

Outstanding Case Studies

Read on to find out what four students gained from undertaking various routes on the Career Development module.

You can also find out what their placement supervisors had to say about their work which was graded 'outstanding'.

We hope these case studies will inspire you; either as a placement provider or as a potential student on placement!



Rachel

[Learning from Work: Greens Health and Fitness](#)



Brett

[Student Tutoring \(Secondary\): Burnside Business & Enterprise College](#)



Nicole

[Student Tutoring \(Primary\): Lingey House Primary School](#)



Mark

[Student Volunteering: Newcastle University Fellwalking Society](#)

If you would like to read more accounts of Career Development module placements, please [contact us](#) or, if you are already enrolled on the module, you can access the 'Extended Outstanding Case Studies' document via Blackboard.

Learning from Work: Greens Health and Fitness



Rachel Thompson - BA (Hons) Marketing and Management

In my final year at University I chose to take a Career Development module. Like most students, I needed to work part-time to fund my living costs and had already secured a role as a Membership Assistant at Greens Health and Fitness in Gosforth. The module allowed me to gain academic credit through my job and as a result, I had a more manageable University workload and more time to commit to extra hours at work.

Why did you choose the Career Development module?

Having spent a year in industry, I began to understand the importance of having practical experience as well as a good academic grounding. On my return to University, I was keen to continue to develop what I had learned. The Career Development module provided that opportunity with refreshing and unique assessment methods; not an essay in sight! Instead I was evaluated on my ability to verbally demonstrate the skills I had learned on work placement and even my supervisor's feedback played a part in my final result.

What activities were you involved in during your placement?

I was responsible for the day to day administration of existing memberships including negotiating contract renewals with existing members, following up queries or complaints by existing members and processing the paperwork for new memberships. A big part of my role involved retaining gym members and I had to try and understand the reasons people were leaving the club, to then offer special deals and packages in an attempt to change their minds. The hardest part of my role related to the members who had failed to pay their subscriptions. Often, this involved liaising with a Debt Collection Agency and occasionally resulted in bailiffs and court action, so my ability to handle volatile situations, and to communicate clearly but calmly, has improved enormously!

What have you gained from the experience?

I knew how competitive it would be trying to gain a graduate job at the end of my degree, but the module really helped prepare me for interviews. While my placement itself was providing me with good examples of various different skills, the lecturers and tutors on the module taught me how to use those experiences to my advantage. Concepts like the STAR technique ensured that I was concise and clear in demonstrating my competencies and in the end I strongly believe this helped me attain my graduate job at Marks and Spencer.

NEXT: read what Rachel's supervisor had to say...

Rachel's supervisor: Phil Lambton



Rachel joined us as part of our membership team who look after our 3000 member club.

Rachel responded to customer queries with a professional approach and provided excellent customer service at all times, which led to our customers being very happy with the service they received and prevented us losing business.

Rachel was tasked to find the reasons why our members were leaving us to see if we could minimise this. She developed a new tracking system which could be used by everybody in the department

and allowed the management to target certain categories of leavers. This led to increased focus and efficiency and we achieved our budgeted targets because of her hard work.

We also asked Rachel to look at collecting as many of the direct debit rejected payments as possible to maximise the clubs revenue and prevent accounts going into arrears for too long, resulting in members leaving the club. She set up a system which led to an increase in collected payments and trained the team how to update the system.

Rachel was an outstanding employee and got on with members and staff of all ages and backgrounds. She was a pleasure to work with and will be an asset to whichever organisation employs her.

Student Tutoring: Burnside Business & Enterprise College



Brett Barnsdale -BA (Hons) Business Management

Why did you choose the Career Development module?

I chose the Career Development module to enhance my final year of study. I wanted to make my module choices as interactive as possible and enable me to distinguish myself from many other candidates in the employment market.

What have you gained from the module experience?

My placement provided me with practical examples of skills which I can take forth to interviews. I learnt a great deal about communication and team working in a school environment. Moreover through the assessment of the module I developed planning skills and learnt how to implicitly display my results, be it through interview situations or in written assessments.

Overall, the module helped me to test out a possible career route and cemented a change in my future direction.

NEXT: read what Brett's supervisor had to say...

Brett's supervisor: Caroline Poole



Brett was always punctual, mature and professional during his time at Burnside and exceeded all expectations when it came to the immense amount of planning and organisation that he undertook to prepare resources for use during his time here. He worked with a variety of students within the business studies department which encompassed a vast range of ages and abilities. The teacher he worked with said:

“Brett made a huge contribution to the students’ learning while he was here. He showed a great amount of initiative from the very first time he arrived and I felt confident to give him a great deal of responsibility.”

He stepped up to the challenge of planning, creating resources for and delivering two lessons for a year 10 group of students, with the focus on job applications and interview techniques, showing brilliant personal enterprise:

“Brett was extremely professional and keen and was a great role-model to the students. He delivered two sessions to students which were extremely well planned and must have taken tremendous organisation. Great time and effort was put into the resources and the students responded greatly to the session, providing very positive feedback.”

Brett also did some mentoring sessions with sixth form students, and in order to support these more vulnerable students to the best of his ability, he researched visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles to help them develop effective learning tools for their futures in education. Along with other placement students, he offered an informal Higher Education drop in information session to aid students with UCAS applications and offer advice about what to expect during life as a student.

When I asked the curriculum leader for business to give me a few lines for Brett’s evaluation this is what I received:

“Brett was a real help in the classroom. He had great subject knowledge and he took on a supporting role for me with minimal (in fact no) instruction. I wish I could keep him here! Brett would make a fantastic teacher; I wish him all the best for the future.”

This is reiterated by all staff Brett worked with during his placement.

Student Tutoring: Lingey House Primary School



Nicole Averre -BSc (Hons) Psychology

Why did you choose the Career Development module?

I chose the Career Development module in my final year of studying as the student tutoring option was a great way to gain additional vocational experience within local schools, and my goal was to gain a place on a Primary PGCE.

My degree in psychology was incredibly academic and the assessment was 100% exam based which could be quite intimidating in third year! The CDM is assessed in a completely different way to most courses at Newcastle – the assessment includes a supervisor evaluation and a formal interview to discuss the skills you have acquired throughout your placement. This was brilliant as it meant that I was able to enhance my graduate skills and get academic recognition for my teaching practice.

What have you gained from the module?

Within the current job market it is extremely difficult to find a graduate job. I was incredibly worried by this, particularly whilst applying for my primary PGCE in my third year. The CDM allowed me to enhance my 'graduate skills' and improved my confidence in my personal enterprise, communication and team working skills, as well as increasing my planning and organisation skills. For the assessed interview, it was essential to focus on 3-4 key examples of where you have improved your skills. I was able to improve my behaviour management within the classroom, improve my communication abilities and show my leadership skills through planning and delivering a science lesson to my class. The CDM completely changed my way of thinking in terms of skills and knowledge and has undoubtedly increased my confidence of how to develop my skills further.

How you might use the module in the future?

The CDM has given me invaluable experience within a formal interview setting - in my actual PGCE interview I was able to use a vast amount of examples to show my skills with a reflective attitude towards how I could improve further. I would highly recommend the CDM to students, particularly those who would benefit from a work placement or those who are considering teaching in the future.

NEXT: read what Nicole's supervisor had to say...

Nicole's supervisor: Connor Chipchase

Throughout her whole placement Nicole has presented herself to be an asset and a motivated member of our team. She has always arrived at, or before, the agreed time and completed any given task to a high standard, showing to have the initiative to undertake basic classroom tasks without being requested to. This has been a huge assistance to me as the classroom practitioner as it has provided more time throughout the school day to undertake extra beneficial activities such as more one-to-one work with the children. Moreover, she has shown herself to be an enthusiastic, determined and professional individual who has proved to be able to adapt to suit the needs of children and the general day-to-day situations that take place in a primary classroom.

Nicole has built positive relationships with all the staff at Lingey House, making great effort to get to know staff and children and displaying a calm, positive and motivational manner throughout. The children have really enjoyed working with Nicole, and assessment results have shown that they have benefited from working with her in guided groups. Guided group work has been a key part of Nicole's classroom support and she has completed everything that has been asked of her with enthusiasm and inspiration. Throughout such support she has shown that she does not need to be constantly directed, and she is always aware of where she is needed in the learning environment.

Nicole likes to keep active in the classroom especially during topic work based around the Tudors. In lessons she has spoken with confidence and enthusiasm and held the children's attention well. She has taken a range of questions from children and motivated them to use higher order thinking skills through her use of effective questioning. She has also created an imaginative learning journey for the Tudor topic that has further supported the children.



To sum up, I feel that Nicole has shown exceptional potential as an educator throughout this placement and she has been a true support in class and around school. All staff who have worked alongside her have been very impressed with her manner and motivated attitude. I wish her great success in her future.

Volunteering Placement: Newcastle University Fellwalking Society



Mark Holroyd: BA (Hons) Geography

Why did you choose the Career Development module?

I was already volunteering as secretary of the Newcastle University Fellwalking Society so the module allowed me to gain academic credit for this work. Taking the module in my final year allowed me to set aside time dedicated to improving the society. Without the CDM, I would have needed to fit this in on top of my heavy course workload.

The CDM offers a different method of assessment - an assessed interview and supervisor evaluation, as opposed to the usual essays and exams in other modules. I was aware that in starting a future career I would need to undergo interviews, which was a bit of an unknown for me, so I felt this module would help me develop the skills I'd need to be successful in this area.

What activities were you involved in?

My role within the Fellwalking Society was to be responsible for administration and communication with members, as well as leading trips each weekend. There were lots of opportunities to develop the graduate skills and plenty of complex situations to use within the assessed interviews. For example, when minibuses broke down in the middle of the Lake District and an appropriate solution needed to be found, or when changing weather conditions on a walk required route alterations. I also spent time guiding the strategic improvement of the society over the year. This was done by leading a review of the society by the committee and brainstorming solutions to problems. The results of this were condensed into a society development plan for which I then reviewed progress with the committee on a regular basis. As my self-initiated project for the Advanced CDM, I led the organisation of a public lecture with world famous climber and extreme athlete, Tim Emmett. This was part-funded by a grant from the Alumni Association, the Union Society and Ncl+ and was organised jointly by many of the university's outdoor clubs, in a bid to improve intersociety relations.

What have you gained from the module?

My degree was very academic with its content having little vocational relevance. The CDM completely altered the way I viewed my degree; switching my perception of it from being content-based to skills-based. For example, I now see essays and presentations as opportunities to demonstrate and develop my skills rather than simply my knowledge. The module also made me far more self-aware about the skills I have and what I need to do to develop these further. It has improved my knowledge of what the graduate skills actually are and how I can demonstrate these effectively, which will hopefully give me an advantage in future job interviews. I highly recommend the CDM to anyone who is already volunteering or working while at University.

NEXT: read what Mark's supervisor had to say...

Mark's supervisor: Georgina Morgan-Wynne

Mark dedicated 131 hours to the society, successfully planning and organising nine fellwalking trips, involving route planning, trip safety and administration, working both with his committee and individually. He effectively implemented a new marketing strategy and society development plan which led to membership increasing by over 20% - great for the society itself and participation levels within the union.



Mark demonstrated a high level of communication through various forms; one-to-one contact with freshers, introducing presentations to over 100 students, committee team meetings and writing up minutes and society plans. He created a new way of recording minutes, using an action point system making it clearer for each committee member to see what they had to do and improving the running of the society overall.

Mark combined both personal enterprise and team working skills when he initiated a meeting with members of other outdoor clubs to promote intersociety relations. This resulted in a collaborative event with an external speaker. He contributes greatly to the aims and objectives of the union society by exercising supervision of the Fellwalking Society, helping to promote this activity to all students and providing social, cultural, athletic and educational activity.