

Digitally Ready for the Future

Application for small project funding

- Funding for small projects is available to staff and students under the following themes:
Work placements; Employability; Enhancing T & L through the use of technology;
Digital skills and literacies; Staff/student partnerships
- All successful applicants will be expected to
 - actively disseminate project outputs (e.g. by contributing to relevant T & L events and submissions to the Digitally Ready and/or Enhancing Teaching and Learning blogs)
 - participate in a celebration event in the Spring Term involving all successful applicants
 - complete a short project report and case study proforma by 31 May 2012
- Project funds will be available until 30 April and all project work should be completed by then.
- An electronic copy of the completed application form must be submitted to **Nadja Guggi** (n.guggi@reading.ac.uk) by **Monday 3 December 2012**.

Applicant details

Name Miss Katerina Lazidou
<input type="checkbox"/> Member of staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student
Department School of Biological Sciences
Email a.lazidou@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Telephone

Project team (Please give details of any other team members)

Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Member of staff Drs Kimberly Watson & Teeroumanee Nadan <input type="checkbox"/> Student
Department School of Biological Sciences
Email k.a.watson@reading.ac.uk and t.nadan@reading.ac.uk
Telephone 0118 378 8168 (T.Nadan)

Project type

- ☐ Research placement
- ☐ Project placement
- ☐ Staff/student partnership (staff-led)
- ☐ **Staff/student partnership (student-led)**
- ☐ Teaching & Learning/Research project
- ☐ APP project

Project theme/s (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Work placements
- ☐ **Employability**
- ☐ Enhancing T & L through the use
— of technology
- ☐ Digital skills and literacies
- ☐ Staff/student partnerships

Project Title

A study on students' and employers' perspectives on global employability in the Biosciences

Project Summary

Describe the proposed project (up to 500 words). Your summary should demonstrate how your project relates to the use of digital technologies and/or the development of digital literacies of staff and/or students, and should include the following:

- *Background*
- *Aims and objectives*
- *Scope*
- *Outcomes and deliverables*
- *Sustainability*
- *Project schedule*

Background

SBS has been leading an initiative focused on 'Creating a Global Agenda in the Biosciences', which started in March 2012. To date, we have focused on several areas of the student experience, namely: Teaching Methods, Learning Styles, Assessment Methods, Academic Support (including tutorial teaching), Technical Support and Career Management. The work to date during this project, particularly student-led, has illustrated some key factors contributing to the enhancement of the student experience and especially toward improving the 'Global Employability' of our students.

(Information Page <http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/bioscience-skills/globalemployability/>)

(Posts <http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/bioscience-skills/category/internationalisation-global-employability-in-biosciences/>)

Aims & Objectives

We wish to further improve our understanding of students' and employers' perception of employability skills through further focus group discussions and case studies with our students who have undertaken placement, as well as, students registered to be in placement for the next academic year. This project is complementary to an HEA funded project which ended in September, that looked at the student experience and enhancing the bioscience curriculum toward a more internationalised curriculum.

Scope

We wish to run focus groups with students and employers, and to develop relevant case studies with (students and) employers from the UK and global organisations. This will be organised for next term. In preparation, we have collated a list and contacted those students and employers who are willing to participate in the study. The student will follow up these

initial contacts and, organise and lead the focus groups. The student also will be responsible for selecting and developing the case studies, with support from the members of staff involved in the project.

The student leading the project will be trained to use video and audio recording packages and will provide assistance while doing video recording and editing. Additionally, the student will be able to participate in the Digitally Ready project case studies. In the final stages of the project, the student will assist in summarising the focus groups and case studies and integrating the project information online in blogs as well as in a booklet.

The student will have the opportunity to build essential skills in networking with employers, staff and students, blogging, video recording, high level communication (written and oral), teamwork, and becoming aware of global employability in the biosciences.

Outcomes & Deliverables

We anticipate that the focus group discussions and interviews will shed light on the most critical skills that students require and develop during work experience that contribute to or directly lead to improving their chances for employability in a subject-specific related field. Likewise, we expect that through direct interaction with employers this will reveal the expectations of industry (in terms of work ethic and bioscience skills training) and aid us in further developing career-relevant teaching and resources for our students to enhance their global employability.

The information revealed by this project will take the form of recommendations for students regarding “Essential Bioscience Skills to Improve Global Employability” via a final report based on the evidence gathered through the focus group discussions with students and employers, on-line Case Studies, Videos and Project Blogs.

Sustainability

This project is part of a larger HEA funded initiative (until March 2013), led by SBS, to look at Internationalisation University-wide. This initiative has, at its heart, the student experience in all its definitions and particularly focuses on improving global employability skills of our students. We are seeking further funds, through the HEA, via a bid to the HEA Collaborative Teaching Development Grant in January 2013. We also have a keen interest in continued dialogue and engagement with employers, which will continue well beyond this project to the direct benefit of those students seeking bioscience work experience and placements.

Project Schedule

Flexible start and end dates are expected and will equal 2 weeks full-time work. The project can start immediately and extend on a part time basis over the Spring Term.

The student will be expected to work with staff members in the School of Biological Sciences (SBS) and will report to Dr K Watson (weekly supervision for progress) and Dr T Nadan (daily supervision).