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Professionalism and Skills Enhancement in the Built Environment: The Role of Higher Education in a Changing Policy Context in England

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Abstract

Since the election of the Labour Government in 1997 there have been a series of policy initiatives emphasising the importance of co-ordinated and integrated approaches to the delivery of urban regeneration and in particular Sustainable Communities. This changing policy context has given rise to a shortage of practitioners with both the technical skills to deliver specific programmes, and more especially the generic skills to work in multi-disciplinary teams in conjunction with partnership-based management boards. This paper discusses the origins of the debate about skills shortages and deficiencies and reviews the main government reports which have advocated a new approach to the provision of skills for community regeneration. It focuses particularly on the work of the Planning Network which was funded by the Centre for Education in the Built Environment (CEBE) to examine the contribution of higher education to the wider skills debate. It concludes by arguing that higher education has an important part to play in the provision of a more appropriate skills set for professional practice within a broader and more inclusive strategy involving all key stakeholders. However, employers also have a major responsibility in ensuring that key skills are maintained and enhanced within their own organisations.

Keywords: Education, Multidisciplinary, Planning, Professional Skills, Skills Gap, Urban Regeneration

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Introduction

Since the general election in 1997 there has been a rapid expansion in policy development relating to all aspects of the built environment. It is now generally acknowledged that successful urban regeneration requires co-ordinated and integrated approaches to delivery, carried out by multi-disciplinary teams working to partnership boards involving all stakeholders, including local communities. A series of reports commissioned by government have pointed out the adverse effects of the shortage of trained professionals entering the built environment professions, the apparent lack of applicants with appropriate skills applying for senior posts, and the overall perception that policy implementation is being constrained by skills deficiencies amongst many professional groups.

The language used has also shifted over time. Whereas the Urban Task Force (1999) referred to the need for an urban renaissance, this came to be identified too closely with a design-led approach and descriptors such as urban regeneration or community regeneration have become more commonly employed. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) now uses the strap-line 'Creating Sustainable Communities' after publication of its strategy towards housing growth and renewal areas (ODPM, 2003). For purposes of clarity, this paper will use the term community regeneration to reflect the process of promoting social, economic and environmental change that engages local communities in policy making and delivery.

Many of the reports cited later in this paper tend to reflect employers' perceptions of skills shortages and deficiencies and also prescribe similar remedies, including national and regional centres to promote training and skills enhancement. In several cases, it is argued that built environment courses delivered by universities are too segmented into narrow and outdated professional disciplines in that students are not sufficiently exposed to multi-disciplinary approaches to problem-solving.

The Planning Network is a consortium of Planning Schools, professional institutions and practitioners based in England and Scotland, which over the past decade has investigated a number of issues relating to teaching and the transition of graduates into practice (see Bailey & Walker, 2001, for a review of previous reports and activities). In 2000 the Network was designated by CEBE as the Special Interest Group in planning and regeneration and funded over a period of three years to investigate what was then called the 'new urban agenda' arising out of the Urban Task Force Report (1999). In carrying out this project, the Network has undertaken research, organised workshops

and conferences and produced two publications (Planning Network, 2001, Bailey & McIntosh, 2004). Although the Network includes two Planning Schools from Scotland, the increasingly divergent approaches adopted in the devolved administrations in the United Kingdom means that the scope of this paper is restricted largely to England. Readers wishing to find out more about the debate in Scotland are referred to a report published by Communities Scotland (Taylor *et al.*, 2004). The detailed findings of the Planning Network will be discussed in a later section of this paper.

The Origins of the Skills Debate

The majority of reports which have engaged with the debate about the quality and provision of skills have concluded that higher education in particular is failing to deliver sufficient graduates with the right portfolio of skills. Some traced the problem back to the national curriculum, while most focused on the compartmentalised system of higher education where they found that most vocational courses were dominated by too narrow a professional focus. The Rogers report was critical of both the lack of breadth and content of undergraduate and postgraduate courses and the Task Force concluded that the inter-disciplinary element of most courses constituted little more than 10 per cent (Rogers, 1999: 161). The Urban Task Force noted that only 3-4 per cent of graduates entering relevant urban professions each year will have undertaken 'hard-edged multi-disciplinary study' (Rogers, 1999: 161). It went on to advocate substantial changes to the content of courses, the system of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the promotion of new and innovative forms of capacity building to enable community participation. The report urged universities and professional institutions:

To increase the output of the relevant specialised skills, including retraining for those that have the right professional background but need to apply it to the task of urban regeneration; second, and critically important, to bring these skills to bear on team working in complex everyday situations. (Rogers, 1999: 161)

As part of the preparation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001), a series of Policy Action Teams (PAT) were set up to investigate cross-cutting issues. PAT 16 investigated amongst other things, current training provision for practitioners. It identified two sets of problems from its research:

The first is that too many people working in key public services do not receive the training and support they need; the second is that too many are almost over-trained, over-professionalised and departmentalised. (PAT 16, 2000: 36)

In reviewing seven professions involved in community regeneration, the PAT found that most were not being well prepared for working in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Where they have received training, it has often failed to equip them with the attitudes, skills and knowledge to deliver their core service to standards set out

by Government. This in turn makes it far less likely that they will be able to collaborate successfully with others to tackle the cross-cutting problems. (PAT 16, 2000: 45).

Whilst concluding that 'there is clear scope for significantly improving current base-level qualification courses for most professional and practitioner groups' (PAT 16, 2000: 45), PAT 16 was one of the few reports which looked to government to establish career structures which reward the most able. It also wished to see a stronger lead from senior managers to promote organisational cultures that encourage and reward learning. Training programmes were also advocated for elected members of local authorities.

A more recent study of skills shortages and deficiencies in the planning profession has drawn similar conclusions. This involved a survey of a sample of planning authorities and University Planning Schools in England. It found that 'local planning authorities face persistent and long-term recruitment problems due to the lack of planners, both new graduates, and, more problematically, experienced planners' (Durning & Glasson, 2004: 11). Their survey results show that over 80 per cent of planning authorities experienced skills shortages in the past 12 months, 87 per cent experienced recruitment and retention problems and that 68 per cent believed that additional training and support was needed for officers to deliver an effective planning service. In contrast, the average annual training budget for each planning department was only £10,000 to meet the needs of qualified and unqualified staff (Durning & Glasson, 2004: 43). The generic skills where deficiencies were most evident included: working with the community, communication, partnership working and mediation (Durning & Glasson, 2004: 51).

Urban design is another area of professional expertise where substantial deficiencies were exposed by a report from a working group co-ordinated by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE, 2001). While acknowledging the shortage of experienced urban designers, particularly in local authorities, the Urban Design Skills Working Group made four broad recommendations. First, that the public's interest in design issues and the quality of public spaces should be reawakened. Second, they wanted to see 'an increase in the skills base available to design and produce better places' (CABE, 2001: 7). Third, urban design practice needed to be expanded and developed within local authorities. Fourth, design appreciation and urban design practice needed to be given greater prominence in secondary and tertiary education.

Thus in broad terms there is little doubt that there are both skills shortages and deficiencies in all professional groups involved in community regeneration, as well as individual professions such as planning. In addition, there is a broad consensus that the current provision of CPD and training is not sufficiently robust to provide an adequate supply of experienced, multi-disciplinary professionals able to deliver the

current policy agenda. Higher education is being exhorted, as much as government and the professional institutions, to change long-established practices and to take a broader and more integrated approach to education and training.

The reasons for this relatively recent perspective on the skills debate are manifold. First, employers have for many years relied on universities to supply the graduates required with an appropriate portfolio of skills. However, most built environment disciplines have experienced a static or declining number of applicants to vocational courses for complex reasons to do with the perceived lack of career opportunities and financial rewards. In addition, it has proved difficult for universities to introduce genuinely inter-disciplinary training while continuing to meet the educational requirements of the relevant professional body. Nevertheless, many vocational courses have introduced innovative approaches to teaching, giving students direct contact with practitioners from other disciplines, through for example, work-based learning, live projects and real-world simulations. These trends are not always apparent to civil servants or practitioners who did not themselves experience these innovations when at university.

Second, the policy context has changed rapidly in the past seven years with more resources going into a series of regeneration partnerships and area-based initiatives, all of which require high levels of professional expertise. Local authorities also went through a period of decline and a loss of powers in the 1990s, from which they are only just recovering. Thus the whole built environment labour market has experienced a policy environment where increasing emphasis is placed on achieving targets and delivering outputs, and in which there is heavy reliance on short-term funding to achieve changing policy outcomes. This 'stop-go' approach is bound to cause disruptions in the supply of a trained workforce, since even if university curricula respond immediately; it may take four years or longer to educate graduates to the required level of proficiency. It will also take time to create a career structure that will produce a cadre of experienced practitioners in sufficient numbers and with the right skills. For all these reasons, it is only from about 2000 that the workforce requirements of the whole built environment sector became a serious issue of concern.

Resolving the Skills Deficit

Apart from encouraging greater collaboration and a partnership between all stakeholders in the skills debate, the solution most frequently advanced has been to set up a national and regional centres to promote training, good practice and knowledge exchange. This section briefly reviews the proposals put forward in several reports to deliver solutions to the skills shortages and deficiencies.

It was the Rogers report which first argued that universities 'may give too academic an emphasis, divorced from the real world' (Rogers, 1999: 165) and that a network of Regional Centres of Excellence (RCE) should be established in England. These

should 'act as a resource to the public, private and voluntary sectors, to raise standards across the board and fill gaps in existing provision' (Rogers, 1999: 165). The original concept for RCEs appears to have emerged from the Millan Report, *Renewing the Regions*, (Millan, 1996) which was prepared when the Labour Party was in opposition. Bruce Millan had been chair of the Regional Policy Commission and this group proposed a series of innovations in order to promote a stronger regional focus in England. An important recommendation was to establish Regional Skills Agencies which would work closely with Regional Development Agencies and elected regional chambers.

Consultants retained by the Urban Task Force carried out a feasibility study into establishing Regional Centres of Urban Development and found substantial support for the proposal (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 1999). They proposed that the key objectives of the centres should be:

- To provide active advice and support to those managing and implementing urban development projects and to local authorities and Regional Development Agencies concerned with funding urban development projects;
- To facilitate the provision and co-ordination of a comprehensive programme of urban development related on-going education and training; and
- To provide a knowledge centre for urban development issues - a body of knowledge and best practice information which is actively managed to be an up to date, leading-edge facility which can be directly or remotely accessed by all relevant professionals. (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 1999: 31)

The Urban Task Force broadly accepted the consultants' proposals but included an additional objective of encouraging community involvement in the regeneration process.

It also recommended that the RCEs should be up and running by 2001. This target was not achieved despite a further commitment to the Rogers' proposals in the Urban White Paper (DETR, 2000: 51). Instead, the RCEs have emerged very slowly and even by 2005 the full complement of nine has yet to become operational.

About the same time, PAT 16 advocated a National Centre for Neighbourhood Renewal in order to promote improved skills, a knowledge management system to share best practice, research and improved leadership in the field. A regional dimension was floated, either through the Government Offices or as a series of regional centres accredited by the National Centre. By the time the National Strategy Action Plan (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001) had been published, the Government had decided that a National Centre might be too removed from the point of delivery and

was unwilling to support the proposal. Instead, the Action Plan advocated a 'skills and knowledge strand' running throughout the National Strategy to be managed by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) and delivered through the Government Offices. The NRU went on to establish the website (www.renewal.net) as a learning resource and set out in *The Learning Curve* (NRU, 2002), a learning framework subdivided into the knowledge base, core skills and behaviours required by key stakeholders in the neighbourhood renewal process.

The most recent advocate of a national centre is the Egan Review which published its recommendations in 2004. Sir John Egan, as chair of the review, had been invited by the Deputy Prime Minister to investigate 'the professional, built environment skills necessary to deliver sustainable communities' (Egan, 2004: 3). The first part of the report identifies the component parts of the sustainable communities agenda and discusses ways in which it might be achieved. The second part investigates the ways in which key skills can be enhanced and sustained at an appropriate level.

The aspect of the Review receiving most attention is the proposal to establish a National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills. This should seek to 'develop world class skill sets amongst all those involved in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities' (Egan, 2004: 75). This should be done by:

- Providing a high profile national focus for sustainable community skills development and research;
- Working with education providers, employers, professional institutions, relevant Sector Skills Councils, RCEs, and other bodies to provide and promote excellence in sustainable community skills development;
- Acting as a catalyst for innovation and a focus for national and international debate on sustainable community skills issues;
- Acting as a resource and communications hub for individuals, organisations and communities working in the sustainable communities agenda;
- Working with others to operationalise the common goals, and to ensure its relevance to the public's requirements; and
- Researching with other partners the long-term environmental standards that sustainable communities should aim for, and how, in practical terms, these should be achieved. (Egan, 2004: 76)

The recommendation to establish a National Centre appears to have the support of the ODPM and a task group from the Egan Review, together with staff from the NRU, carried out a feasibility study. The recommendation to launch the Academy for Sustainable Communities, to be based in Leeds, was confirmed at the Sustainable Communities Summit in Manchester in February 2005 (www.ascskills.org.uk).

Thus the concept of a National Centre and RCEs has been in gestation for some time. Each committee advocating one or both has defined the aims and objectives in slightly different ways, although the main thrust is clear: to integrate the contributions of different stakeholders; to advocate skills and skills enhancement at the national and regional levels; to broker the delivery of effective training programmes; and to act as a resource for the dissemination and exchange of information and good practice. A limited number of RCEs are now operational in, for example, the South West, North West, West Midlands, South East and East of England regions.

The Contribution of the Planning Network

The Planning Network brought together academic staff from five universities with leading schools of built environment disciplines, a partner from a leading multi-disciplinary consultancy, and representatives of ROOM and the Royal Town Planning Institute. The Network was aware of the skills debate and the increasingly challenging policy agenda. It wished to explore the apparent discrepancy between the skills claimed to be in greatest demand and the ways in which Planning Schools could assist in meeting these needs. Between 2000 and 2003 the Planning Network was commissioned by CEBE to undertake two linked research projects. These involved the following tasks:

- Investigating the differing perceptions of skills shortages and deficiencies through a series of interviews carried out with senior members of regeneration agencies in England and Scotland;
- Analysing the skills deficiencies identified in eight different reports and research documents;
- Exploring the range of university courses, CPD training events and conferences available which address regeneration issues in different parts of the UK;
- Interviewing a sample of practitioners in regeneration projects to find out their perceptions of training needs and running a series of short courses designed to meet the needs of particular employers in order to gain first hand experience of how universities can most effectively meet the needs of regeneration practitioners; and
- Drawing general conclusions about the main skills deficiencies and how these are defined by employers and practitioners and reviewing first-hand experience of negotiating, organising and delivering customised training courses.

The full reports from the Planning Network have been published separately (Planning Network, 2001; Bailey & McIntosh, 2004). These reports go into all the above issues in some depth so this paper can only summarise the key findings from the project.

Perceptions of Skills Shortages and Deficiencies

The Network began the project by carrying out a series of interviews with 14 leading practitioners in public, private and voluntary sector agencies engaged in regeneration. Most interviewees drew on their personal experience in identifying gaps and deficiencies and often referred to conclusions drawn from interviewing for senior posts. The general consensus was that there was a shortage particularly of young professionals available to take up challenging leadership roles. Most identified deficiencies in professional skills where cross-linkages between policy areas and interdisciplinary working are required. For instance, a Neighbourhood Renewal Co-ordinator in a Government Office felt that:

There are not enough professionals who have the ability to work with non-specialists and communities – negotiation and facilitation skills are particularly lacking. Others include: appraisal and evaluation skills; knowledge about organisational and constitutional arrangements, and the organisational structures of central and local government; differing ways of combining design and development, social and economic regeneration strategies. (Planning Network, 2001: 7)

Others referred to their own or their organisation's expertise and felt that there needed to be a stronger focus on knowledge and skills in, for instance, urban design, finance and property matters. A member of an RDA argued that knowledge of sustainability was lacking in professionals and the general population and that this needed to be remedied through changes to the national curriculum and in higher education. A member of the Prince's Foundation wanted to see research into European approaches to regeneration to discover how different cultures perceived the public realm. In higher education he also favoured 'integrating the broad sweep of strategy with an in-depth study of particular elements, such as planning, sustainable development and transport' (Planning Network, 2001: 6). An urban designer wished to see urban design written into the statutory planning system so that local authorities are required to prepare and use urban design frameworks, appraisals and design guides.

A number of respondents had strong views about the deficiencies of vocational courses. A senior executive in the Scottish Executive argued that planners are over-provided with management skills but that there is a lack of knowledge of how to achieve things on the ground. He felt that planning was often seen as being too remote. Another academic secondeed to the former Scottish Office was surprised at how few planners were working in regeneration. Those who are involved tend to have backgrounds in economic development, community work, health, education and social work.

The emerging consensus appeared to be that there were severe deficiencies of professionals with the right mind-set who are able to pool their skills and work in partnership with others. As one respondent argued

Each profession does not have to give up their profession as such, but they do need the ability to clearly identify each others' skills and areas of expertise at the outset. This should be built into the overall strategy of a regeneration project (Planning Network, 2001: 9).

Analysing Skills Deficiencies

The second element of the project involved a mapping exercise to identify the skills which each of eight sources identified as being deficient. This was presented in the form of a table in the Network's 2001 report and it was later used as the basis for the NRU's report, *The Learning Curve* (NRU, 2002). The following categories of skills were identified:

- Personal skills;
- Project and programme management skills;
- Finance and organisation skills;
- People management skills;
- Technical skills;
- Strategic Skills;
- Community and inclusion skills;
- Economic development skills;
- Urban renewal skills.

The analysis of this section concluded:

One initial observation can be made on the list which appears in the...table. First, it indicates the perceived importance of management skills and collaborative working skills. This is in contrast with the technical/professional skills which practitioners may possess through their initial training. These factors place extra emphasis on the need for practitioner training and support to be available in order to encourage the gaining of skills that have not been gained through professional training. Indeed, a number of these skills may best be acquired through practice and networks and structures for training and support will need to build upon this fact. (Planning Network, 2001: 36)

Identifying Current Educational and Training Provision

The Network set up a database of relevant courses and training programmes identified from prospectuses and other publicity material running over a period of a year. This identified at least 226 courses relevant to aspects of regeneration including a number of university masters programmes. It proved extremely difficult to define appropriate criteria for inclusion because many courses and conferences lacked detailed

information about the content, level of teaching and degree of focus on specific skills. The main conclusions to emerge were:

- Over a 12 month period a large number of courses are offered. While a limited number are university-based masters courses of one or two years' duration, the majority tend to be no more than one day long and advertised as a conference or short course;
- The content of many courses is unspecified in terms of the skills discussed or taught, with the majority having a strong emphasis on policy and practitioners talking about their own practice;
- Many courses are 'one-off' in that they are only run once in one particular location;
- The geographical distribution of courses is uneven with the majority taking place in London, the South East and South West (Bristol). Very few non-university courses appear to take place in Northern Ireland, Wales or the Midlands. There was no evidence of strategic co-ordination of training events at the urban or regional levels;
- There was very limited evidence of the availability of training using distance or online learning;
- The main providers include: Universities, professional institutions, commercial organisations, voluntary sector organizations and social enterprises, such as the Regen School;
- Very few courses were specifically designed to attract those seeking new skills or a greater understanding or how to work with other disciplines;
- Since there is no national or regional system of badging or accrediting courses, the quality or relevance of many events is hard to judge (although all qualified for CPD purposes).

Interviewing a Sample of Regeneration Organisations about Training Needs

A series of interviews were carried out with senior executives of ten regeneration organisations in England and Scotland in order to find out how important they considered training to be and whether they would be willing to pilot a course of their choice to be delivered by members of the Network. The following approaches were discussed with the interviewees:

Customised training – we wanted to know whether they favoured customised training over and above university-based or other types of training on offer;

Sharing good practice – questions were asked about whether respondents felt it important to discuss and share within and between project staff, and amongst other practitioners working in the same geographical area, or on similar projects;

Comparative studies – an important form of training is to investigate comparative studies from which good practice can be gleaned, whether drawn from the UK, Europe or elsewhere;

Peer learning – many organisations find it difficult to share experiences between staff and to set up systems for mutual learning;

Regeneration skills – these are essential for effective delivery of programmes by staff, management boards, other stakeholders and members of local communities;

Inter-disciplinary and team working – this is a continuing issue for regeneration practitioners and has already been identified as a serious deficiency in many organisations.

The outcome of these interviews was that, after extensive negotiations in some cases, a series of customised training courses were devised and delivered as in-house programmes. Three examples are discussed in detail in the Planning Network report (2004). In addition, Planning Network members were running other training programmes outside the parameters of this project but from which valuable experience could be gained. For example, the University of Westminster had been commissioned to deliver a 15 week course for staff working for the South East England Development Agency.

Project Outcomes and Findings

The Planning Network has found clear evidence of a shortage of experienced staff and sufficient practitioners at all levels who have the generic and specialised skills to deliver the new agenda. However, the nature of these shortages and deficiencies varies in different organisations and different parts of the country. Most practitioners rely on evidence from their own personal experience of recruiting staff and working in inter-disciplinary teams. Perhaps it is not surprising that many perceive the greatest deficiencies in their own (or their organisation's) area of specialisation. The analysis of generic skills identified as most important in a series of research reports has indicated the broad distribution of these skills and the absence of a single definitive list to which all can sign up. The limited experiment in negotiating training programmes with regeneration organisations showed that these often became protracted because of a lack of clarity over what was needed, who should be involved and when it should be delivered. Cost was very rarely a factor. It appears that clients often have specific expectations from training and it may take some time for the provider to identify these and devise a suitable programme to address these needs.

An important finding at this stage of the project was that it became obvious that employers do not have a single viewpoint on what their skills deficiencies are and how training can best alleviate them. There may be a number of reasons for this. First, it is unusual for organisations in the public sector to carry out an audit of their skills strengths and deficiencies so that there is rarely a collective view based on hard evidence. Second, managers at different levels of the organisation and with different professional backgrounds may have very different perspectives on the effectiveness of individual departments and whether deficiencies can best be met by recruitment or (re)training. Third, employers needed to know what a particular University department can offer and decisions had to be made about the mode, level, duration, timing and cost of the training programme. All these uncertainties were often only resolved after lengthy negotiations. It also demonstrates that the current debate about skills deficiencies is often based on perceptions and anecdotes, rather than hard evidence.

In sum, the work of the Planning Network, when combined with that of many other organisations reviewed here, illustrates the challenge facing all stakeholders in achieving a strategic approach to defining needs, delivering programmes and monitoring personal and organisational learning.

Conclusions

There is one over-riding message emerging from all the sources discussed in this paper. This is the widespread perception amongst practitioners, Government and the private sector that there are insufficient graduates leaving universities with the required level of skills and knowledge to deliver the urban agenda. In addition, professional institutes are accused of defending narrow definitions of professional territory and the universities are berated for inculcating an outdated professional perspective that rarely achieves an inter-disciplinary approach to teaching. The consensus is growing that, while policy-makers have now adjusted to the new strategic 'joined-up' sustainability agenda, those who help shape the workforce of the future have failed to deliver.

Rather than giving sole responsibility to an existing organisation, the series of task forces, action teams and task groups reviewed here have almost unanimously, proposed the establishment of a combination of national and regional centres to act as catalysts for change. The role of these centres will need to be a combination of brokerage, negotiation, co-ordination, exhortation and in some cases, direct provision of training, as well as carrying out an ambassadorial role that carries the flag for skills and training.

The challenges to universities are opening up on several fronts. They will need to work much more closely with clients with whom they currently may have very little contact. Courses will need to be offered far more flexibly, in terms of cost and attendance modes, and to students from differing educational backgrounds. Planning Schools will need to give much greater thought to which skills they teach, how they teach them, and

how they are assessed. Some already provide masters programmes in Urban Regeneration, which are not accredited by any professional body. There may well be further experimentation in this direction in offering genuinely inter-disciplinary courses, perhaps linked directly to the staffing needs of major national or regional regeneration agencies. Local, regional and national voluntary and community organizations will also be seeking customised training for their staff and memberships. These client groups will require far more innovative approaches to content and delivery, compared with the traditional academic model.

In the end, however, it will be employers in all sectors who will need to promote an organisational culture of learning, where in-house training and sharing experience become the norm and are rewarded through appraisal and internal promotion. Universities can contribute expertise in appropriate forms of teaching and learning but it will remain the responsibility of the individual practitioner to manage their own lifelong learning and to ensure that their knowledge and skills remain up to date and relevant to their career pathway.

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