an option' was worn out with use. However an awful lot of the status quo has remained, albeit over-laid with all sorts of different things, and more so in some places than in others and perhaps more so in the more traditional universities than in others. But I certainly think the changes haven't been as great as some people maybe wanted or pressed for among the thinkers and report writers, and the management in many cases too.* (Jack)

Moynagh and Worsley (2005) have written extensively on jobs and careers in the 21st century. They conclude that the changes anticipated have not come to fruition.

> One job per person has stayed the norm, permanent full-time employment remains dominant, workers are not moving more often from one employer to another and the 'career' - as a way of viewing work - has triumphed (Moynagh and Worsley, 2005: 93).

Again, Jack, the only Adviser one to comment at length on this point, suggests that the traditional career continues.

> *I suppose there may be some truth in, you know, graduates staying a shorter time in their first job, I'm not aware of any research that has been done on that. You know they do say they change after two and a half years or whatever*

> *it is, now, but the 'portfolio career', well, looking at destinations, there's no*
> *evidence of that whatsoever. There may be some evidence when times are hard*
> *there's more go into low-level jobs and they'll probably try to get out of them*
> *as soon as they can, most of them, but as to a mass-movement towards*
> *portfolio careers, I have never seen any evidence of it.* (Jack)

Another Careers Adviser, who broadly agreed with Jack's position puts it succinctly:

> *Out in the real world people still have a notion of a career.* (James)

Arguing that the prediction of a highly skilled, knowledge driven economy has not come to pass, Moynagh and Worsley (2005:25) point instead to an hour glass economy with a polarisation of jobs at the top and bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Suggesting that a bottom-heavy hourglass best describes the emerging occupational structure of the UK, Nolan (2001) claims that while there is some evidence of growth in knowledge-intensive sectors, this is balanced by an ever-expanding number of low level service jobs. Elsewhere Nolan (2003: 279) comments: 'the low wage, routine and unglamorous occupations that structured working lives in the early part of the 20th century' remain.

The overall picture gained from the Careers Advisers interviewed in this study does not suggest a knowledge driven economy is the typical experience of the majority of graduates. Instead a more mixed picture emerges. Full time jobs are the norm for new graduates but there is a reduced expectation of a 'job for life' and more anticipation of a series of roles and experiences making up the notion of 'career'. Regardless of the impact the actual changes on the economy may have on career and employment trends there will doubtless be some effect on careers practice by the perceived changes. I now turn to examine the effect and the response as described by the Advisers working in the field.

Effect on Practice

The first Careers Adviser, quoted above with respect to views on 'career', suggested the:

> *… advice and guidance you give to students … is very much along the lines of*
> *… career planning in almost a coaching sense instead of 'let's choose a career*
> *that you'll be doing for the rest of your life'.* (Emily)

This suggests that if an individual were choosing a job for life, as might have been expected in a stable industrialised environment, the advice and support offered from a Careers Adviser was 'careers guidance' of some sort. Emily perceives this to be distinct

from the more fluid 'coaching' she mentions here. Another Careers Adviser in describing his work, used the term 'coaching' suggesting:

> *A lot more of it is about helping people, coaching people, training people to be*
> *effective self presenters, basically.* (Lewis)

Lewis seems to see his careers work as a coaching role involving training or helping others in self presenting skills. It suggests, at least for Lewis, that his role concerns helping others develop the skills needed to secure a job and operate in the workplace. Careers guidance work for this Adviser was less concerned with critical reflection and more concerned with helping students develop effective self presentation techniques. Giroux (2010) comments:

> Tied largely to instrumental purposes and measurable paradigms, many
> institutions of higher education are now committed almost exclusively to
> economic growth, instrumental rationality, and preparing students for the
> workforce (Giroux, 2010:2).

Lewis suggests his role is tied to what Giroux might see as a neo-liberal agenda of preparing students for the workforce through his coaching activity. Emily suggested coaching may indicate a changed direction for careers work.

> *I'm quite interested in coaching anyway and that's maybe a development for*
> *careers work.* (Emily)

These two Careers Advisers based at newer universities offering more vocational programmes of study seemed to identify that guidance was making space for coaching. So while I may have identified that Careers Advisers, in the main, did not identify a paradigm shift in work and career a number of them identified changes to their repertoire of expected skills, seeing coaching as a new form of guidance. Coaching may offer what Nussbaum described as 'Control over one's environment' (Nussbaum, 2011: 34) with respect to exercising the right to seek work. By contrast, guidance seems to relate more to the Capability of 'Practical Reason' that is, engaging in 'critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (Nussbaum, 2011: 34). This consideration is examined further in the following chapter, in which I explore the changes that have taken place within careers guidance work and explore differences between coaching and guidance. For the moment, it might be anticipated that changing career patterns will have some influence on the careers identity of the Advisers themselves and I turn now to examine how the participants saw their own career identity and professional development before ending the chapter with the exploration of Employability and its impact on the Careers Advisers' work.

Effect on Professional Career Identity

The careers guidance community has always been somewhat fragmented and it lacks a distinct career identity. This is partly because of the range of different organisations in which a 'Careers Adviser' might be employed and that will depend on the sector (secondary or tertiary level and geographical location) in which s/he works. This is in contrast to some other professional areas, such as, in the UK, nursing with its one professional regulatory body, the Nursing and Midwifery Council. By contrast, until 2013 in careers work an Adviser might have been be associated with an array of different professional bodies. An Adviser might have been a member of the Institute of Careers Guidance; this would have been the relevant body for most Advisers working for a careers company or organisation dealing with school age people. The Association of Careers Education and Guidance focused on the delivery of CEG in school and colleges in England and Wales (often by careers or guidance teachers). The National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults focused on delivery to adults. Since 2013 these organisations have come together under one UK wide professional organisation for careers work: the Career Development Institute. ISCO is the independent schools service and AGCAS, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory services, delivers services to students and graduates in Higher Education and all of the Careers Advisers in this study are members of AGCAS. Its 157 institutional members include all UK universities and most other degree awarding institutions as well as other colleges offering Higher Education provision. It also has almost 2519 individual members (full and affiliate) in some way involved in the information, advice and guidance services to HE students or graduates. University Careers Advisers, then, through their employment at a HE Careers Service, are members of a small professional body, separate from other careers guidance professional bodies, with a distinct set of aims and objectives. Their professional body is not made up solely of Careers Advisers; it is the Services that make up the professional membership so individual members might be Advisers, Information Officers or other Careers Service practitioners who work in that particular Service.

Our occupational identities are formed through the work we do, how we relate to our workplaces and our work processes. These identities are formed within 'communities of

practice' which have a strong sense of joint activity with shared goals and practices (Attwell and Brown, 2003). The stated[14] mission of AGCAS in 2012 was to:

> … harness the expertise and resources of its membership for the collective benefit of its members, HE Careers Services, their clients and customers and the sector overall.

After a review of the strategy a mission statement has been agreed for the years 2013-2016. This states:

> The Association of Graduate Careers and Advisory Services (AGCAS) is the professional body for careers and employability professionals working with students and graduates in higher and further education. Its aims are to:
>
> • Provide a lobbying voice for its membership.
> • Be the focal point for sector-wide research and expert opinion.
> • Provide a range of support and development opportunities for its members (AGCAS, 2014).

It seems that the 'collective benefit' of AGCAS, or at least the emphasis on this has been lost with the new mission statement. I will turn now to explore Careers Advisers' relationship with their professional body and understand this particular 'community of practice'. In the past, membership of AGCAS was a key way in which practitioners showed their occupational allegiance with their part of the guidance sector. When I first started in Careers work in universities there was an expectation that, as well as carrying out day-to-day work, the Adviser should contribute some work to the professional body. As part of any annual career development review or appraisal at least one objective would cover AGCAS activity. There was an expectation, regardless of the size of the university or its Careers Service or the status of the Careers Service within its organisation, that individual Careers Advisers would contribute towards the professional body in some way. This might involve writing careers materials, taking on a role within the working groups, helping in the running of AGCAS itself or being involved in training and development issues or arranging specific AGCAS lead events. Contrast this with comment from a Careers Adviser now:

> *I get no sense of what's going on or whether there's some sort of strategic approach. I don't have much to do with AGCAS anymore so I've no idea what the thinking is.* (Lewis)

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[14] The AGCAS mission, until the review for 2013-2016 can still be seen on the Welsh Higher Education Careers Services website. See:
http://whecs.org.uk/8.html

This comment came from a Careers Adviser who had spent some years in careers work and seemed to identify a change in his AGCAS activity. While previously he was, we assume, active to some level, he doesn't have much to do with it '*anymore*'. It was evident from comment by Careers Advisers that the allegiance that had existed was weakened to some degree. This was echoed by another Careers Adviser who commented:

> *I'm not sure what Services get from AGCAS, compared to what they used to.* (Harry)

Another Careers Adviser wondered if:

> *... younger Careers Advisers aren't as AGCAS minded*. (Olivia)

One Adviser seemed to feel that his professional body no longer gave him a sense of belonging to a community of practice and therefore did not reinforce his occupational identity.

> *I'm not sure I see it as a profession. I think I feel more like an individual practitioner rather than part of a profession. I don't think collectively it adds anything to anyone's knowledge or certainly to our knowledge base. I gave up going to workshops that promised to ... they would have great titles like, I don't know, How to use Social Networking Effectively, so you'd think that's quite interesting so you'd go along to that session and it would be all 'Let's think about how we could use social networking effectively'. Well, I didn't come here to think about that, I'm not telling you how I use it, you're supposed to be telling me.*

> *It's all 'Let's share best practice!' that means you don't know, do you? You just want me to tell you. And universities now are so competitive, there's a whole bunch of stuff I would not share with anybody from AGCAS, about things that we do or things that we don't do or how we do things, how we market things. We don't really want to give other universities an advantage in the league tables.* (Lewis)

Both these Advisers suggest that there has been a change in their involvement with their professional body and the last Adviser's comment suggests this relates to the competitive environment of the university and the focus on performance measurement in the university environment. One Adviser commented on the term of 'profession' suggesting that the

Careers Adviser was not part of a profession and, in fact, that professionalization had decreased.

> … W*e had a debate between us and (another university) about whether Careers guidance is a profession and I lead for the 'no's. And I said it's de facto not a profession because it struggles to restrict its membership- and that went even more so after that- cos the Dip CG lost importance down South with all this Connexions stuff, it wasn't incorporated, you couldn't be kicked out by the ICG. AGCAS is about Careers Services, it's not about Careers Advisers as such*. (James)

It is apparent that some Advisers in this study felt that their allegiance lay not with their professional body, but with their employing organisation and the students within it. They work with their colleagues within their own institutions and that constitutes their 'us'. They do not feel a sense of commitment to the professional body, although there appeared to be commitment in the past. Data from the participants in this study indicated that for some of the participants the community of practice was not based around the professional body.

> *People are so busy having to work in their own Services, the AGCAS bit gets lost. People are too focussed on their own jobs, they've got enough to do and it just makes it really difficult. I'm not learning an awful lot from those relationships anyway. What difference would it make, really, not to be members of AGCAS? And you wonder if it would actually make much difference at all.* (Harry)

It seems that, for some Advisers, the collective, professional purpose of AGCAS has weakened and given way to an instrumentalism in which Careers Adviser is pitted against Careers Adviser. Giroux's (2010: 2) 'logic of self-interest' and consumerism have infiltrated the work of the Adviser and reduced the 'shared sense of commonality amongst practitioners' (Neary, 2014a:14).

If the Advisers felt a weakening of allegiance to their professional body it might be expected that this might have an influence on their own professional development and I now consider this possibility and the data pertaining to professional development.

Effect on Professional Development

Chapter 3: Changing Career Patterns

It might be assumed that a profession that is concerned with developing skills in individuals and helping people realise their potential might lead the way in skilling its own staff with a coherent structure and well-developed CPD once qualified. AGCAS, made up of Careers Advisers and information staff from UK Careers Services, is proactive at delivering training, information sessions and instruction by its own members to its own members in the form of short courses of a few hours to a day covering areas such as 'Careers in Publishing' or ' Getting into teaching'. This is organised through the AGCAS Training sub-committee and different areas run their own regional groups. So, for example, Scotland might run a particular session and most Scottish Careers Services would allow at least one member of their Service to attend. Costs are kept low as all the trainers are 'volunteers' and no payment is involved.

In the 1990s AGCAS, through its training sub-committee, collaborated with the University of Reading to offer a suite of programmes including a certificate, diploma and MA in careers education, information and guidance in Higher Education. University of Reading staff and AGCAS worked to produce a modular programme allowing for AGCAS members to continue to deliver parts of the course. The qualifications are now under the management of the University of Warwick but remain open to those who are already working in HE Careers Services serving to develop practitioners already working in the sector. There is no expectation that Advisers will study for and gain these qualifications and many established Careers Advisers do not embark on the programme if they have other careers qualifications. 'At any given time 12-15% of AGCAS members are working their way to one of these qualifications' (Graham and Mortenson, 2007). The development of this suite of programmes perhaps reflects the growing need to evidence the practice of HE careers guidance as a professional activity.

Professionalism is difficult to define but has been described as practice:

> … that is consistent with commonly held consensual delineations of a specific occupational group and that both contributes to and reflects perceptions of the group's purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by, and expertise prevalent within, the occupational group, as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice (Evans, 2013: 484).

As noted, AGCAS members, through the Training Committee, deliver courses and activity to their fellow members. Sometimes these people will be undertaking the professional University of Warwick qualification and the training event will be linked to that programme but other AGCAS members will also undertake the same training, not for a

qualification but simply for continuing professional development (CPD). In the study it became apparent that the organisation of AGCAS, and in particular its training activity, was talked of with some disparagement by a number of Careers Advisers. As an active professional body, that in the nineties had been endorsed and supported by its own members, this came as something of a surprise. It seems that a number of Advisers had found that its activity had slowed and very little training was taking place.

> *All this time I've been on the Engineering group ... I thought this group was defunct. No visits arranged, it's all been totally forgotten. Basically moribund.*

> *I was on the AGCAS Labour Information Group. Five years ago, we produced this Scottish degrees website, got money off the Scottish government; University of London created it for us. Soon as (the Committee Chairperson) retired it's like 'well, I can't take it over'. That's it. It's gone. We had all these contacts in the Scottish Government from economists and analysts. Gone. That's away.*

> *The AGCAS Scotland training schedule when I arrived (in my post here) ... it was like a book almost, certainly a pamphlet. I may have missed something ... but there's nothing. It's gone. I'm not aware of any of it. And that to me ... it could be about individuals but it's principally about the fact that they've all drawn in their horns and nothing's happening.* (James)

Training delivered by the members of the professional body to its own members means that when the proactive members step down or retire there is a risk that no-one continues their activity. One Careers Adviser suggested that the lack of activity was because Advisers are working to promote their own students.

> *As professionals we still use the AGCAS conduit to keep people up to date but a lot of (my work) is done on an individual basis; AGCAS is not used as much because what you tend to find is it's the same people who are the ones doing stuff and at the end of the day, while there's a collaborative relationship amongst the AGCAS members with the Shared Vacancy system that we've got, at the end of the day, you've still got your own university students to deal with and your own university ... so you do get pulled in different directions.* (Harry)

Interestingly, the Careers Adviser who was newest to the work was the only Careers Adviser to directly speak in favour of the professional body. It may be that those with less experience feel the benefits of collaboration and support that AGCAS may be able to offer more keenly than the seasoned practitioners.

> *I think (AGCAS) is very good. Again it's all about building relationships in your own particular area in the HE sector but by being involved in groups and committees I would have no hesitation in going to members of that group and asking for advice and feedback. I think it's good to have that support network. There are other individuals in other universities that you maybe meet through various meetings or conferences and once you've developed that relationship you can use that support network.* (Sophie)

This Careers Adviser is employed in one of the smaller institution in this study with less resource and staffing than the other universities' Careers Services. AGCAS may have therefore provided a 'community of practice' for this individual. In the main, the Careers Advisers in the study who put forward an opinion expressed disenchantment with their professional body, showing their occupational identity was not enhanced by allegiance to AGCAS, leading to a diminished professional sense. The Careers Advisers had undertaken similar education to become Careers Advisers and I shall now explore their previous education and their comments on its efficacy to prepare them for the work they now encounter.

Initial Education

University Careers Advisers can come from a myriad of backgrounds and are often career changers: four of the eight Careers Advisers interviewed for this study had had previous, established careers, perhaps offering evidence of the fluidity of careers, mentioned earlier in the chapter. All had undertaken a one year post graduate qualification in careers guidance: either the Diploma in Careers Guidance (DCG) or the newer Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG). However, it is not a prerequisite to have one of these qualifications to enter university Careers Services as an Adviser and many will work in Careers Services in universities with a range of related backgrounds and experience. Kidd et al. (1993) showed that in the early nineties 40% of UK Careers Advisers had a Diploma in Careers Guidance and most had experience, often at local authority level, in careers work. More than half, therefore, were working without a directly relevant qualification at that time. The DCG and the QCG remain the key qualifications of Careers Advisers within

universities. The DCG and QCG have 'suffered long periods of instability and uncertainty' and 'attempts to revise content have been bedevilled by policy change and uncertainty' (Bimrose, 2006:5). Although all Advisers in my study had undertaken this qualification there was little sense, from some of the Advisers, that it had prepared them well for the work they went on to do.

> *The thing that still disappointed me about the Dip CG course was it didn't have any of the self-marketing techniques and coaching skills; I don't think anybody trained us for that in the Dip CG. Because of the way the Dip CG or QCG was taught a lot of it was schools based, I never really had an idea what went on in HE Careers Services and I really didn't <u>have</u> any expectation because there's not a lot of emphasis on self-marketing and coaching techniques within self marketing within the course. A lot of school work is simply about subject choice and not messing up so I didn't have an expectation that it would be guidance, guidance. I knew that that went on at other universities ... but I've never worked anywhere ... I've never come across a rigid model that was expected. I suppose if I'd worked in a place that said 'this is your model of guidance' then I might have fallen into that but I think the two places I've worked at I've been lucky enough to be autonomous to develop the job in the way it needed to be developed, not impose a kind of format on it.* (Lewis)

This Careers Adviser seems to be suggesting that the content of the qualification, weighted towards exploring theoretical guidance models, had done little to prepare the Adviser for the tasks and activities required in the role where he now worked. For Lewis' institution, he suggests, the DCG was not appropriate.

> *Personally, I think the DCG will become less relevant to the role of the Careers Adviser; I think we're looking for a different skill set.* (Lewis)

Another Careers Adviser suggested the DCG had not prepared her for the work she encountered within her institution.

> *My training as a Careers Adviser didn't equip me for the kind of situation that we're in*. (Emily)

Chapter 3: Changing Career Patterns

McCarthy (2004: 27) comments that 'training has a dominant effect in establishing a professional identity' and Careers Advisers commented not only on their dwindling commitment to their professional body but also their lack of enthusiasm for its related training programme. It seems that some of the Advisers in the study felt a loosening of their loyalty to their professional body and, instead, a tightening of loyalty to the institution for which they work or to its students which takes us back to the question of who the Careers Service is for, first explored in Chapter One. There was the sense that, rather than commitment to the collective benefit of AGCAS members and an interest in collaboration, Careers Advisers worked for the students within their own institutions.

> *My benchmark is always how well my students are doing. In terms of professional development, I think I would only worry about that if my students were feeling let down or they weren't performing ... I don't really care about anything else, that's what I'm here for. That's what I see my job being.* (Lewis)

To conclude this section, in this study while some Careers Advisers spoke very little about AGCAS and their own professional identity, a few were very vocal. Some of the Careers Advisers spoke of changing career patterns and identified that, for them, this influenced the way they delivered guidance, with 'coaching' being seen as a developing area. One of the Advisers felt his initial education had not prepared him for the realities of his working practice. It appears to me that there is no shared, collective careers identity, strengthened by the professional body. Certainly within these university Careers Services in Scotland the influence and authority the professional body has over the practice of these Advisers appears to have weakened. This may be due to a range of factors. One possible reason might be the maturing Advisers gaining confidence in their workplaces and requiring less support than the Adviser more recently joining the professional body. A second interpretation may be that changes in the nature of careers work, or change in the external environment, or both, have lead to Advisers no longer looking to their professional body as a source of support and instead allegiance has intensified to the institution, rather than the profession.

I have explored the notion of changes to the concept of career and seen that not all of the Careers Advisers participating in the study recognised a paradigm shift. Yet despite this there was recognition that careers work and practice had changed and that the rhetoric, if not the reality, of the knowledge economy had impacted on the work of the participants. I

shall explore this further through the prism of Employability: a key concept explored in the interviews. In particular Careers Advisers were asked if Employability was high on the agenda at their institution and about the effect Employability was having on their Careers Services. Initially then I will consider the origins of Employability before looking at comment from the participants.

Employability

Employability as a concept has become increasingly important to universities and, as support units concerned with employer liaison, students' skills and the management of the DLHE exercise, to their Careers Services. This can be seen in the titles given to the careers activity within universities. Examining the titles of Careers Services in AGCAS shows a surprising variety of names for the Careers function. For example, 'names' include Careers and Job Prospects (Birmingham University) Centre for Student Careers and Skills (Warwick University) Careers and Skills Development (City University) and Placement and Careers Centre (Brunel University). Some do not include 'Careers' in their title at all, for example, Creative Futures at the University of Falmouth and Employability and Graduate Development at the University of Exeter. This trend to drop the label of 'Careers' or to introduce a new term to name the Service, is less widespread in Scotland. Of the 14 universities only four have moved away from a traditional naming of their Service and only as far as describing the unit as 'Career Development Centre' (Stirling and Dundee) or as 'Careers and Employability Service' (University of the West of Scotland) or as 'Careers' within 'Employability Services' which then changed to 'Student and Academic Services' (Edinburgh Napier). When Careers Services first came about, beginning in the traditional universities at the turn of the century, all were called 'Careers and Appointments Service' as noted in Chapter One. Over the years this often became the 'Careers Advisory Service' placing the emphasis less on job placement and more on the advice-giving and guidance nature of the service. Some institutions shortened this to 'Careers Service', a name still retained by many today. Through the nineties and beyond, as the focus began to turn on the value of the university experience and the concept of Employability took hold, many services looked to reflect these changes in their names and titles. Today, many services use Employability as part of their name. In all, 40 (30%) of the 131 UK universities' careers teams have 'Employability' in their title, usually combined with 'Careers' in some way, for example the Universities of Hull, Kent, Liverpool and Nottingham amongst others all name the Service 'Careers And Employability Service'. Even when this is not reflected in the name of the Service, somewhere in the aims or

objectives, mission statement or ethos there is a reference to Employability. Ownership of 'Employability' therefore often seems to reside with the Careers Services for many universities and Employability as a concept seems to be relevant to many.

While I would argue that Employability is an issue at the centre stage of university Careers Services' activity and remit and a concern of the wider university as explored through this chapter, it is apparent that there is still much confusion and doubt over defining 'Employability'. Rajan et al. (2000:23) claim that Employability 'is one of the few words that has gone from cliché to jargon without the intermediate stage of meaning'. Employability as a concept or term is not new, but its meaning appears to have shifted over the years. Beveridge (1909), the founder of the welfare state, is credited with the first use of the term. The concept was then further developed according to Grip et al. (2004) in the United States, where it was defined in terms of the availability of able-bodied workers seeking work (they had employability) against elderly or disabled people eligible for relief (they lacked employability). Gazier's (1998) work has identified seven versions of the concept of Employability up to the current recognised definition of 'having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required' Hillage and Pollard (1998:1). Increasingly aspects such as the condition of the labour market, understanding the labour market and company policy become integrated in understandings of the term. Outin (1990) sees Employability as a construct made up of four parts that can affect an individual's success in gaining a particular place in the job market: the individual's personal qualities; specific occupational qualities and abilities; the condition of the labour market, and government and employer training policies. Employability can be seen here as a shared responsibility between the individual, the government, and the employer with each playing their part and Boltanski and Chiapello (2005: 218) suggest that the main outcome of changing career patterns has been 'the transfer of burden of market uncertainty onto wage earners'. Employability increasingly comes to be seen as the process of the individual taking responsibility for her or his own career development and can be seen as a feature of the neo-liberal agenda, a process of 'responsibilization' (Shamir, 2008). Here, responsibility lies with the individual for their own welfare. Under this model, individuals rather than the labour market determine chances of employment and individuals must seek to acquire the skills required by the global environment. People are responsible for themselves and those who are not economically self-sufficient and managing their own careers and do not engage actively to develop their Employability are constructed as a problem. No longer the responsibility of

governments, Employability has become the responsibility of the individual and as a term it is no longer 'neutral'. In the nineties different ways of defining Employability and opinion on how it affects people increased and 'the concept has indeed become somewhat fuzzy because it has come to incorporate more and more related ingredients' (Grip et al., 2004:212).

Up to this point within universities, work related learning and skills development was seen as relevant only in specific cases; certainly for programmes requiring professional accreditation, and perhaps in areas such as medicine or teaching in which specific practical skills were deemed necessary to practise that profession. However, work related learning was closely linked to colleges or polytechnics which provided work experience. This was often in the form of a year out (described as a thin sandwich or thick sandwich, depending on the amount of work experience included) through courses in a vast array of programmes including marketing, business studies, accountancy, building, surveying and engineering. Many institutions in the UK, perhaps universities, but very often 'new' universities or universities with roots in the college sector and delivering vocational degrees, delivered undergraduate courses in applied learning with each having a period of work experience attached, usually of six months' or a year's duration. 'Employability' was embedded throughout the programme but seen as being about the practice element of these programmes. At this stage, ancient university academic programmes, say in Scotland at the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrew's, did not see skills development, outwith the professional requirements for vocational training and preparation, as being part of their remit in any way. This remained the preserve of technical or FE colleges, or the remit of the newer universities. This began to change through the introduction of the Enterprise in Higher Education programme which started in the late 1980s and is a further indicator of the increasing neo-liberal agenda, as described in Chapter One, which began to drive the Higher Education environment.

Impact of the Employability Agenda

The Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE) initiative was a programme in HEIs, funded by the Employment Department and, subsequently, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), from 1987 until 1996. It aimed to establish and embed the concept and practice of enterprise within universities and to increase the effectiveness of Higher Education in preparing students for working life. The EHE initiative, which involved over 60 universities at a cost of £60 million (Harvey et al., 2002:7) emphasised indirect

preparation for work through the development of personal transferable skills that were to be embedded in the mainstream academic curriculum, rather than via specialist bolt-on skills courses. Successive national evaluations of EHE demonstrated that it 'impacted on the culture and practice of HE' (DfEE 1999:1) and that through it 'significant parts of the HE curriculum have become more relevant to employment and employer needs' (Hawkins and Winter 1997: 6). It might be suggested that EHE 'changed the mindset' of universities and HEIs to 'include Employability and enterprise as legitimate concerns of HE' and that 'careers issues received more acceptance' (Burniston et al., 1999:4) although the acceptance was probably more marked in institutions already engaged with work based learning. The EHE initiative might be seen as the introduction of entrepreneurial and commercial ideologies giving way to Giroux's (2009b) 'rise of the corporate university'.

During the nineties Employability began to take centre stage in policy and government agendas and was used to describe the aim of the economic policies used by most industrial nations at national and local levels (see, for example OECD, 1998a; Commission of the European Communities, 1999; United Nations, 2001). David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Education and Employment stated:

> We have to develop new Higher Education opportunities at this level [foundation degree] oriented strongly to the employability skills, specialist knowledge and broad understanding needed in the new economy (Blunkett, 2000:7).

Blunkett's comment reinforces the supposed connection of Employability to the purpose of university education and the needs of the economy. Doyle (2003: 275), commenting on the discourse of Employability and 'competing economic and democratic agendas' which he identifies through a number of key speeches and Labour policy documents, suggests that Blunkett's speech relates to a continuation of a policy on 'competitiveness'. This process of 'tooling up' what Doyle calls 'UK PLC' (Doyle, 2003: 275) to compete in a global economy he suggests can be identified through three White Papers of the previous government (HMSO, 1994; 1995; 1996). Dearing (1997) continued to raise the profile of Employability through commenting on the need to increase work related learning opportunities, also endorsed by the Scottish Standing Committee and in submissions to Dearing by the Confederation of British Industry Scotland and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry. Since then, as the Higher Education Academy's scoping study on work based learning in HE (Connor and Macfarlane, 2007) shows, various skills and enterprise reports and papers have continued to highlight the need to improve graduates'

work preparedness and skills and the need for universities and colleges to be more responsive to employer demand (see for example Universities Scotland 'Getting Ready for Work', 2004; Scottish Funding Council's 'Learning to Work', 2005).

New Labour[15] saw Employability, along with the knowledge economy, as a central tenet of so-called 'Third Way' policies. The Third Way, at least in welfare terms, might be seen to be concerned with 'promoting opportunity instead of dependence' (DSS, 1998: 19). Dearing's recommendations had already suggested reducing dependence through introducing fees into previously free university education. Blunkett rejoiced at the success of Britain in 'replacing the old agenda by putting jobs, skills and Employability at the heart of Europe' (Blunkett, 1998). It has been argued that the Labour Party replaced its 'historic' commitment to full employment with a promise of 'full employability' (Finn, 2000). Here, it is claimed, equality of outcome is no longer the focus but rather equality of opportunity (Lister, 2001). The connection of Higher Education producing the workforce to develop the economy is a long-standing one going back at least to the Higher Education review in the 1960s, the Robbins Report (1963). Robbins (1963:25) suggested that the first of four aims of Higher Education should be 'instruction in skills suitable to play a part in the general division of labour' contrasting with Barnett's (1990) holistic and liberating idea of the aims of Higher Education explored in Chapter Two. Yorke (2006:3) argues that the Robbins report placed this aim first in order to 'counter the risk that the importance of Higher Education for the economy might have been ignored or undervalued'. The report then went on to comment that few would enter Higher Education without considering future employment and Robbins can still be seen as endorsing the 'liberal' value of education. In contrast by 1997 Dearing (1997) emphatically drew attention to the role that Higher Education was now to play in a modern economy. Global competitiveness, he asserted, required that 'Education and training [should] enable people in an advanced society to compete with the best in the world (Dearing, 1997, para 1.11). The employability of graduates has become an aim that governments around the world have, to varying extents, imposed on national Higher Education systems. This interest in employability reflects an acceptance of the linking of Higher Education and economy previously explored. It signals a recognition of human capital theory (Becker, 1964) in

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[15] New Labour refers to the specific period in the Labour Party history which saw it lead by Tony Blair from 1994- 2007 and subsequently by Gordon Brown from 2007 to 2010. It was characterised as a break away from 'Old Labour' to become a 'democratic socialist' party. See the Labour Party rulebook: http://labourlist.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Rule-Book-2013.pdf

which the role of a government is to create conditions that encourage growth in the stock of human capital, since this is seen as vital to the performance of knowledge based economies in a globalised society. A report from the UK Treasury puts it thus:

> Human capital directly increases productivity by raising the productive potential of employees. Improving skills and human capital is important in promoting growth, both as an input to production and by aiding technological progress. This has been recognised both in endogenous growth theory and also in empirical studies comparing growth in different countries (HM Treasury, 2000:26, 32).

Blunkett claimed that a failure to develop people contributed to the UK's underperformance:

> In part [the underperformance] reflects lower investment in physical capital. But in part it also reflects less investment in human capital – a less well-educated, less well-trained workforce (Blunkett, 2001).

New Labour developed a strategy for a knowledge-driven economy which was, according to Jessop (2003) first clearly articulated in the Department of Trade and Industry's White Paper, 'Our Competitive Edge: Building the Knowledge-Driven Economy' (DTI, 1998). He suggests:

> More formal neo-liberal arguments about competitiveness inherited from the Thatcher-Major years were combined with more substantive claims about the importance of information and communication technologies, the information economy, the culture industries, the knowledge base, and human capital as the crucial foundations for competitiveness in an irreversibly globalizing economy (Jessop, 2003:8).

Increasingly, then, the role Higher Education plays on influencing the economy and increasing the competitiveness and performance of the country is recognised by government, and also by universities. Employability is a key part of that and was, according to Haughton et al. (2000:671), 'a cornerstone of the New Labour approach to economic and social policy'. In graduate recruitment particularly there was and is a trend to recruit new graduates into areas that are not necessarily related to their area of undergraduate study. It is the generic skills gained that are viewed as important and these moves mark the start of the transferable skills agenda for all in the university including academics who often, for example, have to list those on Programme and Course approval documentation. Harvey et al. (2002) showed that UK employers often value generic skills more highly than disciplinary-based skills quoting one director of a large vehicle manufacturing company:

> I don't care what you did your degree in, I really don't … Even in areas like finance, I don't necessarily want a finance-trained human being. It is as much

if not more about personal traits, personal drive and ambition. You could be managing director of this company with a degree in sociology (Harvey et al., 2002:58).

Brown et al. (2002:28) quote one human resources manager who suggests that academic qualifications are 'the first tick in the box and then we move on. Today we simply take them for granted'. Talking on this subject in my study, one Careers Adviser, Olivia comments:

> *People have talked about Employability for a long time. And there's been a lot of fine talk but not much action whereas in recent years there's been more action and that's been because it's become an issue, people are conscious of the number of people coming through university, conscious that the degree itself isn't going to be the thing that opens doors and that universities have to produce graduates who are fit and ready to hit the job market.*

At the same time, there is a changing HE spectrum, not only with supposed new ways of working brought in by flatter less hierarchical organisations, as described earlier in this chapter, but also with an increasing emphasis on instrumentalism, measurability and increasing consumerism. The introduction of differing fee structures is further evidence of a neo-liberal agenda. Those who criticise the instrumentalist view of Higher Education, such as Giroux (1993; 2009b; 2010; 2015), see Employability as a feature of this process. A recent debate on 'Education for sale: a debate on the privatisation of education' held at the University of East London (13th February 2013) heard Rikowski, a well-known neo-marxist commenting on how state-controlled education:

> … tries to get us to think in certain ways, principally as future labour power.... my university is the number one university in the land for employability. I see that as a problem. Most people who I work with are very proud of this. (Matthews quoting Rikowski[16] in Times Higher Education, 2013).

This, of course, resonates with Giroux's position previously quoted where Higher Education is seen as being committed 'almost exclusively' to 'economic growth, instrumental rationality and preparing students for the workforce' (Giroux, 2010:2).

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[16] Glenn Rikowski, School of Education at the University of Northampton at the time of speaking at the debate is now an independent education researcher.

Chapter 3: Changing Career Patterns

All UK universities address the Employability agenda to a greater or lesser extent, some concentrating on the emphasis on the development of skills and personal development and others focussing simply on Destination data as the performance indicator of Employability, as explained in the 'Graduate Destinations as a Key Performance Indicator' section of Chapter One. Many universities adopted the Mantz Yorke (2006) definition of Employability as:

> A set of achievements - skills, understandings and personal attributes - that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke: 2006: 7).

A Careers Adviser comments, picking up on the Yorke (2006) definition, at least in part:

> *We got a strategic steer- the university decided it would happen and it came here because we were driving PDP stuff anyway so we were the ones who seemed to want it to happen and politically it worked at the right time for us. So fair play to (our manager) for driving a lot of that stuff through. Now they see the value of it. The university decided that Employability would be an important Performance Indicator for the university. So that's given us the stick and to be fair to the academic members of staff, they've been working towards professional development stuff anyway. They have to meet the professional criteria anyway so they're used to that sort of process whereas for History of Art, say, it's never been on their agenda at (another university) but for here, it's always been part of the ether.* (Harry)

Another Adviser in the study, Sophie, saw Employability as something measured by the destinations of graduates through the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey (described in Chapter One) submitted to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. She comments:

> *I think the new Principal here has made a difference and she has made it clear that Employability is high on the agenda. Her objective is to improve (the university's) standing in the league tables and one of the ways of doing that is to look at the destination statistics.* (Sophie)

League tables based on the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education data compiled by newspapers (the Sunday Times University Guide, the Guardian University Guide and so on) are a significant feature of some universities' marketing campaigns to attract new

students. One new university, Edinburgh Napier, for example, on the Employability[17] section of its website states 'The employability of our graduates is at the core of everything we do' and reports:

> Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows that, with 95.4% of our graduates in jobs or further study six months after graduating, we equip students for success in an increasingly competitive job market. In fact, out of 154 UK universities, we rank 20th for our graduates' employability' (Edinburgh Napier University, 2015).

The above extract demonstrates how some interpret 'Employability' in the narrow sense of being about performance in league tables. As Employability has moved up the agenda many Careers Services have embraced it as an issue that belongs firmly within the Careers function. One of the Careers Advisers commented:

> *Pretty much (Employability) is down to us and that's OK for us when it's going well... But yeah, it's down to us and it's down to us to poke departments to getting the Employability in there because every single module has to have an element of Employability in the module, academics struggle with it, so we just play the card of ' we'll take that burden off your hands' which we're quite happy to do obviously.* (Lewis)

Harvey et al. (2002:6) comment on the growing recognition by institutions of the need to develop a longer-term integrating strategy for Employability that includes closer links between central services and programme based initiatives. This was a theme picked up by a number of Advisers, as exemplified here:

> *It's in the interest of the University I suppose to be known to have an Employability agenda ...and there's been a drive I think to get academic departments on board with this. So the Employability agenda is not driven by the Careers Service, it's driven by the University and the Careers Service will facilitate it, or help facilitate it. And that's been a good thing because when it was always just the Careers Service banging on about Employability you could bet your bottom dollar we were never going to get very far with it unless you had, you know, certain quite switched on people. But Employability has been*

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[17] Employability – About the University, Edinburgh Napier University, (2015) See: http://www.napier.ac.uk/study/university/why/Pages/Employability.aspx

> *put on the University's agenda, not by the Careers Service but by other things,*
> *and so there's probably more chance now of it becoming a real tangible thing.*
> *It still requires pushing and pushing but it's coming top down from senior*
> *management in the University, it's not just the Careers Service saying wouldn't*
> *it be a jolly good idea if students were more prepared, more conscious of what*
> *they can offer and more conscious of how they can help themselves. Because*
> *it's coming from top down there's more chance that something will happen.*
> (Olivia)

Some Careers Advisers saw that the focus on Employability resulted in the Careers Service being able to collaborate with academic departments more fully so allowing them to become part of the fabric of the educational experience in contrast to careers work being something that was tacked on at the end of the student experience.

> *They have been looking at ways of enhancing collaboration between their*
> *services and academic departments and...I think it's a kind of softly, softly*
> *approach but it's probably becoming something that isn't an irritation that it*
> *might have been a few years ago, as you can imagine academics saying ach,*
> *I'll think about it. I think they now go, OK. So I think it's probably becoming a*
> *more normal part of things that people would think about.* (Olivia)

As the global financial crisis took hold through 2008 universities increasingly addressed the Employability agenda with most referring to Employability in their strategic aims. One Careers Adviser talked about the Employability agenda creating new roles within the Careers Service. Sometimes these were specialist roles seen as furthering the Employability work as suggested in the extract below.

> *For the last couple of years we've had two Employability Consultants funded*
> *by ... the money is provided by the Scottish Government for Employability and*
> *that funded two posts here. They have been working with departments, some*
> *departments again, setting up curriculum based activities .... The management*
> *seem to take on board what the Employability Consultants have deduced and*
> *want it to be fully knitted in to the work that we do, I would say.* (Jack)

In this way we can see that the Employability agenda has had a significant impact on the work of the Careers Service, making it work more closely with the academic processes, encouraging closer liaison with academic staff and sometimes creating new roles within

the Careers Service as a hybrid between a Careers Adviser and an academic member of staff. In the discourse of Employability Giroux's (2009b) description of a market driven educational system is apparent and I might question where Nussbaum's (2001; 2011) 'flourishing' is allowed, beyond the economic and employability drivers and to this I shall return in Chapter Four.

One Careers Adviser emphasised the way Employability has helped to gain access into the curriculum and to engage with academics.

> *We can only do so much, we can't go hammering on doors clamouring to come in, we shouldn't do that, but I think with the Employability agenda, either departments are thinking they need to do this, because they've been told or they think it's a good idea themselves, it's maybe just making it slightly easier in some places than it would have been otherwise.* (Sophie)

This means that, for some universities, Employability has become the responsibility of both the careers practitioner and the academic representative, resulting in the role of the Careers Adviser shifting to working in partnership.

> *You become someone who's a natural ally rather than someone who just trying to get into their class, which is the whole point so Careers isn't just stuck on at the end, it's properly a part of the university.* (Harry)

Some Careers Advisers see Employability, usually seen as being skills development programmes, helping to ensure the institution is responding to its Employability statement or agenda, as their remit. Olivia stated:

> *Money was made available and that resulted in two Employability Consultants at (name of university) and they were based in the Careers Service because that was the most natural place for them to be.* (Olivia)

Some Careers Advisers discussed how the Employability agenda raised the profile of the Careers Service, helping the Service to further its reach with other units and activities and become better known across the university.

> *My job is completely different from the job when I started. Since I've been here the Careers Service has become a more integral part of the university, we're not as stand-alone as we used to be. We have involvement now not only with*

> *academic staff but also with the Students' Union and alumni and other parts of*
> *the university that we would never have had contact with before. Most recently*
> *that's come about through the Employability funding; in our case somebody*
> *was appointed as an Employability Co-ordinator who reported into the Centre*
> *for Academic Practice, but worked closely with us and helped us get more*
> *known throughout the institution, particularly within academic areas.* (Sophie)

However, one Careers Adviser saw the changes brought about by Employability as detrimental to the Careers Service. Rather than extending the reach of the Service it had resulted in others taking on the work instead of the Careers Service staff. Careers Advisers had thereby been marginalised and their role made redundant. In this particular new university, external funding had been sought and secured to employ another unit to deliver a programme of skills development and awareness raising through a series of workshops and activity. The employees in the new team are described as 'personal and professional development facilitators' and, instead of being placed within the Careers Service, arguably the obvious location for such an activity, are part of a stand-alone, discrete unit with its own manager. The aim of this new unit is to develop Employability skills sought by employers. The Careers Adviser comments:

> *But when someone on a course, a lecturer is thinking about Employability, and*
> *how they would boost the Employability of their students they aren't*
> *automatically turning to the Careers Service. One, they'd probably do it*
> *themselves. Two, (others) have already been round and said we can do this*
> *workshop on this, that or the other at various stages and there's not much*
> *room for various other types of enhancement.* (James)

There was some cynicism from this Careers Adviser that the Employability agenda was just the latest in a line of 'in–vogue' processes and not something at the heart of Careers Service activity.

> *Actually all the Graduate Attribute stuff, it's all very much flavour of the*
> *month... so all the kind of high level statements, the starting point for*
> *everything. Graduate Attributes is like that 'Students will be international*
> *citizens' and all that kind of stuff. (The department where the Careers Service*
> *sits) is certainly heavily involved, (the University) is certainly heavily involved*
> *at a high level in putting Graduate Attributes forward and that's all getting*

> *adopted and worked through but it doesn't involve (the Careers Service), we'll just be one of the people who help to make it flesh, as it were.* (James)

The Employability agenda has raised the profile of careers related activity in universities. This process can extend the reach of a Careers Service, change its role and influence the activities of its Careers Advisers. However, for those Careers Services not poised to grasp the opportunities there is the danger of the Careers Service being side-lined as others take on that activity. The idea of Careers Services being under threat was raised in Chapter One and one of the Careers Advisers specifically refers to 'threat' here:

> *I feel threatened within my role because look what they're doing ... last summer they said we had to have three Careers Advisers, one for each campus, six months later they don't need three. And then you've got these Graduate Attributes coming in, which (facilitators) are going to be delivering ...it's getting very close to Careers stuff, I think and the only stuff we're protected about is that we do CVs and covering letters and personal statements, mock interviews.* (Isla)

The debate over the role of the university, whether it exists to impart knowledge 'for its own sake' or whether it is there to provide the workforce of the future and contribute to the wealth and development of the country has perhaps intensified over recent years as the UK has succumbed to a shrinking job market and an increase in measurement, league tables and competition between institutions. This has, inevitably perhaps, left its mark on the institutions' Careers Services. The environment has offered opportunities for funding to be attracted into the Services, the creation of new hybrid roles for staff and the potential for Careers staff to work in partnership with academic colleagues and extend the reach of the Careers Service. However, an increasing focus on the instrumental nature of the Careers Service will also expose them to criticism if they are seen to be failing to deliver. Media focus has increasingly turned to Careers Services and questioned whether they are delivering what is required. For example in an article from the Guardian's Employability pages, writer Louise Tickle (2012) comments:

> University Careers Services have never been more important, but how good are they? Not as great as they think, say recent graduates (Tickle, 2012).

More attention is being paid to the role of the Careers Service and, arguably in common with all parts of today's university, as suggested by Nijjar (2009) in Chapter One, it is scrutinised and challenged with evidencing 'value for money' rather than providing an

environment to help the individual flourish. Increasingly, economic imperatives take precedence and the Careers Service is charged with supporting its institution in remaining competitive. The focus of the Service to provide an environment to help the development of the individual may take second place to the need to respond to demands of the economy and the outcomes of destination surveys. As Nussbaum (2010) suggests:

> Distracted by the pursuit of wealth, we increasingly ask our schools to turn out useful profit-makers rather than thoughtful citizens (Nussbaum, 2010: 141).

My point, of course is that the university Careers Service should serve a role that combines both goals.

Having explored the impact of the Employability agenda on the Careers Advisers and their Services I want to now consider its impact on three areas of work traditionally considered to form the work of a university Careers Service: education, information and guidance. Careers Advisers were prompted with questions around the future of one-to-one guidance and the future of careers resource centres. I also examined the relationship of Careers Service to reaching departments to ascertain the Advisers' thoughts on the key aspects of careers guidance, information and education. In the next Chapter I specifically examine coaching, first raised in this chapter, and query its relationship to guidance.

Chapter 4: Careers Work: Education, Information and Guidance

The previous chapter explored changing career patterns, the Employability agenda and its increasing influence on universities and their Careers Services. It indicated that in a neo-liberal environment higher education has become increasingly organised by the premise of a human capital agenda (Becker, 1964). Universities, and perhaps particularly their Careers Services, are seen as spaces in which students might be encouraged to adapt to the needs of the marketplace and prepare themselves for graduate level employment. As Giroux (2015: 104) suggests, education is 'defined as a site of training'. This does not seem to allow for the flourishing of the individual or as Nussbaum (1997:9) suggests, for the 'cultivation of the whole human being for the functions of citizenship and life generally'. This chapter examines the triad of the Careers Adviser's work of education, information and guidance to identify the changes that have taken place. Additionally, it seeks to ascertain whether and in what ways the flourishing of the individual is supported beyond, but including efforts to meet the demands of, the Employability agenda through those three areas of careers work.

Careers Education

According to the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), careers education is concerned with:

> … the ways in which individuals can take control of their careers, the study of how career choices are made by individuals, and the wider range of socio-economic factors that impinge on these processes (AGCAS, 2013).

The professional body continues:

> We define careers education as those formal processes that empower individuals to identify, develop and articulate the skills, qualifications, experiences, attributes and knowledge that will enable them to make an effective transition into their chosen futures, and manage their careers as lifelong learners, with a realistic and positive attitude. As a process it is capable of addressing the needs of diverse learners, whether differentiated by age, ability, ambition, background or subject discipline. Within this broad scope a key aim of careers education in higher education is to prepare students for graduate level employment and study (AGCAS, 2013).

Through this definition careers education can include lectures and workshops; work based learning such as internships or placements; and online and distance learning experiences. In my study, all of the universities were involved in delivering careers education to a greater or lesser extent. However, only one of the four Careers Services in the study

undertook this as a key activity and delivered accredited careers modules to its student body as part of their educational programme.

 Careers education has become an increasingly important aspect of university careers work. The very first review of Careers Services, then more commonly labelled 'University Appointments Boards' took place in 1964 via the Heyworth Report. As I reported in the first chapter the activities of these appointments boards, according to the report, involved three main elements:

> (a) Advisory interviews between appointment officers (b) the provision of information about careers, jobs, employers (c) machinery for: (i) notifying vacancies to students, (ii) arranging interviews between students and employers, (iii) dealing with employers' enquiries (Heyworth, 1964:5).

There is no mention here of any sort of activity that might be deemed as careers education but careers education and personal development became increasingly important through the nineties. When I started work as a Careers Adviser at a modern university the focus of activity was still on interviews, vacancies and liaison with employers and information provision and there was no careers education provision until I initiated this, in the form of workshops and skills development sessions, in 1990. According to Butcher (2007) the first accredited careers education programme started at Oxford Polytechnic in 1988. Nearly a decade later the Dearing Report stressed the importance of skills development:

> … because of the importance we place on creating a learning society at a time when much specific knowledge will quickly become obsolete. Those leaving Higher Education will need to understand how to learn and how to manage their own learning and recognise that the process continues throughout life' (Dearing, 1997: 9.18).

This Report explicitly makes the point that the required skills were 'relevant throughout life, not simply in employment' (Dearing, 1997: 9.18) with one key recommendation for Careers Services. They should be integrated 'more fully into academic affairs' and 'reviewed periodically by the Quality Assurance Agency' (Dearing, 1997: 8, 11).

The QAA Code of Practice for Careers Education, Information and Guidance was written in response to the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report) in 2001 (and revised in 2011). A statement of good practice, this reinforced the need to 'produce graduates equipped to meet the fluctuating demands of the employment market of today and tomorrow' (QAA, 2011:12:2). The Harris Report on HE Careers Services, referred to in Chapter One, also suggested Careers Services should help students acquire career management and development abilities:

> Too often students pay insufficient attention to developing such skills, especially during the early years of their time in Higher Education. Our research has shown that those students who probably most need help are the least likely to seek it out. Higher Education Careers Services therefore need to be supported in their mission to equip each student with the skills and abilities to manage not only the initial transition from education to employment but also his or her lifelong learning and career development (Harris, 2001: 151-153).

Additionally, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (Scotland) established 'Enhancement Themes' selected by the Scottish Higher Education sector. The themes included 'Employability' in 2004 - 2006 and 'Graduates for the 21st Century' in 2008-2011 aiming to encourage both staff and students 'to share current good practice and collectively generate ideas and models for innovation in learning and teaching' (QAA, 2015). Here we can see a shift from Employability to what are now described as 'Graduate Attributes' explained in an QAA Enhancement Theme as follows:

> Employability is about the development of a range of attributes and skills at university that can be transferred into situations beyond university study. 'Careers' is a subset of employability. The graduate attributes agenda incorporates the employability agenda (Gunn et al., 2010: 1).

The QAA continued this focus on employability and graduate skills through its commitment to Progress Files which required universities to provide opportunities for the developing and recording of achievements that would provide evidence of an individual's skills and personal development. Since 2008, the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) a 'school- style report card' according to Paton[18] (2012) detailed not only the qualifications gained by an individual but a record of work experience, internships, extra-curricular experience and positions of responsibility and was trialled by 18 universities. These included Aberystwyth, Derby, Greenwich, Keele, Leicester, Manchester, Newcastle, Northampton, Northumbria, St Andrews, and University College London. The Higher Education Academy now provides support for the implementation of the HEAR[19] and claims that 90 universities and colleges are implementing or planning to implement the HEAR.

The funding providers, the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Scottish Funding Council, also place a high emphasis on skills development and careers

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[18] Paton, G. (2012) 'Students to be issued with graduation report cards' in *The Telegraph,* London: Telegraph Media Group.
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/9581619/Students-to-be-issued-with-graduation-report-cards.html
[19] Higher Education Achievement Report. See: http://www.hear.ac.uk/

education activity. In 2005 HEFCE commissioned a three year project on student Employability with its 'Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination' team concentrating on the curriculum as the main route to enhancing Employability. Subsequently, in 2010 HEFCE asked that all universities under its remit published an 'Employability statement' clearly delineating what universities and colleges offered to their students to support their Employability and their transition into employment and beyond. In 2007 the Uni-Stats[20] website (itself a marker of the neo-liberal, consumerist environment in which the performance of different universities can be measured) was established and described as the 'official site that allows you to search for and compare data and information on university and college courses'. Because statistics are readily available showing the outcomes data on employment at subject-level on the Uni-stats website, HEFCE suggested universities should focus on the support available to students. This has resulted in most English Universities responding with fervour in support of Employability and skills development activity. For example, the University of Central Lancashire's[21] website claims 'A focus on Employability is at the heart of UCLan's culture' and the University of South Wales[22] has a strapline of 'Your future is our priority'. This indicates the increasing focus on Employability and, arguably, the instrumental nature of the university.

In Scotland in 2007 the Scottish Funding Council put in place a four year programme of strategic funding for Scottish HEIs to develop graduate Employability. The extent to which this development is seen as the responsibility of the Careers Service seems to occur to varying degrees within different institutions. In the previous chapter I observed that some institutions clearly align Employability with the first destination DLHE data, usually provided by the Careers Service. In contrast to the emphasis on destination statistics, at the University of Edinburgh the Employability initiative, the Edinburgh EdGE[23], sits within the Careers Service, and nowhere on the EdGE website are the destination statistics for the University. Instead, these are shown as a University factsheet under Governance and

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[20] Uni-Stats (2015) website 'Compare official course data from universities and colleges'. See: http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/
[21] University of Central Lancashire, website 'Creating impact, changing lives'. See: https://www.uclan.ac.uk/news/assets/Key_Facts_12-11-13.pdf
[22] University of Wales, website 'Key strengths of the University of South Wales'. See: http://www.southwales.ac.uk/about/strengths/
[23] University of Edinburgh, website 'Employability Initiative at Edinburgh'. See: http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/

Strategic Planning. Similarly, Stirling University's Careers Service houses its Employability initiative,[24] the two joint Heads of the Careers Service lead the Employability Strategy, and the webpages emphasise components of Employability, ways to develop Employability and reflective practice rather than the DLHE statistics. Similarly, the University of Aberdeen's 'Your Future'[25] pages refer to Employability and graduate attributes and offer Employability resources which do not refer to destination or performance measures. It is apparent, then, that some universities understand Employability to mean performance in league tables of graduate destinations and others align it more closely with career management and development. In addition, some universities perceive the Careers Service to be the natural home of Employability matters and others do not.

One institution, Heriot -Watt University, is an example of an institution which has adopted five Graduate Attributes[26] under its Learning and Teaching Strategy [27] with an overarching strapline of 'professionally educated, globally employable'. The Strategy paper suggests that, amongst other activity, the successful implementation of the new Learning and Teaching Strategy is dependent on developments in 'seamless alignment with the strategies of Schools and particular directorates within the Professional Services... [such as] the Careers Service and Development and Alumni'. The focus then, for some universities, has moved from the Careers Service being responsible for, and the source of, skills development with 'ownership' of Employability activity to Employability being seen as a university responsibility or an activity managed in partnership between academic department and Careers Service. In other universities, Employability and skills development have developed within the Careers Service and thereby augmented the reach of that Service. As career development learning and Employability have moved higher up the agenda it seems there is a question about the location of responsibility for these activities within the university. While it might seem appropriate that their natural home resides within the Careers Service, this has not always been the outcome. As institutions

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[24] University of Stirling, website 'Developing Employability'.
See: https://www.stir.ac.uk/employability/staff/developing_employability/
[25] University of Aberdeen, website, 'Your Future.'
See: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/about/career-prospects-142.php
[26] The five Graduate Attributes of Heriot Watt University are: Applied, Global, Professional, Leading, Enterprising.
[27] Heriot Watt University, website 'Final Report: Strategic Theme on Graduate Attributes', Edinburgh: Learning and Teaching Board, Heriot Watt University.
See: http://www1.hw.ac.uk/committees/ltb/resources/lts-gradattributes.pdf

progress their Employability agendas there is the potential for more powerful or influential departments, units or individuals to take possession of the remit, as indicated in the previous chapter in which some participants commented on the threats they perceived to the Careers Service.

Many Careers Services are now developing work related learning experiences, a theme underpinned by the Scottish Funding Council's Learning to Work Two [28](2009) initiative. Student involvement in a range of skills development activity including volunteering, work experience and student representation is rewarded by an Award giving recognition of the activity and entry onto the student's HEAR record for the student. Some Careers Services have made in-roads into the curriculum with credit bearing courses delivered by Careers staff at the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Heriot Watt and Stirling and other non-credit bearing but compulsory programmes at the University of Edinburgh and to this aspect of careers education provision I will now turn.

Credit Bearing Courses
Delivering accredited careers education programmes can be a route for a Careers Service to strengthen its role within a university, raise its profile and justify its existence. Foskett and Johnston (2006: 11) carried out research into credit-bearing careers education commenting on a 'diversity of provision'. That research found that, in England, post 1992 universities tended to have large credit-bearing careers education programmes. In contrast, most credit-bearing careers education programmes in Scotland are based in pre 1992 universities. Some of these programmes were funded through Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT) projects (England) or QAA Enhancement theme funding (Scotland). The report concluded that:

> Curriculum development is usually the responsibility of the disciplines and may not involve the Careers Service, which is often part of centralised student services. In many institutions there is limited linkage between the two and the Careers Service may be aware of provision only where they have been explicitly involved in its development (Foskett and Johnston, 2006:17).

However, this comment is from an English perspective and does not seem to reflect the current situation in Scotland. The Careers Service of one of the institutions in this study, delivers accredited careers education programmes and three other institutions in Scotland,

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[28] Scottish Funding Council, web source, 'Learning to Work Two', work placement projects.
See: http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Good%20practices%20in%20SD_Scotland%20-%20Employability.pdf

as identified above also have well-developed programmes delivered through their Careers Services.

Yorke and Knight (2006) suggest that:

> In many cases a preferred way of enhancing an institution's contribution to student Employability is to strengthen the Careers Service, although the impact will be muted if the Service lacks a curriculum presence (Yorke and Knight, 2006:14).

In the last decade or so since these comments were made we have seen Careers Services going through changes with their activity weighted towards particular activities, with some offering full commitment to accredited careers delivery. The traditional role of helping students with the transition from university to work, from student to employee, has expanded to embrace a far more diverse set of activities and roles and different models occur as outlined below.

Different Models

According to Watts (2006:27) writing for the Higher Education Academy there are a number of different models to deliver what he calls 'career development learning'. He goes on to observe:

> The growth of career development learning has significant implications for the organisational location of Careers Services within institutions and for the competences required by their staff (Watts, 2006:28).

Watts has written at some length on career development activity and its increasing importance in public policy. Specifically, his work in 1997, first considered in Chapter One of this study, considered seven strategic directions that university Careers Services might take with four of them concerned with taking a more central embedded role within the institution[29]. Those four models are:

> The *integrated guidance* model, in which the Careers Service becomes an integral part of a continuous guidance process available to students pre-entry, on entry, and throughout the student's course, as well as on exit from it.
> The *integrated placement* model, in which the Careers Service's concern for placement on graduation becomes part of an integrated placement operation which also includes course-related placements, and placements into part-time and vacation jobs.
> The *curriculum* model, in which the Careers Service becomes part of the teaching delivery vehicle for, or of a consultancy service designed to support academic departments in, incorporating into course provision the development of employability and career management skills.

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[29] The other three represent different models for delivering careers support after graduation: the extended support model; the lifelong guidance model and the alumni model.

> The *learning organisation* model, in which the Careers Service becomes part of a service designed to foster the career development of all members of staff, including contract researchers and other staff, as well as students (Watts, 1997:40).

The curriculum model is the only one of the four that can clearly be identified within the four institutions in this study, with one university Careers Service in the study having taken a curriculum based route. Three Services, to a greater or lesser extent, are examples of Services that, according to the Harris Report:

> … have key roles in delivering, or helping tutors to deliver, aspects of the curriculum, for example relating to the development of students' career management skills, arranging work experience and encouraging students to reflect on that experience (Harris, 2001: 30).

This model is more widely reflected through other Careers Services as evidenced by a survey by Maguire (2005:41) who found that no less than 90% of Services reported that they had partnerships with academic departments contributing to career management skills development, and 76% in embedding career management skills in the curriculum. Foskett and Johnson's (2006:19) survey found that 41% of the institutions who responded to their survey undertook some form of credit-bearing education. There has certainly been a shift in institutions that carried out very little careers education of any sort in the nineties to today with the vast majority involved in this activity and with many significantly involved in delivery of careers development programmes as part of the curriculum.

It has been seen that expanding the careers education function of the Careers Service allows the Service an opportunity to carve out a role for itself and thereby strengthen its responsibility and activity within the institution. At one university Careers Service in the study the decision was made to become part of the academic process to allow the Careers Service to more directly address the wider concerns of the university. But the impetus to do this had first come about because economies of scale meant this Careers Service could not choose to take on a significant guidance or one-to-one support role. A Careers Adviser from this Service comments:

> *We made a decision about five, six years ago that integrated careers education was the way we wanted to go; we don't have the resources, we're not a big service, we don't have the resources to give in depth interviews to hundreds of students at a time so we decided that class-based integration and workshops was the best way to go and give people the skills and the tools to at least get*

> *them thinking about their own career planning skills and where they should be going.* (Lewis)

The Adviser here indicates Nussbaum's (2011: 34) Capability of 'Practical Reason' described as engaging in 'critical reflection about the planning of one's life' might be realised through careers education activity by encouraging students to think about their career direction and '*where they should be going*'. This Adviser goes on to explain that it was chance, or coincidence that the goals of the Service coincided with the strategic thinking of the institution. On finding itself slipping in the league tables, it agreed to put the plans of the Careers Service in place to address the action plan proposed. It is interesting to note that while a key activity of a Careers Service is to work towards positive graduate destinations this Careers Adviser was thankful that the destinations were poor against benchmarked universities because it allowed him to use this as a lever to progress careers education activity.

> *We were really lucky, it's that kind of serendipity thing, because at the time that we thought this would be a good idea, the University itself was getting a bit concerned about its slippage in the league tables so round about the same time as we started to get into classes the University management team were benchmarking against the (institution description) to see who was performing well or who wasn't performing well against the (institution description) equivalents. Thankfully, {laughs} in a way for us, the graduate destinations were pretty poor compared to the (institution description) across most of the departments and there was pressure from the University then on the departments to do something about it. It was traffic-lighted so anything we had a red on, we had to put an action plan in place. So we just thought, well here's our ideal opportunity so we just went along and said you know that action plan you've got to do, well, how about we do this and this ... we actually gave them a solution to a problem that had just occurred and they were quite happy to snap it up.* (Lewis)

This idea of using the current situation to extend the reach of the Service was reiterated by another Adviser:

> *The University decided that Employability would be an important PI for the University. So that's given us the stick .... that gave us an angle.* (Harry)

Chapter 4: Careers Work: Education, Information and Guidance

At a large traditional university another Careers Adviser explained that while one-to-one guidance was still carried out it had become only one activity amongst others.

> *The one-to-one guidance has become something we do but alongside a whole host of other things now and that's because of the developments in careers education and delivering to try to capture as many people as possible.* (Olivia)

This Adviser sees the increase in careers education as a response to the greater numbers of students coming to university without the necessary expansion of staff.

> *So I think the careers education was a way of us getting out and trying to pull in more people or at least make people aware of ourselves and aware of resources that we had.* (Olivia)

This institution has not gone down the route of accredited careers education but has expanded its careers education programme both centrally and within Schools. It has endeavoured to create programmes involving careers education including, for example, periods of work experience with reflection on that experience and activities to understand the value of work based learning. There is also the sense that even in a traditional, research lead organisation there is a requirement to take more note of student feedback, the surrounding environment, and the influence of league tables. The report on the analysis of 20 Enhancement Led Institutional Reviews conducted on the first cycle of ELIR from 2003- 2009 demonstrated the importance of a:

> … collaborative approach to Employability within institutions, in particular the collaborative working between Careers Services, academic staff, centres for academic practice, and employers' (QAA, 2009).

One Careers Adviser commented:

> *I think with the Employability agenda, either departments are thinking they need to do this, because they've been told or they think it's a good idea themselves, it's maybe just making it slightly easier in some places than it would have been otherwise.* (Olivia)

A Careers Adviser from a new university described a hybrid service in which guidance and one-to-one appointments still took place but development had begun to involve the Careers Service in careers education work.

> *Careers Education is integrated to some extent. We've managed to get into quite a lot of academic areas to give basic introductory talks on the Careers*

> *Service; really just marketing the service, mainly finalists but it's still patchy.*
> *We're doing more of it now and we've got better relationships with individuals*
> *within academic departments. It can range from a one-off, to maybe running a*
> *few sessions over a number of weeks. The standard one being CVs and the next*
> *being interviews. So getting timetabled slots with students. Going a step further*
> *than that is the assessed module, 'Working in the Media', although I've not*
> *been involved in the assessment, I have been part of deciding what they do.*
> *This is taking us to where we were when I first started at (my first university*
> *Careers Service) so I'm very aware that we're very slow to progress.* (Emily)

What emerges is a mixed picture with most university Careers Services at least involved in delivering non- accredited careers education programmes and some offering accredited careers management learning. Horn (2009) describes activity at a handful of English universities in which careers education programmes are delivered to all students. The University of Reading, for example, has incorporated five credits of career management skills into all undergraduate degrees with both careers and academic staff involved in delivery. This model had not yet been developed through the Careers Services involved in this study but developments in careers education have lead to a change in role for some of the Careers Advisers. This study reveals Careers Advisers' attitudes towards these changes and these range from perceived threat to enhanced professional satisfaction. One Careers Adviser, Jack, for example, spoke of the '*encroachment*' of careers education, careers management and Employability suggesting his view was that careers education was intruding or invading on the work (presumably the guidance work) of careers activity. Others corroborated this view suggesting that the increasing careers education activity meant Careers Advisers had to change their work, perhaps leaving behind the work they had come into the university Careers Service environment to do.

> *A lot of people have gone into the area of work because they want to do one-to-*
> *one and they're very geared up to that kind of relationship building, they didn't*
> *want to be teachers and that's why they wouldn't want to be standing up*
> *lecturing big groups of people.* (Olivia)

From some Careers Advisers the sense that they had to defend their professional area was palpable, they felt that if they were not careful, they would give away all their secrets and then talk themselves out of a job.

> *I was at something recently and the academic asked for my list of websites and
> I said you're not getting all of it, I'll be selective about what I give you because
> otherwise that makes me redundant. What are you going to do with that?
> Where's it going to go?* (Sophie)

So while some Careers Advisers are working alongside academics to deliver careers
activity, and others are given free rein to deliver careers modules accredited as part of the
curriculum, others feel their role might be diminished if they collaborate and share too
much, too closely with academic staff. This highlights the sense of threat identified by
some of the Careers Advisers mentioned in the previous chapter as suggested here.

> *The contact we have is if they ask us to come in and deliver sessions and nine
> times out of ten the member of staff doesn't sit in but they'll ask us for a copy
> of our slides. We've discussed this and are of the same opinion: that we will
> keep our presentation slides to an absolute minimum so we are not giving and
> sharing the knowledge that we have. Because if we do then we become
> redundant.* (Sophie)

An alternative role for the Careers Service is that of a consultancy service. Shaw et al.
(2003) produced case studies of four externally funded Employability projects and within
that study suggested that Careers Services might act in such a consultancy role. One of the
Careers Advisers commented on this particular development for the Careers Adviser role:

> *The practical, in the classroom, in some parts of the university has become
> really important and there are new modules starting up and in my area, we've
> already been through that and because it's been integrated, it means there's
> less classroom stuff but your building the relationship for slightly different
> reasons, you're used more as a consultant than a teacher.* (Harry)

He suggested that this had other implications to the extent that it reduced the Careers
Adviser's role:

> *You kind of do yourself out of a job because you integrate the careers
> education into departments and then back off again.* (Harry)

Some of the Careers Advisers in the study suggested there was an increasing use of
'externals', students or newly qualified careers professionals trained to give CV and
application form feedback, being used to deliver some careers education activity. One of

the Careers Advisers in the study expressed anxiety about this reducing the work of the Adviser commenting:

> *Bank staff have also done some of the central workshops so (my colleague) you can imagine, she's been worrying ever since they started because she's having to share materials and train them and I've been there myself, you train someone cheaper to do your job for you.* (James)

This sense of competing elements within an institution can also be identified through website presentation. In Chapter One it was noted that Edinburgh Napier University secured external funding to develop a 'Confident Futures' programme. In the online postgraduate prospectus[30] both services directly refer to employer requirements. The Careers Service entry states:

> Employers expect postgraduates to be effective in the workplace immediately. They value attributes like adaptability, professionalism and innovation, so it's important to consider how you will develop to meet the requirements of the world of work.

The second unit, Confident Futures, states:

> Employers expect postgraduates to be equipped with the skills, attributes and attitudes that enable them to work as knowledge-generating professionals.

Both units then go on to claim, in very similar language, that their activities will help students develop the required skills to operate in the global job marketplace.

As noted, the threat perceived by some Advisers in the Careers Services in this study is palpable and it is a threat felt both from other units, services or individuals within the institution in which the Careers Adviser is based, and from externals. One Adviser comments:

> *This is going to be the death of (me and my colleagues) this Bank staff. At the moment we've got six. This is priceless! I train them up so they can do my workshops. And then they buy them in at an hour a pop.... And (my manager's) like 'so have you trained the Bank staff up in everything yet?' Oh, I see where this is going. And I've got to write all the materials, I've got to do all the PowerPoints, all the handouts, put it on the shared drive. And as he put so*

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[30] Edinburgh Napier University, website 'Postgraduate prospectus' http://www.napier.ac.uk/contact-us/prospectus/Documents/Postgraduate-2013/pg_2013_studentsupport.pdf

> *nicely to me about three days ago: Have you got all that stuff on the shared*
>
> *drive, just in case you are run over by a bus. So ... all they need to do is buy*
>
> *bank staff at £17 an hour to go and deliver the workshops and they won't have*
>
> *to pay for full time people*. (Isla)

Isla's reference to 'Bank staff' reminds me of Giroux's comments on 'adjunct' staff in American universities (Giroux, 2006: 97) who are, he suggests, underpaid, overworked and lack any real power or benefits in the institution. This situation helps to render the full time staff what he calls 'disempowered educators':

> Faculty in this view are more and more regarded as simply another cheap army of reserve labor, defined largely as a subaltern class of low-skilled entrepreneurs, removed from the powers of governance, and subordinated to the policies, values, and practices within a market model of the university (Giroux, 2010:3).

Isla comments on the threat she feels from a competing professional development unit also working at the university.

> *I think that our role is overshadowed by (this unit)... They are the Golden*
>
> *Girls. They are the shining stars of the University.... And there's starting to be*
>
> *boundary issues... And I'm thinking, right, what else are they going to do?*
> (Isla)

Another Careers Adviser shares the feeling of being under threat:

> *You do get this feeling that they've no time for us and you know on the one*
>
> *hand, (name of institution's) a classic one, having it on the side of buses about,*
>
> *you know, something about the success in employment but treating their*
>
> *Careers Service appallingly. As I say, I don't think it's happened here - yet -*
>
> *but it just needs one person, like at (another name of institution), you know*
>
> *they were held in great regard and one person changed that...the same thing*
>
> *could happen to us.* (Jack)

It is very apparent that Isla felt her Careers Service was squeezed out by unsupportive management, and the creation of structures and services that undermined or threatened the key activities of the Service. Jack voices the perception that some Careers Services are not valued and that support might be tenuous.

However, in exploring the role of careers education activity in universities, the study participants indicated contrasting attitudes ranging from those who felt secure with clearly demarcated roles within their universities and those feeling less secure who felt they were fighting to cling to their roles. In this study, the newer universities' Careers Services struggled most with protecting their identity, resenting the incursions of others and striving to defend their right to exist rather than being able to find new ways of growing and a sense of purpose and intent. This may not result from the status of modern universities but from a comparatively lower level of resource. One institution, for example had only two Careers Advisers within its Careers Service and both were part time with a manager who oversaw the wider student support facility. In another university with a different unit delivering skills development across the curriculum the work remaining for the Careers Service focussed on the exit point and supporting the transition stage from student to worker by offering CV feedback and developing interview skills. While Nussbaum's Capabilities of 'Control Over One's Environment' and specifically the 'right to seek employment' is supported through this Careers Service there seems to be less scope offered to satisfy some of the other Capabilities brought about through 'Senses, Imagination and Thought' and 'Practical Reason' (Nussbaum, 2011:33). The Careers Service, based narrowly on a model of self presentation for the selection process, found itself marginalised and struggling to compete with the traditional careers model in research-led universities. Those Careers Advisers who felt threatened in their roles were impeded from exercising their capability to enjoy what they deemed to be the worthwhile activity of careers education and personal skills development. At the same time, their students were, arguably, prevented from undertaking experiences which may help them to develop their critical thinking and self awareness to help them to go on to flourish in their future occupational lives. Careers education is one area where it is apparent that the Employability agenda has made a significant impact on careers work and I want to now consider the two other key areas: information and guidance, and explore the Employability agenda's impact on these facets of careers work.

Careers Information
As noted in Chapter One, in the first review of Careers Services carried out over 50 years ago in 1964 (Heyworth, 1964), there was discussion around information provision but it was not the focus of the careers activity. The focus was the guidance interview, and there is no indication of a distinct job role as an Information Officer, Information Manager or some such title at that time. The Information Officer role is grouped with the 'work of the

clerical staff' and not mentioned by name but as an aside as in 'There are library services to be run' (Heyworth, 1964: 11). The report later goes on to claim that the (careers) library is an 'essential part of a properly organised appointments service and provision should always be made for having it properly run' (Heyworth 1964: 44). This last statement still holds true today, although the provision and its delivery have changed radically and fundamentally.

Through the seventies and eighties the information provision of Careers Services became central to the work of the Service. There was an expectation that a library or information service would be provided and much work was carried out to ensure that employer and occupational information was reviewed, date stamped, filed and displayed to the student population. Most of this work occurred manually and might have been very time consuming depending on the size and spread of the Service. At one Careers Service in which I worked previously, the Careers Service had a presence on three different campuses and each of these campuses had to be stocked and checked, posters displayed and removed and a Careers Adviser presence maintained on a rota system at each base. Debate then focussed around how thinly to spread resource; whether we should go out to the campuses or encourage the students to come into one stronger, centralised service. Vacancy managing was a key part of every Careers Service. Employers notified their vacancy to their chosen Careers Service or Services and details were then taken, typed up and formed the weekly or fortnightly vacancy listing and information journal. These publications were kept on file in huge lever arch files to be consulted by Advisers and students alike. However, increasingly through the eighties and nineties technological developments lead to the development of a range of careers guidance programmes firstly in the school guidance sector with programmes such as JIIG-CAL (Job Ideas and Information Generator and Computer Assisted Learning). This was followed in the Higher Education sector by GRADSCOPE, a matching software programme available on an interactive basis having been designed initially as a PhD thesis (Wilson, 1980). The latter was overtaken by the more advanced Prospect (HE) system designed to be used as an integrated programme in Careers Services but also available as a stand-alone facility (Watts et al., 1991). Graduate Prospects, as it became known, was the commercial arm of the Higher Education Careers Service Unit, a registered charity and agency of Universities UK. Eventually, Graduate Prospects developed the shared vacancy scheme with 12 of the 14 universities in Scotland being part of that online vacancy programme. Watts (1997), in his strategic report, was able to comment that there had been a significant shift from the Careers Services' focus, in

Heyworth's time, on the guidance interview 'with a careers library available as a supportive resource' to an 'open- access information room...now viewed as the heart of the service' (Watts, 1997: 16). Students still had access to Careers Advisers through the one-to-one interview but could also access information themselves by browsing the files and shelves in an 'open access approach' (Sampson and Watts, 1992) or by making use of the 'upgraded information staff' (Watts, 1997: 16). During this time, then, there was a shift in activity from the focus being on the one-to-one interview to accessing a far wider range of provision with students accessing information for themselves, making use of guidance programmes either within or out with the Careers Service, and taking part in group work activities. As Higher Education continued to expand, the need grew for Services to be accessed by greater numbers, or through self-help mechanisms and there was an increasing emphasis on careers education. In the previous section I noted the increase in accredited careers education programmes and every Service looked to its range of services and widened these to some extent. As the student body has continued to change, with increasing numbers of distance learners and international students, Services have continued to look at their provision and methods of delivery. Emphasis now falls on being able to provide a 'round the clock' service, at least via the website, and to cater to the demands of students across time zones and continents. Information provision forms part of that delivery, particularly through increased electronic and online information. Yet the participants in the study suggest that information provision in Careers Services is undergoing significant change and is often not being expanded, as outlined below.

Disappearance of the Information Role?
The examination of current information activity in the four universities in this study shows a mixed picture. Only one institution, the large, traditional, research-lead university, has maintained the information role with an Information Manager and a team of Information Officers. One university Careers Service, the smallest service with only two part time Careers staff employed, had never had an official information role. As a Careers Adviser explains:

> *Another big change is the electronic dissemination of information which we're ... we don't have an Information Officer or Adviser so we're dealing with that ourselves. An awful lot of what we do is just sheer administration; we're doing a lot of admin. and vacancy handling.* (Emily)

At the other two university Careers Services in the study, it seems that as the final information member of staff left or retired, the post was not replaced. At one of the universities, this seems to be viewed with regret by the Careers Adviser:

> *The culture at (name of institution) kind of died after (name of Information Officer) left and then it was just ... we can just be paperless. I don't think that was a great move.* (Isla)

The same action occurred at another university:

> *We did have an Information Officer but when she left we made her job two part time Careers Adviser posts.* (Harry)

However, the view towards this outcome at this university seems more positive, with it being seen as a natural development in response to the environment.

> *The information is definitely no less important but it's just delivered in a different way and therefore I think the time that was spent with the Information Officer before was about ordering books, it was about managing a physical careers library, which meant going through the paperwork, throwing stuff out, stamping it, making sure it stayed two years in date, and actually information provision changes so quickly that two years out of date might as well be a different century. So someone else has taken responsibility for the information provision, because it's all done online, we now have a 24/7 online careers library, our paper library is almost down to nothing.* (Harry)

Harry stresses the transformation that the Careers Service has undergone is due to the impact of technology and online provision and I will now turn attention to the technologically driven impact on Careers Services and their delivery of careers support.

Impact of Technology

The rapid onset of electronic provision and ICT provision on Services (Offer et al., 2001; Offer, 2003; Madahar and Offer, 2004) undoubtedly had an effect on delivery of Careers Services in a similar way to its effect on a range of other services from banking to travel to retail. Many services have been and continue to be transformed by digital developments and the Careers Service, with its traditional emphasis on information, encountered similar challenges to those facing libraries and information centres, publishing houses and broadcasting. Giroux has written of the dangers of increased technology in HE arguing that

while online discussion, the internet and email should improve existing modes of communication, all too often a 'means driven technology as a pedagogical tool' means that ' instrumental goals replace ethical and political considerations' (Giroux, 2009b: 685). We have seen already that, for some Careers Services, the role of information manager has disappeared together, although this activity may then be subsumed within the roles of other people within the careers team, often the Careers Adviser. One of the Advisers spoke incredulously of the information provision at another university, questioning the need for such provision:

> *In getting rid of the Information room at (this institution) I was just thinking of how different that is from (name of another university) which has almost an extensive library ... why have they got that, is it because there's a different need at (name of university), is it simply just to keep information people in a job?{laughs}. Is it just, what it is, a legacy? Is it what they think they should have*? (Lewis)

It is interesting to see how some roles have faded away altogether but for some others the Careers Adviser's role, perhaps traditionally seen as one dealing with guidance, support and one-to-one interviewing has, for some, been augmented by the developments in digital media and IT.

> *A lot of my professional skills development is on the technological side and that's just all self-taught, it's nothing to do with careers, it's nothing to do with guidance, it's all to do with delivery and media, more than anything else so I suppose I'm more in that ballpark now rather than the guidance /skills area.* (Lewis)

And it is interesting to note that Lewis thinks that in order for him to stay employable then having this knowledge and skills are a prerequisite.

> *I just think that will keep me employable if I ever wanted to leave here.* (Lewis)

The development of the internet in the late 1990s meant significant developments of web pages and a re-appraisal of how careers information resources should be managed. Services questioned which materials should be online and which produced in hard copy.

Chapter 4: Careers Work: Education, Information and Guidance

Huge swathes of materials are no longer maintained in careers or information centres because instead the resources have gone online. One Adviser comments:

> *The web is 50% of the answer to that. Yes, physical resources are dwindling ... the number of, the pile of files saying 'students, please help yourselves' is testament to that ... they can be done without. Employers' literature is the prime example, it was a huge section; it pretty much doesn't exist anymore.* (Jack)

The availability of materials online means that Services reconsider how to stock their information spaces or change the use of their information space or change the role of the staff. Some careers staff commented on the effect the move to electronic resources and digital media is having on their own approaches to their work. These changes have encouraged changes to the activity and direction of some roles. A Careers Adviser comments:

> *I have to remind myself we are here for students and we need to provide what suits them and just because I happen to like going into that area and sitting with files it doesn't mean it's the right thing to do.* (Emily)

In a larger Service, and one that is well resourced and staffed, a full team of information support is in place and this leads to a clear demarcation between the roles of information and guidance, whereas in other Services these roles have sometimes blurred. Perpetuating the use of a large information room allows the traditional areas of careers advice work to continue to flourish and keeps a clear line between the role of information on one side and guidance on the other. But it seems it is only in larger, traditional Services with long established teams that this demarcation has been sustainable. One of the Advisers from such a Service described the relationship between the work of Adviser and Information Officer:

> *I think some of the sweetest times I've ever seen is when there's been that wonderful connection between a student, an Adviser and then moving on to the Information team, and if I was a student I'd think this was fantastic. I've had a dedicated service in an Adviser who can then also show me Information resources with an Information team who are ready to take me on. So there are some very sweet movements through when Advisers and Information people are working very well together.* (Olivia)

It is clear from this Adviser that the different roles within the Service are clearly delineated and to an extent this demarcation has existed for some time and looks set to continue with the size and scope of this Service allowing this traditional model to continue. In one smaller Service in which I have worked previously, in a new university, the information role was established in 1986 and only 20 years later the post had disappeared. It might be questioned whether there is scope for the professional development of the Information Officer and an observation that within university Careers Services at least, development is restricted. It has certainly meant that the activity of the role is shifting, with the impact of web and digital developments influencing this role as much as any. As a Careers Adviser suggests:

> *We've always had a big Information team and there's been a lot of changes but it's usually been a pretty good team. Managing a lot of information but researching a lot and writing a lot.* (Olivia)

Another Adviser agrees that the information role is changing.

> *Undoubtedly the role is shifting and they are doing (lots of other things) as well as the paper side and it's bound to continue, it's bound to. And I think slowly the paper side will continue to fall away until maybe at some time someone's going to say, 'Hey there isn't anything left, we might as well do away with it'. I would hope that's not for some time because you want people coming in and knowing about the place and there's still so much to offer but also at the end of an interview I would probably be spending more time online with somebody rather than showing them paper things.* (Jack)

In the traditional Service, the Adviser seems content that the differentiation exists and this allows a clear demarcation between the role of Careers Adviser and Information Officer. An Adviser comments:

> *I can't imagine having to know everything about everything, I think I've got enough problems with what I need to know to be a Careers Adviser and to deal with what I'm dealing with and then to think I'd have to know about the ins and outs of employers and the ins and outs of information retrieval! I like this system because I know it but I also think it's an effective system so I'd be very sorry to see that change.* (Olivia)

It was apparent through the interviews that the Advisers based in the traditional university, by and large, seemed content within their roles whereas anxiety and a feeling of persecution were sometimes the theme of those from smaller, less resourced Services. In some Services the information role was lost and for others the role was maintained but changed.

Information Space

In the larger Services the information role continues although the activity of that role has changed from that of a traditional librarian to one that demands a full range of competencies around digital and electronic devices, including an ability to write for the web and manage and develop online resources. Similar to the changes that took place in libraries, Information Officers needed to continuously learn and develop to respond to the increase in the amount of information, and the wider range of information resources, and constantly evolving software and hardware using a predominantly digital interface. In smaller Services, the information role has sometimes been squeezed out, with some seeing the role as no longer required. If there is scarce resource, both physical and human, it seems the physical entity of the information room and the role of the Information Officer are areas at particular risk, at least as distinct roles within a university Careers Service. Frequently the activity falls to an Adviser who takes on responsibility for digital development as part of his or her wider role.

Increasingly Careers Advisers see the web as the place to manage the information resources.

> *We had a look at our information room and over the last 4 years it looks as if a plague of locusts has come in...We were getting less and less from employers to display, we were getting less and less requests from students for books or paper copies or whatever and the amount of resources and time and effort to keep that updated was not proportionate to the usefulness of it. We actually went in and had a look at it a couple of months ago and we just made the decision then that we were pretty much going to put almost all of our information resources online now*. (Lewis)

Lewis and other Careers Advisers' comments on the 'information room' and Careers 'space' and its importance reminds me of Palmer's (2007) paradoxical learning space: a

physical space but also a safe space to nurture critical and personal development. One Careers Adviser suggested:

> *We all want to see a kind of space that would be a Careers space , it's not going to be covered in magazines and books, I mean that's not going to happen, but it would be nice if it was filled with interview rooms or meeting space. That's really what we are looking for. Some kind of physical presence is important*. (Sophie)

This theme of valuing the space, over and above its primary purpose as an information resource was echoed by another Careers Adviser:

> *We need a focal point, yeah, we need a hub that people can come to and know where we are. I don't think just having some virtual name somewhere, because people still need to come and talk to you*. (Lewis)

Another Adviser picked up on the importance of the information centre in promoting the activity of the Service.

> *Not having any information space ... it makes us less visible. They've got (another Adviser) doing all this work to the student portal but yesterday I did (a colleague's) drop in, I saw four students, they had no idea about all the stuff that's on the portal. So how are the students going to find out what's on offer? We keep trying to plug it but if you don't have the information centre, which is there, it's physical, it was hard enough getting the students to realise they had a Careers Service, and now there's nothing there and they're not picking up that there's lots of information on the website*. (Isla)

This sentiment was reiterated by another Careers Adviser from a smaller Service who commented:

> *I think for a long time having that area and using that area, and as an Adviser I used to find it very useful to have hard copies, made us more visible, people could see us moving around, people knew the Careers Adviser and the careers resource area. Now you're sitting behind a computer all the time, you're doing just as much work, in fact you're maybe being even more effective but people don't associate you with anything in particular or know how much you're*

> *doing so I personally still like and would fight to maintain that area even if we use it in slightly a different way.* (Emily)

The move to online resources is seen as a response to the environment where students want or expect to access information 24/7 and employers no longer supply information about themselves in hard copy. When I started university careers work in 1990, a separate room was required to house the application forms and brochures supplied by graduate recruiters. Now this is provided online and students complete electronic application forms. The move to digital resources is also a response to the changing student body. One university in particular saw that it was not going to continue to attract international students, partly, the Careers Adviser felt, due to the changes in fee structures and the government decision to withdraw the Post Study Work visa, making study in the UK less attractive. Instead, the university wanted to re-brand itself as a global university and the response from the Careers Service was to ensure that information provision was available to all, rather than just the local market of those in or around the area. One of the Advisers comments that the Careers Service strives to:

> *… make sure information is easily available to our (name) campus and all our approved learning centres, anywhere from (name) to (name). We need to keep that global head on.* (Lewis)

Giroux (2009) comments that development of academic online and technological provision:

> … offers universities big opportunities to cut back on maintenance expenses, eliminate entire buildings such as libraries and classroom facilities and trim labour costs (Giroux, 2009b: 684).

In the Careers Service the traditional model, made up of education, information and guidance, seems to be breaking up somewhat and the reason for that is explained to some extent by the reduction, change or removal of the information role or facility. This brings questions about careers work into focus. Across Scotland different models are in existence. Some universities maintain a model of discrete activity of education, information and guidance and one of the Advisers describes the process that his university went through to maintain this role. The Service was moving location and this presented an opportunity to examine the key priorities and look at restructuring the Service. The option proposed was to maintain an information space but to have bookable interview spaces with the Advisers occupying open shared space rather than individual offices. The Adviser comments:

> *Here the (people in the Service) nearly lost their own offices, you know we're*
> *moving ... and the layout was going to be open plan with a lot of individual*
> *offices but I pointed out there was nearly as many offices as there were*
> *Advisers because at certain times of the year nearly all Advisers would be*
> *interviewing so you need space for an interview and space for a desk. What is*
> *the point? It's inefficient. I said, why, can you ask why, is it just a matter of*
> *principle, a matter of making sure people don't think they're too important,*
> *which I think is very often the case. And eventually the battle was won and they*
> *are getting their own rooms in there. The counsellors and disability people*
> *were keeping their own rooms and it was a question of convincing people that*
> *for Careers, confidentiality is equally as important, emotions can be equally*
> *raw, when it comes to careers work.* (Jack)

This Adviser's observation about '*making sure people don't think they are too important*' reminds me of Giroux's (2009b) comments on the corporate university and its attempts to deskill and disempower its educationalists. Furthermore, the remark of '*emotions can be just as raw*' harks back to Nussbaum's (2011:33) Emotions Capability and reminds me that the Careers Adviser's activity is in place to 'support forms of human association' and, on this occasion, in this Service, that activity was supported. In making this conscious choice this Service is acknowledging the importance of the guidance process for its Careers Service. In addition, the university is recognising the value of the careers activity and is prepared to allow it space and resource to continue that activity. This contrasts with other Services which need to 'fight' to keep their space (and even in Jack's university above it was a '*battle*') or lose that fight and have no space. Many Careers staff do seem to see the reduction of their physical space as a backwards step. Perhaps some Services are constrained by traditional models of careers delivery. Rather than having the confidence to forge a new style of Service some of these smaller Careers Services might compare themselves against the traditional model, as the accepted and established standard, and find themselves lacking. Yet the strong message coming through from each Adviser was the importance not only of developing the Service through modern methods of online and web delivery but also maintaining some sort of presence or nucleus for students. A Careers Adviser at one of the modern universities, echoing the 'fighting' metaphor, suggested the Careers Service was under threat and in danger of losing the presence it had so far maintained.

> *There's rumours that a Bank will go in our space, Santander, so unless we really fight and be seen to be using it but if we're just seen pulling down files from shelves that might not do us a lot of good. So there's a fight for space.* (Emily)

There was even the fear that if the web resources continued to be developed it would discourage students from making their way to the Careers Service and thus further obliterate the reach of the Careers Service.

> *There's a lot of information we could put on our website but we have to be selective. Because if we put a lot up there they're not going to come and speak to us. At the moment we're struggling to get them to come to speak to us; if we put everything out there in the public domain then that's going to make things increasingly difficult*. (Sophie)

In sum, looking at Careers Service activity today reveals a marked increase in the use not just of web resources and online activity but, increasingly, the use of social media. The quick updates[31], two lines provided by each Careers Service, for the Scotland Biennial AGCAS Conference of 2012 reveals that more than half of these mention social media developments, from LinkedIn, to Twitter and Facebook to online forums. Edinburgh University recently ran a training day for its career staff covering developments in social media, Blackboard Collaborate[32] (a 'comprehensive online learning and collaboration platform designed specifically for education') writing blogs, Pebble Pad, Google analytics and the development of the Careers Service Wiki. Across Careers Services, activity shows an increased emphasis on exploring new delivery methods and particularly exploiting electronic, digital and social media platforms. Much of this activity relates to the changing Careers Information role and the changes brought about by what might be described as the impact agenda.

Impact Agenda
At the AGCAS Scotland Biennial conference in June 2012 Ann-Marie Martin, then president of AGCAS and Director of the University of London Careers Service, gave a presentation on what she called the 'impact agenda'. She commented on the need to give

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[31] Quick Updates on Service activity for the AGCAS Scotland Biennial Conference 2012. See: http://www.agcasscotland.org.uk/resources/biennial/Biennialprogrammedesktop.pdf
[32] More information on Blackboard Collaborate can be seen on the website.
See: http://www.blackboard.com/cmspages/getfile.aspx?guid=aa3e60c1-fe90-45d4-92d5-dfcfdb023235

evidence of the return on investment in the university experience. She referenced this particularly on the need to provide evidence to the funders of Higher Education that targets were being reached, and suggested that funding may be reduced or restricted if this were not the case. In Scotland, with universities funded through the Scottish Funding Council, targets take the form of outcome agreements on areas such as wider access and retention, university and industry collaboration, equality and diversity and, of particular relevance to Careers Services, the 'entrepreneurial and employability skills of graduates' (Universities Scotland, 2012:4). Anne-Marie Martin went on to explore the Impact Measurement Survey carried out by AGCAS through its Impact Measurement and Positioning Task Group set up in 2010. Its aim was to take forward a number of key issues and challenges facing HE and university Careers Services in the context of rapid change, restructuring and demands to show value for money. Martin (2012) is critical of the responses, mainly from Heads of Careers Services from 47 HE institutions which indicate that most Heads viewed institutional management not as their primary stakeholder (only 7% indicated this) but as the fifth and last stakeholder of importance (45%). Martin (2012) goes on to suggest that Information Officers engage much more readily with technology exploring the use of Facebook, twitter, tagged searches, and electronic delivery of services and she proposed that mixed media is required. She contrasted this with 'Careers Consultants, who like paper and words' (Martin, 2012: 25). She added: 'Manage the demise of paper rather than have it thrust upon you' and argued against what she calls 'fortress guidance' (Martin; 2012:25). Overall, the thrust of the argument was that many Services were complacent about their delivery and had a misguided sense of their reach within their own institutions. Some of Martin's comments chime with other criticisms of Careers Services and one can only guess at the reaction in the conference room amongst some careers staff already feeling beleaguered and besieged within their own institutions. It might be supposed that the Careers practitioners, and particularly the Advisers, here did not experience a sense of well-being and personal fulfilment in their work roles when castigated by the president of their professional association.

The developments that have taken place in information provision within Careers Services, as with provision in other services, has been rapid and continue apace. For some Services it has meant a reduction in the space made available for the Careers Service and a feeling that the presence and reach of the Service has been diluted. For others, it has meant a change of role for other staff within the Service, with an expansion of skills to include managing digital technology. For some others it has resulted in a reduction of staff with

information roles being completely removed in some places. As developments continue, the role information provision plays will continue to change and develop. As education and information activity continue to influence the future development of Careers Services I turn my attention to the final part of the triad that makes up the traditional work of the Careers Adviser: careers guidance.

Careers Guidance

Careers guidance, is conventionally seen as the bastion of careers work, flanked by education and information. The related professional qualification delivered through University of Warwick and the professional body AGCAS, covering Masters, Diploma and Certificate level programmes also focuses on these three key areas awarding qualifications at each level in Career Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education. Guidance is perhaps seen as the capstone and the main purpose of guidance is seen as enabling individuals to work out what is important to them and what they plan to do, thereby relating to Sen (1990) and Nussbaum's (2011) doing and being, their capabilities.

Outwith Higher Education rapid changes have been taking place in Careers work with a new Career Development Institute being formed (as noted in Chapter Three) from the merger of four different professional bodies: the National Association for educational guidance for adults (NAEGA), the Association for Careers Education and Guidance (ACEG), the Association of Career Professionals International (ACPi-UK) and the Institute of Career Guidance (ICG). With this merger it is possible to identify the broadening out of the work of careers with less focus on 'guidance' and instead a catch all definition under the heading of 'What is career development'.

> Activities and services may be delivered in schools, universities, colleges, training organisations, public employment services, the workplace, community or voluntary sector and the private sector. They may be provided on an individual or group basis and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help-lines and web-based services). They include the provision of information, ideas, tools and resources (verbal, printed, web-based or other forms), administration of assessment and self-assessment tools, career guidance interviews, career education programmes, career coaching, taster programmes, work search programmes, outplacement, redundancy and transition services, retention and talent management reviews, career progression or promotion, training, or other forms of career development-related consultancy, research and professional development (Career Development Institute, 2013).

In the realm of university Careers Services guidance could refer to a range of different activities, some of which are mentioned above. When contrasted with education and information, guidance would more usually refer to the extended appointments of up to an

hour that take place between student and Adviser. These are referred to as guidance appointments, long appointments or extended appointments or interviews and they are usually carried out by a qualified Careers Adviser. Shorter appointments variously referred to as short, drop in, duty or standard appointments or interviews are usually up to 20 minutes in length. While frequently delivered by qualified Careers Advisers they can also be delivered by a range of other qualified staff, or sometimes by students interning in the Careers Service or having been trained to carry out specific tasks and activities. A full time Careers Adviser could expect to deliver up to four extended interviews a week and perhaps three or four sessions of standard appointments with up to six interviews of up to 20 minutes taking place in each session. However, as my data indicates, university Careers Advisers might offer a variety of activity and some appear to deliver 'guidance' less frequently or see themselves as moving towards a focus on other aspects of careers work.

The Careers Guidance Interview

The careers interview between student and Adviser is the activity that most will associate with the traditional careers guidance process; indeed often it is thought of as the only activity of the Careers Adviser. Long after memory of any group activity, talks or events might have faded, people will still refer back to 'what their Careers Adviser told them to do' with reference to an interview, meeting or appointment of some sort. The 'Careers Adviser anecdote' is one that frequently appears. For example, 'They had me fill in a questionnaire and the results were conclusive- I was born to be a dental hygienist' says actress Daniela Nardini[33] (BBC News Magazine, 2009). There was some evidence from the Advisers involved in this research that the careers interview was what was sought by students.

> *It's still what the student asks about most, you know students are told about the other things. They come in and if they ask for that, they'll be told about the options, if they're not aware that there's the drop in sessions but if they say, no, I think I'd like a full interview then that's what they get.* (Jack)

  Whether students want an interview because they associate it with the careers process, because it is what Careers Services promote, or because it is an experience they value, is not clear. Careers Advisers might deliver a talk on 'options after your degree' but this then results in a stream of students returning for a one-to-one appointment to see the Careers

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[33] Actress Daniela Nardini was quoted in an article by journalist Finlo Rohrer in the BBC News Magazine. See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8176124.stm

Adviser about their options. As the one-to-one activity is still considered an important, and possibly the most important, feature of a Careers Service it seems surprising that there is a little research, certainly from a British perspective, carried out on careers interviews, the process, or the counselling theories they may be based on.

As noted in Chapter Two, all of the Careers Advisers interviewed for this study had undertaken a Diploma in Careers Guidance, the professional qualification related to this area of work (now called the Qualification in Career Guidance and Development in Scotland). The majority of Advisers in this study completed this qualification in the 1990s with one Adviser completing it later and two completing it prior to 1990. This qualification is not tailored for university Careers advice work, instead it has primarily been the route taken for those embarking on school level careers guidance. However, as the key qualification in the field, it is still seen as the recognised professional qualification for work within Careers Services in universities with many university Advisers having spent some time working in local authorities or Careers companies before moving into the tertiary sector. In the 1990s, provision of progressive levels of specialised education, via initially, the University of Reading and subsequently the University of Warwick for Higher Education Careers Advisers in the UK and Ireland was developed, as previously mentioned in Chapter Three. Undertaking these programmes is not mandatory and is available only to those already working in HE Careers Services.

The Careers Advisers contributing to this research and undertaking their Diploma courses in the 1990s and earlier would find the key models given as a framework for guidance interviews to be Rodger's seven point plan (Rodger, 1952) along with Law and Watts' DOTS model and some reference to a person-centred approach. I will explore each of these below.

Rodger's Model

Rodger's (1968) model of guidance, seen as 'talent matching' emphasised diagnosis and assessment with the Adviser then making suggestions and recommendations based on her findings. Rodger himself describes it as a 'simple but scientifically-defensible assessment system' to be used when 'summing up the employment potentialities of other people' considering the 'suitability of someone for a certain vacancy' or giving somebody 'advice about his (sic) career' (Rodger, 1968: 359).This model is now dis-credited because it is so directive, with the Adviser seen as the 'expert' and authority and it would not sit well with Giroux (1991) and Sen's (1999) emphasis on agency, and Nussbaum's (2011) stress on

autonomy. Careers guidance work has moved increasingly to a model allowing the client to take responsibility for the process and decision-making. Rodger's model with seven headings and associated questions, which form the basis of the so-called 'seven point plan', act as a framework for the interview process and now sound as if from another era, as shown below:

> Physical make up. Has he any defects of health or physique that may be of occupational importance? How agreeable are his appearance, his bearing and his speech?

> Attainments. What type of education has he had? How well has he done educationally? What occupational training and experience has he had already? How well has he done occupationally?

> General intelligence. How much general intelligence can he display? How much general intelligence does he ordinarily display?

> Special aptitudes. Has he any marked mechanical aptitude, manual dexterity, facility in the use of figures, talent for drawing or music?

> Interests. To what extent are his interests intellectual? Practical? Constructional? Physically active? Social? Artistic?

> Disposition. How acceptable does he make himself to other people? Does he influence others? Is he steady and dependable? Is he self-reliant?

> Circumstances. What are his domestic circumstances? What do the other members of the family do for a living? Are there any special openings available for him? (Rodger, 1968: 364).

Kidd (1996) suggests that there are four major orientations and approaches to careers interviewing: person-environment fit, as demonstrated above through Rodger's seven point plan; developmental; person-centred and goal directed. Developmental theories have emphasised the particular developmental stages and tasks involved in the process of moving towards career maturity and followed Super (1957, 1980), in particular with regard to his life cycle model, suggesting that career decision making is heavily influenced by the stage of life of the individual. The DOTS concept as outlined below is one that has stood the test of time and is still referred to by guidance practitioners.

Models of Guidance

A particular developmental application is the DOTS model (Law and Watts, 1977) which examines four areas of the individual to lead towards careers decision making : Self-awareness ('who am I?'), Opportunity awareness ('where am I?'), Decision learning ('what will I do?') and Transition learning ('how will I cope?'). This model might be seen as the one traditionally used in university careers guidance overlaid with a person-centred

orientation. The person centred approach was introduced by Rogers (1951) in a counselling context and developed for careers work by Patterson (1964). It stresses the quality of the client/counsellor relationship and the need for the client to take 'ownership' of the process and to be empowered rather than directed by the Adviser. Increasingly, guidance interviews were expected to be 'goal directed' (Kidd et al., 1997; Gothard, 1999) as evidenced by models put forward by Culley (1991), Egan (1994) and Ali and Graham (1996). Ali and Graham might be seen to be the most influential on university careers guidance work, and particularly careers guidance work in Scotland, written as it was by two practising Careers Advisers and Directors of Careers Services from Edinburgh and Strathclyde Universities respectively. A key feature of goal directed guidance is the use of 'contracting' in which a contract, plan or agreement is drawn up between Adviser and student. Ali and Graham (1996) describe this as a four stage model of career counselling: clarifying, exploring, evaluating, and action planning. The tasks of the exploring stage are building the contract, exploring the issues within the contract, encouraging the student to explore other options and re-examining the contract. Thus writes Gothard (1999: 221) 'the contract is of central importance in the exploratory phase of the interview'. More recently, Kumar's (2007) SOAR (Self, Opportunity, Aspirations, Results) model, while still based on the original DOTS model also embraces more recent developments in careers thinking. It moves away from guidance seen as an activity developed through the framework of an interview and towards a broader process that encourages the embedding of employability related skills across the institutional curriculum. It is less a model for the careers interview but more an approach exploring personal development and critical thinking. Accordingly, underlining the importance of well being and personal fulfilment, it has the potential to fulfil those premises of Nussbaum's (2011) CA.

With reference to the move away from the guidance interview, in 1999 Gothard could state:

> The Careers interview, a structured discussion between a Careers counsellor and a client lasting between 30 minutes and an hour, still remains the focal point of Careers guidance in the UK (Gothard, 1999: 217).

By 2006 this had changed to become:

> Certainly the nature of Careers Services' core work has changed dramatically. In many institutions, individual and group guidance is now increasingly based on short interventions and group activities rather than long guidance interviews (Watts, 2006:24).

This shift from the careers interview encapsulating the guidance process to an emphasis on careers education is commented on by the Careers Advisers in this study. Sometimes it was not seen as a shift at all but rather that 'guidance', and the guidance interview based on a model of guidance were just not seen as being the important focus for some Advisers.

> *I don't know if anyone here adheres to any particular model; we've all developed our own techniques and our own models and it's just not that important, we don't use it that much.* (Lewis)

It was again evident that the type of institution in which the Adviser found herself or himself might strongly influence the type of activity undertaken. For some universities, heavily tiered with different functions carried out by designated layers of the team, it is likely that guidance continues to be delivered in some form of the traditional, one-to-one, extended guidance interview. Many students graduating from non-vocational degrees, often in a university which delivers less 'applied' learning may need support and guidance to help them decide on their vocational route. By contrast, students, perhaps those on more vocational programmes and perhaps those at newer universities with a focus on the needs of industry may have already, to some extent at least, made some vocational career decisions. Yet it seems it is not simply that for some institutions there is less need for this aspect of guidance. A number of Advisers commented on the change that has taken place in their work.

> *When I started ... as an Adviser the majority of my work was one-to-one guidance and probably, quite imperceptibly over the last 20 years we've moved ... towards careers education.* (Olivia)

> *It's certainly not what I envisaged myself doing when I became a Careers Adviser because I thought then that most of the work would probably be one-to- one careers guidance, almost in a pastoral sense, whereas this is really quite different.* (Emily)

In both newer and traditional universities the Services' focus on Nussbaum's (2011: 33) key Capability of 'Practical Reason', which she describes as 'to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' was certainly acknowledged. An Adviser comments:

> *It's about recognising that part of a university's purpose is to help prepare*
> *their graduates for when they leave university. And it's not just about looking*
> *after them when they're at university it's helping to take them from there to the*
> *next stage of their life.* (Olivia)

Another Adviser also refers to the importance of the Careers Service being a place to develop critical reflection by commenting:

> *It's all about providing information and advice and maybe start challenging*
> *them to self analyse and look at skills, qualities and values.* (Sophie)

An Adviser based in a traditional university acknowledges that one-to-one guidance was still an aspect of the work which a Careers Adviser was '*lucky*' to enact, conveying the sense that this was an activity perhaps under threat and that other, less 'lucky' individuals, had to do without.

> *We still have one-to-one guidance, probably not many universities have one-to-*
> *one guidance in the way (name of institution) has, we've been lucky that we've*
> *been able to continue that.* (Olivia)

The Careers Service, and the guidance process is one place in which students might develop their capability to critically reflect and plan their futures and make informed, critical and reflective choices about their options as described by Nussbaum's (2011:33) Capability of 'Practical Reason'. There is a sense from some of the Advisers that this type of guidance is at risk, that the educational environment, or senior management's reaction to the environment has encouraged a reduction of this activity and a subsequent increase in other related guidance work or an increase in education related work.

In discussion about guidance, comment is frequently made about it being costly and whether it can be deemed as cost effective as an intervention, in terms of learning outcomes (Kidd, 1996; Oliver and Spokane, 1988; Gothard, 1999). Often these debates focus on the costs of career guidance in the context of the expansion of Higher Education leading to the diversification of the student body and the emphasis on the needs of the labour market (see for example, OECD, 1997, 1998b; Grubb, 2003). A number of Careers Advisers in this study saw the pull away from guidance and towards other activity as being cost- driven and the comment below extends the image of guidance as being an activity that needs to be protected from management determined to reduce it.

> *Senior management don't want it. Drop in is all we're allowed. We don't do*
> *one-to-one guidance. We're actively discouraged from having appointments.*
> *They'll tolerate the drop in for just now. The students can't get at us. Anything*
> *they want they have to go through (a gatekeeper), they don't have our phone*
> *numbers, can't find us. We're not allowed to make appointments with students.*
> *They don't want us to do interviews; they see it as not cost efficient.* (Isla)

This starkly reveals a culture, understood by this Careers Adviser, in terms of a controlling senior management team only '*allowing*' certain activity if it is cost efficient. The Adviser is '*discouraged*' from meeting students on a one-to-one basis with only shorter interactions through the 'drop in' facility '*tolerated*'. As Nussbaum has claimed:

> Under pressure to cut costs, we prune away just those parts of the educational
> endeavor that are crucial to preserving a healthy society (Nussbaum,
> 2010:142).

Another Careers Adviser at the same institution viewed it slightly differently, while agreeing that the focus was moving towards 'other things' and it was made deliberately hard for students to access the extended one-to-one support.

> *I wouldn't say there's less one-to-one but it's less obvious how you get it. It's*
> *very difficult for students to book an appointment, for example. It's been made*
> *deliberately difficult for them to do that, so that we focus on other things.*
> (James)

This Adviser spoke of managerial influence ensuring that it was '*deliberately difficult*' for students to access Careers Advisers to deliver guidance in this format. He commented that his manager describing guidance as the pinnacle of the service provision and stating:

> H*e said one-to-one was too expensive. It's cost driven. He says, I'm not saying*
> *you can't do guidance but that's the Rolls Royce Service, you can't give that to*
> *everyone, we haven't got the resource.* (James)

James' manager here seems to be suggesting that guidance, previously conceived as the central tenet of careers work, must align itself to 'market values' (Giroux, 2009b: 670) and a cost-benefit analysis. This Careers Adviser also suggested that a consequence of carrying out less one-to-one guidance was that shifting the emphasis of work to information and advice had resulted in a dilution of the specialism and a removal of the expertise of the Adviser.

Chapter 4: Careers Work: Education, Information and Guidance

> *In the Graduates Attributes hierarchy we'd be seen as lower level or less*
> *skilled than the more reflective stuff, even though the more reflective stuff is*
> *what we've always done.* (James)

This Adviser again shows that Nussbaum's (2011:34) Capability of 'Practical Reason', supporting students to navigate their studies, work and life, is restricted. This may have implications for the professionalism of the Careers Adviser. Remove the expert activity of 'guidance' and the role may become inter-changeable with other support provided through other university support services. Identifiable in these comments is a difference in the perception and interpretation of the changes that have occurred. Advisers from all universities saw their work changing and a move towards more careers education and School or College based work. In the traditional university this was seen as a natural change and perhaps as a result of the expansion of Higher Education and the need to address larger numbers. Advisers at one new university saw it as something that was imposed by others, a deliberate effort to change the way work was carried out, with the hint that it could also be a deliberate attempt to de-professionalise the work of the Adviser. Management structure seems to be fundamental to decisions about what work is undertaken, who does it and how. In the traditional university it is usual that the Service stands alone and is independent from other units and departments in the university. It therefore has its own mission and objectives and its steer is from its own director who might report to a senior figure, usually an assistant principal. At one of the universities in the study, for example, the Director of the Careers Service also has responsibility for Counselling, Disability and Chaplaincy and reports directly to the Assistant Principal with responsibility for Student and Academic Services. In contrast, one of the other universities' Careers Service has, from 1990 to 2009, been aligned with student services, then marketing and communications, and been part of a new department encapsulating careers, enterprise, and development. It then made a return to student services, and subsequently became part of a unit along with another externally funded programme. The remit of this unit was to develop Employability skills in students and the Careers Service currently now exists as a unit aligned with six other areas of student support reporting to a Director, who reports to a Senior Director who reports to a Vice Principal. As it underwent these various re-structures it moved physical location no fewer than six times. As a small Careers team it is not difficult to see that its voice might get lost in the cacophony of those clamouring for resource and influence. This Careers Service sits with three Advisers, a Head and a project officer (although at time of conducting research external funding has been secured for

additional short term posts) while the largest university Careers Service in Scotland has a staff, at the time of writing, of 44. Obviously a larger Careers Service can expect a larger student body too. The largest Careers Service in Scotland has double the number of students of one of the Careers Services described here but it also has far more than double the number of Careers staff. The reach of the larger Service is therefore far greater than that of the smaller and its ability to identify a sense of purpose, develop services and seek out new growth is likely to also be far greater than that of a smaller Service, preoccupied as that might be with survival and defending the right to exist. An Adviser describes the experience at the traditional university:

> *On the whole there hasn't been that pressure that we've seen elsewhere and I think partly of course it's because the people in charge have been powerful and certainly the last two Heads of Service had a greater pan role with Student Services so they're reasonably powerful figures and the people above them do listen.* (Jack)

Increasingly, as all Services move away from the extended guidance interview as the significant focus of Careers Service activity, other areas of work increase and sometimes that seems to be education work.

> *I think we've also moved to careers education.* (Olivia)

> *Generally speaking we are trying to get the message across in groups, and do more teaching.* (Emily)

But there is also an increase in the number of short appointments offered. An Adviser comments:

> *I don't know how long the short interventions have been going on, I suspect not for ever but that is the only significant change I can think of, bringing in the duty or short allocations, I think is probably quite a new thing.* (Jack)

New or not, it seems that 'drop in' 'duty' or 'short' appointments are here to stay.

> *It seems like the most sacrosanct thing, if you've got to drop anything the last thing you would ever drop is duty. It's just like closing Accident and Emergency in a hospital, you just would never do it.* (Olivia)

These appointments constitute 'guidance' too, but a different form of guidance. Harry comments:

> *It's not guidance – it might be advice but it's not guidance in the same sort of way. It's really about the practical steps of what they want to do.* (Harry)

And it seems a distinction has developed between the two sorts or levels of guidance; one being what happens in the traditional 'careers guidance interview' and the other, more aligned to what occurs under 'advice'. The latter might be the mainstay for a new university and may be the direction in which senior managers are leading some university Careers Services, in order to soak up the demand from the expanded student body. Following the recommendations of the Harris Report, the review of Careers Services in 2001, and close collaboration with the then DfES and Guidance Council, AGCAS adopted the matrix Standard as the preferred framework for continuous quality improvement. The matrix Standard[34], owned by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, is a UK Government accredited, quality framework 'for organisations to assess and measure their information, advice and/or guidance services'. 'Advice' then is seen to be as relevant to today's students as 'guidance', if not more so. The term advice might be more akin to the growth of guidance in the form of coaching that I first discussed in Chapter Three and I will turn now to explore this activity.

Coaching
In Chapter Three, exploring the effect of the neo-liberal environment on careers practice, interesting comment came through from an Adviser in one of the newer universities when he commented on the way he delivered guidance:

> *It's almost like a, I don't know, it's not a lifestyle coach but it's a.... there's a definite technique to that and I don't think anybody trained us for that in the Dip CG.* (Lewis)

This Adviser has identified a different way of providing guidance which focuses on 'coaching' skills and this thread, identified in the previous chapter, was picked up by another Careers Adviser who suggested that the work was more about helping clients with:

> *… creative jobhunting … career planning in almost a coaching sense…*(Emily)

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[34] The matrix Standard quality standard for organisations. See website:
http://matrixstandard.com/about-the-standard/

Chapter 4: Careers Work: Education, Information and Guidance

Coaching in the context of careers work might refer to a training or development process in which the individual works towards a specific professional or personal goal with the support of the Careers Adviser. Coaching has grown in influence in recent years and spawned activity in areas such as life coaching and wealth coaching. In careers work, debate has sprung up around defining these areas of guidance, coaching, mentoring and skills development with some writers at pains to identify the areas where coaching aligns with and differs from other related areas. The Coaching and Mentoring Network, for example, includes a section on definitions of coaching and then goes on to delineate the differences between coaching and a range of other activity including counselling, consultancy and 'traditional forms of training' (Coaching and Mentoring Network, 2013).

Career Guidance Today, the magazine of the Institute of Career Guidance ran an article on career coaching in its October 2011 issue with the strap line of 'What exactly is it?' reflecting the nebulous nature of the activity. The article claims it attracts 'lovers and sceptics' in equal measure (Yates, 2011a: 17) and that a search of all published academic journals does not reveal work carried out exploring the distinction between guidance and coaching. Exploring overlaps and differences in coaching and guidance, the article identified areas of similarity in various key areas. Careers coaching and careers guidance both focus on issues around career choice and careers management; both have a structure to the interaction within an interview-based consultation and both use a similar range of skills including listening and questioning to develop self-awareness and generate ideas and options. Differences included the training and regulation of the two disciplines and there are differences in theoretical bases as I will explain.

The article was mainly based on the work of Julia Yates, a former Head of Careers Service at the University of the Arts London and now Senior Lecturer at the University of East London. Yates (2011b:147) comments: 'A comprehensive, generally accepted definition of coaching has, as yet, proved elusive' and she goes on to give two definitions:

> The art of creating an environment, through conversation, and a way of being
> that facilitates the process, by which a person can move towards desired goals
> in a fulfilling manner (Gallwey, 2002:47)

Followed by:

> Coaches bring the advantage of insight, information, and planned action to the
> pursuit of goals such as: choosing goals, moving up in a profession, moving
> out by choice, finding work after job loss, and planning for the end of paid
> work and the beginning of a period of generativity (Cox et al. 2010: 311).

Yet these definitions could as easily be applied to guidance and do not seem to capture the difference that coaching seems to represent for some of the Careers Advisers interviewed.

A fundamental difference between guidance and coaching seems to be location, with guidance in the public sector and free at the point of delivery, and coaching in the private sector, charging a fee for services. In the local authority context many Careers Services in England now no longer exist with schools taking over the duty to provided independent careers advice from 2012, brought about by the Education Act, 2011. It could be predicted that the private sector will continue to flourish with some clients or perhaps parents of clients at least, prepared to pay significantly in order to receive the services of a professional career coach in order to ensure that the client secures, say, access to elite universities. Certainly, we can identify a continuing growth of careers coaching across sectors including universities and through human resource services in private and public bodies (CIPD, 2014).

Yates discusses key differences between guidance and coaching with respect to training, theoretical backgrounds and processes. Some of the Advisers in this study, all educated in the traditional guidance programmes, seem to concur that what they are doing now is sometimes less 'guidance' and more 'coaching' with an understanding that the process undertaken is different between these two fields. For example I reported that Lewis, one of the Advisers in the study suggested that he did not use '*heavy models of guidance*' but that his role was about '*training people*, *coaching people*'. Yates (2011b) states:

> Different provenances have lead to the different professional groups adopting and developing tools and techniques from different disciplines and theoretical schools (Yates, 2011b: 158).

Coaching tends towards a reliance on cognitive-behavioural therapy or neuro-linguistic programming; some aspects of guidance may also make use of these techniques but it is Yates' (2011b) work on the perceptions of guidance and counselling that is most interesting and perhaps our Advisers share some of her perceptions. Her study compared students' perceptions of careers guidance with career coaching. While the study is small (60 students and recent graduates) and unpublished it has produced some interesting results. Clients expected an Adviser to take more responsibility for solving problems compared with a coach and participants believed that a session with a careers coach would be more useful than one with a Careers Adviser. With regard to expectations, the clients not only expected the Adviser to take greater responsibility for solving problems and coming up with ideas but with the coach they felt the onus lay with themselves, or at least

was regarded as a collaborative process between themselves and the coach. They expected a Careers Adviser to have more occupational knowledge than a careers coach. Despite this, they felt a session with a coach would be more useful (56% thought this would be 'very useful') compared to the value of a session with a Careers Adviser (38% thought this would be 'very useful'). This could mean, then, that this group of students found high occupational knowledge less useful and valued more highly the process that allowed themselves to solve their own problems and ideas, reflecting the state of 'career' and the requirement for lifelong learning that I explored in Chapter Three. What these students seemed to value was the practitioner acting as the facilitator or enabler which is perhaps what the Careers Adviser was straining for when he described the work he undertook as:

> *… self-marketing techniques … helping people, coaching people, training*
> *people to be effective self presenters* through using a *definite technique.*
> (Lewis)

Such considerations have also been debated in the professional arenas of AGCAS with an established email discussion list (AGCAS- coaching') and blogs such as that of The Careers Group at the University of London: ' Careers- in Theory' blogging on 'guidance v coaching'[35]. Some of the discussion suggests coaching is simply a fad and what happens under guidance has simply been renamed as coaching. There is no doubt that there is plenty of overlap between coaching and guidance. Bachkirova and Cox (2005:1) maintain that many practitioners from other disciplines, such as guidance, believe that 'coaching is just a different brand name for what they have been doing for quite a long time'.

Yates (2011b) suggests:

> In the current climate, the effectiveness of our interventions are under great scrutiny and it is not to overstate the situation to suggest that if we fail to impress, our whole profession is at risk. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that career coaching techniques work, so adopting some of these ideas into our professional toolkit is likely to benefit our clients and our professional reputation (Yates, 2011b: 156).

Yates (2011b: 154) comments on other perceptions, perhaps the most interesting of which is the alignment of coaching with 'success' and guidance with supporting the vulnerable. She comments that, as many Careers Services are based or aligned with student services,

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[35] University of London Careers Group, 'Career – in theory' blog: Guidance v coaching.
See: https://careersintheory.wordpress.com/?s=guidance+v+coaching

this idea of 'healing the sick' is perhaps reinforced. This argument goes right back to the purpose of Careers Services and whether they are aligned with support functions or with marketing and other business related functions as first raised in Chapter One. As demonstrated, Careers Services' roles have increasingly been seen as supporting Employability and 'In some institutions it isn't Employability but employment outcomes that are driving the agenda' (Martin, 2012). Accordingly, the focus on counselling and guidance becomes less important, and the skills development that replaces guidance work and supports the drive to help students secure graduate level work takes precedence. Perhaps by calling the work coaching it allows Careers Advisers to continue to give support and guidance under a more acceptable term, in the world of Employability, buzzwords and managerial discourse-speak. It might give space for subverting the neo-liberal agenda.

I have shown in this study that all the Careers Services engage with 'coaching' type of activity in some form or other. Sometimes the Advisers indicate this is what they are doing as 'guidance', and sometimes shorter sessions (drop in, short appointments) appear to be coaching sessions in all but name. In some UK Careers Services, this has developed into an actual job role, distinct from the Careers Adviser. The University of Sunderland's Careers Service for example, identified:

> … a gap linked to the need for specific interview coaching, preparation for
> graduate selection processes and, most importantly, opportunities for students
> to increase their self-confidence and self-promotion/marketing techniques
> (AGCAS, 2012).

Anne Burlinson, Head of Careers and Employability at Sunderland is quoted as commenting:

> We have now established a full-time, core careers coach post, which
> supplements and further develops our range of provision and works
> collaboratively with Careers Advisers, work experience staff, employers and,
> increasingly, faculty staff providing practical, customised, up-to-date interview
> coaching support for students (AGCAS, 2012).

Burlinson (2012) is still at pains to point out that the Careers Adviser's role continues, that the coach only 'supplements' the other activity undertaken. UK Careers Services still, in the main, suggest they provide guidance services but there is a sense that this is shifting as demonstrated by the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC)

running a debate in 2009 entitled 'Past its Sell-By Date? Career guidance for the 21st Century'[36].

It seems evident through comment from the Advisers in this study that careers guidance is certainly undergoing some transformation with a shift towards shorter interactions and a departure from conventional guidance work. As student numbers have increased but career staffing has remained static (or in some places declined), Careers Services have looked to other ways of delivering guidance spawning a growth in shorter interactions, and an increasing dependence on online support and self-help. The increasing 'corporatization of higher education' (Giroux, 2015: 106) and an environment in which students are seen as 'institutional performance indicators - to be ingested and spat out as potential job seekers' (Giroux, 2015: 107) gives rise to activity such as coaching. Students source support to develop their self-presentation to employers and education providers in an increasingly competitive and marketised environment. Yates (2011b:153) comments that careers practitioners need to 'move on from practices that seem tired and worn' and states that in 'the current climate, the survival of career guidance may depend on our ability to be flexible and effective'. Coaching then, appears to relate to the instrumental nature of the university provision. The Careers Adviser as coach will show that the careers practitioner is being 'flexible'. Coaching will help the student to present well and to develop but arguably only as far as securing a job or succeeding in the interview to get a job. By contrast, a Capabilities Approach would consider careers work to be about helping the student towards a life she or he can value. Coaching concerns the Adviser working to present the student as required by the employer or organisation. Careers work, particularly through the guidance activity, is less concerned with what is required externally. Guidance work is far more concerned with helping the individual to find what is important to her or him, considering Sen's (1999:288) 'agency and judgment of individuals' explored in Chapter Two. Agency is important in guidance work because 'people who enjoy high levels of agency are engaged in actions that are congruent with their values' (Alkire, 2008:3). The coaching approach suggests the role of the university, and the Careers Service, is to respond to the demands of the marketplace and 'coach' the students towards 'success'. The CA suggests instead that the Careers Adviser should help the student to be:

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[36] The NICEC/ CRAC debate. 'Past its Sell- by Date? Career Guidance for the 21st Century' Slides from the debate presented by Dr Bill Law.
See: NICEC/CRAC Debate

> … actively involved - given the opportunity - in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programmes (Sen, 1999:53).

The CA goes beyond the framework of Employability, at least in its narrowest interpretation, as the aim of university provision. Instead it stresses the personal development of the individual and one way to realise this, in the Careers Service, is through the practice of guidance. In sum, this chapter has explored the established areas of the Careers Adviser's work and identified the changes that have taken place in these traditional areas of careers work. I will now turn to two key stakeholders in the environment of the Careers Adviser's work, employers and students, and examine the changes that the participants in the study and recent literature identify.

Chapter 5: Employers and Students

In the previous two chapters I looked at the changes that have taken place across Careers Services, reflecting on changes to career patterns, both externally and for the Careers Adviser herself and then examined changes to the core activities of Careers work: education, information and guidance. In this chapter I want to return to considering the employer perspective introduced in Chapter Three and now focus on changes in recruitment and selection methods and their impact on the student and the Careers Adviser.

Much of the activity of Careers Services is in place to encourage students and recent graduates to connect with employers and secure graduate level employment thereby helping the institution remain competitive within its sector. It is particularly in this aspect of supporting employer activity that we can understand Giroux's (2015: 107) concern that the university and here, the Careers Service, is a place for 'potential job seekers for whom education has become merely a form of training'. Acting as a conduit between the university and the employer is a crucial aspect of Careers work and this chapter will look at recruitment strategies, changing employer strategies and the impact they have on the student. But I suggest that the Careers Service can and must be a place which also helps the student to develop what Nussbaum (2011: 34) describes as 'Affiliation'. She explains this as being able to 'work as a human being' and enter into 'meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers' and the extent to which employer selection methods present opportunity for Affiliation is explored.

Graduate recruitment and selection describes the processes employers undertake to advertise and select graduate recruits for their opportunities. The graduate recruitment cycle has been established over many years and supporting this cycle has been a key aspect of the work of the university Careers Service. In the UK graduate employers start their recruitment process in the Autumn of each year, advertising opportunities to final year students. They then tend to interview and select by Easter for that year's intake to start in their ascribed roles the following Autumn. Other employers will not use such lengthy processes but will recruit as and when they need employees. If a graduate is sought for a particular role the employer may time the vacancy to coincide with early summer as the student prepares to leave university or may simply target those who have already graduated and are now working or still seeking graduate employment. Employers follow the usual recruitment cycle of advertising a vacancy, selecting candidates from information supplied

on a CV or application form, and interviewing those candidates. Those employers involved in large recruitment campaigns will usually follow on from this initial interview by then selecting candidates from that process through a further process known as the 'assessment centre'. Some will use further steps in the early stages of recruitment, perhaps using online selection tests before the first interview stage. That first interview may take place face-to-face or may be by Skype or telephone with some employers starting to make use of video interviews, in which applicants use a webcam and a microphone to record their responses to questions as they appear on the screen. Enterprise-Rent-a-Car, Morrisons supermarket, BT and Scottish Water are some organisations which make use of video interviews as a key method of recruitment. Other organisations, particularly for sales, media or marketing roles, ask students to upload a YouTube video or self recording about themselves. The assessment centre, the second stage of the interview process, can take place on one day or even over a couple of days. It might involve a range of activity such as delivering a presentation, undergoing a series of aptitude tests (perhaps testing verbal and numerical ability), taking part in a group discussion or group exercises involving role playing, undergoing an interview or series of interviews and, at some assessment centres, taking part in dinner and socialising with the other candidates and employees. Developments in IT have meant that selection methods have advanced to some extent in recent decades. There is, as I indicated in the previous chapter, a reliance on the internet to advertise and promote vacancies and a reduction in brochures and promotional material produced. Employers, similar to Careers Services, have found that their work involves changes in the use of technology with many using websites and instant messaging to recruit, communicate with and track students. Giordani (2006) notes the increasing reviewing of social networking sites to evaluate student applications and comments that one in ten organisations uses social networking as part of the hiring process. However, while some organisations will conduct telephone or Skype interviews and some use online tests as part of their selection process, the focus still remains very much on face-to-face interaction with a preference for the interview above all other selection methods. While it might be anticipated that the internet and digital methods might replace much face-to-face activity this is still key to the process, and many of the blue chip organisations are very active on campus, presenting to students, conducting interviews and attending Careers fairs. Much of the work of a Careers Service focusses on helping to facilitate this recruitment process, whether helping employers gain access to students and promote their opportunities or assisting students to

prepare for the selection process. In this area we can see stark contrasts between different universities and how they resource this activity.

Broadly, the larger the Careers Service the more segregated the roles and activities within it. Some university Careers Services will have teams, perhaps made up of those who work with employers and manage careers fairs and employer activity on campus while some smaller Services will have no separate, designated team for this work but might employ one or two individuals for this activity. The priorities of the university will reflect the make-up of employees within its Careers Service. For some Services it will be easier to argue the case for someone to manage the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey and other exercises which relate to league tables and public reporting if that institution uses the results from these exercises as a key marketing feature to attract students. While some institutions may have to work to attract employers to attend an event or activity, an established and prestigious university may have to deploy a waiting list and turn away employers, due to lack of space or because the employer's profile may better suit a different activity or event. The type of institution, and its perceived 'prestige' has a significant bearing on the number and calibre of employers it might attract and the ways in which its students may be able to interact with employers.

Recruitment Methods

A survey of 153 graduate recruiters in 1990 showed that the most preferred recruitment methods in order of preference were 'the Milk round'[37]; recruitment brochures; recruitment fairs; directories; newspaper and magazine advertising; sponsorship and recruitment agencies (Schofield, 1991:36). Even in a small Careers Service, servicing the recruitment needs of students from a new university (and therefore less likely to be directly targeted by graduate recruiters) the Milk round was the key recruitment activity undertaken by employers. In the last 25 years the Milk round, although still tangible in its form of employers visiting universities, relies less on interviewing on campus than on a series of presentations delivered on or off campus to targeted students at particular universities. Targeting of particular universities has become commonplace; an employer is not able to visit every university in the UK (or beyond); instead a 'hit list' might be drawn up of the organisation's preferred institutions. One of the Careers Advisers in the study commented that one of the major developments in graduate recruitment was '*targeting… of universities'* (Jack). The implication for Careers Services is that their work shifts to attract

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[37] The Milk round was the term given to the annual recruitment programme in which employers visited particular universities, gave presentations and selected students on campus.

those employers, or help support those employers that target specific universities. An Adviser comments:

> *So you have to build your own relationships because you want to make sure the employers are coming and speaking to your students, rather than everybody else's*. (Harry)

Some employers even speak of receiving 'referrals' from academic tutors[38], particularly from Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and will then wait to receive that student's application and ensure those interviewing are aware of the 'referral'. It seems that we have returned to the days of Heyworth (1964):

> Appointments officers, relying on their own judgment and the opinions of academic staff, can provide employers with assessments of the abilities and personal qualities of applicants. Going further than that, they can select applicants to be interviewed by employers (Heyworth, 1964: 23).

This kind of 'crony capitalism' (Zingales, 2012) is indicative of the neo-liberal environment in which the graduate selection process takes place. As Higher Education has expanded it might be expected that employers have their pick of graduates leaving universities. AGR's (2013) poll questioned 200 employers from around the UK and found out that there is an average of 85 applicants for every graduate vacancy, up from 73 the same time the previous year. But it seems employers still state that they struggle to recruit the workers they want. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in its annual survey on 'Resourcing and Talent Planning' found companies reported that 'Skill shortages are escalating: over four-fifths feel that competition for talent has increased over the past two years' (CIPD, 2015:5). Williams et al. (2006) challenge this, suggesting that there is a 'graduate glut' (2006:5) and go on to suggest that the marketing of opportunities may have more to do with maintaining the reputation of the brand than finding new graduate employees (2006:23).

In the CIPD (2015) survey of over 500 employers, nearly two fifths run a graduate training scheme although the use of these schemes is related to organisation size and sector. Smaller organisations and voluntary sector employers are less likely to run graduate training schemes (CIPD, 2015: 19). Williams et al. (2006:6) state that there is only a one in twenty chance of securing a place on a graduate training scheme. Organisations running such schemes see them as the training ground for the leaders of the future, where they will

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[38] Personal communication between myself and graduate interviewer from a 'magic-circle' law firm.

'grow' their future managers and leaders and Williams et al. (2006:7) state 'the biggest break you can ever have is to get yourself onto a graduate-to-management training scheme in your early twenties'.

Brown and Hesketh (2004: 216) have written previously about the 'labour market congestion in the competition for fast-track jobs in leading edge organisations'. They concur with other writers from Berg (1971) to Wolf (2002) who challenge the policy of investing in and expanding Higher Education, suggesting that it is a myth that spending more on Higher Education will stimulate growth. Brown and Hesketh (2004) suggest instead, that the expansion of Higher Education has created a congestion that ensures that the competition is fierce for what are deemed the best jobs. New recruits seek to be the leaders of the future by embarking on a graduate training scheme with a large graduate recruiter such as the large banks, legal, consultancy and finance companies, and oil, gas and engineering conglomerates. Of course only a fraction of graduating students secure roles with organisations such as these, but many apply and it is with these organisations in particular that we can see changes in the way they conduct their selection of the graduate intake. Those students securing graduate level positions help to improve the destination figures, often, as noted, a key performance indicator for the institution, so much of the work of the Careers Service is around preparing for these selection processes, despite the fact that a slim proportion successfully secures a place on such a scheme with one of these recruiters.

Changing Employer Strategies
As the numbers of young people going on to Higher Education has increased, many sectors which, in the past, would have recruited school leavers for specific roles, now consider graduates. Although large multi-national employers continue to dominate the graduate recruitment market, increasing number of SMEs now employ graduates and this trend seems set to continue. As we have seen, only a small number of graduating students progress onto the coveted graduate training scheme meaning that many others will take up roles in the SME sector, sometimes in roles that a couple of decades previously, might have been undertaken by a school leaver. As early as 1995 the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) predicted that 'the greatest potential is likely to be in smaller businesses which have not tended to recruit graduates in the past' (AGR 1995: 5). An earlier Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2012) survey suggested two-fifths of organisations were concerned that the increase in university tuition fees would

make it harder to get the skills they need (rising to half of those with graduate recruitment schemes).The AGR Graduate Recruitment Survey (2013) endorsed this, suggesting that some employers started to re-consider their graduate recruitment strategies in light of government changes to student funding (the outcomes of the Browne Review, 2010) and the anticipation that numbers of graduates may reduce. While a minority of employers predicted a decrease in graduate vacancies for 2012-2013, many reported that increased competition from other employers seeking to recruit talented school leavers was a reason for implementing schemes around this group of education leavers: the secondary sector rather than tertiary. It was suggested that increased tuition fees could be deterring individuals from going to university and therefore not subsequently being in a position to join graduate programmes. As indicated by one employer from the banking sector:

> We're doing this because the shift in political landscape is going to cause a lot of individuals to decide not to go to university and will impact where the talent goes in the marketplace. Most big employers are waking up to this and have developed their own apprenticeship programmes. The programme is on the same level as the graduate programme with the same priorities for the business and professional studies, but we do see it as a separate pipeline for the future (AGR, 2013:18).

It will be interesting to see if this is a continuing trend, with fewer people choosing university and instead opting to explore 'apprenticeships' and other schemes designed to identify talent at earlier stages in the individual's academic career. It could be anticipated that a knock-on effect may occur to the university Careers Service: lower numbers entering universities may well lead to the reduction of resource made available for the Service. However, numbers appear to be holding up with UCAS reporting that over half a million students secured a place in UK institutions in 2014 (UCAS, 2014) an increase of 3.4% from 2013.

With an increasing pool of qualified graduates, how does the graduate recruiter make her or his selection? Increasingly, a good degree from a respected university is deemed insufficient, as I identified in Chapter Three. Employers also seek evidence of a range of skills and expect applicants to be able to articulate how and in what contexts they have developed these skills. They will then put their selected candidates through the rigours of interview and assessment centres to ensure they are selecting their candidates with the required competencies and attributes. Increasingly however, employers are faced with huge numbers of applicants and a significant task in whittling down these applications to a manageable number that can be channelled through the assessment centre process. A key

development for many employing organisations is to start the selection of students earlier than in their final year, or earlier in the final year, aiming to 'bag the best'. Employers are faced with the challenge of how they attract what they see as the best prospective employees when competing against other organisations who are also trying to recruit the best candidates.

One way of attracting the best graduating students is to increase the reward offered. And, of course, this practice takes place. We see, for example, high salaries offered by the most successful law, management consultancy and investment banking firms. Some organisations, alongside a high salary, will offer to pay for further professional training. Many large, international law firms, for example, offer to cover the not insubstantial costs of the common professional exam followed by a legal practice course in the recruitment of trainee solicitors. However, the economic climate has meant that salary and training costs are not always the preferred way to offer enhanced rewards to new employees. The AGR (2013) suggests that reward in the form of salary is not, in these difficult economic times, significantly increasing. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of respondents plan to freeze starting salaries for graduates over the next year, according to research by Incomes Data Services (IDS, 2013). Its annual Pay and Progression for Graduates 2013 report, which surveyed 93 large organisations, suggested median graduate starting salaries are set to remain at £25,500 until at least 2014. Of course, it might be argued that salary and reward are not the only considerations of the graduate. The well-being of the graduate in the workplace will also depend on finding the right fit and aligning her or his values to that of the employing organisation. While economic goals are, of course, necessary, well-being depends, also, on the potential to fulfil individual personal development and social goals. Employers recognise this too and strive, increasingly, to connect with students early on in their academic careers.

First Year is the New Fourth Year
Building relationships with students early is, today, seen as the new and preferred method of recruiting students. Traditionally, recruitment has taken place, at its earliest, in the final year of an undergraduate degree, albeit with sometimes very early closing dates occurring soon after the student has started their fourth (in Scotland) and honours year or third year in England and Wales. But, increasingly, in order to attract the proactive and able student early and to start employer loyalty near the beginning of the student's academic career, students in their early years are encouraged to engage with prospective employers. This

might take the form of insight days, taster days, work experience and internships. Success at these stages results in progress to the assessment centre in their final year, avoiding the need to undergo the early stages of the selection process. Students might be eager to engage in this way because, as Aronowitz and Giroux (2000:337) put it: 'The student and his or her family feel more acutely the urgency of the race for survival'. Some organisations have developed specific roles for students. Britvic[39], for example, advertises a brand ambassador role where the student encourages sales of the Britvic range through working with a 'Britvic buddy' and the Britvic marketing team, promoting activities on campus and through social networking to encourage sales. In return, the student is paid, gains a certificate 'to use when interviewing for future career opportunities – stand out from the competition!' and potential opportunity to work for Britvic full time after university. Employers who have engaged with students throughout their academic careers can therefore undertake an easier selection process; they can simply select from those who have already worked for the organisation and they will have had the opportunity to assess the student for longer and in a more realistic, job related environment than an interview or assessment centre might allow. In the case of the Britvic opportunity, those who are eligible in the first place to undertake the ambassador role are restricted. Only students from seven universities may apply and presumably these universities are places in which Britvic has discovered a preference for its drink range or, more likely, they represent the target universities for the organisation. An additional advantage for the employing organisation is that it can promote its organisation, through the internships, attendance at different careers and recruitment events, and ambassador roles, not only to their prospective employees but also to their respective clients and customers of the future.

Frequently the shift towards early identification of students to bring into their organisations is carried out by large, blue chip organisations or professional organisations such as large accounting, finance and law firms. Chartered accountancy firm, Deloitte, is one of many big employers to have devised a programme to attract talent into the organisation at an early stage. It offers a scholarship giving a series of paid work placements and annual grants to students from first year to graduation. In return, the student takes on the role as ambassador for the firm on campus, advertising its presence, inviting students to meet with

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[39] Britvic (2012) promotes a 'Student brand ambassador role for academic year 2011/2012. 'Max your experience by working with huge global brands'.
See: http://student.britvic.com/index.html

Deloitte on campus, promoting the summer and graduate schemes and disseminating information and materials about the organisation. Of course, alongside insight days and ambassador schemes, an increasing focus has fallen on internships to the extent that, in some career areas, the recruitment to internship takes on as much importance as that previously allowed for the graduate training scheme.

One of the Careers Advisers in this study commented that in terms of graduate recruitment the '*whole thing is kicking off earlier*' and this seemed to relate to '*the importance of internships*' (Lewis). CIPD's (2015:19) annual survey suggests that internships are offered by a third of the private sector organisations included in their survey and these are more common in this sector compared to the public and voluntary sector. The survey states that 20% sponsor students through university and the same proportion offer post-Higher or A-level entry routes. All of these schemes are more likely to be implemented by larger organisations. A Careers Adviser comments:

> *It's like, if you haven't worked for us before, you're unlikely to get a job, which is 'wow'... we get employers in to run business games, case studies, and then by the end of that I then encourage them strongly to use all of these skills and actually make an application for a live internship programme, which the majority of them have done this year.* (Lewis)

'High Fliers', an annual report looking at the graduate vacancies and starting salaries of the top 100 best known UK companies and organisations makes the following observations:

> More than four-fifths of the UK's leading graduate employers are offering paid work experience programmes for students and recent graduates during the 2013-2014 academic year – a record 11,819 places are available. Two thirds of employers provide paid vacation internships for penultimate year students and three-fifths offer industrial placements for undergraduates (typically lasting 6-12 months as part of a university degree course).
>
> Increasing numbers of employers now also have work experience places for first year undergraduates – a quarter of organisations offer paid internships and a third of employers run introductory courses, open days and other taster experiences for first year students.
>
> Over half the recruiters who took part in the research warn that graduates who have had no previous work experience at all are unlikely to be successful during the selection process and have little or no chance of receiving a job offer for their organisations' graduate programmes (High Fliers, 2014:6).

Specifically, the report shows that over a third of graduate positions are filled by those who have already worked for the organisation, either through internships, industrial placements

or vacation work therefore demonstrating the increasing use of early identification of graduate talent. This is reinforced by the CIPD Survey which found that apprenticeships are offered by 47% of organisations overall, with a further 16% planning to introduce them in the next 12 months while nearly a third have increased the number of 16–24-year-olds they employ compared with one year ago (CIPD, 2015:6).

An outcome of early targeting of students and the increasing trend for employers to start their recruitment cycles earlier and earlier is the increased likelihood of graduates accepting a post but later declining it. According to the AGR Graduate Survey, the biggest challenge the graduate recruiters face is that 'candidate drop out because the candidates are applying for a large number of opportunities' (AGR, 2013: 28). The majority of employers surveyed thought this was due, not just to starting salaries, but also the move towards working for a 'better' company (deemed a bigger company that has better brand recognition).

The employers in the survey were asked how they might counter this higher level of drop out. Employers reported following a 'keep warm strategy' (AGR:2013: 33) in which they attempt to nurture relationships with students from the start of their academic career, through brand ambassador roles, invitations to presentations, regular contact, perhaps through the occasional telephone call, coffee and meeting and even an annual Christmas card. The key seems to be keeping regular communication with students throughout the relationship, and most particularly once students are in the recruitment process. One banking sector employer commented that as they find their new recruits through their internship programme it was vital to maintain the communication and contact to make sure 'they don't forget about us' (AGR, 2013: 33).

A journalist writing in the Guardian commented on the increasing trend of graduates sending out multiple application forms and 'juggling' (Tims, 2011) rival job offers. She describes how PWC has launched a Facebook-style forum where new students recently recruited into the organisation can engage with their colleagues-to-be, how PWC regularly sends them text messages inviting them to local events and activities offering chances to meet and develop relationships with prospective colleagues. Richard Irwin, PWC's head of student recruitment is quoted as commenting:

> The candidate experience breeds loyalty, like a retail experience. It's vital to establish personal relationships with candidates as early as possible, for competition for top talent is as hard as it ever was (Irwin, 2011).

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Other multi-nationals are following suit. Unilever, for example, offers a three day Spring programme (at this point first year students will have undertaken less than six months university education) which once completed allows entry to the selection day for Unilever's Summer and Industrial work experience programmes (either three months or a year's experience with the company). GTI Media, a graduate recruitment media company operating as Target Jobs in the UK has recently introduced two new publications to its suite of guides and directories, Finance First and Law First, showing the increasing activity from employers in focussing on the first year of the student's undergraduate life, with those employers offering a range of taster experiences and insight days, leading into Christmas vacation experiences and spring and summer internships in the first year and beyond.

Implications for Careers Services and their Advisers are that the nature of the student-employer work, once focussed on finalists and graduates, increasingly moves to work with earlier years and increasingly to coach or prepare students for these selection methods. This activity helps to reinforce the sense of the university and perhaps particularly the Careers Service as a 'training centre for future business employees' (Giroux, 2009b: 671). This trend seems set to increase with students coming through increasingly conscious that, having contributed significantly to their university experience through fees (notwithstanding Scotland's position, previously discussed) , an outcome or benefit should be attained. The benefit is frequently seen as securing a graduate level job with a respected and successful organisation. As recruitment practices shift, Careers Services increasingly look at ways of ensuring the early year students begin their career planning at the start of their academic careers, and not when nearing the end. In addition, as employers vie to recruit the 'best' some Careers Services are kept in demand by servicing those graduate recruiters through a stream of vacancy distribution, careers fair and presentation organisation. Other Services, whose institutions are less targeted by the graduate recruiters, struggle to attract the interest of graduate recruiters putting the onus on the student to proactively seek interaction with the recruiter. Finally then, I want to turn attention to the student, the crucial link between Adviser and employer and unpack the literature around the student and the Careers Advisers' thoughts on if and how the student has changed.

The Changing Student?
The first review of Careers Services (examined in Chapter One) , then called University Appointment Boards, identified that in the year 1961-1962 a total of 13,631 students from

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23 universities were available for employment (Heyworth, 1964:8). Compare that to over 50 years later when 443,110 UK and EU leavers responded to the survey of the Higher Education Statistics Agency Survey (2015). This massive increase in numbers graduating is only one piece of evidence pointing to significant changes that have taken place within the Higher Education sector. The variety of students studying (more mature students; an increase in international numbers) has also changed, along with their mode of study (part time and distance learning) and the way they might study (downloading lectures, digital learning).These changes we would expect both to influence expectations and the ways Careers Services are used as well as influencing developments in the way services are delivered. In the first review of Careers Services Heyworth (1964) wrote:

> The general picture that takes shape as we watch the student approaching his [sic] career, is of a somewhat hesitant approach to the appointments service and a rather limited idea of what it is likely to be able to do for him. We see a considerable number of students who, for a variety of reasons, prefer to go it alone and do not come to the service at all, and in some universities the number who come may be less than half of those who, on general grounds, might be expected to seek its help (Heyworth (1964: 32).

Through the years there have been echoes of this description around the use of Careers Services and take up of the services provided indicating a sometimes under-utilised Careers Service with a perception of it catering for only certain types of student with many students accessing or finding careers support and direction elsewhere. Numbers making use of the Service however, might have improved more recently. GTI Media (2013) carried out a live online survey for the period 24 October to 30 November 2012, surveying 2,300 students studying at 125 universities. It states:

> Student use of the Careers Service is high, with 64% of all respondents saying that they had used it either in person or online. This is a small but significant increase compared to six years ago when the figure was 58% (GTI Media, 2013: 2).

It could be anticipated that as concerns for Employability have become ubiquitous and instrumentalism becomes the driver, with Higher Education's role seen to be its contribution to the economy, then the nature of being a student and a student's use, awareness and expectations of the Careers Service, may change too. Perhaps it is unsurprising that increasing numbers of students are coming to make use of the Careers Service if university is now seen as an environment where Employability is developed and if a key reason for embarking on university education is to enhance career prospects. Perhaps students have an expectation of a certain level of information and support on career direction and perhaps universities are expected to deliver a certain amount of careers

support to their 'customers'. The extent to which this has become the norm is demonstrated by Redmond (2011:5), himself a university Careers Service Director, calling this an 'Employability entitlement' and suggesting it can be delivered through the curriculum, co-curriculum and extra curriculum with the last dimension being where the Careers Service input and activity may sit.

Heyworth suggests that the key user of the Careers Service back in the 1960s was the 'average' student with 'no tradition, either from school or family, of what a university education is or what it should lead to' (Heyworth, 1964: 4). Increasingly, nowadays, this is no longer the case. As Higher Education has expanded, students now frequently have parents who also went through Higher Education and as Redmond (2011) puts it they are:

> 'Baby Boomer' parents, who have to some extent 'decoded' the job market. They've figured out how employment markets 'work', how educational 'capital' can be maximised through contacts and strategic alliances. Armed with this 'knowledge', they are in a poll-position to take it upon themselves to 'fast-track' their offspring through the early 'qualifying' rounds of the job market (Redmond (2011:5).

Redmond (2011:5) suggests that parents are also becoming increasingly active in terms of taking responsibility for their son or daughter's Employability and he refers to them as 'helicopter parents' suggesting they are hovering protectively over their children. A Careers Service may find that as well as considering the requirements of its direct student users, their parents may be another stakeholder group requiring consideration and support. This is perhaps more evidence of a commercialised environment where expectations are high that a return will be gained on the investment in university education and the return is often expected to be a graduate level job. The 'helicopter parents' are dealing with a different type of offspring, according to Redmond, on account of the impact of Generational theory.

Generational Theory
Redmond, recent President of AGCAS, the professional body for HE Careers Services, past Director of the Careers Service at the University of Liverpool and current Director of Student Life at the University of Manchester is a proponent of generational theory. Generational theory is a concept which has been widely espoused in the media but was first put forward by Mannheim (1952) who suggested that generations are not only people bound together by a common date of birth but that they share a similar outlook, history and experience. The theory suggests that the era into which you are born has a significant influence on attitudes held, expectations and choices made. The theory was developed

further in the USA by Howe and Strauss (1991, 1997) who described the history of America as a series of generations with specific outlooks and characteristics. A social generation refers to the group of people born over a span of 20 years with each span covering childhood, young adulthood, midlife and old age. Howe and Strauss suggest each generation shares three criteria. Firstly they share an 'age location in history' because they undergo the same key events and occasions; secondly they share 'common beliefs and behaviours' and thirdly, they have a common sense of 'perceived membership of that generation' (Howe and Strauss, 1991: 58-68). There has been some criticism of generational theory; in particular it is suggested that as a theory it is not properly researched and claims are made that cannot be supported and verified. Giancola's (2006) work on generational theory notes many inconsistencies in assumptions and presumed 'facts'. For example, Giancola discovered that authors frequently do not agree on the definition of each generation, the number of generations present in the workforce, or the applicability of generational differences to minority groups. He concluded that the findings 'lend credence to the notion that the generational approach may be more popular culture than social science' (Giancola, 2006: 33).

Nonetheless the concept of generational theory has taken hold to some extent within Careers Services, perhaps because Redmond as past President of AGCAS, and a Director of a Careers Service himself is one of the most prominent exponents of generational theory. He relates it directly to the client group for Careers Services and discusses the impact of 'generation Y' on Careers Services and graduate employers. Redmond builds upon Howe and Strauss' (1991) generational theory exploring the common definitions of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (increasingly the term 'Millennial' is used to describe Generation Y in the USA) and particularly looking at the latter as the largest group of university students currently making use of Careers Services. He also borrows terms from Brown and Hesketh (2004: 126) when he describes 'players' and 'purists' as the two types of graduates chasing graduate level jobs. According to Brown and Hesketh (2004) players put themselves forward in line with what different employers want, they 'play the game' to secure the roles and jobs they seek, they are prepared to try different routes to achieve their goals. In contrast, purists will not 'sell out' but will strive to find the right fit between themselves and an employer, trying to stay true to what they are and the job roles they seek. The graduates described as players by Brown and Hesketh (2004):

> … used the university Careers Service, employer's websites, and social
> contacts to help them 'decode' the winning formula. They attended workshops

> that simulated group exercises at assessment centres and practised psychometric tests...They understood the importance of developing a narrative of employability that mirrored the requirements of the employer (Brown and Hesketh, 2004: 127).

These players as described here are recognisable as students who make use of the Careers Service facilities and resources, often applying for significant numbers of, sometimes widely differing job roles with the aim being to secure a graduate level role and get the best 'deal' available. These students might identify with Giroux's sense of the corporate university and the Careers Service as a stepping stone to aid them to present themselves to competitive advantage. In contrast, purists viewed education as the 'progressive unlocking of human potential' (Brown and Hesketh, 2014: 137) prioritising job satisfaction through authentic engagement with employers and the selection process.

Are the students now making use of Careers Service any different in their use and expectations of Careers Service than their counterparts of fifty or so years ago? A number of Advisers in this study did refer to a different type of student, suggesting the students making use of the resources and accessing services show different characteristics and have different needs to those of a previous era. A typical comment was one that demonstrated that the resources had very much changed for students, compared to a pre-internet age. Students' access to information and resources has changed dramatically.

> *Before, students relied very much on the brochures that were handed out at Careers Fairs and in the Careers Information room and just by their very nature they were only able to pick up seven, eight brochures whereas now they've got access to a mass of information and a mass of resource; that's changed greatly.* (Lewis)

As indicated in Chapter Four technological advances significantly influenced the role of the information room with fewer callers to the information space and students more likely to access the resources online, in their own time rather than making use of a facility within office hours. A recent questionnaire[40] carried out over a 'Feedback Fortnight' survey during February 2012 on students making use of the careers resources at the University of Edinburgh found that 66% preferred to access help and resources online. When this was followed up by a further Careers Survey online questionnaire of the 772 survey respondents answering the questions about online resources, there was a preference for

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[40] Unpublished source at University of Edinburgh Careers Service.

'static' information as against interactive material. One of the Careers Advisers in this research comments that the ability to make use of the resources in the information room (hard copy materials) has reduced or that students prefer the online medium.

> *Students ask for it [the resources]less and are a lot less aware of it, I have to say, than students years ago and at the end of an interview you're showing students things that they probably had no idea existed and talking to them about that en masse... well you seldom get the chance to... but even when you do, you don't feel they are taking it in very well, they are more and more web orientated and of course all AGCAS resources, all our resources are online so there's very little that they could pick up out here or look at that they couldn't see or wouldn't see online.* (Jack)

These changes have perhaps come about through the development of the internet and its power to change the way the student then engages with and accesses support and information. One Careers Adviser comments:

> *The main thing has been the development of the website; as long as people are familiar with it they can readily access information from it.* (Sophie)

A significant change to the student body has also been the increase of international students attending UK universities and this trend looks set to continue, at least with attendance of students from EU countries as the Scottish government continues to pay fees for this particular group of students. According to the Complete University Guide (2014) the percentage of international students at first degree level from the universities represented in the study vary little and each has more than 20% international students. One Adviser commented on differences between students and how the local, home students appear to be less successful in securing prestigious job roles.

> *The Scottish students, now that is an issue, and you see that in the destinations as well, the quality of the jobs obtained by Scottish students is not as good as the quality of jobs obtained by Polish students or some Asian students and definitely English and Irish students. Scots seem to have lost their mojo altogether, frankly but that's wider than Higher Education, I think. I guess confidence maybe has something to do with it, people afraid to take on the world, kind of thing, the way the English students are and definitely the Northern Irish students.* (Jack)

This Adviser went on to wonder if part of the explanation for this may be:

> *… a problem of Scots not using the Service ... is that a factor in them not getting good jobs, I don't know, but they are falling down somewhere.* (Jack)

Olivia agrees that international students are keen to access the Careers Service.

> *International students would access our service always and still do... International students, were, are, in a good way, very demanding of the Service.*

And so perhaps this increase in Service use is at least partially explained by the increase in international students who, traditionally, make good use of Careers Services. Olivia did go on to comment that due to the changes in visa regulations with the withdrawal of the Work Study visa which had allowed international graduates the possibility to remain in the UK for up to 2 years, changes in international numbers might be anticipated.

> *I think there'll be a change in our international population, I can't imagine they'll come in the same numbers that they have with the changes in the visa system. (Olivia)*

The Adviser also commented at some length on the changes that seemed to have occurred in the student body. She identified a change in the student which suggests that their expectations of a Service have been influenced by the 24/7 environment.

> *It was just a change in pace- if I talk to a computer I'll get an answer back therefore if I talk to an Adviser I'll get an answer back (clicking fingers).* (Olivia)

The Adviser seems to suggest that students want an instant service and also want very much to be understood as individuals:

> *... all students just got into the 'I haven't got 45 minutes of my life to talk everything over I just want to go bleugh and you go bleugh back to me'. It's kind of I want it, and I want it now if not five minutes ago. It's the speed of delivery that they expect, but still you talking to them and 'getting' them.* (Olivia)

Chapter 5: Employers and Students

This is reflected in the understanding of generation Y depicted by Redmond as a keynote speaker at the GEES Conference in 2008 in Edinburgh arranged by the Higher Education Academy. He commented on Generation Y's characteristics as: 'connected 24/7; self-confident; optimistic; independent; bored by routine; entrepreneurial; goal oriented; and digital natives' (Redmond, 2008). I might ask whether the student body is also concerned with values and relationships with people, if it seeks opportunities to reflect on experiences and if it strives to develop the ability to make critical and reflective choices.

The Adviser makes it clear that the Careers Service has had to adjust for this new type of student and may have to deliver its services in different ways, making itself accessible to students who are more demanding, more aware of their requirements and holding higher expectations of the Service. Foreshadowing the futures discussion coming up in the next chapter she comments:

> *Maybe we'll get much more into eguidance. Maybe we'll be Skyping with our students. Faster quicker delivery, when they want it. Longer opening, maybe 24 hours. Who would ever have thought that a student didn't need to go to lectures? Now they can just download it. Who would ever have thought that you would be sending an email with advice on how to do something? Maybe the 'how' we communicate with students... the 'what' might not change, but the 'how' will be where the main changes will be. The immediacy has been a huge thing. And the consumer mentality. And Careers Services have had to gallop along with that.* (Olivia)

It is interesting to note the comment in the above extract on '*the consumer mentality*'. Aronowitz and Giroux (2000:333) suggest that the effect of the neo-liberal environment and the 'triumph of the market means many students and their families no longer believe that higher education is about higher learning'. Instead, it is about 'getting a foothold in the job market' (Aronwitz and Giroux, 2000:333). The increasingly consumerist and digital environment of Higher Education has lead some to comment on a move away, even from email and web pages, to more instant and mobile ways of responding and connecting with students. Carnevale (2006) writes about these shifts taking place in American colleges:

> As some students reduce their use of e-mail in favor of other means of communication, colleges are trying new technologies to reach them. Among the new techniques are:
> Cellphone Text Messages: Students live and die by their cellphones. A few colleges now provide information, including snow closures and sports scores,

> to students instantly, wherever they are. Instant Messages: Some professors
> now make themselves available to students via instant-messaging software,
> especially during office hours. And some admissions counselors use it to
> answer questions from prospective students faster, and through a medium in
> which many students are most comfortable. MySpace and Facebook: Some
> colleges have begun using the popular social-networking services to provide
> information to their students, including calendars of events, deadlines, and
> other announcements. College officials also use the services to present a lighter
> side of an institution something different from the stuffy main web page
> (Carnevale, 2006:28).

One of the Careers Advisers in the study found Redmond's comments and their application to Careers Service work very insightful, particularly as an approach for many Careers Services has been to respond to the changing environment by increasing online access. Yet Redmond's work, one Adviser felt, suggests this student body **does** wish to interact with real people in accessing Careers support.

> *He was at Stirling, the guest speaker, he is known as the expert on Generation*
> *Y and how they like to learn. And he just turned everything around, they like*
> *things fast but they actually get a lot of attention from their parents and they*
> *expect a lot of attention from Careers Services. They want to talk, they want*
> *literature, they don't want to find it on the web. Which is really peculiar! And*
> *he's done a massive amount of research, he's been on the BBC... he was*
> *fabulous. (My manager) was at that talk and I'm looking at him going... are*
> *you going to take this back to (senior management), because (they) are all for*
> *pushing it on to the web. (Isla)*

Madden et al. (2013) based at Harvard University, carried out a phone survey of 802 parents and their 802 teenaged children aged from 12 to 17 between July 26 and September 30, 2012. This showed that 95% of teenagers are online, a figure that was consistent with the same survey carried out in 2006 but interestingly it found:

> The nature of teens' internet use has transformed dramatically during that time
> from stationary connections tied to desktops in the home to always on
> connections that move with them throughout the day (Madden et al., 2013:3).

The survey shows that smartphone use with American teenagers has increased substantially and it is usually through a mobile phone that this group accesses the internet. Interesting statistics reported are:

> 78% of teens now have a cell phone, and almost half (47%) of those own
> smartphones. That translates into 37% of all teens who have smartphones, up
> from just 23% in 2011. One in four teens (23%) has a tablet computer, a level

> comparable to the general adult population. Nine in ten (93%) teens have a computer or have access to one at home. Seven in ten (71%) teens with home computer access say the laptop or desktop they use most often is one they share with other family members (Madden et al., 2013:2).

In American universities there is a raft of support mechanisms embracing the new technology. The University of North Carolina[41], for example, explores 'career-related apps for your new i-pad', promotes TED talks, and even has a tab for parents on its career website with a 'tips for parents' pdf to download, very much embracing the ideas of Redmond's (2011) comments on helicopter parents. Madden et al. (2013) state that:

> In many ways, teens represent the leading edge of mobile connectivity, and the patterns of their technology use often signal future changes in the adult population (Madden et al., 2013:3).

It may be anticipated that the developments that take place in the USA are also taking place here in the UK too, as we see an increasing rise of students using tablets and smartphones to manage their academic, career and personal lives.

One Adviser expressed some alarm at keeping up with this new type of student and their ways of engaging with careers support:

> *But this is where I don't have enough knowledge and my training as a Careers Adviser didn't equip me for the kind of situation that we're in where the young people and not so young, are expecting something other than files and books and I don't really feel on top of knowing how to provide information in the way they want.* (Emily)

Larger Services, with a range of staff and the scope to maintain training and development in new technology for careers staff, or with their own staff developing technology related activity are likely to find a niche for themselves and respond to the demands of students. Smaller Services may not have scope to develop in such a way. The effect of digital developments and the perceived expectations of students are likely to be felt more keenly on smaller, under-resourced Careers Services and increase the feeling for some Advisers, and some external commentators, that the Careers Services and support are ineffective or deficient.

For some, as noted previously, this can lead to feelings of inadequacy.

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[41] University of North Carolina, UNC Student Affairs, University Career Careers Services website. See: http://careers.unc.edu/

> *I have to remind myself we are here for students and we need to provide what*
> *suits them and just because I happen to like going into that area and sitting*
> *with files it doesn't mean it's the right thing to do.* (Emily)

Another Adviser felt there had been a significant shift in the student body.

> *I'd say the biggest change has been to do with how students operate themselves*
> *and technology and things like that.* (James)

He suggested that students previously might have made use of the Careers Service more readily because there were fewer ways to access resources:

> *We're no longer necessarily automatically a destination in the sense of at a*
> *time when there was less. There were fewer ways of gaining access to*
> *information, even ten years ago.* (James)

He also indicated that students' expectations had changed and suggested that this was a threat to the information worker, presumably including Careers Advisers within that description.

> *But I also think this technological thing...any information worker, any expert,*
> *is basically, I feel, threatened by technology... they are, it's undoubtedly the*
> *case. I mean my own specialist subject is journalism and clearly any print or*
> *paper type of operation, it may not be so obvious to the lay punter but people's*
> *lives have changed, they aren't picking up daily newspapers the same,*
> *everything they're getting is on little smart phones or whatever. Now apply that*
> *to 21 year olds, and they've got a different expectation. They aren't going to*
> *come into some office, closed at lunchtime or whatever, and queue up to talk to*
> *someone who themselves may have to start looking things up because they've*
> *got 15,000 students or whatever.* (James)

The Careers Advisers in this study suggested that technology has significantly influenced the expectations of the student body. Some of them suggest that those students who have grown up using technology expect a more immediate service, anticipate that they can access information and resources on the move and yet also want a personalised, bespoke service. The ways students expect to receive the services has changed with, today, an expectation that services might be 24 hour, that information will be available online and that it will be accessible through both asynchronous and synchronous means. Careers

Services strive to respond to this by developing activity. Website support is still very relevant, but Services also explore and increase the use of twitter, webinars, Skype and real time interactions. Increasingly, those coming into careers work have to understand and be familiar with technology to at least the same extent as the students seeking support.

Offering flexible services will challenge many Services. Smaller Services run the risk of having to focus all resources and staffing on maintaining web support and falling behind on utilising the many types of technology tools that may develop activity. This helps to reinforce the differences between universities and Careers Services that are large and well-resourced, against those that struggle to maintain a basic service to its student group. Increasingly, these differences may become more marked and further differentiate the Careers Services provided by universities.

In sum, in this chapter I examined the changes taking place within graduate recruitment with regard to employers and students and considered the impact of this on Careers Services. I have suggested that the consumerist neo-liberal environment, in which a return is expected on the investment in higher education, does not always seem to allow for adequate attention to individual development and flourishing. The Careers Service can be an enabling environment to develop critical thinking and provide experiences to encourage reflection. But the increasing emphasis on performance, supporting the demands of graduate employers and a focus on a 'narrow set of marketable skills' (Nussbaum, 2011:155) may dilute the transformative and ethical purpose and potential of the Service. To elaborate and summarise these thoughts I now turn to my final chapter and consider my enhanced understanding of the changing environment for university Careers Services, and how this influences their role and reach. In this final chapter I also reflect on ways in which this has influenced my perspective as a Careers practitioner and researcher.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

In the first chapter of this study I stated that this Dissertation would explore where university Careers Services were twenty years ago and where they are now, informed by interviews conducted with a group of Careers Advisers based at four Scottish university Careers Services. In the course of the Dissertation I have examined changes that have taken place over the last twenty years up to the present day, drawing on this data, augmented by my own personal experiences and perceptions, synthesised with relevant theoretical and policy texts. I intend, in this chapter, to draw together my thoughts and conclusions with regard to my findings and tentatively suggest futures for the university Careers Service. The chapter will start by reflections on my study that includes a consideration of its limitations and suggestions regarding areas and methods for further research. I shall then summarise what has been gleaned and, finally, I will reflect on what I have learnt as a Careers practitioner and a researcher, exploring ways in which this study and its undertaking have informed and influenced my perspective.

Limitations and Further Research

Inevitably the study that comprises this Dissertation has shortcomings and limitations. I worked only with eight participants and make no claims that data gathered and analysed provides a representative and systematic account of the views of Careers Advisers that goes beyond the experiences and views of those who contributed as participants. Conclusions and thoughts here can only be tentative and I make no claims for generalisability. Nevertheless, the views and comment of the participants, along with my academic research and my own experiences and reflections on practice may help to examine the situation of Careers Services today and provide at least a snapshot of perspectives that may contribute to an understanding of the changes that have taken place in the Careers Service. The study was always intended to be and is exploratory in nature. Others may build on it, and it raises important issues which would benefit from future research with a larger more diverse population.

The work was undertaken on the views of Advisers based only in Careers Services in Scotland. It could be worthwhile now to explore the question across a wider geographical area, looking at the UK in general or looking at scenarios on a global scale to identify differences between countries. However, the scenario in Scotland is distinct from that of the wider UK, not least due to the different funding mechanisms in place and focusing on

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Scotland alone allowed an in depth examination of that particular context. Whilst small in scale, this study allowed a reasonable variation as the institutions used differed in their size and purpose. The study could, of course, be widened by increasing the number of participants to allow more exploration of opinion and it would also be interesting to increase the number of institutions to allow the impact of location and type of university to be more thoroughly examined. Increasingly, I have come to appreciate that there may be significant differences between universities and, accordingly, their Career Services. Such differences likely depend on their location or on the type of institution as well, of course, on differences between individuals.

At the start of this chapter I mentioned 'futures' that might be envisioned for the Careers Service. Futures studies is a research field involving academics and researchers across many disciplines. For a recent review of methods such as scenario development, horizon scanning and foresight see the papers of the European Training Foundation [42] round table event at Turin in March 2012. The presenting of futures scenarios as a method to anticipating change and its implications is useful here and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been active in looking at scenarios, both at school level through its Schooling for Tomorrow project (CERI, 2015), and via its Futures of the Tertiary Education sector project. In the latter, Vincent-Lancrin (2004) of the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), for example, presents six scenarios for universities and Higher Education which would influence the realisation of the university Careers Service in different ways[43]. Looking locally, as the situation in post-referendum Scotland continues to take shape and devolved powers take hold, it seems likely that Scottish National Party ministers will attempt to revive the Fresh Talent initiative of 2011 to allow non-EU students the opportunity to stay in Scotland and work for a further two years after graduation. If this occurs, it may shift the balance of international students in Scotland and further differentiate Scotland's immigration policy by contrast with England and Wales. This may have significant impact on how careers work develops and how Careers Services become increasingly differentiated in different parts of the UK. Furthermore, if a second referendum on Scottish independence takes place and if independence were achieved, this may, according to media reports[44], challenge the

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[42] European Training Foundation round table event, Turin 2012
See: http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/EV_2012_Round_table_on_Foresight
[43] The scenarios are: Tradition; Entrepreneurial universities; Free market; Lifelong learning and open education; Global network of institutions and Diversity of recognised learning.
[44] See, for example, the Scottish Constitutional Futures Forum blog:

capacity of the Scottish government to withhold free tuition for English students. Another scenario is that the Scottish government may require its universities to charge tuition fees to all in order to remain viable and competitive. This could have major implications on universities, their future development and how their Careers Services are resourced and maintained.

Looking to a more extreme scenario, Tyler Cowen's (2013) 'Average is over' premise suggests, in the future, political and economic control will be in the hands of a narrow elite and educators will become motivators. This suggests that the Careers Service of the future, if there is one, might be entirely online and the Adviser will become the coach and motivator of the student. This scenario was foreshadowed in this work identified by the commentary of the very first quoted participant, Emily, when she describes her work as '*career planning in almost a coaching sense*' and I explored this more thoroughly in Chapter Four.

This research focussed on the opinions of Careers Advisers in university Services only. Further research would supplement this study into changes undergone by Careers Services in Higher Education more widely and explore changes through interviews with other practitioners, including those in other services or academic departments charged with, say, the Employability agenda. The enquiry exposed the changing role of Advisers and the creation of new roles, the increase in the number and type of roles helping to develop activity, particularly in liaison with employers. It would be interesting to now widen the perspective of the enquiry and identify the perspective of information staff, employer relations staff and managers of university and Higher Education Careers Services, graduate employers, academics and students to explore the viewpoints of all involved in the activity of the Careers Service. Exploring the views of Careers Service managers, in particular, might expose interesting tensions around commitment to the institutional purpose and commitment to the student needs. It might be interesting to conduct research to map the activity across all UK universities and HEIs to look for patterns, similarities and differences across locations and different types of institutions. The Employability agenda affects roles and activities across the university and it might be illuminating to look at its impact on academics, particularly in light of the proposed Teaching Excellence

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http://www.scottishconstitutionalfutures.org/OpinionandAnalysis/ViewBlogPost/tabid/1767/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2673/Paul-Beaumont-The-Scottish-Governments-Position-on-the-Relationship-Between-an-Independent-Scotland-and-the-EU.aspx

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Framework. Jo Johnson, Minister for Business, Information and Skills in his speech to Universities UK stated as his first aim for the TEF:

> … to ensure all students receive an excellent teaching experience that encourages original thinking, drives up engagement and *prepares them for the world of work* (my italics) (Johnson, 2015 b).

In Chapter Two I explored and justified my use of semi structured interviews as a method and examined the credibility of the research: I explored the 'trustworthiness' of the findings. I described the study as a credible one but transferability and dependability may be augmented, as far as they can be within such research, by complementing the data obtained with other work and even using other methods such as case studies comparing and contrasting different universities. The type of university was found to have had a significant influence on my findings but there is a limit to the extent that differentiation can be identified if the anonymity of the participants is to be respected and confidentiality maintained. With only thirteen universities in Scotland, and with some of those Careers Services employing few Advisers, ethical considerations meant a full account of participants, in consideration of the small world that makes up Scottish university Careers Services, was limited in order not to identify the participants. However, and in the light of its limitations, I will now turn to the key findings of the study and consider what these might reveal as I draw those findings together to arrive at some conclusions.

Findings

In the data chapters the study began and ended by looking at employer and organisational practices. Chapter Three looked at changing career patterns and explored the so-called knowledge economy and Chapter Five looked at changing graduate selection methods. Both chapters then explored the perceived implications for careers work. The data in Chapter Three did not reveal a consistent view that the 'knowledge economy' had lead to leaner flatter organisations. If anything, the Careers Advisers in the study suggested graduates continued to secure permanent, full time job roles. The Employability agenda and the increasing marketization of universities, however, did impact on the Careers Services. An increasing drive for universities to produce employable graduates has resulted, according to my participants, in significant changes with respect to what careers work is and the ways in which careers work is executed in the university. The influence of these changes is more significant in some universities' Careers Services than others, but all have changed. As noted in Chapter Three, governments and funding councils across the UK have made public funding at least partially contingent on demonstrable graduate

outcomes. All universities have responded by developing Employability strategies to help develop qualities, skills and understandings commonly referred to as 'graduate attributes' (Bowden et al., 2000). All UK universities maintain Careers Services, in some form or other, and they can be seen as a clear recognisable resource to deliver the development of graduate attributes and aid the university to achieve its performance indicator on Employability. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, some Careers Advisers perceived the Employability agenda to have helped raise the profile of the Service within their institutions. For some there was an increase in careers education but this meant a decrease, or at least a pressure, on guidance work. Guidance work, for some, became more about coaching: developing a range of skills and competencies in students rather than space to reflect, plan and question. Chapter Four also reported the significant changes taking place in information work within a Careers Service. For some this meant the reduction of the physical space the Careers Service occupied and an expectation that everyone in the Service had to be confident around technology rather than technology use being the remit of a few specialists within the team. This seemed particularly important because, returning to the outcomes of Chapter Five, employers and students were increasingly using technology as part of everyday practices. Employers were targeting students earlier in their university programmes and students were therefore encouraged by Careers Services and employing organisations alike to start their career planning early. In addition, further changes to roles within the Service were identified around the information, Employability and DLHE activity.

In Chapter Four the study revealed that my respondents thought significant changes were taking place around the careers information role of the Service. All Careers Advisers identified changes to the information provision and their reports suggested that, in three of the four institutions, the information role had become subsumed into the work of the Adviser. The Employability agenda had also allowed other new jobs to be created and to flourish within universities. For example, the University of Glasgow has a College Employability officer with a team of eight interns and an Employability Consultant is in place at the University of Edinburgh. The latter is housed in the Careers Service while Glasgow's Employability Officer sits in, and reports to, the College of Social Sciences, outwith the Careers Service. It can be supposed that the location of this role and team might increase the reach and influence of the Careers Service or it may be seen by some as competing with it. Employability, as I suggested in Chapter Three, is often conflated with

the Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) survey data and the DLHE also influences job roles.

Job responsibilities may change with an increasing emphasis placed on securing good results in the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) exercise or new roles may be created that focus on the DLHE and other performance indicators. Glasgow Caledonian University and Dundee University's Careers Services, for example, both have a DLHE Officer as a designated role and many Careers Services will have one member of staff whose main activity will be managing the survey and its report. Attention paid to the DLHE helps raise the Careers Service's profile as the destination employment status is used as a primary graduate Employability performance indicator for the four UK funding bodies[45] (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015). Careers Services which manage and deliver the DLHE exercise can be seen to be delivering a service to the university and this helps the Service to gain credibility and leverage (Nijjar, 2009:10). However, the DLHE is not a good measure of Employability if we consider Yorke's definition of Employability adopted by the Higher Education Academy and ESECT (and first quoted in Chapter Three):

> A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes - that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke, 2006:8).

As Knight and Yorke (2003) point out, the DLHE exercise is more likely to reflect the state of the short term graduate market in a particular location. Variability in employment rates might be indicative of those graduates' possession of skills, understandings and personal attributes but is just as likely to be a reflection of the competition for work in a particular sector, in a particular place. Yet because the DLHE is an important Key Performance Indicator for universities, Careers Services which do not manage their DLHE exercise risk losing influence within their organisations, as participants suggested in this study. Two institutions in this study did not take responsibility for the DLHE exercise (in one university it was carried out by another department and in the other it was carried out by i-graduate, an external commercial research service). Participants from both of these Services demonstrated more insecurity, anxiety and uncertainty than the Careers Advisers

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[45] The Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Department for Education and Learning (part of DENI: Department for Education – Northern Ireland).

based at Careers Services which did manage the DLHE exercise in-house. Their insecurity may be partially explained by the lack of influence these Careers Services exercised within their institutions. Alongside the increasing use of the DLHE as a performance indicator, as identified in Chapter One, was an increasing shift from guidance to education work with one Service indicating a significant shift.

One of the Careers Services in this study delivered a curriculum based service focussing on delivering the Employability agenda through credit earning modules. The Service had significantly changed its focus from a generalist Service to a Service delivering careers education, operating as an academic department as well as a Service and thereby ensuring a role and focus for its activity. It had fundamentally restructured itself into what Watts (1997) might describe as a curriculum model, as identified in Chapter Four, supporting academic departments by delivering careers development skills within academic programmes. Some Careers Advisers commented on the increasing competition amongst Careers Services in an increasingly marketised environment where employers target universities and students compete to secure positions on graduate training schemes. This resulted, for some, as identified in Chapter Three exploring the professional development of Careers Advisers, in a loosening of affiliation with the professional body, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). Careers practitioners focussed on their individual Services rather than considering the collective needs. These developments emphasise the increasingly instrumental nature of the Careers Service and often these developments showed a distinction between different types of university institution.

Surviving and Thriving?

My introductory chapter suggested that the Careers Service as an entity is fragile, ephemeral and not particularly well established. My study underlines that premise but suggests differences between types of institution. My data indicated that established and larger Careers Services are not constantly fighting for recognition. They are already supported and recognised and when opportunities present to further their reach, perhaps to create a new post (such as Alumni Volunteer Co-ordinator at the University of Aberdeen, for example) they are in a position to take advantage of these opportunities. These Services are, perhaps, 'surviving and thriving'. Increasingly over the last 15 to 20 years, Careers Services have become different from each other, developing their own areas of specialism. I have already indicated that one Service in this study took on an increasingly curriculum

focus. In this study there is an identifiable differentiation between the larger, traditional and elite institution with larger and more established Careers Services and the smaller, newer university Careers Services. Emily, one of the Careers Advisers in the study, comments that she is '*very much aware of my job changing because of where I am...the particular institution*'. The traditional Services might be more able to capitalise on their reach to keep layers of activity within the Service: guidance, destinations, employer liaison, and information management, intact and secure. The traditional Service within this study had seen change in the form of increasing careers education and an Adviser, Olivia, who felt '*lucky*' to still be carrying out guidance work. In recent years, more posts and activity had occurred around the employer liaison team and the work it carried out in managing employer relations. The two smaller Services in this study did struggle significantly to gain recognition for their work. The smallest of the four in the study was incorporated within a Student Services division and while it continued to perform the tasks of the larger Services such as guidance, information and education it struggled to make an impact with staffing of only two part time individuals. This Service secured extra funding allowing the employment of an individual charged with developing 'Employability' with academic departments. A change of Principal, with an interest in student service support, had helped raise its profile somewhat but there was still a sense of falling behind and a perceived challenge to gain recognition and support. One of the other Services in the study had undergone the most significant change having stopped carrying out the destination exercise and no longer operating the employer liaison side of its work. Losing these two crucial aspects of activity had meant its influence and control were much reduced. At the same time, other units within its university had taken over some of the personal development function, leading on the Employability agenda and delivering personal and professional skills programmes to students, which might hitherto have been seen as the traditional areas of concern of a Careers Service. The activity left for this Service to deliver was reduced to little guidance, the Advisers reported that they were actively discouraged from providing guidance, but an increase in the form of drop in advice and CV sessions with some of that work carried out by temporary staff employed on an ad-hoc basis. If a Careers Service is described as a function that manages the destination exercise, oversees its relations with employers, advertises and manages its vacancies, events and fairs as well as performing various guidance activities, then this Service is only performing a slim part of that activity and struggles to fulfil the full role of a Careers Service. It could be seen as 'death of a Service' and, I suggest, this matters. To me, Careers Service provision is

crucially important at a time when, arguably, students require the support and input from Careers practitioners in an increasingly globalised competitive environment. The Careers Adviser, specifically, can perform the tasks most often associated with the advisory role: a kind of matching process to help people work out their vocational direction. For example, the response to the Leitch review (HM Government and Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2007: 28) identifies the need for a 'Skills Health Check' in which Careers Advisers 'take stock' of an individual's skill needs, strengths, goals and ambitions and matches them to help people 'advance themselves and reach their full potential'. But much more than this, the Careers Adviser is involved with what Frigerio et al. (2010:4) describe as the 'messy… deeply personal and contingent' activity of guidance. The Careers Adviser offers support, information, and networks and operates under Parker Palmer's (2007) paradoxical space tendering challenge and direction. But she also helps the student with identity formation (Watkins and Savickas, 1990) and by 'providing insights, focus, and clarification; motivating; increasing self-confidence and self-awareness; and structuring opportunities for reflection and discussion' (Bimrose and Barnes, 2008:62). In essence, the Careers Service, particularly through the role of the Adviser, can help students to think creatively and critically. Diluting or removing this activity seems obtuse if we care about the students we are preparing for a life likely to require a commitment to re-invention and lifelong learning. Nussbaum (2011: 128) has written of Aristotle's idea that the job of government 'is to make all citizens capable of leading a flourishing life in accordance with their choice'. Following Nussbaum, I contend that the role of university Careers Services is to help all students become aware of and to work through their choices in order to conduct a life of fulfilment and self-actualisation that simultaneously is a life that contributes to the economy.

I have demonstrated that Careers Services have undergone many changes and have started to take on different forms or models in different universities. Governments have become increasingly concerned with improving Employability and performance measures, often crude in the form of the outcomes of the DLHE surveys used as gauges of high performing universities. Some Careers Services have been able to harness this activity and take the lead on these agendas and thereby ensure a role for themselves in their institutions. Other Services, which are struggling to find a role, may find that the Careers Service ceases to exist as a separate unit, either becoming merged with other units or finding its activity

increasingly limited, diluted and reduced. A number of Advisers mentioned the development of a consultancy role, and this was noted particularly in the institution that delivered career management programmes as part of the curriculum.

Consultancy Role

There was a greater expectation gained through the study that consultancy, acting as a mediator between academic departments and the students, and the student and the employer was increasingly required. This has taken root in some Services. For example, the summer of 2014 saw the title of Adviser changing to Consultant in the University of Edinburgh's Careers Service. Some Advisers felt that a consultancy role significantly changed the focus of the work of the Adviser and was perhaps a role for which they had not been trained or which they had expected when they entered the work as Advisers, as noted in Chapter Four. Neary (2014b) has described the importance of nomenclature in establishing professional identity. The language of commerce, or what Giroux (2009b) (see Chapter Two) might call the 'corporate' Careers Service, is reinforced by the language. 'Consultant' brings forth a sense of the business environment and the market place while 'Adviser' might be associated with old-style support and help. At the AGCAS Scotland Biennial conference Anne-Marie Martin, then President of AGCAS and Director of Shared Services for students and graduates at the University of London gave a keynote lecture, as previously noted in Chapter Four under the Impact Agenda commentary. She asked her colleagues: 'What does your career resource centre look like? Does it look like a dusty library or an Apple shop?' (Martin, 2012). Note here the discourse of the library (public and, arguably, liberal) and the pejorative use of 'dusty' suggesting an out-dated and obsolete Service against the discourse of the market (private and neo-liberal) presented as modern and cutting-edge. She illustrated this question with the following two slides:
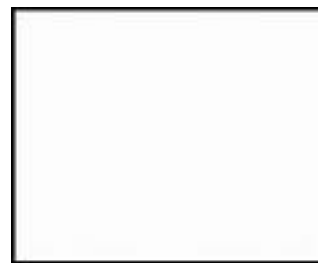
Two images removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Careers Services will and must change and adapt to the needs of their students. But we must surely not do this at the expense of the 'ethical' process of Careers Services to help students live meaningful, purposeful and successful lives.

Giroux (1981) outlines the dangers of the corporate university replacing the democratic purpose of the university. Educators previously had the potential to realize the emancipatory power of education but in taking on a corporate identity educators are now, he claims, 'impartial facilitators' (Giroux, 1981:80). In the same way, Careers Services which bow too far to the demands of the market may lose sight of their role in the 'transformative intellectual' (Giroux, 1993) process. As Giroux suggests of teachers, Careers Advisers too must equally:

> … understand the nature of their own self-formation, and have a future, see the importance of education as a public discourse, and have some sense of mission in providing students what they need to become critical citizens (Giroux, 1993:15).

Giroux and McLaren suggest that pedagogy needs deal with 'the views and problems that deeply concern students in their everyday lives' (Giroux and McLaren, 1989: 150) and, again, I contend that Careers Services can serve an equally important role in this respect. They can provide a paradoxical space (Palmer, 2007) outwith the curriculum in which, Giroux would argue, much education does and should take place. If we lose this element we run this risk of losing the 'heart' of Careers Service work. Simply measuring the value of the Careers Service activity in human capital terms (see Chapter Three) is too narrow and a consideration of the key tenets of the Capabilities Approach, which stresses the worth of evaluating capabilities and not just considering economic outcomes, can offer an additional framework for a future Careers Service.

The concept of personal development at the very centre of higher learning is supported by Nussbaum's CA which is focussed on:

> … what people are actually able to do and to be in a way informed by an intuitive idea of a life that is worthy of the dignity of the human being (Nussbaum, 2006:70).

Everyone should be provided with support and opportunities to live a flourishing and fulfilled life. Nussbaum describes compassion as the 'basic human emotion' (1996) and this suggests to me that those of us working in education, in whatever sphere, should look for ways to develop compassion in our practice, seek ways to care for others and see her ten Central Capabilities as important human and political goals. I see the Careers Service

as an important space in which this activity should take place. Nussbaum's ethical framework for evaluating the quality of life goes beyond instrumentalism. In an earlier exploration of the CA Nussbaum suggests that two of the ten capabilities have 'special importance' (Nussbaum, 2000: 82) and elsewhere she says they are 'architectonic' (Nussbaum, 2011: 39). These two Capabilities she describes as Practical Reason and Affiliation. Practical reason means 'being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (Nussbaum, 2011:34). Affiliation is about:

> Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, and to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another (protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and political speech). (B) Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion and national origin (Nussbaum, 2011: 34).

Both Capabilities are significant in relation to the work of the Careers Service. Its crucial activity is to help students consider their life planning and to help them move towards the next stage through engaging with others. The Adviser helps the student, sometimes individually, sometimes in groups, to understand the importance of working out and recognising their own interests, strengths and goals and their own values, beliefs, and personality. Students are encouraged to work out who they are and what is important to them by thinking about their values and purpose. The Adviser is not just performing the instrumentalist purpose of putting 'a cog in a machine' (Nussbaum 2000: 82) but is placing personal development at the very centre of the higher learning experience. This is not, of course, to suggest that Careers work has to stand still or return to the extended careers interview as the sole or reigning activity. Wilson (2013) writes of the three key drivers for change being technology, globalisation and demographics and each of these will continue to affect the structure of employment and how we deliver our services. But Careers work and Careers Services can help students play a part in designing and shaping their future, with that future understood not only in terms of their first jobs. Of course first jobs are important but careers advice and guidance must also provide a place for students to develop as critical thinkers and citizens. So, too, careers advice and guidance can provide a place in which students can be encouraged to develop as critical thinkers able to reflect on and make choices with regard to their broader futures including what is important to them,

their values and the roles they will develop in an environment that has to be about lifelong learning. Such aims are not incongruent but surely combine to benefit both the economy and the individual. Careers guidance and education therefore has a key role to play in facing significant challenges such as 'an ageing society, climate change, sustainable economic development and inequality' (Wilson, 2013: 101). It can help students work out who they will be and what they might do in these future environments in and alongside their jobs. Careers Service could respond by consistently reviewing and shaping their Services to reflect the breadth and diversity of student needs and behaviours. Increasingly, Careers Services will likely develop employer liaison activity, alumni networks, and more tailored careers education and use differentiated modes of delivery, often online rather than face-to-face such as blogs, twitter feeds, Skype, webinars and e-guidance. Careers Services will, on my account, increasingly work with students to help students realise their own agency and to fulfil their potential to be what Giroux (1991: 118) describes as 'informed political agents'. A crucial role for the Careers Service is helping students work out their possible and preferable futures. Having explored the educational purpose of the Careers Service, which the study has helped me to understand, I will now reflect on what I have learnt from undertaking this process.

Why Did I Do This; What Have I Learnt?
Action research is research by practitioners to solve their own problems and improve their professional practice. This study is not action research but an important part of conducting the research was to help me, as an educator, to improve my practice and become a self-reflective practitioner (Schon, 1983). I want to be able to share what I found and to discuss and come to new understandings about the place of Careers Services in universities and what they might become in the future. The aim of this piece of work has been to understand changes that have taken place in Careers Services and be able to question the effects of these changes in order to improve my own professional understanding and practice as a careers practitioner and ultimately to put my understanding to use to improve careers practitioners' work. As I approach the latter stages of my own professional life I am increasingly involved in considering the training and development of those entering or new to careers work.

This study has allowed me to consider what our work is about, how it is valued and what we can do to ensure those coming into the profession have the space to enjoy a professional dialogue about their Services and what they are trying to achieve. My study

shares some aspects of 'practitioner enquiry' (Menter et al., 2011) which might be defined as carrying out research with the intention of sharing its outcomes within my own professional circle in order to improve my practice, that of others and, ultimately, the experience of the students with whom we work. I aim to use this work as a stimulus to provoke discussion and debate of the condition of university Careers Services now and into the future. The study contributes to an under-researched area of careers guidance work and offers a Scottish focus, aiding understanding of what is happening, and drawing attention to the need to defend and promote the value of careers work through a functioning university Careers Service. It offers, too, an understanding that draws on the theoretical insights offered by Nussbaum's CA and the work of critical theorists such as Giroux and Freire. Research by careers practitioners seems to me to be of real worth at a time when some Services are under threat and others are transforming and shifting their focus. Careers guidance research can surely make an impact on the careers profession itself. I would argue that Careers Advisers and practitioners carrying out their own research can help to strengthen the profession and give voice to the concerns of those practitioners and such enquiry might impact on professional identity and professionalism more widely. Discussion about our work raises the profile of careers work, allowing a previously unexamined area a voice and location for debate. There is perhaps a growing research focus and culture within the community of careers guidance practitioners and this study contributes to that growing body of research. That contribution might be realised here through dissemination across the AGCAS Research and Innovation Group, or through publishing articles in Phoenix[46], the professional journal of AGCAS. In the wider careers guidance context, Skills Development Scotland has, for the last three years, delivered an annual Research Symposium, which examines how careers research is translated into practice and how practice helps inform research. This study could, additionally, contribute to the dialogue about the dual role of Careers Adviser and researcher and might help develop the status of practitioner research. My research can be shared and disseminated to help give a platform for practitioner research to increase the evidence based approach to our work, improve practice, and contribute to professional interchange and discussion.

Approaching my topic through the structure of an EdD has given me the opportunity for scholarly engagement, not only with the interview data gained through the participants, fellow careers practitioners working in the field, but also with the academic literature and

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[46] Phoenix, the professional journal of AGCAS. See: http://www.agcas.org.uk/agcas_resources/25-Phoenix

the work of different theorists. On the one hand, themes emerging from the interview data informed my reading and research and lead me to explore areas I had not first considered in my initial conception of the work. On the other hand, exploring the academic literature helped make sense of and give life to my embryonic thoughts about the work and helped me to work through the data analysis and overall direction of the research.

As a social scientist perhaps the expectation is that I will work inductively: beginning with my data, seeing patterns and developing theories. But, as indicated in Chapter Two, I believe I am working both inductively and deductively. I started the work with some specific ideas, goals and preconceptions, based on my own experiences working within university Careers Services. I tried to work with this, using my own views and thoughts to inform the research, but also to keep an open mind and be ready to listen to and assimilate the views of others and then draw on theories and readings of others to help me understand and inform my work further. Perhaps this means a persistent back and forth - an iteration - of discussing, listening, reading, and thinking in a more circular way rather than the linear way demanded by the idea that one writes-up a Dissertation only when these iterative processes are complete.

Changed Perspective
Carrying out the piece of research has allowed me the opportunity to identify the changes people in my profession perceive to be important and to consider the likely developments of my professional area in the years to come. Some of my initial views about the state of university Careers Services have been confirmed but my understanding has expanded. It is difficult to over-estimate the impact technology has had on all aspects of life, including the delivery of careers work and the impact of technological developments is likely to increase and continue to fundamentally change the way students engage with university Careers Services. The increasing aspect of receiving careers support 'on the move' through smart phones and tablets is likely to increase and students will continue to build their profiles, track opportunities, engage with employers and undergo many aspects of selection, all online. Our challenge is to keep ahead and predict the different ways in which we might be able to deliver support outwith the traditional face-to-face mode. The way we do this might develop further still. I anticipate the balance of the Careers Service changing with an increasing importance placed on the employer liaison activity and increasing numbers of staff in place to develop relationships with employers and providers and further communication between careers professionals and academic professionals to ensure

students are allowed to develop capabilities to live a flourishing life. With more resource put in place it is likely that, for many Services, there will be opportunity to increase institutional influence and some universities may invest in high tech state of the art services to attract employers, alumni and donors. Tracking and measurement will continue to allow Services to clearly measure their success in delivering targeted services to students. In order to flourish under these new scenarios Careers Advisers might have to stop 'advising'. Increasingly, Advisers are re-branded as consultants able to facilitate and engage rather than counsel and advise. The sense, then, of the work of the Careers Adviser being aligned with other support and advisory roles, say advice worker, counsellor, social worker, teacher and youth worker inexorably moves to becomes more closely aligned to consultant, training and development and human resource roles. Protecting the guidance function within the Careers Service under these new scenarios will be crucial.

In an environment of commodified Higher Education, globalisation and an increasing emphasis on accountability, as explored in the first two chapters here, the immediate concerns of the Careers Service have become the concerns of the wider university. Careers Services need to demonstrate to senior managers that investing in the Service adds measureable value to the institution itself, in order to maintain and develop the role of the Service and ensure its effective existence into the future and beyond. As an enquiring practitioner, Nussbaum's CA offered a framework against which I could conceptualise and consider issues around the well-being of students and their Careers Advisers. Similarly informative was Giroux's writing which allowed me to better understand the neo-liberal environment in which Careers Services are situated. The CA helped provide some clarity for the work of the university Careers Service and the importance of shaping and acknowledging the value of the Service beyond a merely instrumental purpose. The concept of capabilities and functions helped me to consider ways in which the well-being of the Careers Service and the individuals working in that Service and served by it might be enhanced or compromised by the neo-liberal environment. This conceptualisation of well-being helped me to question the ethical purposes of a Careers Service, to see beyond the merely instrumental, functional purpose of getting students into jobs and to ask if the Service did and could serve a deeper purpose of enhancing the capabilities, as an end in themselves. I concluded that the Careers Service goal of enriching human development is in itself a valuable end to work towards. As an enquiring practitioner, Nussbaum's CA has allowed me to reflect on the current situation and consider how guidance might flourish in the neoliberal environment. Undoubtedly, creative and imaginative responses are required,

Chapter 6: Conclusions

and the CA framework has allowed me to question ways in which guidance might be delivered in groups, harnessing technology in the form of careers guidance apps, and exploring ways in which careers advisers might work together to support the guidance needs of increasing numbers of students in university settings.

Drawing on Giroux, and also Freire, I have concluded that education and, particularly here, careers education is not a neutral process. Following Freire's (1972) distinction of liberating or domesticating education I am aware that one might see domesticating careers education as a process which prepares students only for the world of work. Drawing on both Freire and Giroux's critical approach, provides support for my argument that, instead, careers education could and should be a liberating process whereby students, and then graduates, might seek futures of passion and principle, where they might flourish and transform themselves and, potentially, transform their society.

Finding out what is happening to Careers Services has been a valuable exercise that has demystified the phenomenon of Employability and shifted my previously unexamined perspective on the work. In particular, it has helped me realise the importance of not being *defensive* about, yet being able *to defend,* the work we carry out in Careers Services. The study has challenged me to find ways and means of meeting the needs of the student body in my professional practice. I can now better understand that opportunities for social and emotional learning can and should take place within different formal educational settings. Helping students find their way is important for them individually but encouraging them to critically engage and to flourish as individuals in and across communities is surely important for all our futures. Giroux's work has helped me to see that one place for this critical engagement is the university, and for me, particularly the Careers Service. Succumbing to a solely instrumental purpose means we can lose sight of this activity. I have long held the view that Careers work is about more than just getting students into good jobs and my new understanding of ideas around the purpose of the Service and the concept of flourishing drawing on Nussbaum's CA, leads me to more fully understand its potential for good. In her work on Capabilities (2000; 2011) and her work on Emotions (1996, 2001) in exploring what makes for a flourishing life Nussbaum writes extensively about emotions and compassion. She suggests she wants compassionate institutions but at the same time indicates that this goes both ways:

> Compassionate individuals construct institutions that embody what they imagine; and institutions, in turn, influence the development of compassion in individuals… institutions teach citizens definite conceptions of the basic goods,

> responsibility, and appropriate concern, which will inform any compassion that
> they learn (Nussbaum, 2001:405).

In the early chapters I referred to Barnett's work on the idea of the university (1990) and it seems appropriate to return to Ron Barnett and refer to his 2011 work on the 'ecological university'. Here he calls for the university to be both authentic and responsible (Barnett, 2011). I suggest the Careers Service is one space in which this can occur. It could be a space in which to forge a more critical approach as advocated by both Nussbaum (2010) and Giroux (2009a). So, as Careers Advisers, it is important that we are compassionate in our work if we are to develop this capacity in our learners. This develops the sense of developing a mutually beneficial relationship with students to allow for Giroux's position that 'students as well as teachers are intellectuals and need to see themselves as informed political agents' (1991: 118).

Poised at the start of a new academic year as I complete this study is not an easy place for me, even after many years of working within university student support and Careers Services. Like many other careers guidance practitioners, I have to gather my thoughts and consider how I might approach this new group of students, at different stages of their career planning and development. How will I convey the purpose of the Service? How will I invite students to engage with the Service, participate and take ownership of it? How do I encourage them to invest their time and energy in their career management and the development of the society they will influence and grow? If I am only interested in securing a job for them I can simply point them to the appropriate web site and vacancy listings. But careers advice and guidance, I contend, can and must involve much, much more than that.

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

University of Glasgow | School of Education

Ethics Committee for Non Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

EAP4 NOTIFICATION OF ETHICS APPLICATION OUTCOME

Application Type: New

(select as appropriate)

Application Number: EA1792

Please add R to the end of the application number if this review is for a resubmitted application.

Applicant's Name: Kay Barbour

Project Title: Death of a Service? Exploring the impact of change on Higher Education Careers Services

Date Application Reviewed: 02/02/2011

APPLICATION OUTCOME

 (A)   Fully Approved   ☒   Please just note and address the recommendations given.

(select as appropriate)

Start Date of Approval: 18 February 2011   End Date of Approval: 31 December 2011

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

If the applicant has been given approval with amendments required, this means they can proceed with their data collection, with effect from the date of approval. The College Ethics Committee expects the applicant to act responsibly in addressing the recommended amendments. **The amendments should be submitted to the Research Office** for completion of the applicant's ethics file. An acknowledgement that all requested amendments have been made will be made within three weeks of receipt.

(B)   Amendments Accepted. Application Complete.   ☐

(select as appropriate)

This section only applies to applicants whose original application was approved but required amendments.

(C)   Application is Not Approved at this time   ☐

Please note the comments below and provide further information where requested. The full application should then be resubmitted to the Research Office via e-mail to Terri.Hume@glasgow.ac.uk.

———————————————————————

Major Recommendations

2.2. The statement does not indicate what the significance of the study will be. It simply reports on what the study is going to do. There needs to be a statement as to why this study is significant.

Questionnaire: Some of your questions are ambiguous

Question 2: Perhaps it would be best to identify a particular date for which you are asking people to consider change. For instance someone in position for more than 10-15 years will have seen many changes, but are these relevant? Are you considering recent changes? Eg. since 2005, since 2000? If so then you should set the date in your question…has the role changed since 2005?

Question 3: Does this mean 'Have you changed jobs, ie moved to new employment' or does it mean 'has the organisation you currently work in changed in the time you have been working there?

Should there be a question about…'Have the students changed?'

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

Spelling should 'careers service' be careers' service'?

Minor Recommendations

Not applicable.

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Terri Hume, Ethics & Research Secretary, in Room 104, Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street, Glasgow G12 8QF.

Appendix B: Interview Themes

Do you think the role of Careers Services has changed since you began careers work?

What are the main changes (in the last x years)?

Has the Careers Adviser's role changed?
In what ways?

How has your role in particular changed?

What are the implications of these changes?

Is Employability high on the agenda at your institution?

Is this extending or curtailing the role of the Careers Service?

What is the future of 1:1 careers guidance?

What is the future of careers resource centres?
Have these changed?
How does the Careers Service relate to teaching departments?
Has this relationship changed in your institution?

Have students changed?

What will the Careers Service of the future be like?

Appendix C: Notes on Transcribing Interviews

- Each interview was transcribed into a separate Word document. This was sent to each participant.

- The audio file and the Word file was titled by the pseudonym of each participant.

- I added the chosen pseudonym of each participant to the original paper consent form. The original names did not appear anywhere else in the documentation or records.

- All references to identifiable places, universities, Careers Service colleagues, employers and any other material that may be at risk of divulging the participants, be of a sensitive nature or potentially breach confidentiality were removed and replaced with brackets; for example (name of University).

- Short silences, 'drifting off' or sentences left trailing were indicated by three dots eg: …

- It was not considered necessary to indicate the length of pause.

- Stressed words were underlined eg: '*you have to be <u>seen</u> to be doing a good job, not just doing a good job*'.

- Other activity taking place in the interview that were not words were indicated in brackets eg {laughs}but I did not transcribe coughs or pen tapping.

- '*Mms*', '*um*', '*uhuh*' noises and comments were transcribed verbatim to include the full and accurate rendition of the interview and to allow it to sound 'real'.

- My questions and comments were indicated by the use of large brackets eg: [Were these significant changes?] so the input of me, the researcher, was clear and distinct from the words of the participants.

- A second backup copy of the texts and audiofiles was kept.

- All recorded and transcribed material will be destroyed on completion of the work.

Appendix D: Coding the Data

Example theme: Employability

Participant comment on Employability

Emily

I think all the universities, about four years ago, advertised for an Employability Co-ordinator on a four year fixed term basis. That happened here with a view to maybe making Employability related issues much more embedded within the curriculum. The success of that project will vary from institution to institution but for me a lot of that role will be bridging that gap and giving credence and credibility to the role of Careers Advisers. Because Employability is such a generic term, it can cover lots of different areas but if you break it down, what are we looking at? Not only that our graduates have the academic qualifications but also the soft skills to enable them to secure relevant employment and be productive people in the workplace and know how to search for jobs and know how to sell their skills. And I don't think in the academic curriculum the timetables have the time to focus on that like we do.

Harry

We got a strategic steer- the university decided it would happen and it came here because we were driving PDP stuff anyway so we were the ones who seemed to want it to happen and politically it worked at the right time for us. So fair play to (our manager) for driving a lot of that stuff through. Now they see the value of it. The university decided that Employability would be an important Performance Indicator for the University. So that's given us the stick and to be fair to the academic members of staff, they've been working towards professional development stuff anyway. They have to meet the professional criteria anyway so they're used to that sort of process, whereas for History of Art, say, it's never been on their agenda at (another university) but for here, it's always been part of the ether.

You become someone who's a natural ally rather than someone who just trying to get into their class, which is the whole point so Careers isn't just stuck on at the end, it's properly a part of the University.

Isla

I don't think they assign student employability to anything that we do.

A (senior manager and section head) have been working on a new thing. You know that they've been selling this (named individual's) jigsaw for years. They've got a new one and they're calling it Graduate Attributes. So they've written masses of stuff, it's much larger than that jigsaw, it goes into about twelve categories with long lists of the perfect graduate

skills and attributes. And then you've got these Graduate Attributes coming in, which (facilitators) are going to be delivering ...it's getting very close to Careers stuff .

It's not promoting the profile of Careers, it's not raising it, I thought the whole point was to raise our profile, that's what (our manager) was brought in to do. But I just don't think that we're well thought of or considered by the higher powers.

I feel threatened within my role because look what they're doing ... last summer they said we had to have three Careers Advisers, one for each campus, six months later they don't need three. And then you've got these Graduate Attributes coming in, which (facilitators) are going to be delivering ...it's getting very close to Careers stuff, I think and the only stuff we're protected about is that we do CVs and covering letters and personal statements, mock interviews.

Jack

We've had two Employability Consultants funded by this 'funny money' not (a specific funding scheme) but in this case the money is provided by the Scottish Government for Employability and that funded two posts here. They have been working with departments, some departments again, setting up curriculum based activities.... The management seem to take on board what the Employability Consultants have deduced and want it to be fully knitted in to the work that we do, I would say.

Maybe it's a reflection of my age and stage that it doesn't seem that different from so many things that have gone before, just got a slightly different name and maybe it is just (this university's) way of dealing with it and satisfying the government.

James

We were discouraged from trying to contribute significantly to developing Employability in the curriculum.

Employability, we might think we know what it means, but it has a very specific meaning to certain high-up people in the University, it's much more about what the QAA thinks Employability is or what it means within a programme, when it's written into a programme or a module.

We're now moving towards this whole Graduates Attributes model which to us might sound like the latest fad, really, from the Enhancement themes of the QAA but because we are now controlled, or influenced by, people from an academic development background they are quite savvy at knowing what matters to the academics in the sense of or at the least how you can politically affect the academics in terms of Graduate Attributes- all (name of University) graduates will be able to do this, this and this, by the time they leave. (Our Service) or (another unit) or whatever can help them develop that and here's how. So I'm not sure if that's a change in universities or a change in the structure at this one University; I think if Careers had owned...had still owned itself, as it were, probably we

wouldn't really be pushing Graduate Attributes we would probably be ticking a box saying this moves towards it; it wouldn't be seen as our be all and end all.

But when someone on a course, an employer is thinking about Employability, and how they would boost the employability of their students they aren't automatically turning to the Careers Service. One, they'd probably do it themselves. Two, (others) have already been round and said we can do this workshop on this, that or the other at various stages and there's not much room for various other types of enhancement.

Actually all the Graduate Attribute stuff, it's all very much flavour of the month, well you've got a kid at school, so all the kind of high level statements, the starting point for everything. Graduate Attributes is like that 'Students will be international citizens' and all that kind of stuff. (The department where the Careers Service sits) is certainly heavily involved, (the University) is certainly heavily involved at a high level in putting Graduate Attributes forward and that's all getting adopted and worked through but it doesn't involve (the Careers Service), we'll just be one of the people who help to make it flesh, as it were. It's a thing really aimed at Schools or subject groups, it's aimed at these senior academics and they have to write it into their programmes and all that kind of thing and then we use that as a lever to say 'oh we can help you tick those boxes' as it were. I suppose if I were cynical I would say that they think they are changing the world with it but I can't believe they honestly believe that. I think they do.

In the Graduates Attributes hierarchy we'd be seen as lower level or less skilled than the more reflective stuff, even tho' the more reflective stuff is what we've always done.

Lewis

Our focus is on two things: One, getting students experienced and upskilled in terms of the personal qualities and skills that they have and two, is having done that, being able to market them effectively.

Pretty much (Employability) is down to us and that's OK for us when it's going well. But like any Careers Service we take the credit when it's going well and we blame external economic factors when it's not! But we are always benchmarked now against (a group) so we need to make sure our students are up there with the best of them. I think we looked last year, I think our performance indicator overall, had we been in (a group), I think we would have been about 2nd on Employability. But yeah, it's down to us and it's down to us to support departments to getting the Employability in there because every single module has to have an element of Employability in the module, academics struggle with it, so we just play the card of ' we'll take that burden off your hands' which we're quite happy to do obviously.

Employability is very high level now it's on the benchmarking matrix now so people actually care about Employability figures.

Olivia

So I think there could be that. I suppose there's a whole load of other agendas; employability and so on.

People have talked about Employability for a long time. And there's been a lot of fine talk but not much action whereas in recent years there's been more action and that's been because it's become an issue, people are conscious of the number of people coming through university, conscious that the degree itself isn't going to be the thing that opens doors and that universities have to produce graduates who are fit and ready to hit the job market.

It's in the interest of the University I suppose to be known to have an Employability agenda and then of course there's been monies which have been made available, which in (this University's) case have been turned into Consultants posts and there's been a drive I think to get academic departments on board with this. So the Employability agenda is not driven by the Careers Service, it's driven by the University and the Careers Service will facilitate it, or help facilitate it. And that's been a good thing because when it was always just the Careers Service banging on about Employability you could bet your bottom dollar we were never going to get very far with it unless you had, you know, certain quite switched on people.

But Employability has been put on the University's agenda, not by the Careers Service but by other things, and so there's probably more chance now of it becoming a real tangible thing. It still requires pushing and pushing but it's coming top down from senior management in the University, it's not just the Careers Service saying wouldn't it be a jolly good idea if students were more prepared, more conscious of what they can offer and more conscious of how they can help themselves. Because it's coming from top down there's more chance that something will happen.

Money was made available and that resulted in two Employability consultants at (name of university) and they were based in the Careers Service because that was the most natural place for them to be.

They have been looking at ways of enhancing collaboration between their services and academic departments and...I think it's a kind of softly, softly approach but it's probably becoming something that isn't an irritation that it might have been a few years ago, as you can imagine academics saying ach, I'll think about it. I think they now go, OK. So I think it's probably becoming a more normal part of things that people would think about.

It suffers from fine words, to call something Employability, it sticks in your throat but I suppose it's about recognising that part of a University's purpose is to help prepare their graduates for when they leave University. And it's not just about looking after them when they're at University it's helping to take them from there to the next stage of their life. It's probably always happened it's just a little bit more explicit and more formal.

Sophie

Since I've been here the Careers Service has become a more integral part of the university, we're not as stand-alone as we used to be. We have involvement now not only with academic staff but also with the Students' Union and alumni and other parts of the

university that we would never have had contact with before. Most recently that's come about through the Employability funding; in our case somebody was appointed as an Employability Co-ordinator who reported into the Centre for Academic Practice, but worked closely with us and helped us get more known throughout the institution, particularly within academic areas.

We liaise very closely with the Employability Coordinator and we work together and have made inroads into certain areas where we didn't have access before.

The success or otherwise of the Employability Coordinator role and the project as a whole depends on where that person sat within the institution. Some sat within Careers Services so there'd be much more liaison as a result. Some sat within Centres for Academic Practice so there'd more involvement at a strategic level, so there'd be less hands on at delivery level. And I think it's now really important to maintain that momentum to speak to as many departments as possible.

We can only do so much, we can't go hammering on doors clamouring to come in, we shouldn't do that, but I think with the Employability agenda, either departments are thinking they need to do this, because they've been told or they think it's a good idea themselves, it's maybe just making it slightly easier in some places than it would have been otherwise.

I think the new Principal here has made a difference and she has made it clear that Employability is high on the agenda. Her objective is to improve (the University's) standing in the league tables and one of the ways of doing that is to look at the destination statistics.

Developing themes

Employability: the word; what is it; slippery term

We're now moving towards this whole Graduates Attributes model which to us might sound like the latest fad, really, from the Enhancement themes of the QAA (James)

It suffers from fine words, to call something Employability, it sticks in your throat but I suppose it's about recognising that part of a University's purpose is to help prepare their graduates for when they leave University. And it's not just about looking after them when they're at University it's helping to take them from there to the next stage of their life. It's probably always happened it's just a little bit more explicit and more formal. (Olivia)

Because Employability is such a generic term, it can cover lots of different areas but if you break it down, what are we looking at? Not only that our graduates have the academic qualifications but also the soft skills to enable them to secure relevant employment and be productive people in the workplace and know how to search for jobs and know how to sell their skills. And I don't think in the academic curriculum the timetables have the time to focus on that like we do. (Emily)

A (senior manager and section head) have been working on a new thing. You know that they've been selling this...(named individual's) jigsaw for years. They've got a new one

and they're calling it Graduate Attributes. So they've written masses of stuff, it's much larger than that jigsaw, it goes into about twelve categories with long lists of the perfect graduate skills and attributes. (Isla)

Maybe it's a reflection of my age and stage, that it doesn't seem that different from so many things that have gone before, just got a slightly different name and maybe it is just (this university's) way of dealing with it and satisfying the government. (Jack)

Our focus is on two things: One, getting students experienced and upskilled in terms of the personal qualities and skills that they have and two, is having done that, being able to market them effectively. (Lewis)

Employability: Not just about a degree; added value; skills

Not only that our graduates have the academic qualifications but also the soft skills to enable them to secure relevant employment and be productive people in the workplace and know how to search for jobs and know how to sell their skills. (Emily)

People have talked about Employability for a long time. And there's been a lot of fine talk but not much action whereas in recent years there's been more action and that's been because it's become an issue, people are conscious of the number of people coming through university, conscious that the degree itself isn't going to be the thing that opens doors and that universities have to produce graduates who are fit and ready to hit the job market. (Olivia)

Employability: a lever; increases reach of CAS

The university decided that Employability would be an important Performance Indicator for the University. So that's given us the stick and to be fair to the academic members of staff, they've been working towards professional development stuff anyway. They have to meet the professional criteria anyway so they're used to that sort of process… (Harry)

It's a thing really aimed at Schools or subject groups, it's aimed at these senior academics and they have to write it into their programmes and all that kind of thing and then we use that as a lever to say 'oh we can help you tick those boxes' as it were. I suppose if I were cynical I would say that they think they are changing the world with it but I can't believe they honestly believe that. I think they do. (James)

But yeah, it's down to us and it's down to us to poke departments to getting the Employability in there because every single module has to have an element of Employability in the module, academics struggle with it, so we just play the card of ' we'll take that burden off your hands' which we're quite happy to do obviously. (Lewis)

I think with the Employability agenda, either departments are thinking they need to do this, because they've been told or they think it's a good idea themselves, it's maybe just making it slightly easier in some places than it would have been otherwise (Olivia)

I think it probably does raise the profile of the Careers Service. (Olivia)

We liaise very closely with the Employability Coordinator and we work together and have made inroads into certain areas where we didn't have access before. (Sophie)

The success or otherwise of the Employability Coordinator role and the project as a whole depends on where that person sat within the institution. Some sat within Careers Services so there'd be much more liaison as a result. Some sat within Centres for Academic Practice so there'd more involvement at a strategic level, so there'd be less hands on at delivery level. And I think it's now really important to maintain that momentum to speak to as many departments as possible. (Sophie)

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Employability: creating new roles

We've had two Employability Consultants (Jack)

Money was made available and that resulted in two Employability Consultants (Olivia)

… in our case somebody was appointed as an Employability Co-ordinator who reported into the Centre for Academic Practice (Sophie)

Employability: the responsibility of others too

…it's patchy within the institution and there are some people at a senior level who have a lot of interest in Employability but there are other areas who aren't interested (Emily)

I don't think they assign student employability to anything that we do. (Isla)

We were discouraged from trying to contribute significantly to developing Employability in the curriculum. (James)

Employability, we might think we know what it means, but it has a very specific meaning to certain high-up people in the University, it's much more about what the QAA thinks Employability is or what it means within a programme, when it's written into a programme or a module. (James)

But when someone on a course, an employer is thinking about Employability, and how they would boost the employability of their students they aren't automatically turning to the Careers Service. One, they'd probably do it themselves. Two, (others) have already been round and said we can do this workshop on this, that or the other at various stages and there's not much room for various other types of enhancement. (James)

Actually all the Graduate Attribute stuff, it's all very much flavour of the month, well you've got a kid at school, so all the kind of high level statements, the starting point for everything. Graduate Attributes is like that 'Students will be international citizens' and all that kind of stuff. The department where the Careers Service sits) is certainly heavily involved, (the University) is certainly heavily involved at a high level in putting Graduate Attributes forward and that's all getting adopted and worked through but it doesn't involve (the Careers Service), we'll just be one of the people who help to make it flesh, as it were. It's a thing really aimed at Schools or subject groups, it's aimed at these senior academics and they have to write it into their programmes and all that kind of thing and then we use that as a lever to say 'oh we can help you tick those boxes' as it were. I suppose if I were cynical I would say that they think they are changing the world with it but I can't believe they honestly believe that. I think they do. (James)

Employability: links between Careers Service and departments

You become someone who's a natural ally rather than someone who just trying to get into their class, which is the whole point so Careers isn't just stuck on at the end, it's properly a part of the University. (Harry)

They have been working with departments, some departments again, setting up curriculum based activities.... The management seem to take on board what the Employability Consultants have deduced and want it to be fully knitted in to the work that we do, I would say. (Jack)

It's in the interest of the University I suppose to be known to have an Employability agenda and then of course there's been monies which have been made available, which in (this University's) case have been turned into Consultants posts and there's been a drive I think to get academic departments on board with this. So the Employability agenda is not driven by the Careers Service, it's driven by the University and the Careers Service will facilitate it, or help facilitate it. And that's been a good thing because when it was always just the Careers Service banging on about Employability you could bet your bottom dollar we were never going to get very far with it unless you had, you know, certain quite switched on people. (Olivia)

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it's probably becoming a more normal part of things that people would think about. (Olivia)

Employability: it is about DLHE statistics

Employability figures (Lewis)

I think the new Principal here has made a difference and she has made it clear that Employability is high on the agenda. Her objective is to improve (the University's) standing in the league tables and one of the ways of doing that is to look at the destination statistics. (Sophie)

Employability: situated in the Careers Service

We've had two Employability Consultants funded by this 'funny money' not (a specific funding scheme) but in this case the money is provided by the Scottish Government for Employability and that funded two posts here. (Jack)

Pretty much (Employability) is down to us and that's OK for us when it's going well. But like any Careers service we take the credit when it's going well and we blame external economic factors when it's not. (Lewis)

…resulted in two Employability consultants at (name of university) and they were based in the Careers Service because that was the most natural place for them to be. (Olivia)

Employability: a threat to the Careers Service

It's not promoting the profile of Careers, it's not raising it, I thought the whole point was to raise our profile, that's what (our manager) was brought in to do. But I just don't think that we're well thought of or considered by the higher powers (Isla)

And then you've got these Graduate Attributes coming in, which (facilitators) are going to be delivering ...it's getting very close to Careers stuff. (Isla)

In the Graduates Attributes hierarchy we'd be seen as lower level or less skilled than the more reflective stuff, even tho' the more reflective stuff is what we've always done. (James)

Employability: high on agenda

Employability is very high level now it's on the benchmarking matrix now so people actually care about Employability figures. (Lewis)

Participant	Defining E	Beyond degree	Lever	New roles	Others' responsibility	Academic departments	DLHE	In Careers Service	Threat
Emily	Generic term	Soft skills			Patchy				
Harry			Given us a stick			Careers is natural ally			
Isla	Graduate Attributes				Not seen as Careers role				Not promoting Careers; close to Careers stuff
Jack	Similar to what went before			E Consultants		Working with departments		Funded 2 posts here	
James	Fad; flavour of the month Graduate Attributes;		A lever		Discouraged to develop E; academic focus; No room for Careers				We'd be seen as lower level
Lewis	Personal qualities, marketed		Poke departments				E figures	E is down to us	
Olivia	Suffers from fine words	Ready for job market	slightly easier; raise Careers profile	E Consultants	University's agenda	Academic departments on board		Natural place to be	
Sophie			inroads; maintain momentum. integral	E Coordinator			Destination statistics		

Appendix E: Example Transcript: Lewis' Interview

[I've been asking people to give me a bit of background on what got you here]

Um…I suppose then the main industry I got into after leaving school, um, was the photographic uh industry so it was either in a kind of production/ management capacity or spent about two and a half three years as a freelance photographer, just working with a variety of firms, including Kodak um…and then went to university quite late…um…and …did a Sociology degree there, got a First at (name of university) um… with the intention of possibly doing primary teaching?

[mmhmm]

Did some {laughs} work experience working with primary school kids in (name) and thought 'Nah; I'm gonna kill them – not for me {laughs}. So I started to look around for options that were tied into teaching but not teaching and the Careers work came up. Went to (name of University) in '99, um... that was I think the last year that we finished up in November December, I think it was, and had a job lined up the Monday after I finished the course from one of the companies that I'd done my placement with, which was Prospects- uh God knows what they are called now, it's the Prospects Group, I think, they provide a lot of education, um facilities and uh research stuff…but anyway. So worked for them for a couple of years, I think 18 months a couple of years uh then came back and did a little stint with (name of organisation), working with the (name of programme). Uh… and then from there got the job at (name of organisation) and was there for about 18 months, again a couple of years, and then from there moved to (name of organisation) in 2000 and, uh, either two or three, can't remember, yeah must have been 2002… has it really been that long, it's the longest I've worked anywhere. So yeah.

[Did you do a careers education post at (name of University)?]

It was one of those combined posts, it was careers education but there was a guidance caseload as well.

[Mmhmm. So you've been here since 2002 as a Careers Adviser. Did your role change…do you not have some managerial responsibility?]

I deputise for (name of Director of Service) um…when, when he's not here. But ... they don't like, because it's so small, they don't, there's no point in having Deputy Directors here.

[Can you tell me briefly about the make up of the Careers Service?]

Um so here we …have a dedicated Careers Adviser for each of the Schools, so we have a Careers Adviser for the (name of School), for (name of School); for (name of School); for

(name of School); (name of School), and we have a Careers Adviser for (name of School), as well which is the (name) campus. We've also got a um… although she's not managed by us, we've got a Careers Co-ordinator, I suppose, in the (name) campus, she was over here for a week just to see what we do and finding out how we can work together. Um…

[Is that 6 Careers Advisers?]

Uh, right hang on…one, two, three,…six, yeah.

[And you have couple of support people?]

Yep, we've got an Employer Liaison Co-ordinator and we have three um admin. support staff. Not all of them are full time. A lot of them are part time or term time only or a mixture of both. We have full time people when the students are here.

[Technically you don't have an information role?]

No, no. we did have (name) was the Information Manager, we've moved that role now; (name) who is our admin support person has taken on a bit of the Information role, she's been doing a lot of the web stuff um and I look after the majority of the other web stuff, um because <u>most</u> of our information now is online.

[Do you see that as a significant change?]

Yes, well, we made that decision we, we had a look at our information room and over the last 4 years it looks as if a plague of locusts has come in … we were getting less and less stuff from employers to display, we were getting less and less requests from students for actual books or paper copies or whatever and the amount of resources and time and effort to keep that updated was just <u>not</u> um proportionate to the usefulness of it.

We actually went in and had a look just at it a couple of months ago and we just made the decision then that we were pretty much looking to put almost all of our information resources online now and maybe think about utilising the information room for doing smaller workshops. That information role, um, has … it's still important … we still like to keep everything bang up to date but when we get the information now it goes on the website, as opposed to in a room. Partly driven because that's the way students want to access information {laughs}, partly driven by the University management's desire to make sure information is easily available to our (name) campus and all our approved learning centres, anywhere from (name) to (name). Basically … we need to keep kind of that global head on.

[Do you think it's a trend across other Careers Services?]

I'm not sure, it's certainly a strategy that (name of University) has taken, basically because of the pressures on student numbers and funding in the UK, the growth area up until quite recently was international students but with the withdrawal of the Post Study Work visa um that's going to be pretty much closed now, the students are <u>not</u> going to come here in the numbers that they would have if that had still been here. So (name of University's) strategy now is basically to have a global University, (name of campus) just

being one of the campuses and (name of campus) has only been in existence for three or four years and they've already outgrown it and they're building now a much, much bigger campus out there.

[Are you aware of students accessing information ouwith the Careers Service?]

We ask them, we do an evaluation every year and we ask them what other information they use. We ask that for two reasons; one is to find out if they're using any good resources that we can easily link to but the other reason is to find out how good they are at identifying good resources um and it tends to be the latter category {laughs}...a lot of them are still thinking that using the Daily Record's website is a great way to look for a career. So, it informs us to be able to go in to classes and say 'Look, we realise a lot of you are using resources <u>but</u> be very, very careful about what you are using.' So, we… we don't see it as a threat, we're quite happy, we've now got Twitter, we've got Facebook, we've got um uh hundreds of links and if there's a good resource out there for students we're quite happy to link to it, we don't care who they use as long as we can get that information out to them as a resource. We don't feel threatened.

 [What does that mean for the role of the Careers Adviser?]

A lot of our job is signposting to the right resources, although the dream was to turn the students into effective information managers, I don't see any sign of that happening...they're still wandering about in the dark which is why they come to us, em and a lot of our role is 'OK now that we've discussed what general direction you're going in, now we're going to furnish you with a list of the right resources that are going to help you because… very very often a conversation will start with 'I'm looking for a job in X and there's nothing out there' so what they really mean is 'I haven't found the right resources.' Yeah. The more stuff that's out there, the more confusing it is so what we always say is our website is basically there to synthesise all of the stuff that's out there and for the subject bases at (name of University) we will try as much as possible that we've got the right resources for you in our online library and in the online subject pages so you don't have to go looking that far. And if you use our stuff you shouldn't really go far wrong.

[Has that area of work expanded since you started in 2002?]

Absolutely! Before, students relied very much on the brochures that were handed out at Careers Fairs and in the Careers Information room and just by their very nature they were only able to pick up six, seven, eight brochures or whatever, whereas now they've got access to a mass of information and a mass of resources, that's changed greatly.

[You mentioned working with students. Tell me how that has changed.]

In terms of guidance for my caseload I do probably very little guidance; um if I'm doing any guidance interviews, it's mainly with the (named subject area); I'll do next to no guidance with the (subject area) and some of the (subject area). They've already made their career choice, my role then is in getting them prepared for the application process and the interview and assessment, that's a coaching role in technique and a lot of my time is spent doing that. Um,, uh, the (subject area), a lot of them are not sure where to go but

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even there, they've usually got a fair idea of where their (subject) is going to take them because we do a module with all the (subject) in third year and first year and we get them to think about that so by the time they come to see me for a 1- to- 1 they've usually gone through a fair bit of work on the guidance process. Still happens now and again to get someone who says I don't have a clue what to do and we can take them through that process.

[How many guidance interviews in a year do you do?]

Wow, over a year? About a dozen guidance interviews a year, that's always been the case here. A lot of it would be with the generalist degrees – uh, management students, they tend to need a lot of guidance interviews and the life sciences students, it's not… I suppose they are guidance interviews in a way because the jobs, they, the jobs that they think they want to go for are either not there or are so niche that usually the guidance there is to get them to widen their horizons, especially the psychologists, for example : 'I want to be a psychologist' or 'I want to be a marine biologist - in (name of city)'{laughs} ...there might not be a lot of that going around so you might have to start thinking about that. Yeah, a lot of the guidance interviews I do are with the MBA students, that's always an interesting conversation. Probably more with them than any other.

[What is the direction of guidance here?]

We made a decision, oh God, about five six years ago that integrated careers education was the way we wanted to go; we don't have the resources, we're not a big big service , we don't have the resources to give in depth interviews to hundreds of students at a time so we decided that em class-based integration and workshops was the best way to go and <u>give</u> people the skills and the tools to effectively, at least get them thinking about their own career planning skills and where they should be going. So certainly in my case loads all of my students get um a flow chart or a procedure that I take the through to get them to start narrowing down career ideas if they haven't already decided what that is.

[What is the process to be seen for an appointment?]

We have that triage system. Normally we would see every student in a class situation at some point and that could be from first year onwards; most of us see our students regularly, once or twice a year in each year… so we're in class a <u>lot </u>and at that point they're pretty clear on the way they should be accessing us. We make it clear to them that the majority of information queries that they are going to ask us they could find out for themselves by simply putting it in the search box on the website and they're going to get that information. If there's something quite tricky or they want a quick check of anything then they can come to the drop in sessions and it's only then at the drop in session if something crops up that we kind of think, actually you need a bit more of a guidance interview or you need to do this in private or whatever, then, then we'd get them to book um an appointment. They now book their appointments online, but individual Advisers, we are still at liberty to manage our student caseload as we want so for example, I'm still quite happy to say to any of my students and I do tell them that, that they shouldn't send anything off, <u>anything </u>to an employer before running it past me first ... and they do take

me up on that so really a lot of my stuff is really just checking application answers, checking CVs, checking covering letters... cos that's what a lot of my students need. It's about teaching techniques and self marketing. They know they want to be an (job title), they know they want to be a (job title), they're just not very good at presenting themselves to get that job so...that's what we're good at so we can take them that far.

[Is the role what you expected?]

Because of the way the Dip CG or the QCG was taught a lot of it was schools based, so I never really had an idea what went on in HE Careers Services and I really didn't <u>have</u> any expectation because there's not a lot of emphasis on self-marketing and coaching techniques within self marketing in the course. And a lot of school work is simply about subject choice and not messing up so I didn't have an expectation that it would be guidance, guidance. I knew that that went on at other universities, I knew that, for example (name of University) was very focussed on this counselling model but I've never worked anywhere, I've worked in two universities I've never come across a rigid model that was expected. I suppose if I'd worked in a place that said 'this is your model of guidance' then I might have fallen into that but I think the two places I've worked at I've been lucky enough to be autonomous to develop the job in the way it needed to be developed, not impose a kind of format on it. I don't know that I had any expectations, or not. Certainly now it would be really strange if I got an increase in people saying 'I'm doing (subject) but I don't know what to do at the end of it', that would be weird.

[Talk to me a little bit about the teaching role.]

That's now gone up to the equivalent of 1.5 modules a year so there's a half module in first year in Maths, which just started this year. The teaching role, the teaching part of the job has been in response to, it's really just, it's getting students aware of the whole process and the whole game early on in their career. Cos what was happening was when I first arrived, what was happening was, that the students were appearing in their fourth year and saying 'Uh, I need to fill in this application form but there's a bit here asking me about this, this and this ... I don't have any examples of that'. Well it's a bit bloody late in the day! But I realised that it wasn't their fault because nobody had told them that somebody at some point was going to ask them about this. They still had this idea that all they would need to do was pick up their degree and walk out the door and there would be a job waiting for them and they wouldn't have to go through any process. Um ... so certainly with my caseload I made it a priority that the first years, as soon as they came through the door, they would know, they would be in no doubt whatsoever that in three or four years' time somebody was going to be asking them very, very difficult questions, over and above their technical degree information. And we spend two or three years making sure people don't forget that. And they're actually doing it, they're actually building up a portfolio of skills, so that when it comes to eh applications a) they've got the evidence b) at that point it's really just shaping that evidence to make it as um presentable as possible and make it as different as possible. So, so that's really why we've got into the teaching. So the first year half module in (subject) is in a, what's it called, a Problem Solving module any my half, because this is the first time I've run it this year I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do with them but I gave them ... because one of the things that is still lacking in the

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(subject) students, because it's a pure (subject) degree here, they've no real sense of the business world or how to apply (the subject) in the business world … and very, very few of them will become (name of profession), in fact, next to none of them will become name of profession), they will all end up in the business world. So uh what I got them to do was think about (the subject) and how it's taught and get them to devise, design and market a game to help teachers in a school support Key Stage 2 (subject) teaching eh, and then as a group they had to pitch it and that's what they were assessed on . They were assessed on their pitch, their business awareness, their presentation skills, their ideas, how well they took on board the brief etc etc. It was completely novel to them, it was a real culture shock because they did not come to university to do that, they came to study (subject) or (subject) or whatever. And I tell them that, I say 'You're going to hate this , it's going to be completely outside your comfort zone but it's the old broccoli thing … it's good for you, believe me, you won't appreciate it at this point but believe me, it's good for you.' And it has been over the years, the destinations for the (subject) students have just gone through the roof, students are much, much better prepared now. So we do that in first year. We do a similar type of thing in the (name of degree), the first year we do half a module there, but that's really working with employers, bringing them in, letting them know what employers look for, beyond their numerical ability, so they've got enough time to work on that. The other half module is with (subject) again, in third year, and um that really is, it's almost like a live module now, because, … because of the importance of internships… A great figure came out recently from The Times High Fliers that 32% of employers will now only employ people if they worked with them before. That's a huge chunk of the market- a third of the market?- it's like, if you haven't worked for us before, you're unlikely to get a job, which is 'wow'. So the whole thing is kicking off earlier and what we do with the third years, we just take them through the whole career choice programme, the coaching stuff on applications and uh assessment centres – we get employers in to run business games, case studies, and then by the end of that I then encourage them strongly to use all of these skills and actually make an application for a live internship programme, which the majority of them have done this year.

[Is that model replicated across the board?]

Each School will do it differently, each School thinks it has different needs, each department thinks it has different needs.

[Has it been easy to make in-roads?]

We were really lucky, it's that kind of serendipity thing, because at the time that we thought this would be a good idea, um the University itself was getting a bit concerned about its slippage in the league tables so round about the same time as we started to look at getting into classes the University management team were benchmarking against the (institution description) to see who was performing well or who wasn't performing well against the (institution description) equivalents. Thankfully, {laughs} in a way for us, the graduate destinations were pretty poor compared to the (institution description) across most of the departments and there was pressure from the University then on the departments to do something about it. It was traffic-lighted so anything we had a red on, we had to put an action plan in place. So we just thought, well here's our ideal opportunity

so we just went along and said you know that action plan you've got to do, well, how about we do this and this ... we actually gave them a solution to a problem that had just occurred and they were quite happy to snap it up.

Um but once they actually saw the benefit, the <u>real</u> benefit, I think they would struggle without it now in the departments. So it wasn't that difficult in a lot of cases. There still is bits of the University where it's more difficult, but usually that's not an ideological resistance to it, it's really just a practical thing about trying to get time, within a timetable, that's accredited, because there's so much to be taught, and there's no slack ... so they keep saying! But students tell us differently.

[Will this grow elsewhere?]

I get no sense of what's going on or whether there's some sort of strategic approach. I don't have much to do with AGCAS anymore so I've no idea what the thinking is.

When I talk to employers they're looking for people who have a business head on them, who are not offensive, who can write properly, who can count effectively and who they'd feel comfortable with shoving them in front of a client and that's what we coach people in and I don't know who else would do that. The whole kind of higher level, pedagogical stuff about equipping people with the skills ... I'm not sure, I'm not sure about that, I just think ... people will develop those skills when they are in the business place , it's just showing that they have the potential to do that, that's what employers are looking for . If no-one's doing that then the students are floundering, I would imagine. Um, the good students will be able enough to seek help somewhere but the majority of them will get it wrong. And for us, that's good news, well for our students, because one of the things I think is useful to point out to my students is that on average at the first sift of a graduate selection process, 70% of students will be excluded because they can't write an application form properly. So here's what we are going to do over the next 10 weeks: we're going to make sure that at least, you get past that stage, which cuts it down from 100% to 30% so the competition is going to be a lot less.

Our focus is on two things: One, getting students experienced and upskilled in terms of the personal qualities and skills that they have and two, is having done that, being able to market them effectively. The vast majority of our job is now doing that. Getting students experienced and skilled and then getting them to not waste that by not marketing it effectively. Once they get to the assessment centre and performance side of things we can coach them so far; the rest is up to them.

[How is the Careers Service seen in terms of Employability?]

Pretty much that's down to us and that's OK for us when it's going well. But like any Careers Service we take the credit when it's going well and we blame external economic factors when it's not! But we are always benchmarked now against (a group) so we need to make sure our students are up there with the best of them. I think we looked last year, I think our performance indicator overall, had we been in (a group), I think we would have been about 2nd on Employability. But yeah, it's down to us and it's down to us to support departments to getting the Employability in there because every single module has to have

an element of Employability in the module, academics struggle with it, so we just play the card of 'we'll take that burden off your hands' which we're quite happy to do obviously.

[What about the identity, the profile of the Careers Service here?]

The profile of the Careers Service has gone up, gone up majorly. I mean last year we won a Learning and Teaching award for one of our modules, so the Principal was well aware it was a Careers module. We're very savvy now about self marketing ourselves, we now make sure that anything we deem as a success, we market that to the hilt, we let everybody in the University know um because it's just one of these facts now that in universities you have to be visible, you have to be <u>seen</u> to be doing a good job, not just doing a good job. You cannot hide your light under a bushel anymore. We've raised our profile. It's just things…When you get invited to present figures to the Learning and Teaching boards, whether we're invited along to departmental meetings on a regular basis, those kind of things suggest to me that we're kind of up there now. I get invited to my departments' meetings; that would never have happened five years ago. It's just tenacity I think, you've got to keep knocking on doors until they realise the value of what it is.

Because a lot of academics don't have a bloody clue what it is we do, they have no idea, academics in general see any support service as a drain on resources. OK. They make money for the University through their research and it all gets frittered away by support services, that's their general view on things. So at the meetings it's quite nice to put them right on things – if your students weren't getting jobs nobody would come on to your course , nobody comes on to your course, your course wouldn't run and you don't have a job so ...

[Has your role changed?]

From the time I've been here, since I've been at (the University) it's not changed, it kind of started off on that premise, it just wasn't as effective or engrained as it is now. It's changed in as much as it's got a lot better but the actual road that we were taking hasn't changed. We had that idea about five years ago. Employability is very high level now it's on the benchmarking matrix now so people actually care about Employability figures.

[What will the Careers Service of the future be like?]

A lot more use of social networking media; we've certainly got into that in a big way. I think a lot of it will be driven by technology. I think depending what's out there. We're developing a mobo, a mobile phone site, a version of our website and so that'll be getting launched in the summer time. SMS messaging will become very common ; we already have a system where we can text message students to remind them they have an appointment or there's an event coming up or whatever so I think, that's certainly <u>my</u> interest, using technology to make our job a lot easier and make it more effective from the student's point of view . I think that's a good thing and we can sell that on a political level to the University because that doesn't rely on somebody knocking on my door and sitting in that seat for half an hour . We could do that whether they are in (this University) or wherever. Even to the extent that we're looking at podcasting or videoing employer presentations so we can upload them so people in (a place) or (another place) can see the PWC

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presentation or whatever. But that's needed a change of attitude about what careers information is ...I mean the old classification system... I don't think anybody knows or cares what that was anymore...it's just not relevant.

[What are the implications for Careers Advisers coming in?]

I think a lot of it... I don't know... The thing that still disappointed me about the Dip CG course was it didn't have any of the self-marketing techniques, coaching skills and a lot of it was very heavy models of guidance which I don't know if anyone, certainly not here adheres to any particular model; we've all developed our own techniques and our own models and it's just not that important, we don't use it that much, as I've said. A lot more of it is about helping people, coaching people, training them to be effective self presenters, basically. It's almost like a, I don't know, it's not a lifestyle coach but it's a.... there's a definite technique to that and I don't think anybody trained us for that in the Dip CG. Personally, I think the DCG will becomes less relevant to the role of the Careers Adviser, I think we're looking for a different skill set.

[What do you look for in recruiting Careers Advisers here?]

We look at a variety of backgrounds. Um we'd look at what they've got to add to the skillset that we don't have , we are quite lucky here, we've got quite a good broad skillset and we've all got really good strengths in different areas which works across the University.

It is interesting, in having that conversation about getting rid of the Information room we were just thinking of how different that is from (another University) which has almost an extensive library ...why have they got that, is it because there's a different need in (this university), is it simply just to keep information people in a job? {laughs}. Is it just, what is it, a legacy? Is it something they think they should have? Those rooms just take space and space is at an absolute premium at a University. And to be honest, one of the questions we asked the Advisers was when was the last time you actually took someone in to the Information Room or you saw someone in the Information Room looking at the stuff and nobody could remember!

[Do you need a physical space?]

We need a focal point, yeah, we need a hub that people can come to and know where we are. I don't think just having some virtual name somewhere, because people still need to come and talk to you ...you can't get across online the nuances or even checking stuff. I refuse to check stuff electronically, I refuse to check CVs, anything online because I don't think I can check that effectively without a conversation with someone. All I ever say to them is the only way I can check this is I can tell you if it looks nice but that's about it. But without an extensive conversation with you as to why things are in the way they are, or why you've emphasised that or why have you done that, that ain't going to happen without me having a conversation with you ... so I don't do it. I don't know if other Careers Advisers do but I just refuse. Cos I know whenever I'm checking anything it is an intensive conversation and a lot of it is just getting people to re-think what the hell they are doing with their CV and what the hell the CV is for. It's the 'general Joes' I love! What's the CV

for? 'Oh it's just a general CV !' 'Well, generally, that looks fine!' Come back when you've got a job that you are aiming for and I'll tell you what it's like. {laughs}.

I think the other thing that students appreciate here is that I think we're brutally honest with them and a lot of them like that. We don't… we don't sugar the pill. We just tell them how it is. Tell them how difficult it is out there and tell them what they are up against. And at least when they've got that information, they are well prepared.

[Tell me about AGCAS; you said you didn't have much to do with it?]

No idea, nothing, don't know what it's for or what it's about. Still don't get the AGCAS link thing: I've got a session with Psychology students next week coming up can anyone give me a CV for Psychology students? No, do it yourself. Um, don't get that one. It's your job {laughs}. It's like the QAA, there's an Enhancement theme on Employability embedded in the curriculum. Really? That's never been done before. There's a whole industry out there… I'm not sure I see it as a profession. I think I feel more like an individual practitioner rather than part of a profession. I don't think collectively it adds anything to anyone's knowledge or certainly to our knowledge base. I gave up going to workshops that promised to ... they would have great titles like, I don't know, 'How to use Social Networking Effectively', so you'd think that's quite interesting so you'd go along to that session so it would be all 'Let's think about how we could use social networking effectively'. Well, I didn't come here to think about that, I'm not telling you how I use it, you're supposed to be telling me.

It's all 'Let's share best practice!' that means you don't know, do you? You just want me to tell you. And universities now are so competitive, there's a whole bunch of stuff I would not share with anybody from AGCAS, about things that we do or things that we don't do or how we do things, how we market things. We don't really want to give other universities an advantage in the league tables. The other thing that annoys me about these collectives is that it slows everything down, it slows change down. Totally slows change down. It drives me insane.

The Shared Vacancy scheme that we eventually got up and running, great system but took about four years to get that off the ground. It's insane. That frustration is just too much to bear, because if you're not going through that process it's dead easy for us here. It's pretty good here, if you've got an idea and we want to implement it and can find the money and a budget somewhere then we'll do it, we'll just go ahead and implement it and we could do that instantly.

[Are there other ways you keep up your professional development?]

My benchmark is always how well my students are doing. In terms of professional development, I think I would only worry about that if my students were feeling let down or they weren't performing. My benchmark every year is basically, is how well are they doing and if they're doing really well I don't really care about anything else, that's what I'm here for. That's what I see my job being, getting as many of them into good graduate-level jobs and if that's what happening, if it ain't broke, then there's no need to fix it. A lot of my professional skills development now is on the technological side and that's just all self-

taught, it's nothing to do with Careers, it's nothing to do with guidance, it's all to do with delivery and media, more than anything else so I suppose I'm more in that ballpark now rather than the guidance /skills area. I just think that will keep me employable if I ever wanted to leave here, which I might not now, cos it's nice. But even thinking of moving into a management role somewhere, the thought of having to leave that behind and having to deal with committees and meetings and stuff like that is… not me.

[Phone rings. We end the interview]

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