

THE SCHOLARSHIP FRAMEWORK

Member of staff:	Jamie Hutton
College:	Guildford College Group
Programme Award Title:	Golf Management FdA and BA (Hons) Top Up Degree
Name of Employer(s):	European Golf Tour/PGA/Merrist Wood Golf Club

Jamie Hutton is a Lecturer and Course Leader on the Golf Management FdA at Merrist Wood College (part of the Guildford College Group) and understands that it takes time to build up relationships with employers. “I use my CPD as an opportunity to network with professionals and companies involved in the golf industry.” Jamie also keeps up to date with the industry by belonging to the PGA⁽¹⁾ (Professional Golf Association) and continues to keep his professional skills up to date which latterly included a course with the PGA on golf biomechanics in Birmingham. These qualifications are also of benefit to students who have an added bonus of being coached during their programme of study by a professional golfer and a teacher with a good level of understanding of the more scientific aspects of their course.

Students are also involved at every opportunity and attend events such as the national golf shows, prestigious golf tournaments and have the opportunity to use state-of-the-art equipment and golf courses (see below).

Merrist Wood College is well placed for a Golf Management programme, with Merrist Wood Golf Club on its doorstep, and over 100 other golf clubs within Surrey. Wentworth Golf Club is also within easy reach and is the annual host of the BMW PGA Championship. All of the degree students are employed in a voluntary capacity during this tournament and all work within the Media Operations at this important event (2). This is a very good example of how the programme can be of value to local employers.

“Over the years we have also had three professional golfers working in the department and they all bring their own experience to the programme. The upside to this is that all of them bring with them a wide network of other golf industry contacts that can be of great value to the course.”

“I see previous students all of the time working in industry-related retail or manufacturing outlets including working as assistant managers at golf clubs. When I attended Wentworth, I saw the four main tour vans on the range with previous students working in each one! Quite often previous students are also seen caddying; this role comes with a great salary and world travel. One student has recently been employed by ‘Your Golf Travel’, a corporate golf travel company that organises golf holidays and tournaments worldwide, which demonstrates the range of roles a student could potentially move into.”

“Students on this programme are very employable. Unfortunately we have more requests from employers than we can cope with at times.”

When the team wrote the FdA and Top-Up programme they had an industrial liaison board of local employers (3). “During the validation employers definitely helped shape our programme. This is an ongoing process so it is really important that individual staff continue networking to keep those relationships going and promote new connections.”

“Modules are developed with employers in mind so that students get the essential experience that employers need which is why it is important to continue networking so that we can keep up with the industry. These relationships also offer other benefits such as students gaining real-life experiences and the programme continues to have a rich engagement with employers.”

As well as the above, students reap the benefits of these relationships; for example, manufacturers like Callaway Golf provide discounted clothing and prizes for students. They have even donated Gary Willett’s winning shirt in a sealed frame to the college. Willett won his first major championship at the 2016 Masters Tournament at Augusta National and is an inspiration to the students.

Keeping the relationships with employers going is necessary so that they are continually sharing their expertise and they support the programme in many ways (4). Primarily, employers offer specialist tutors who link to the programme in general or to specific modules. Merrist Wood has a PGA regional office nearby and each year a member of their staff offers six lectures on the rules of golf and a speaker from the Surrey Golf Union gives a talk about handicapping systems.

Employing experts can be problematic but the college is quite supportive of this; for example, they employ the experts as casual staff or offer a one-off payment.

However, many speakers do come in and do favours. “To offer this level of expertise we do need additional funding and of course goodwill; without all of this I will not be seeing those students out in the workplace.”

“We do rely on the employers/experts sharing their resources and letting us use their facilities either for free or at a heavily discounted rate.” One specialist coach has a high tec. 3D analysis system that costs a considerable sum of money and is one of only a few of these machines in the UK. The equipment throws a magnetic field around the player and transfers what it reads into a 3D image offering over 200 measurements (5). “What the students learn goes straight into their bio-mechanics assignments and they are then able to compare their own golf swing to a professional’s golf swing. This adds scientific detail and offers students an informed viewpoint.”

The HE students mainly already work in the golf industry part-time, mostly in pro-shops which allows them an insight into the industry. They tend not to then undertake additional work experience because with work, practice and study, time is limited. However, they do benefit from six away days per year and one of them, at Sunningdale Golf Club, offers a brilliant discount so students can play on one of the best courses in this country.

A golf course architect delivers the Golf Architecture module so that the students gain relevant information first hand. This module includes site visits to new golf courses as well as courses in planning to learn about the land, levelling and how it needs to be developed (6). “This is real-world experience and very valuable to the students’ development.”

Students also visit Foresight Sports Europe and use the golf simulators that professionals use so that students can better understand how this technology works, and be able to link it to their biomechanics assignment. This is especially useful when using the Force Plate that allows students to gather data about their transfer of weight in the golf swing.

Students undertake a professional development module in the first two years and keep work experience log books. As they are already working in the industry no extra placement is added to their workload.

Each year Merrist Wood students run a memorial tournament for the family of a student who died a few years ago. They manage it from end to end as part of an event management module. This is organised as a small charitable event at college which helps prepare them for the Wentworth professional European Tour event where students on the course man the media desk for the whole event (7). “It is the best week of the year, a totally different environment. We have 2-3 students working all of the time in the media centre which is the hub of the event. They are taking what they have learnt straight into practice and they can see the dynamics of a large international event at first hand. They are handing microphones to reporters, commentators and famous golf figures. They don’t get paid for it but the other benefits are huge including Hugo Boss gear that they keep at the end of the tournament and they are also able to watch the golf for free along with a ticket for a guest.”

“This is real assessment in the workplace. Students continue keeping a log book and they receive an assessor report from the manager of the media centre.” This assessment is then used by the module leader to grade their work.

For technical higher education programmes a teacher practitioner is certainly necessary. “Having one foot in the industry and one in the college community certainly helps with the quality of the student experience and I think it is essential to have time to set up sponsorship deals that support the development of resources and the graduation process. However, there is just not enough time for much of this extra work, but maybe stronger links between marketing departments and employers would be useful and a benefit to all.”

Links with Boyer’s Models of Scholarship

- (1) Scholarship of Teaching: Teacher studying and developing deep pedagogical knowledge
- (2) Scholarship of Integration: Closer involvement with the community and investment in work-based learning and internships
- (3) Scholarship of Integration: Integration of knowledge from different sources
- (4) Scholarship of Application: Formal development of practical partnerships on behalf of the university that connect students with the field/industry

(5) Scholarship of Application: Apply knowledge and skills in work-based placements

(6) Scholarship of Application: Support or development of community activities in the field or industry that link with academic discipline

(7) Scholarship of Integration: Closer involvement with the community and investment in work-based learning and internships

Reference

Brewer, J. & Hutton, J. (2016) Employer Engagement Mosaic: A tool to identify and capture scholarship in college higher education. East Surrey College and Merrist Wood College. *The Scholarship Framework*.