

Session Outline:

The concept of learning gain has significant currency across the sector, set against the backdrop of Gibbs' (2010) *Dimensions of Quality* and the US study (2011) *Academically Adrift*, and its concerns in relation to educational gain. Meanwhile, the UK Government's Green Paper (2015) refers to student outcomes and learning gain as key to an understanding of 'the complexity and breadth of teaching quality and excellence'.

Capturing Learning Gain from Work Placements was a research project undertaken at the University of Dundee and funded under the Higher Education Academy Vice-Chancellors' Strategic Excellence Initiative. The overall aim of the project was to build on the University's approaches to graduate employability using the concept of 'the distance travelled' by students undertaking work placements and by capturing and exploring the associated 'learning gain'. Findings from the project indicated a statistically significant increase in students' self-perception of skills development post-placement and thus a statistically significant learning gain.

However, of equal interest, were the unintended outcomes from the project which highlighted the attitudes, personal attributes and self-realisation and learning that were emerging for these students as a result of the placement experience.

This interactive workshop will discuss findings from the Capturing Learning Gain project and next steps in the development of approaches to supporting students in effectively identifying, realising and applying learning gained from placement experiences. Participants will have the opportunity to consider the following questions with respect to their own practice.

- Authentic contexts such as work placements create genuine and valuable learning opportunities for the development of (graduate?) attributes and personal development in addition to skills – **to what extent is this measurable as learning gain?**
- How can we ensure that students **continue to capitalise on this learning** when back in the classroom?
- How can we embed more authentic learning (and teaching) opportunities in the curriculum to blend this learning with academic study **for the benefit of all students?**