

How could we incorporate work based learning into the current 3 year curriculum structure?

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Traditionally embedding professional skills and experience in the curriculum has been structured in the form of a placement year. This discussion paper will consider strategies for embedding shorter term work based learning projects into the existing curriculum timeframe, drawing upon the lessons learnt through the @Work programme.

The University of York's @Work programme has been coordinated collaboratively by Careers and Humanities and Social Science departments since 2010. It is targeted at first and second year undergraduates and the initiative currently generates around 35 projects for 200 students annually.

Projects are developed alongside a wide range of partner organisations, including employers, charities and local government. They are designed to have both tangible and valuable outcomes for those partners, as well as offering students a real and challenging experience which will enable them to develop and practice broad skillsets, such as communication, team work and resilience. It is this exposure of students to a professional environment and the associated risk of a real project, which we will examine for its potential to provide an opportunity for the formal assessment of critical reflective abilities in the curriculum.

This discussion will consider some of the past projects, departmental feedback and student reflections and encourage participants to discuss how and where we can incorporate these sorts of activities within a formal academic programme with structured learning outcomes and assessments, whilst retaining quality, consistency and parity.