

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS



**NICKI MOORE
RCDP, ON HER
EXPERIENCES
OF THE NEW
QUALIFICATION
IN CAREER
DEVELOPMENT**

The team at iCeGS at the University of Derby decided to deliver initial training for career development practitioners at a time when the CDI was producing the *Blueprint for Professional Roles in the Career Development Sector*. The CDI activities resulted in the new Qualification in Career Development (QCD) which replaced the old QCG in January 2017 and the University of Derby was the first university to deliver the new award within our new Masters in Career Education and Coaching.

students with a diverse and interesting programme which is rooted in good practice and a knowledge of 'what works'. iCeGS knowledge of the sector, through their ongoing programme of research, has also been used to support our learners both in developing their own cutting edge professional research skills and in developing an up to date understanding of the sector.

Our programme is thorough and very stimulating and we have juggled the need to develop practical skills with the very rigorous academic approach required by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education for Masters level study (QAA 2010). Students on our programme have required tremendous commitment and excellent organisational skills to manage the competing requirements of practical skills development and the ability to critically analyse and reflect on practice and accommodate a diverse range of assessment types.

We set out to develop a programme which was 'innovative, evidence-based, and rigorous'. Our innovation is evident in both our delivery model and philosophy. Our programme is delivered through a blended teaching and learning approach and a philosophy which embraces the concept of a community of practice (Wenger 1998).

'I have loved that the students on the course have created a 'Community of Practice' who offer support and practical advice to each other through the 'WhatsApp' group, even though we come from very different backgrounds and live in different parts of the country.' Roma Gee, student, MA in Careers Education and Coaching

Our students come from all over the country and providing them with opportunities to work together on collaborative activities is an essential element of the programme and of course, technology has been important in helping us to achieve this goal.

We were clear from the start that a new model would mean changing the way we think about practice. The new Blueprint reflects this and the QCD now includes a much greater focus on educational management and development, teaching and learning theory, the use of technology in education and guidance, partnership working, and innovative ways of developing and using career and labour market information.

To manage this diverse range of competences we have been supported by guest lecturers from across the education and guidance sectors who have provided our

It has been an exciting but demanding time for our delivery team and for the students but at the end of our second semester we have our first cohort of eight students who are certainly going to be equipped to manage and deliver high-quality programmes of career development in any part of the sector which they find themselves in. This is what one of our students had to say about the programme:

"This has been a fabulous learning experience - challenging, enlightening and enriching. The Saturday lectures and blended learning approach enabled me to balance the degree with the rest of my life. I met wonderful fellow students, who alongside some great teaching and influential guest lecturers, made this learning journey a life changing experience for me. I look forward to putting knowledge into practice as I move towards a new career horizon". Zoe Hendricks, student, MA in Careers Education and Coaching

References

The Quality Assurance Agency (2010). *Masters Degree Characteristics*. Gloucester: QAA. www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Masters-degree-characteristics.pdf [Accessed Sept 2017]
Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge University Press.

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