

Recruiting Strategies and Keep Warm Activities

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Course applications in the Post-16 sector have dropped significantly since the Lingfield report in 2012

Across the whole UoP PCET partnership, records indicate that recruiting is down from a high of approximately 600 new starts in 2010 to 150 in 2018.

The decline has slowed up in the last two AYs suggesting that it has found its natural level under the current legislation and other contextual factors

Anecdotal feedback from partner colleges suggests that organisations are holding back on any significant investment in training and development until the Apprenticeship becomes 'live'

Learning and Skills apprenticeship is currently at 'Stage Two-standard approved' last updated 11 Apr 2018 (IfA 2018)

At University of Plymouth we
have relied on a ‘whole’ or ‘one
size fits all’ organisational
approach to recruitment

Using Web presence, Twitter and other social media platforms.

It is an approach that favours the 18-21 UG demographic not the PGCE PCET target audience

For ITE, this is now changing

Informally, ITE phases have arranged drop-in sessions for UoP year 2 and 3 UGs.

PCET benefits in terms of numbers and raising awareness from these sessions more so than Primary or Secondary.

This suggests that little is known about the sector and represents a significant obstacle.

Ofsted require evidence of ‘the quality and effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process’ (Ofsted 2018:10)

- Interview is a multi-stage process
- Literacy, numeracy and free writing tasks
- Micro-teach
- Standardised interview questions
- Second placement interview to assess subject specialist knowledge; suitability for the curriculum taught; and awareness for the ‘college’ environment
- An assessment of potential, strengths and specific training needs
- **Conditional Offer issued after first interview**

Keeping applicants warm at all stages of the recruitment process: Applicants ask for any pre-reading they can undertake before starting in September

Rather than sending out articles that can have copyright issues etc, we gave applicants links to [Atherton's teaching and learning](#), and [INFED](#) with specific pages to look at;

no pre-reading was undertaken

We asked current students what they wish they could have had before the course? They said information on lesson planning. We sent out our own 'lesson planning with guidance' pack to new entrants;

no evidence of engagement with the material

This suggests that there is a pre-conceived idea about what the course is about with applicants engaging in it in a similar way to their UG degree study.

Despite strenuous efforts at interview to suggest it's different.

What 'keep warm' activities do you use?

What works is extensive use of current or graduating students to give the applicant an ‘insiders’ view.

The old adage that family, friends and other informal complex social relationships are still the best recruiting medium dispelling the

‘assumption that if young peoples’ access to [formal] information improves they will make ‘better’ decisions about their futures. However, the picture is rather more complex due to the socially embedded nature of decision making (Brookes 2002:217)

Conversion rate is nearly double for those applicants we see face-to-face informally (eg open days, informal drop-ins personal calls etc) verses those that apply through UCAS route without any other interaction beforehand.

Therefore, one key question is how to get applicants to the face-to-face stage and keep them?

In terms of marketing, some ideas to consider:

- Video clips from graduating students
- Subject specific branded posters
- Suitable and phase-applicable images
- Student quotes with pictures
- Student stories on your webpages
- Teaching staff profiles
- Do your web pages look welcoming to international students
- Audit web pages to ensure any links work
- Outreach activities
- Research marketing successes-facilitate focus groups with current trainees

References

- Atherton, J. (2013) More than you wanted to know about James Atherton at <http://www.doceo.org.uk/me.htm> (accessed 10 Oct 2018)
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Using some of the themes and issues raised here, plus any others you may have, consider how you currently engage in recruiting and ‘keep warm’ activities to identify four quick wins that you can action before the next recruiting round