

Earn to Learn Scheme at Loughborough University

Research by the Centre for Global Sourcing and Services at Loughborough University has found that 'white-collar' middle-office, work in business support functions is being systematically reconfigured and re-engineered through internal Shared Service Centres (SSC) and external business process outsourcers (BPO).

As a consequence, professional work becomes deskilled and commoditised such that it can be moved to cheaper locations offshore. Currently the UK is home to around five million of these middle-office jobs.

Deskilling and offshoring has three potential impacts on the UK economy:

1. The hollowing out of middle level jobs creates an hourglass shaped economy with a mid-career bottleneck for individual workers;
2. A skills/experience gap as entry-level training roles are moved offshore and away from the main business, preventing onshore individuals from getting a foot on the career ladder (Data from the Association of Graduate Recruiters indicate that graduate recruitment to top organisations fell 8% in 2016).
3. Work is offshored for lack of a compelling reason to leave it in the UK

We have explored ways in which universities can collaborate with enterprises to create business process roles which can employ students.

This project aims to form a consortium of universities and stakeholders in conjunction with the Government's UK Department for International Trade to develop a 'Flexible Business Process Sourcing' scheme that will

- Provide for the progressive development and practise of relevant professional skills.
- Enable students to graduate without substantive debt, especially if linked to graduate apprenticeships.
- Widen participation in Higher Education and help organisations to justify locating work in the UK.

The project will bring together organisations, consultants, outsource providers, policy makers, educationalists and UKTI to share alternative approaches that can encourage more sustainable labour policies in the UK.

Loughborough University is one of the leading universities in the UK and we believe we can play a leading role in creating innovative practice **for** collaboration between universities and enterprise partners to bring value to students, industries and the UK economy. We want to establish a model, which could be followed by the other institutions in Higher Education.

For more information contact: Ian Herbert at i.p.herbert@lboro.ac.uk or go to

<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/sbe/cgss/activities/>

Summary of EtoL benefits

Students:

- Graduate with lower debt (dependent upon length of course and accommodation costs)
- Employability - build up work skills and experience as a fast track to entering higher level graduate roles
- Work readiness – through work orientation and business practice
- Try certain employers and types of work before making career choices
- Relate academic theory to work, and bring practice into the classroom – improving both grades and the learning experience

Universities:

- Attract more students
- Help towards social inclusion targets
- Improve learning through combining theory and practice in the classroom –improving grades and learning experience
- Develop networks with wider cross section of industry (presently skewed to science and technology)
- Reduce the need for placement support in job hunting during second year of study
- Foster PR opportunities
- Provide research opportunities to study new working practices new organisational forms, service work, IT and education schemes/curricula development in laboratory conditions

Employers:

- Help to keep jobs onshore close to business
- Promote corporate social responsibility and develop onshore talent pipeline
- Improve working methods and technology through scientific study of work
- Attracts more diversified but still graduate workforce with cross-over skills
- Reduces training costs of graduates – through self-learning in entry level jobs (bootstrapping) rather than with full-cost graduate training programmes
- Reduce attrition levels through 'long interview' of prospective graduate employees

Local population:

- Bring employers to local areas

Home economy:

- Keep jobs on-shore, develops/preserves skills and contributes taxes
- Create sustainable international competitiveness and employment
- Rebalance economy from over dependence on the financial services sector
- Address the challenge of low-cost economies moving up the value chain and taking progressively higher level work

Society:

Improve social inclusion.