

annual report 2005/06

Higher Education Careers Services Unit





HECSU's charitable object is the advancement of education of students and graduates of any establishment of higher education which is a subscriber to the company by supporting and assisting the work of the careers advisory services of such subscribers.

Graduate Prospects' mission is to be the leading UK provider of graduate careers and recruitment solutions.

Supporting these missions are **four** values:

To be an employer of choice to **people** who take pride in providing high **quality** products and services which fulfil our **customers** needs **profitably**.

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Foreword

I am delighted to introduce my second HECSU Annual Report. In the financial year 2005-6, HECSU's trading arm, Graduate Prospects Ltd, consolidated its profitable trading, with a trading profit of £459,000 (£120,000 the previous year). HECSU's equity investment increased in value by £586,000, and thus the Group retains over £8m (£7.86m: 2004/05) in reserves. Once again, HECSU's charitable expenditure was £1.1m.

With such healthy levels of reserves being maintained, the HECSU board's decision last year to cut institutional subscriptions over three years, has been justified. A 'typical' HEI is seeing its subscription fall from c.£1400 to c.£700 over this period.

The Group continues to provide an excellent range of high-quality paper and electronic products and services to the HE sector in general and the careers services of higher education institutions throughout the UK and Ireland in particular, and investment in new products and services has been maintained during the last year.

The graduate recruitment market continued strongly in 2005, but the shift of emphasis in immediate vacancies from paper to web continued. The brave response by Graduate Prospects management was to close Prospects Today in September (after 32 years and £33m of revenue),

and replace it with a wholly digital magazine, Prospects Graduate, delivered via e-mail and broadband. The response from graduates, careers services, recruiters and advertising agencies has been hugely encouraging, and at the time of writing, the magazine is outperforming the equivalent issues of Prospects Today in advertising volume and revenues.

Early indications for 2006-7 are that last year's market buoyancy is being sustained, with the first three paper products of the year achieving above budget revenues, and forward bookings across the whole portfolio are very healthy.

The HECSU board in November 2005 received a report on the literature review and pilot stage of the ambitious six year Longitudinal Research Programme (its aim to improve our understanding of the career learning and decision-making of students and graduates, and the career guidance interventions required to support these). The board approved the expenditure of £1.1m on the subsequent Core Study, following the 2006 entry cohort through to 2011. It also agreed, in principle, that £500,000 be ring-fenced for a number of related annual 'subsidiary studies' over the next five years.

This is a major undertaking for

HECSU, and the board has every confidence that Professors Peter Elias and Kate Purcell – acknowledged as the leading figures in this field – will produce a ground-breaking study with important practical outcomes for the sector. The board would like to take this opportunity to thank HECSU's sister agency, UCAS, for all their support at the pilot stage.

The Group and its staff, in partnership with our valued friends at AGCAS and in HE careers services, are again to be congratulated on their hard work during the financial year. As I noted last year, the next few years will continue to be challenging for HECSU and Graduate Prospects (indeed, for the whole HE sector), but I am sure that Graduate Prospects Ltd is well placed to take advantage of these developments, while HECSU has the resources to work, with AGCAS and others, to ensure the interests of students and graduates are paramount in the deployment of our charitable funds.

Finally, during the year a number of trustees and directors stood down, and my thanks go to them all.

*Professor D Bone Vice-Chancellor,
University of Liverpool and
Chairman of the Board of Directors*



Board of Directors

Professor D Bone (Chairman)*

Vice-Chancellor
University of Liverpool

Professor David Melville

Vice Chancellor
University of Kent

Professor J Stringer

Principal, Napier University
(resigned 31st May 2005)

Dr G Copland

Rector and Vice-Chancellor
University of Westminster
(resigned 1st December 2005)

Professor Andrew Hamnett

Vice-chancellor
University of Strathclyde
(appointed 1st August 2005)

Professor Paul O'Prey

Vice-Chancellor
University of Surrey, Roehampton
(appointed 1 January 2006)

Dr J Cater*

Chief Executive
Edge Hill University College

Mr S Denton

Registrar
Leeds Metropolitan University

Dr J Nicholls*

Registrar
University of Birmingham

Mr A Nelson

Nelson Griffiths LLC

Mr H T B Smith*

Director, TetragonHR

Ms Alison Hodgson

European HR & Resourcing Manager
Expedia.com

Mr J Gough

Head of Careers Service
De Montfort University

Linda Buckham*

Head of Careers Service
University of Sussex

Mr A Butler

President of AGCAS, and Head of
Careers Service
University of Oxford

Mr P Redmond

Career Development Team Leader
Liverpool Hope University College

Mrs L Ali

Head of Careers Advisory Service
The University of Edinburgh

Graham Nicholson

Head of Careers Service
University of Dundee
(appointed 1st August 2005)

***indicates non-executive director
of Graduate Prospects Ltd, the
trading company**



AGCAS President's statement.

I confess at the outset to writing this contribution to the HECSU Annual Report under slightly false pretences, since a somewhat tiresome medical condition has meant that I have vacated earlier than I had expected my position as AGCAS President. I am, however, particularly pleased to have been given the opportunity to write a second statement for this Report, since I feel that this past year has seen the proof (if proof were needed) of the strength of the relationship which the three organisations have developed over the last couple of years.

Could I first of all, however, warmly endorse the remarks of the Chief Executive in his summary, and say how delighted AGCAS is to see Graduate Prospects flourishing in an increasingly competitive and constantly developing commercial environment: it is no mean achievement to have nearly tripled profits at this time.

Last year, Graduate Prospects, HECSU and AGCAS were able to report on the agreement we had reached about our future relationship. But the test of an agreement, of course, is whether it actually works out in practice.

Well, it is working and I am delighted to see AGCAS and Graduate Prospects working in partnership and engaging together with other organisations in the sector.

More specifically, the joint market research into the AGCAS-generated information products now needed by students and graduates, and by those within the sector who help them with their career decision-making, was completed. This has laid the foundations for an agreed framework for new Service Level Agreements under which AGCAS will supply - and HECSU/Graduate Prospects will publish - over 300 different titles each year for the next three years.

These include some 200 Occupational Profiles (a critical ingredient of the pioneering and highly successful Prospects Planner system), 40 Options titles (the successors to the Signposts series), 15 Sector Briefings, half a dozen Special Interest items, 25 Country Profiles and new material on diversity, A Level Playing Field, and for prospective entrants to the teaching profession. An impressive portfolio by any standards, and unmatched, so far as I can see, anywhere in the world.

Under the new framework agreement, AGCAS is also actively supporting HECSU/Graduate Prospects in its plans to develop its electronic output and to reduce progressively bulk printing and distribution of the above materials. These plans are essential not only to the maintenance of Graduates Prospects' premier position in the graduate careers publishing field, but

also to meeting the needs of present-day students and their advisers; and AGCAS welcomes especially Graduate Prospects' willingness to involve us in the detailed planning of this important development.

We are also delighted by the progress which has been made with the project to improve the web version of Prospects Planner. The new version combines the undoubted power and functionality of the stand-alone version with the increased access and flexibility which the web version offers. The new web version is a tribute to the hard work and expertise of the joint AGCAS-Graduate Prospects team charged with carrying the project forward.

This brings me to the final point I would like to make, one which has struck me most forcibly over the last few months as I have moved towards retirement: for all the planning, negotiating and management which successful ventures require, when it comes down to it, it is the qualities of the people who are doing the work which really make the difference.

My observation is that HECSU, Graduate Prospects and AGCAS are remarkably fortunate in the talents and commitment demonstrated by their staffs and members, and I would like to extend to them my very special thanks and appreciation.

*Tony Butler
President of AGCAS, 2004-2006*



Chief Executive's Statement 2005/6

In the 12 months, 1 February 2005-31 January 2006, the subsidiary Graduate Prospects Ltd had a turnover of £5.40m (£5.54m: 2004/5), and returned a profit from ongoing trading, before the gift aid payment to HECSU, of £459,000 (£120,000 in 2004/5). A net adjustment of £47,000 relating to the winding up of dormant subsidiary companies, increased the profit to £506,000, before a gift aid payment of £459,000 to HECSU.

In HECSU, charitable spending was maintained at £1.1m. However, the charity's equity investment increased in value by £586,000 to £3.65m, and this combined with the trading profit from Graduate Prospects resulted in an overall group surplus of £224,000 (£339,000 deficit in 2004/5). This brings the level of charitable reserves up to just over £8m (£7.86m: 2004/05).

Although income is flat, careful cost control in print-buying, marketing, and labour has helped contribute to the bottom line.

The graduate recruitment market continued to be buoyant in 2005, but the immediate vacancies title Prospects Today did not benefit: the shift of emphasis in immediate vacancies from paper to web continued to accelerate. As a result, Prospects Today ceased to publish after August 2005 (after 32 years and £33m of revenue), and was replaced by a wholly digital magazine, Prospects Graduate (PROVIDE A HOT LINK), delivered via e-mail and broadband, from September. After six months, advertising volumes and revenues are substantially higher

than the equivalent issues of Prospects Today, and advertisers are delighted by the direct measurability of the response to adverts.

As far as we are aware, Graduate Prospects is the first organisation in the world to close completely a relatively profitable paper title, and replace it with a wholly digital magazine. We could do this because over the last five years, Graduate Prospects has collected hundreds of thousands of graduates' e-mail addresses, many of whom have signed up for various e-services.

Across the paper and electronic portfolio, 2006 started very well indeed, with the first three paper products of the year achieving above budget revenues and year-on-year growth, and forward bookings beginning the year 28% up on January 31st 2005. This is partly a result of the benefits of the London sales office coming on stream, now a settled and experienced team is in place.

Despite the continuing struggle for income, over the last 12 months Graduate Prospects and HECSU (the Group) have continued to invest significant sums into the business and the HE sector. Many of the initiatives are mentioned elsewhere in this report, but I want to draw attention to the start of the six year Longitudinal Study.

The HECSU board is to be warmly congratulated for supporting this ambitious, £1.5m project, tracking the 2006 cohort into, through and out of HE and into the work place. I want particularly to thank those board

members who gave up their valuable time to get heavily involved in workshops, conferences, tenders, and interviews, etc. This ambitious piece of research will be the central pillar of HECSU's work over the next decade, and its findings will impact on policy at every level.

Needless to say, the work the Group engages in is only possible because of the outstanding ability and hard work of all the staff, of whom there are over 100. It is their commitment and energy, their integrity and commitment to excellence that distinguishes us from our competitors and rivals.

Another essential ingredient in our success is a healthy and mutually supportive relationship with the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). This year, we signed a new three year agreement for the provision and publishing of information products, and jointly overhauled and updated Prospects Planner.

The biggest challenge for Graduate Prospects continues to be managing the increasingly rapid transition from paper to electronic formats, via fixed and mobile web-enabled devices. Last year I expressed confidence that the group was capable of developing products and services which will help it seize these opportunities, and this year we proved this was the case.

*Mike Hill
Chief Executive*

The Activities of HECSU & Graduate Prospects

HECSU and Graduate Prospects provide products and services to all universities, most colleges of higher education and, increasingly, many colleges of further education with significant HE provision, as well as to thousands of graduate employers in the UK and Ireland. These products and services include:

- managing and producing careers information materials for higher education, including the design and development of web-based information, and printing and distributing hundreds of thousands of sector briefings and careers information booklets each year
- developing and managing Prospects Planner, the internationally-recognised computer-aided careers guidance system for higher education students and graduates
- publishing labour market and other relevant statistics and research
- giving financial support to the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) for an approved range of projects
- undertaking a number of collaborative projects with AGCAS; the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS); Universities UK and Standing Conference of College Principals (SCOP); the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC), Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE), and the National Union of Students, amongst others. These include commissioning research,

managing specific projects and producing joint publications and services

- providing a range of support services for higher education careers services, including: running a fortnightly mailing service; maintaining the Graduate Careers Service Directory; the production of the higher education careers service journal Phoenix; supporting the publication of *What Do Graduates Do?*, and much more
- developing and managing prospects.ac.uk, which is the official national site for higher education careers guidance and information on careers, employment and post-graduate study
- providing an e-mail service linking employer advertisers to targeted groups of students through Recruiters Desk and MyProspects
- providing a computerised applicant database search facility for employers, through Recruiters Desk and MyCV
- providing a text-messaging service linking employer advertisers to targeted groups of students, through Recruiters Desk and MyProspects
- publishing the UK's official graduate employer and post-graduate directories, Prospects Employer Directory and Prospects Post-graduate Directory, and Pocket Prospects, a Spring update of the Employer Directory
- publishing a range of national magazines and vacancy publications

- in paper and on the web, for students, graduates and applicants to post-graduate study and research, including the revolutionary digital magazine Prospects Graduate, and Prospects Finalist, Prospects Postgrad and Prospects Postgrad UK
- publishing a range of targeted publications in paper and on the web, including the Prospects Focus series (covering Law, Work Experience, and Public Services as magazines; and city and finance, technology and engineering, and retail); and
 - entering into partnerships and collaborating with relevant organisations, including the Law Society, the Bar Council, the Small Business Service and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) amongst others, to extend the range and quality of information to applicants, students and graduates contained in its commercial products.

Graduate Prospects also owns the National Council for Work Experience and its associated website, www.work-experience.org. Graduate Prospects continued to invest resources into ProspectsNet (a careers service administration system, including vacancy handling, events management and e-guidance), Status, Gradsouthwest (for the 14 HEIs in south west England), and the Prospects PG Online Application System.

Review of the Year

Internal Services Division

The division's role is to deliver internal services effectively via its component departments and managers:

- **IT: Mark Watts (Head of IT)**
- **Finance: Craig Ridge (Financial Controller)**
- **HR: Zoe Mitchell (HRManager)**
- **Operations: Carl Miles (Operations Manager)**

The successful introduction and embedding of our four values of people, quality, customers and profit, supported by clear objectives throughout the organisation, has been at the centre of the division's activities, ensuring the organisation has a clear way forward and that we can monitor our progress towards achieving our goals.

IT

The IT department continues to produce high quality work. The Content Management System upgrade has been successfully completed. ProspectsNet and PG online sites continue to go live and are supported to high levels. Improvements to our electronic services are contributing to the growth of web income, whilst our electronic customer interface and back-office systems are continually improving via our ProspectsNet system.

The ITD scheduling system has proved very effective in managing the work going through IT, resulting in more jobs being completed on schedule and in more efficient scheduling and prioritisation of the many and varied demands on IT time.

Finance

Monthly management accounts continue to provide accurate pictures of the financial position of the organisation, with progress against budget monitored each month and the forecast year-end out-turn updated accordingly, enabling us to track the improvement in our performance during the year, and take management decisions accordingly.

Improvements in the annual planning process have resulted in the budget providing more detail, which should allow improved monitoring of progress against budget and thus improved forecasting of the year-end out-turn.

Value for money initiatives continue to identify actual and potential savings, with savings in particular on printing, photocopying, storage and travel realised during this year, and further savings anticipated for the forthcoming year.

HR

Our full IIP accreditation has been confirmed: very positive feedback was received from the assessor. We continue to look for ways of building on this success.

The Employee Opinion Survey was carried out in November 2005. This confirmed the progress made in this area, with virtually full awareness and acceptance of the organisation's four values.

HR reports each month on how key 'people' issues affect the bottom line: ie absence reports and staff turnover show substantial progress in both areas: staff turnover has almost

halved in the last year, whilst numbers of days lost have fallen by a third. A full training calendar has been delivered, including a management development programme, and this is fully evaluated. A new training calendar is currently being put in place to build on this success.

The appraisal system has been streamlined to align it with corporate values and allow more effective performance management. The annual appraisal process has been completed using our upgraded, streamlined processes.

Operations

The annual planning process, based on business and service department plans, has been completed. The result is robust management information in terms of targets and schedules, which will be used to focus and monitor performance during the year. A set of key objectives has been agreed to focus activity during the year. These targets are being collated and are reflected in Performance Development Reviews and supporting action plans. The process is being reviewed to identify further improvements for next year's cycle.

We passed our latest ISO audit with flying colours.

Our four values implementation, the ITD schedule, and the automated change request processes are all contributing to greater operational effectiveness.

*Steve Bluck
Finance Director/Head of Internal
Services Division*

Review of the Year *continued*

Sales Division

A number of challenges in 2005 resulted in a reduction in overall advertising revenues of 3%; however, if we exclude immediate vacancies, we increased revenue by over 5%. The strongest performer was our portfolio of web products, on which we increased revenue by over 30%. We successfully launched a new digital magazine into the immediate vacancies market late in the year. The newly launched London office was fully staffed substantially ahead of schedule and within budget, and we also invested in new technology to support our Ad Processing teams.

Most independent surveys continue to show our portfolio's strength in the market in terms of student/graduate awareness and usage, as well as employer use and effectiveness. We continued to develop and promote our portfolio, including participation in the HR Forum and sponsorship of the Personnel Today Awards in 2005.

Immediate Vacancies

Prospects Today continued to face challenges in 2005 including; continually reducing revenue with the move from paper to web, and a distribution route subject to continual

erosion. We took the decision to close Prospects Today and replace it with a digital magazine, Prospects Graduate.

We made a great effort to engage with the market, our stakeholders and our staff, to ensure we could deliver the right product to meet the needs of advertisers and students and graduates. The launch in September was a real success. Prospects Graduate has increased revenue in a previously declining sector despite its lower rates, and carries more advertising than comparable issues of either Prospects Today or its competition within the national press. We now have a solid distribution base and are delivering tangible results for advertisers.

Although the Immediate Vacancies area suffered a revenue contraction of 35% in 2005, we now have a firm foundation to re-energise and further develop this market sector.

Employer Final Year Paper Portfolio

The successful launch of the new London office had a short-term negative impact of the employer portfolio. The faster than anticipated loss of staff in Manchester, and hiring and training in London, resulted in

capacity shortfalls and reduced visibility for a short period. This impacted on revenue, and the employer portfolio income contracted by 3%. Although disappointing, we now have a firmer foundation for the coming years.

Postgraduate Paper Portfolio

Following a very successful 2004, the postgraduate portfolio continues to lead the market. Movement from paper to web continues to impact on results: that said, revenues were stable in 2005 within 1% of the previous year.

Web and electronic services

As mentioned above, the movement of paper to web continues, and the average order value on the web is about 1/3 that of paper products. Although web revenue is increasing, continued innovation and added value are required in order to enhance it further. We have continued to invest in and develop our portfolio of electronic services in 2005, resulting in growth across all product areas.

*Allan Brown
Sales Director*

Review of the Year *continued*

Publishing Division

The publishing division has responsibility for the design, content and delivery of Graduate Prospects' products and services.

The Team

Graduate Prospects recognises that future profitability depends on maximising the potential of Prospects.ac.uk and our electronic portfolio in tandem with our market-leading paper products. We have identified the need to realign our focus and resource behind these key services, and the challenge is to deliver the right content for both paper and electronic portfolios.

To meet these challenges the division, aside from NCWE, has been reorganised. The Employer and Postgraduate Business teams are responsible for developing and managing the employer and postgraduate business strategies and implementation plans.

The Web Services team has primary responsibility for delivering the electronic portfolio, including traffic management and email services. The Publication Services team (including the graphic designers) delivers the paper portfolio. This includes all Prospects and non-Prospects-branded products.

The Information and Content Development team is responsible for all Prospects and non-Prospects-branded content for web and paper products and services. The team commissions, manages and edits all externally provided content and provides original material, as agreed with Graduate Prospects'

management group through business plans, and with AGCAS through SLAs. The team also provides current awareness, news and competitor analysis services and manages the Intranet.

Prospects Portfolio

This year has been dominated by two significant developments. The closure of Prospects Today and the launch of a digital magazine, Prospects Graduate.

The challenge for the organisation was to develop innovative, technological ways to deliver the high impact, corporate branding messages previously disseminated by display advertising in print. Prospects Graduate is a digital vacancy publication launched in September and delivered fortnightly to My Prospects users, making it our single biggest circulated publication. Its searchable format uses the latest technology to allow us to offer high-value, premium electronic branding solutions to recruiters for the first time. The medium is being further explored for other opportunities across the portfolio.

Prospects.ac.uk has achieved ABC-e audited figures of 336,000 unique users per month in the latest audit, with average user session lengths increasing by 39% in the last year to nearly 11 minutes.

Postgraduate study is still the destination of choice for over a quarter of first degree graduates. The official national database of postgraduate opportunities on Prospects.ac.uk this year carries information on over 50,000 taught

courses and research positions. The electronic data collection and management system was redesigned and relaunched in May with the facility for data compilers to update their information on the national database, 24 hours a day.

Our partnership with CRAC to produce the Postgraduate Directory continued and we also received the endorsement of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council as sponsors. We agreed a way forward for a partnership with UCAS to develop a central application service for postgraduate full-time taught masters degrees as part of a sector working party. In addition, our own online applications system has grown, with 74 HE institutions now live.

Other information products The one-year extensions to the SLAs for AGCAS information products were agreed and delivered. A new three year meta-SLA to take us through to 2009 has been negotiated and agreed with AGCAS. A major piece of research on the information products was carried out with careers service staff on behalf of AGCAS and Graduate Prospects in Spring 2005. Most of the recommendations from that research were implemented for the autumn cycle, eg the renaming of the signpost sheets as the 'Options Series' and the addition of guides to other AGCAS products on the back cover. Other recommendations are being implemented for forthcoming products. The research confirmed the high value of the suite of products to

Review of the Year *continued*

careers advisers. A joint seminar was given at the AGCAS biennial conference in September.

A formal memorandum of understanding was signed by Graduate Prospects and the Law Careers Advice Network (LCAN) to strengthen our existing partnership.

Usability testing of Prospects.ac.uk took place in November and a full report is being produced. This will inform changes to the website and its development for the coming year.

National Council For Work Experience

This year has seen NCWE consolidate its position as the central body for

work experience and develop a suite of materials to address the standards of work placements and their management.

NCWE has partnered with an organisation called Wise Owls, to develop placement support materials and facilitate learning outcomes from placements for people aged over 45.

This year has seen a second successful pilot of the proposed NCWE Work Experience Quality Mark and the commercial launch is imminent. It has, at its core, a framework of essential criteria based on the NCWE code of practice developed with ASET. NCWE's own Advisory Board will act as the review body.

Copies of Red Hot Talent, the toolkit for SMEs developed with RDA funding with the University of Nottingham, is being sold nationally and also on licence to HE Institutions. We are in negotiation to extend the licence to overseas bodies to raise standards internationally.

Work continues on the Diploma in Work Placement Management in partnership with NASES and AGCAS and a pilot will be in place later this year.

*Jayne Rowley
Publishing Director*

Review of the Year *continued*

Chief Executives Division

Careers & Guidance Services (CGS)

2005 was a busy year for CGS. Due to increases in graduate demand for our web based virtual careers services, CGS recruited an additional permanent part-time E-Adviser, taking its total to 12; and during the busy summer months, CGS also recruited 5 freelance E-Advisers as well.

The remit of CGS is not only to continue the successful virtual graduate careers service on Prospects.ac.uk, but also to develop a range of web-based guidance services and products for delivery via Prospects.ac.uk, higher education careers services, other external education and guidance organisations and graduate recruiters. During 2005, business plans were finalised and approved in order to promote and sell CGS's five key online products and services:

- Prospects Net – vacancy handling, events management and e-guidance systems for education and guidance organisations in the UK to manage and administer their own guidance services to their client group. During 2005, CGS sold two e-guidance systems to Aim Higher Greater Manchester and Coventry University Learner Service. Within the HE careers services sector, over 78 careers services are currently utilising the Prospects Net system, using one or more of its modules.
- Prospects FAQs – a frequently asked questions system to enable guidance organisations to deliver online their own Questions & Answers service. During 2005, CGS sold its first FAQs system.

- Prospects Chat – chatrooms, virtual open days and virtual fairs for education and guidance organisations to deliver live career management and recruitment events. During 2005, CGS moderated over 34 paid-for chats from graduate recruiters.
- Prospects Profiles – starting life as the Alumni Profiles project in partnership with the Aim Higher Peninsula Project (a consortium of south-west education colleges and universities including Exeter and Plymouth universities), the online case study database system went live in the South West during 2005. The database of case studies will profile graduates, their university experiences and their current jobs with the aim of profiling graduates, universities and graduate recruiters.
- Premium Graduate Services – a “pay-at-the-point-of-use” specialist career development service for graduates which will complement the free interactive graduate services. During 2005, market research was undertaken with graduates to identify the types of online services they would be prepared to pay for and at what price. The results of the research have shaped the developing Premium Graduate Services.

CGS has spent most of 2005 redeveloping Prospects Planner for delivery via Prospects.ac.uk. During 2005, Planner has been redesigned using market research data from graduates and HE careers staff and

went through its first user testing towards the end of 2005 ready for its launch in early 2006.

CGS ends the year with its virtual graduate careers service approaching its 5th birthday. During these last five years, over 48,000 careers queries have been submitted to Graduate Questiontime, our email a careers adviser service, and 21,000 online CV's have been submitted for checking to our Graduate CV Surgery service.

Lucy Madahar
CGS Manager

Marketing Communications & Channel Management

It was an eventful year for Marketing Communications and Channel Management, with successful consolidation of recent developments and some extremely high profile industry activities, all achieved at a lower cost than in 2004.

We again sponsored the Award for Excellence in Graduate Recruitment at the Personnel Today 2005 Awards, which culminated in an event attended by over 800 major recruiters. Our presence in national and local media was further heightened through monthly columns in both *The Independent* and *The National Student*, and we are regularly included in *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Mail on Sunday* and on the BBC.

To promote our publications and online services, including the newly launched digital magazine *Prospects Graduate*, we used a mixture of electronic communication and

Review of the Year *continued*

traditional marketing activity. This has involved targeted email campaigns, innovative direct mail and our bi-monthly online newsletters, which are received by over 1500 graduate and postgraduate recruiters. Extensive developments in Careers Guidance Services and software packages were supported through direct promotion to students and graduates and the production of a demonstration CD-Rom, distributed at national careers guidance events.

Close working relationships with careers services across the UK continued via the Channel Management Team. The distribution and promotion of Graduate Prospects products and services on campus at UK universities was strengthened through sponsorship activities and close liaison with careers information and guidance staff. We also increased our presence at graduate, postgraduate and sector specific fairs across the UK, attending 50 events and distributing in excess of 80,000 publications directly to students and graduates.

'Are You Ready? A guide to age for graduate recruiters' was produced in conjunction with DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary and endorsed by the Association of Graduate Recruiters. The report was showcased to graduate recruiters via seminar events with the Open University.

In July 2005, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our market leading website, which now receives over 340,000 unique users per month, accessing 5m pages.

Sarah Kite
Acting Marketing Manager

HECSU

HECSU now has resources available for a range of activities:

- i) research projects,
- ii) membership services,
- iii) labour market information and
- iv) other projects.

Research projects

The pilot for the Core Study of the longitudinal programme began in September 2005 with an electronic questionnaire survey of a sample of 15,000 entrants to HE, in collaboration with UCAS. This was supplemented with a telephone survey of non-respondents to ascertain ease of use of the questionnaire and timings, incentives, etc. The pilot has been very informative and led the research team to propose significant amendments.

The first Subsidiary Study of the longitudinal programme was begun in the summer of 2005 to investigate award bearing careers education within the HE curriculum. This study is due to report in June 2006 and aims

to develop a typology of practice. Strong links with the AGCAS CEG benchmarking project foreshadow continuing use of this researched evidence as an aid to practice. Two projects have completed during 2005/06: the Careers Advisory Services and International Students project and the Employability and Career Progression for Full time UK-resident Masters Students. Reports of both were well received at the 2005 AGCAS Biennial and the UniversitiesUK conferences, and additional dissemination events are planned.

Membership Services

Following a record number of signed agreements, the membership services team is now turning its attention to generating new memberships from colleges of FE/HE. Attendance at conferences, and professional body meetings and events, has been productive in terms of identifying the needs of stakeholders and gaining feedback on membership services.

A review of the HECSU website (www.hecsu.ac.uk) was undertaken and plans for its enhancement are now in place. Webtrends software is being used to monitor use of the site, which appears to be attracting interest from all over the world.

Review of the Year *continued*

Labour Market Information

Following changes to the management of the labour market information team, the provision of labour market information is now being promoted as a HECSU service in order to maximise opportunities to disseminate information. Increasing numbers of registrants to the electronic version of Graduate Market Trends, and several invitations to address high profile national conferences, suggest that there is growing interest in the graduate labour market, and increasingly HECSU is being perceived as an impartial broker of information and commentary.

Other projects

HECSU contributes to a range of external work groups, including, HESA longitudinal DLHE, NSS and TQI steering group and the HEA Work Experience Forum. HECSU co-funds several research and development projects of which four are referred to here.

1. The Merseyside Diversity Mentoring project is reporting increasing success in attracting over 250 undergraduates from diverse backgrounds to participate in career development workshops and mentoring arrangements with employers. The project's focus has broadened to include mature students as well as those from minority ethnic groups and 'first generation' HE participants.
2. The International Competitiveness of UK Higher Education project currently undertaken by the CIHE is revealing valuable insights into the perceptions of major employers in relation to the research and teaching capabilities of universities. This work (completes in summer of 2006) will be of particular interest to policy planners and those concerned with knowledge transfer.
3. The HE Academy Work Experience Forum is managing a research project investigating Work Experience - in the HE Curriculum.

Whilst much is known about the potential benefits of work experiences to students and employers, relatively little is known about how students utilise these experiences as part of their learning. This project is also due to report in the summer of 2006.

4. The National Association of Student Employment Services aims to have 100 student services in membership. Training events include, 'Setting-Up a Student Employment Service Workshop' and the Association is currently developing a qualification for Job Shop Practitioners, Work Experience Coordinators, and Placement Officers, as well as producing a textbook.

*Jane Artess
HECSU Research Manager*

Graduate Prospects Employees as at 31 January 2006

Staff List

* indicates executive directors of Graduate Prospects Ltd, the trading company

Chief Executive's Division

Chief Executive: **Mike Hill***
PA: **Annette Stewart**

HECSU Research Manager:

Jane Artess

Membership Services Manager: **Christine Tomkinson**

Administrative Assistant:

Andrew Priest

Labour Market Information Manager: **Charlie Ball**

Ball

Labour Market Information

Co-ordinator: **Pearl Mok**

Markets Research Information Officer: **Colin Lawton**

Lawton

Careers and Guidance Services Manager:

Lucy Madahar

E-Guidance Manager: **Liz Hagger**

Guidance Services Executive:

John Bellerby

Part-time E-Advisors: **Ann Berry,**

Mike Cox, Deborah Fowles,

Laura Hooke, Irena Jennings,

Andy Kay, Angus McKendrick,

Adele Merrison, Janice Morris, Naeema Pasha,

Gill Sharp,

Nan Sherrad

Marketing Communications Manager:

Julie Ingham

Channel Manager: **Sarah Kite**

Senior Marketing Communications

Executives: **Brian Hussey, Vicky Reed**

Marketing Communications Executive: **Simon Thomas**

Thomas

Despatch Co-ordinator: **Mike Threlfall**

Threlfall

Internal Services Division

Finance Director: **Steven Bluck***

Financial Controller: **Craig Ridge**

Credit Controller: **Andrew Bebbington**

Purchase Ledger Clerk: **Angela Johnson**

Assistant Accountant: **Karen Fernyhough**

HR Manager: **Zoe Mitchell**

HR Officer: **Jenny Newton**

Facilities Officer: **Ray Rawlinson**

Projects Manager: **Carl Miles**

Head of IT: **Mark Watts**

Deputy IT Manager: **Richard Sandell**

Technical Development Manager: **Andy Rubio**

Senior Software Engineers:

Suzan Allen, Chris Dean,

Muhammed Sarwar, Mark Reeves,

Jonathan Whitehead

Senior Systems Analyst: **John Hooper**

Software Engineers: **Guy Chester,**

Philip Harper, Abdurrahman Patel, Gareth

Robinson, Samantha Royle

Senior Technical Analyst:

Michael Bryant

Student Placement: **Simon Frost, Peter Holmes**

Computer Services Manager:

Kalpesh Vadera

Computer Services Technicians:

Sunil Patel, Mandeep Singh

Singh

Publishing Division

Publishing Director: **Jayne Rowley***

National Council for Work Experience:

Director: **Liz Rhodes, MBE**

Product Manager: **Julie Wilson**

Student Placement: **Amy Peck**

Post-graduate Business Manager: **Leon March**

Product Managers: **Sam Breslin,**

Andy Harris

Harris

Employer Business Manager: **Chris Rea**

Product Managers: **Karen Baird,**

Helen Cartwright,

Cartwright

Web Services Manager: **Sinead McGovern**

Senior Web Developer: **Peter Hill**

Web Developers: **John Ossaway, Richard Smith**

Web Traffic & Communications Manager:

Dave Sherwin

Sherwin

Publications Manager: **Paul Naylor**

Designers: **Simon Gurnhill & Lisa Murphy**

Information Production Officer: **Chris Hicks**

Student Placement: **Charlene Grant**

Grant

Information & Content Manager:

Claire Basinger

Deputy Manager: **Vacant**

Editors: **Zannah Ingraham,**

Joanne O'Connor, Graham Trickey

Information Manager: **Lisa Ward**

Information Officers:

Martin Gresty, Julie Maybury

Information Executive: **Ruth Eaton**

Information Co-ordinator:

Carli Ridings

Student Temporary Placement:

Hazel Tyldesley

Tyldesley

Sales Division

Sales Director: **Allan Brown***

Receptionist/Sales Administrator: **Anne Betty**

London Office Administrator: **Gemma Hook**

Hook

Post-graduate Sales Manager: **Emma Irving**

Post-graduate Team Leader: **Alison Smith**

Post-graduate Senior Account Executive:

Clare Wedren

Post-graduate Account Executive:

Michelle Jarvis

Post-graduate Sales Executive: **Sarah Smith**

Smith

Senior Sales Manager: **Nick Matthew**

Sales Manager (London): **Natalie Cunningham**

Account Manager (North): **Cathy Campbell**

Campbell

Senior Account Executives: **Sarah Dennis,**

Louis Koonjean (London), Jon Radley (London),

Rick Riley, Mark Thompson (London)

Account Executives: **Jessica Gilbert,**

Warren Jituboh (London), Lisa Protano,

Scott Pugh (London)

Sales Executives: **Shagobi Kumarasamy,**

Marilyn Martins, Ruth Oloyede, Martin Ward,

James Whitfield (all London)

Advertising Processing Manager:

Steve Pickering

Advertising Production Executives:

Sandra Merrell, Sharon Walton

E-Commerce Services Executive: **Tracy Jones**

E-Commerce Services Assistant: **Julia Scott**

Project Manager, CRM: **Peter Jury**

Jury

Many thanks to all those staff who have moved on from Graduate Prospects during the last 12 months.