



Enhancing graduate employability through interdisciplinary, work-based learning

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Abstract

This paper examines an interdisciplinary initiative at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL), focusing on the collaboration between qTech and qNomics in delivering a multi-disciplinary project designed to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional experience. The collaboration fosters direct engagement with industry and provides students with authentic, real-world learning opportunities that are crucial for enhancing their employability. This initiative goes beyond traditional academic frameworks, offering students not only an opportunity to engage in practical problem solving but also a platform for reflecting on their work. In doing so, it contributes significantly to knowledge exchange while simultaneously providing a foundation for professional competencies and reflective practice. By exploring the structure and outcomes of this collaboration, the paper highlights how such interdisciplinary projects can strengthen graduate attributes, enhance work-based education, and better prepare students for the challenges of the contemporary workforce.

Keywords: graduate attributes; inter-disciplinary work-based education; employability.

Introduction

This paper highlights the collaboration between qTech and qNomics in delivering a multi-disciplinary project. We explore how this initiative contributes to students' employability, demonstrating the value of collaborative, co-created projects involving academics,

professional partners, and students. By providing direct industry engagement, these initiatives offer invaluable insights and preparation for the professional world.

Background and rationale

National context

A significant proportion of undergraduate students enter university with well-defined career aspirations, while others lack a clear trajectory. Despite longstanding efforts to integrate employability into Higher Education (HE) since the 1990s (Miller, Biggart and Newton, 2013) and its prioritisation by universities (Pegg et al., 2012; Winberg et al., 2020), a persistent disconnect remains between academic learning and workplace readiness. This issue is further underscored by employer concerns regarding the skills gap, wherein graduates often lack essential competencies required in the workforce (CBI, 2022). Notably, the demand for transferable soft skills — such as communication, teamwork, and problem solving — continues to surpass the extent to which they are fostered within conventional HE curricula (Noah and Aziz, 2020).

The evidence highlights the scope of this gap. Radermacher, Walia, and Knudson (2014) found that computing graduates are often perceived as deficient in cognitive and soft skills, limiting their effectiveness in professional settings. Similarly, a 2018 Bloomberg white paper indicated that 65% of corporations and 56% of academic institutions regard graduates as inadequately prepared for employment, emphasising a considerable preparedness gap (Bloomberg, 2018). The rapid expansion of HE has exacerbated this issue by leading to an oversupply of graduates, intensifying competition for a limited number of graduate-level positions. Employers, conversely, struggle to find candidates with the requisite skill sets, resulting in increased training costs and productivity challenges. A recent study by Henseke et al. (2025) employed a task-based approach to analyse the British graduate labour market, revealing that while the number of graduates has risen, demand for high-level skills has not kept pace, resulting in market saturation.

In response, national and sector-wide initiatives such as work-integrated learning (WIL), apprenticeships, industry partnerships, and structured graduate-development schemes have been implemented to bridge this gap. The adoption of WIL and experiential education has gained traction, with institutions like the University of Warwick and Manchester Metropolitan University embedding employer-led projects and industry placements within

their degree programmes (Jackson and Bridgstock, 2021). The National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) underscores the role of knowledge-exchange partnerships in enhancing graduate employability through university–industry collaboration (NCUB, 2021). Internationally, Australia’s embedded employability framework and Germany’s dual education system serve as exemplary models, demonstrating the efficacy of structured work-based learning in facilitating the transition from academia to employment (Tomlinson and Holmes, 2017). However, these approaches are not yet universally integrated across institutions, leaving many graduates at a disadvantage when entering the labour market.

Contributing factors

While work-integrated learning and industry partnerships provide valuable opportunities, their availability is often limited, and not all students can access them equally. This problem is further intensified by higher education curricula’s failure to align with the evolving demands of industries, resulting in skill mismatches among graduates. A study on the UK artificial intelligence (AI) sector revealed discrepancies between university curricula and employer expectations, underscoring the need for curricular updates to reflect emerging industries and evolving competencies (Jaiswal, Kuzminykh and Modgil, 2024). The evolving nature of industries and technological advancements mean that universities must continuously adapt to remain relevant.

Many graduates enter the job market with minimal practical experience, impeding their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in professional settings. The overemphasis on academic achievements at the expense of hands-on learning leaves graduates underprepared for workplace challenges. Despite demographic trends favouring young graduates, a slowing labour market and heightened competition reinforce the necessity for practical skill development to improve employability.

The accelerated pace of technological change renders certain skills obsolete at an unprecedented rate, posing challenges for HE institutions striving to maintain up-to-date curricula. A scoping review of the creative industries identified difficulties in synchronising educational outcomes with industry requirements, further highlighting the critical role of continuous curriculum evolution (Flew, 2019). The ongoing demand for soft skills such as adaptability and problem solving is particularly pronounced in fast-changing industries.

Structural inequalities further complicate graduate employability outcomes. A recent OfS report indicates that students from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented communities often face lower employment prospects (Office for Students, 2023).

QMUL's context

QMUL is renowned for its diverse student body, comprising individuals from over 170 nationalities. Notably, 93% of domestic students come from state schools and 46% are first-generation university attendees, indicating a stronger representation of state-educated students at QMUL compared to the national landscape. This diversity extends to postgraduate taught (PGT) students, 54% of whom identify as Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) — a proportion significantly higher than other Russell Group universities. However, despite this vibrant diversity, QMUL graduates encounter substantial challenges in the labour market.

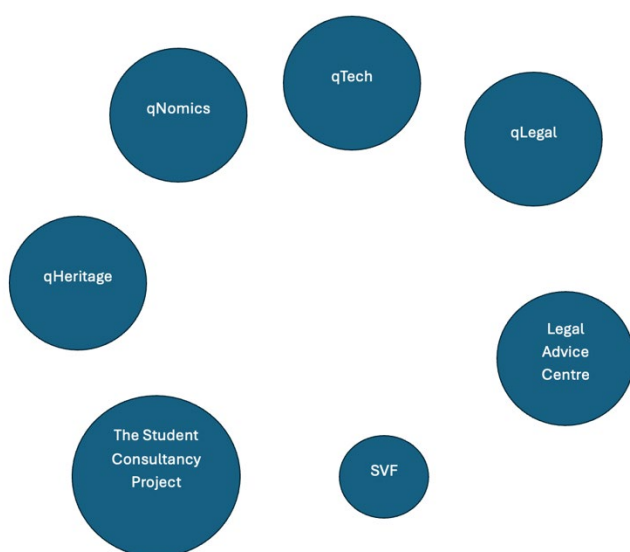
On top of that, many QMUL students face structural barriers to employment, including limited access to professional networks, lower levels of social capital, and disparities in career-readiness skills compared to their more privileged peers (Bathmaker et al., 2016; Tomlinson, 2017). Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions aimed at fostering employability and improving access to professional opportunities.

To mitigate these challenges, QMUL has introduced a series of initiatives designed to enhance social mobility and workforce inclusion. Employability programmes such as SKETCH emphasise extracurricular activities and industry collaboration to equip students with relevant skills and professional experience (Jackson and Tomlinson, 2021). By embedding employability within the curriculum and offering real-world learning opportunities, QMUL aims to ensure that graduates are not only academically proficient but also equipped with the competencies and confidence required for successful careers (Holmes, 2013).

What is SKETCH?

SKETCH is a cross-faculty QMUL initiative designed to foster innovation and entrepreneurship by bringing together different schools within the university (see Figure 1). Initially supported by funding from the Office for Students (OfS) and Research England, SKETCH creates a dynamic ecosystem where expertise from diverse disciplines, ranging from Business and Law to Science and Technology, intersects to support knowledge exchange.

Figure 1. A visual representation of the SKETCH ecosystem pillars, each representing a distinct academic discipline or area at QMUL.



Initially launched as a five-pillar programme, SKETCH has since expanded to include seven pillars from various schools within QMUL. Each pillar operates its own employability and knowledge-exchange (KE) initiative, designed to support students and enhance their employability skills. The primary objective of SKETCH is to foster interdisciplinary collaboration across these pillars, creating a cohesive framework for student development. SKETCH aims to promote student knowledge exchange. This occurs whenever students apply their academic skills to real-world challenges, engaging with businesses and communities.

The SKETCH programme is grounded in three key theoretical frameworks: (a) experiential learning utilising Kolb's (1984) action-based approach to immerse students in real-world experiences that enhance their learning and skill development; (b) work-based learning integrating academic knowledge with workplace environments to improve employability;

and (c) lifelong learning, fostering soft skills that enable students to adapt to an evolving labour market.

The programme connects students with local businesses, individuals, and community partners through workshops, training, advisory clinics, consultancy-style projects, and investment services. These initiatives provide practical experience that bridges the gap between academic knowledge and real-world applications, equipping students with essential employability skills. It also encourages students to take ownership of their professional and personal development, track their progress, and reflect on prior learning experiences (Exley and Dennick, 2004).

Aligned with Knight and Yorke's (2003) model of employability and learning, each pillar in SKETCH offers the students a suite of personal development opportunities designed to equip them with experience and skills relevant to their academic studies. Students' development is assessed through reflective evaluations recorded in their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) transcript, providing documented evidence of their growth.

As part of QMUL's broader innovation strategy, SKETCH plays a key role in advancing enterprise education, sustainable business practices, and the integration of cutting-edge research into entrepreneurial ventures. Through its structured framework, it serves as a catalyst for impactful research, policy engagement, and the promotion of an entrepreneurial mindset across the university.

A key feature of SKETCH is its 'collaborative, pillar-led framework', through which interdisciplinary projects are initiated and managed. Each project is spearheaded by a lead pillar, which then draws in students from various disciplines based on the project's specific demands. This model ensures that students engage in hands-on, real-world problem solving while benefiting from a truly interdisciplinary approach. One such example is the Financial Literacy Project, where students from qNomics and qTech collaborate to develop financial education tools for the benefit of public, blending expertise from economics and technology to create impactful solutions.

The following section will analyse the structure, impact, and outcomes of two such initiatives — qNomics and qTech — examining their contributions to graduate employability, social mobility, and the broader discourse on work-integrated learning in higher education.

Programme initiatives: qTech, qNomics, and the Financial Literacy Project

This study describes a challenge-based learning (CBL) project in which Computer Science (qTech) and Economics (qNomics) students collaborated in multidisciplinary teams to develop a financial literacy platform for public use. The initiative also capitalised on university students' expertise by involving them in delivering workshops at local schools for GCSE students, Science institutions, and refugee learners, in partnership with charitable organisations. Alongside formal curriculum developments, extra-curricular activities were introduced to enhance students' career readiness and graduate profiles.

The project emphasises active engagement and cross-disciplinary collaboration, fostering a dynamic learning environment that nurtures tolerance, adaptability, and mutual understanding — essential qualities in today's interconnected world. Interdisciplinary initiatives, such as joint projects and workshops, enable meaningful interactions among students from diverse backgrounds, ultimately cultivating a more holistic and cooperative educational experience.

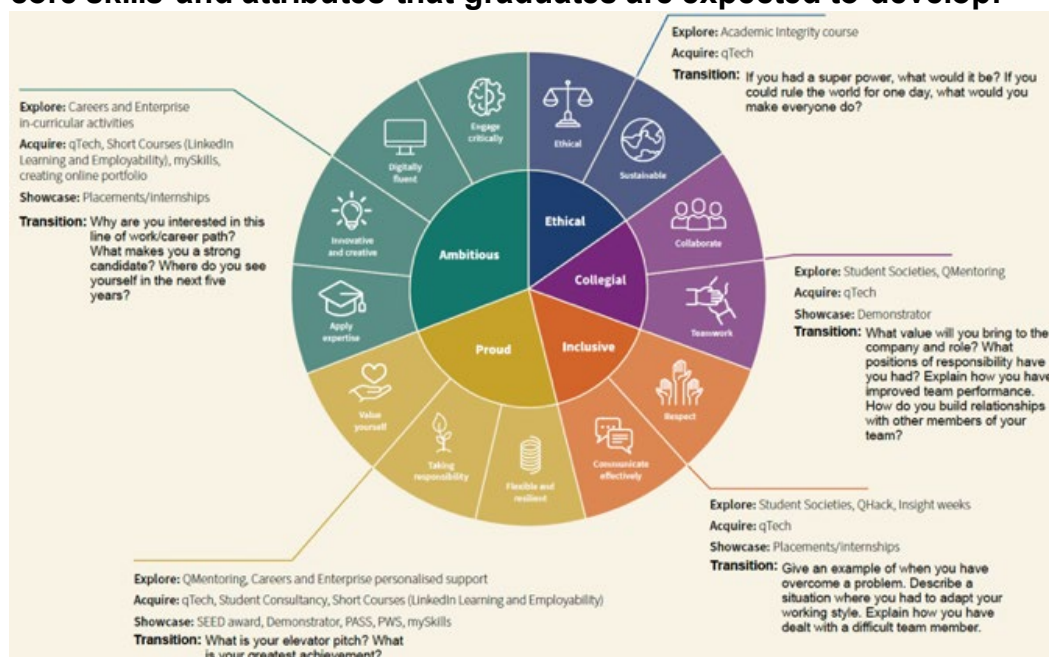
qTech initiative

Based in the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science (EECS), the qTech programme is structured around the QMUL GAP (Graduate Attributes Programme). It is a student-centred, flexible framework that guides students through key career-development phases from job-hunting to reflective practice on learning experiences, aiming to build both technical competence and soft skills.

QMUL (GAP) is a QMUL flagship professional-development programme that supports students in planning, promoting, and enhancing their personal, professional, and career growth. It defines the knowledge, behaviours, and attributes of successful graduates while encouraging them to maximise their potential. The programme adheres to a quality benchmark aligned with QMUL's core values — inclusivity, pride, ambition, collegiality, and ethics. Additionally, it integrates EAST, QMUL's student career journey framework, which consists of four stages: (E)xplore career options, (A)cquire experience, (S)howcase skills and experience, and (T)ransition to the next steps. Each stage includes sub-dimensions

that map onto graduate attributes, aiding students in preparing for interviews and bridging the gap between academic learning and career readiness. The GAP also maps attributes to potential interview questions to aid students' transitions and bridge the academic/education career gap, as demonstrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Diagram illustrating the QMUL Graduate Attributes Programme, showing core skills and attributes that graduates are expected to develop.



qNomics initiative

Originating in 2015 within the School of Economics and Finance, qNomics addresses the gap in affordable, comprehensive financial guidance for start-ups, a need highlighted by a British Business Bank (2015) report. Initially the programme was set up as an extra-curricular, non-credit-bearing option to postgraduate students in Economics who would provide tailored advisory services to start-ups, working closely with specialist and academic mentors. Within the following four years, qNomics gradually expanded and is now offered to both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

qNomics strategy

qNomics adopts a three-tiered strategy to deliver financial advisory services to start-ups and emerging enterprises. First, the programme offers customised financial consultations, in which Economics students, working in a group of three or four students, prepare comprehensive written reports and tailored recommendations under the supervision of

experienced financial professionals. Each client engagement typically involves around eight hours of dedicated student work spread over a 21-day period, including client interviews and report drafting.

Second, qNomics organises group learning events and workshops, enabling students to present on various financial topics to multiple start-ups simultaneously, with each session requiring approximately eight hours of preparation and follow-up across a 60-day timeframe. Finally, qNomics champions interdisciplinary collaboration through initiatives such as the Financial Literacy and Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) projects. The ESG initiative invites students to investigate sustainable business practices and craft strategic frameworks that address environmental and social challenges. These projects are also supervised by specialist guidance and are carried out via cross-disciplinary teamwork, typically involving around four hours of weekly engagement over a 30-day cycle. Meanwhile, in the Financial Literacy Project, students join forces with qTech students to develop accessible educational resources and case studies that clarify complex financial principles for the general public, yielding practical, industry-relevant outputs.

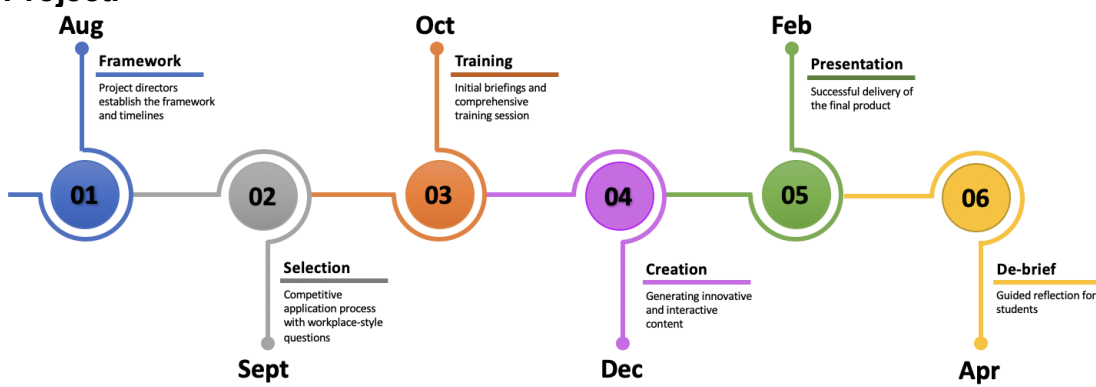
The Financial Literacy Project

Universities today are placing greater emphasis on enhancing the student learning experience, particularly as competition for both undergraduate and postgraduate enrolment increases. Traditional university placements often follow rigid structures, lasting for set periods and may not always align closely with students' academic studies. In contrast, the Financial Literacy Project offers a flexible and integrated approach, allowing students to apply their knowledge in a practical setting while collaborating across disciplines.

Overview

The Financial Literacy Project was conceived and delivered as a non-credit-bearing extracurricular activity, following the timeline outlined below.

Figure 3. A timeline diagram outlining the key phases of the Financial Literacy Project.



As a collaborative effort between qTech and qNomics, the Financial Literacy Project tasks interdisciplinary teams with developing interactive products ranging from online learning video series to gamified tools that clarify financial concepts for diverse audiences (e.g. start-ups, sixth-form pupils, and fellow students). This non-credit, extra-curricular activity provides students with practical experience in real-world financial challenges, while fostering cross-disciplinary teamwork. During their involvement, students will:

- Gain insights from experienced professionals and academic mentors.
- Enhance their ability to analyse and communicate financial concepts clearly.
- Develop teamwork skills by working with students from different academic backgrounds.
- Build confidence in applying financial knowledge to practical problems.
- Connect university learning with professional experience.

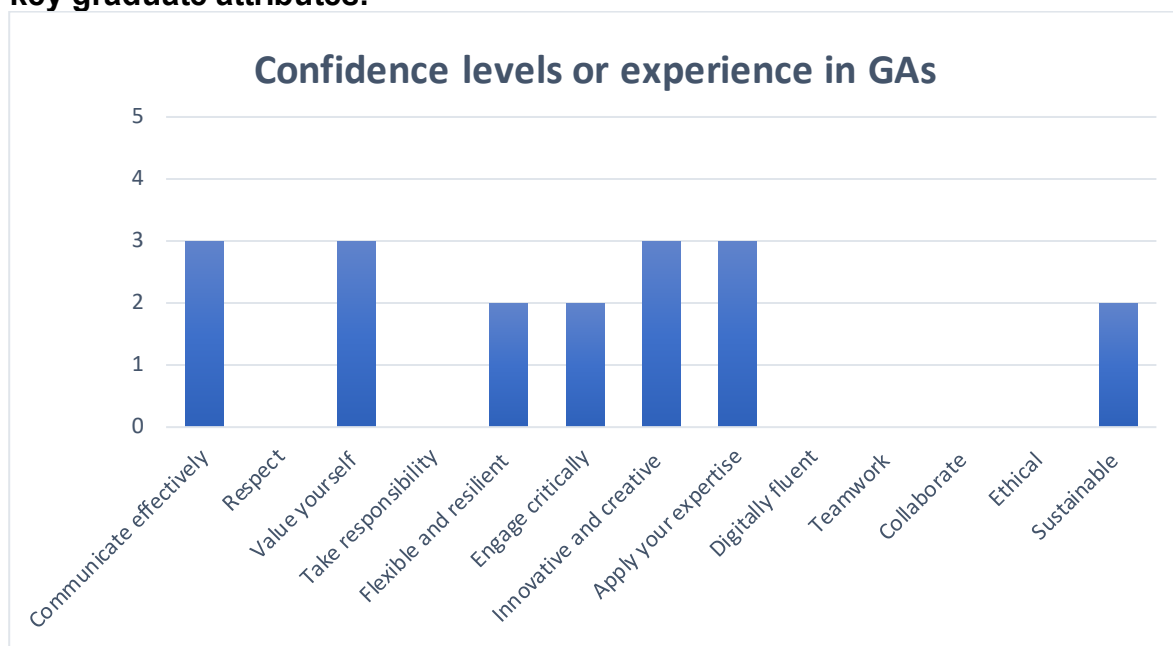
Students are required to submit a report and a final virtual product. This not only allows them to document and reflect on their work but also facilitates knowledge exchange, while providing a foundation for academic assessment.

Project structure and data gathering

As for any SKETCH project, in the Financial Literacy Project we employ a rigorous selection process that mirrors professional recruitment practices to identify students with strong analytical and communication skills. This method integrates a comprehensive questionnaire with a structured interview format, assessing not only academic merit but also practical problem-solving abilities and the capacity for innovative thinking.

Before commencing the project, we begin by gathering data on students' confidence levels and experiences with key graduate attributes. This initial phase is crucial to ensure that our project design directly addresses the students' needs. In this initial phase, students complete a self-assessment questionnaire to pinpoint the specific skills and competencies where they feel least confident (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. A bar chart displaying students' self-assessed confidence levels across key graduate attributes.



The questionnaire utilises a one–five scale — where one represents the least confidence and five the highest — to capture students' self-assessed levels of confidence and experience in each area.

Looking at the data, we identify priority areas for intervention in the project, i.e. flexibility and critical engagement. Other areas, such as application of expertise and communication, also get attention due to the inherent nature of the project. Thus, we modify the learning activities to focus on bolstering the identified areas, ensuring the project closely aligns with the students' requirements and promotes a more effective learning experience.

Students are selected into interdisciplinary teams of four to six. They receive an eight-hour intensive training covering key topics such as research, drafting, common financial issues, marketing, and public speaking and presentation skills. Students then receive a detailed brief outlining their next steps: to develop an interactive financial literacy tool for

community distribution. They are given the freedom to choose their target audience and to design any digital tool that best supports that choice.

This project brought together the strengths of both the qTech and qNomics SKETCH pillars, with qNomics students contributing essential financial insights and qTech students focusing on the technical development. This flexible, multidisciplinary approach not only enriched their practical learning experience but also sharpened key soft skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and effective communication.

Project outcomes

Over the last three years, the project has produced 12 interactive platforms addressing various financial topics. These platforms incorporate a variety of dynamic and interactive elements to enhance understanding and decision making in key areas such as finance, entrepreneurship, and education.

Among the platforms is an online learning video series tailored to start-ups, guiding aspiring entrepreneurs through the process of setting up and managing a business. Another platform features interactive quizzes designed to help young adults assess their risk attitude and understand how it influences their financial decisions. Additionally, an interactive online tool was developed to assist students in better understanding student loans, including repayment plans and long-term financial commitments.

Beyond these, the students have created numerous other engaging and innovative platforms, each designed to make complex topics more accessible through interactive simulations, gamified learning experiences, and AI-driven insights. These tools aim to empower users with the knowledge and confidence to make informed financial decisions in various aspects of their lives.

Evaluating and scaling interdisciplinary initiatives

Best practices and challenges in interdisciplinary teamwork

In the Financial Literacy Project, the diverse student body, ranging from local learners with varied socio-economic backgrounds to a significant international cohort, both enriched the experience and introduced challenges typical of multidisciplinary teamwork. Research

indicates that interdisciplinary settings can face difficulties in effective communication and collaboration between students (Xu et al., 2022). These challenges were further compounded by practical issues such as delayed intermediate report submissions and coordination problems between groups from different schools. To overcome these hurdles, the project was restructured into smaller, sequential tasks, with each group assigned a specific responsibility. This approach not only clarified individual contributions toward the overall project goal (Thomas, 2000), but also enhanced interaction and active participation through regular submissions and detailed feedback. By promoting autonomy and decision making — key aspects of entrepreneurial leadership education (Okudan and Rzasa, 2006) — this progressive strategy enabled students to develop essential interdisciplinary skills and better prepare for today's dynamic, technology-driven job market (George, 2023).

Integrating work-based learning into the curriculum

To link service delivery directly to our academic programmes, we have adopted an intervention model that begins with identifying students' knowledge gaps and then employs a hands-on approach, with continuous feedback from supervisors (Okudan and Rzasa, 2006). Students engage in a series of tasks and regular meetings with specialist mentors, which not only provide them with a sense of agency, but also mirror reinforcement learning strategies used in workplace training. This model is particularly timely as higher education, post-COVID, embraces innovative, sustainable, integrated, and inclusive approaches to help students define their professional identities (Knight and Yorke, 2003; Smith et al., 2017).

Within this framework, the qTech and qNomics programmes incorporate the Financial Literacy Project in ways that reflect their unique academic structures. At qTech, final-year students can integrate the project as a core component of their final-year project, directly linking academic assessment with practical experience. Meanwhile, qNomics allows second-year undergraduates to continue their involvement into the following academic year, where they transition into roles as student advisors to start-ups, applying the hands-on experience they have gained in developing interactive financial literacy tools. This comprehensive approach, bolstered by tailored supervision sessions, reflective activities, and insights from alumni, fosters a participatory tri-stakeholder relationship among academics, students, and the community, ultimately equipping students with the skills and

confidence to excel in a dynamic, technology-driven job market (Jackson, 2016; Van de Ven, 2018).

Scaling up and future directions

Scaling up these initiatives to accommodate larger student cohorts carries significant risks for maintaining quality. As participant numbers increase, the pressures on academic staff intensify, potentially compromising the personalised support and robust feedback mechanisms that are critical for effective learning. Without commensurate increases in resources and careful strategic planning, these additional pressures may lead to reduced individual attention and, ultimately, a decline in programme quality (Bianchi, 2020). These insights underscore the necessity of a balanced approach to scaling that ensures that growth in student numbers does not come at the expense of quality. Robust resource management, strategic planning, and additional support measures are essential to maintaining high standards in such programmes.

Student engagement

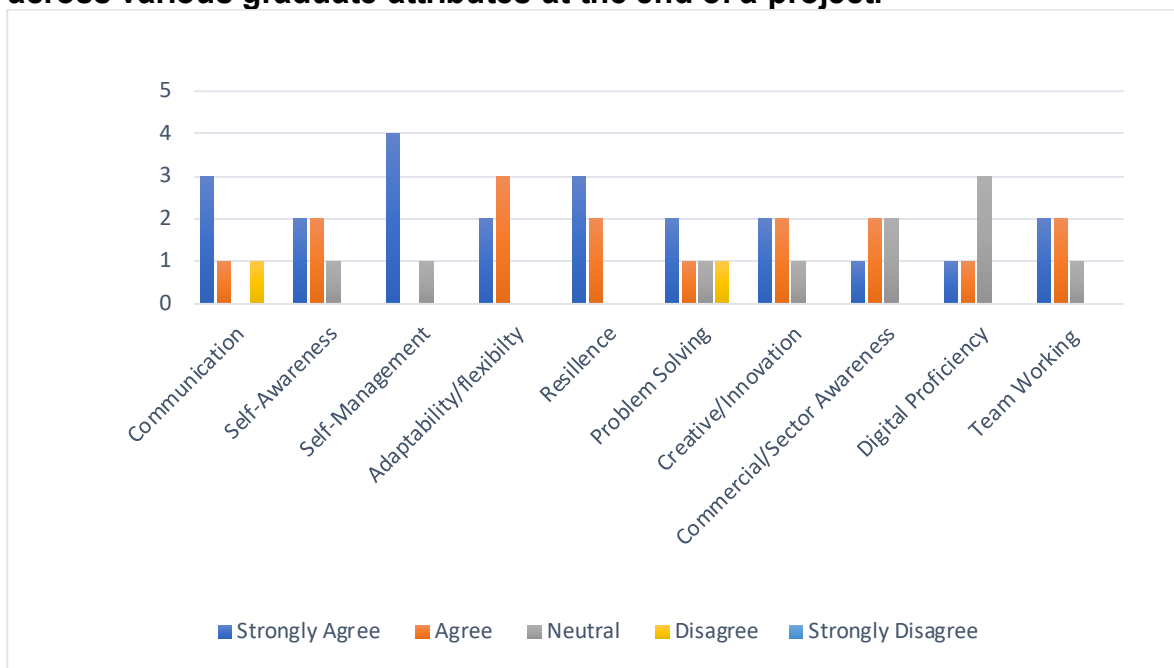
Assessing the success of the project involves evaluating both the benefits delivered to participating start-up companies and the enhancements to the learning experience for students from each programme, and SKETCH in general. Although SKETCH is still in its early stages, data collected from students indicate that the quality of the learning experience is a critical performance indicator. This feedback-driven approach allows us to continuously refine the project, ensuring that it meets both industry needs and educational objectives effectively.

Engagement through challenge-based learning

Challenge-based learning through student knowledge exchange offers significant benefits for both student employability and community engagement. In our project, in the period of 2022–25, 36 students experienced an immersive learning programme that equipped them with the skills to develop innovative interactive tools. At the project's conclusion, participants were invited to assess their development across key employability attributes. In particular, qTech students (Figure 5) rated their progress on a scale from 'strongly

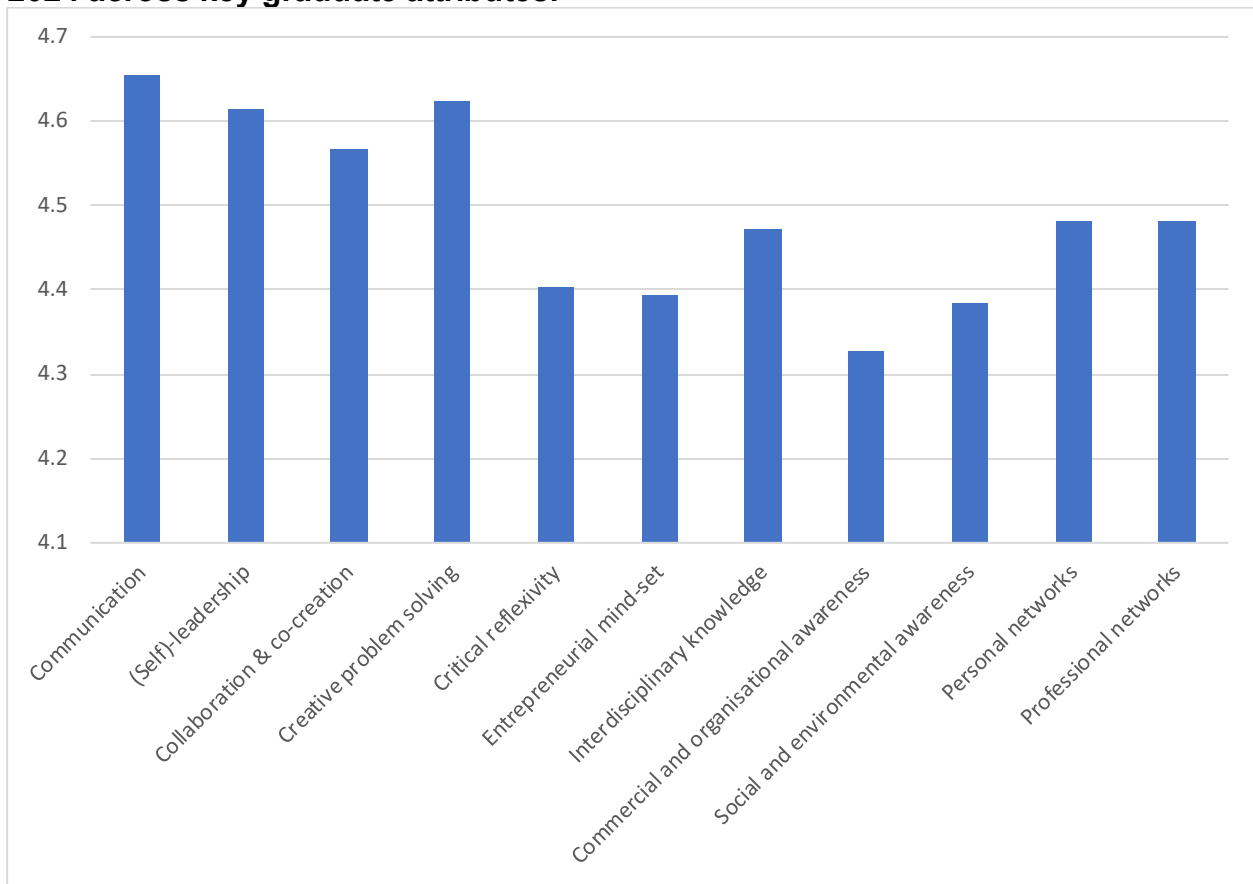
disagree’ (one) to ‘strongly agree’ (five), with attributes such as self-management and adaptability emerging as the strongest indicators of success. Although this feedback was gathered from five students during the 2022–2023 programme launch, it provided valuable insights into the tangible improvements in skills that enhance students’ CVs and overall work readiness.

Figure 5. A chart illustrating self-reported skills development among qTech students across various graduate attributes at the end of a project.



Similarly, the evaluation data from the qNomics programme (Figure 6) reveals a clear improvement in self-leadership and interdisciplinary skills. Attributes were measured on a one–five scale, from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’, and the high values observed across the board indicate that students have significantly developed these competencies. The survey, administered to 54 students on the programme between 2022 and 2024, demonstrates that participants not only gained confidence in these key areas but also enhanced their ability to work collaboratively and think across disciplines, reinforcing the overall success of the initiative in preparing them for the demands of the modern workplace. Moreover, the initiative directly benefits the community by addressing real societal needs, creating a mutually reinforcing cycle of learning and social impact.

Figure 6. A chart summarising qNomics students’ evaluation response from 2022 to 2024 across key graduate attributes.



Reflective practices and feedback integration

Participants in the programme are encouraged to adopt reflective practices that align their experiences with the university’s key graduate attributes. This reflective process enables them to critically assess their personal growth and the application of these attributes throughout the programme. By incorporating these reflections into their LinkedIn profiles, they can effectively communicate their experiences and skills to potential employers. Demonstrating proficiency in these attributes through real-world applications not only strengthens their profiles but also provides a clear indication of their capabilities and adaptability for future roles.

Feedback from students offered valuable qualitative insights into the effectiveness and impact of the training and the programme shedding light on the strengths of the programme and areas for further enhancement:

It has been a great opportunity to meet people outside of my course and come together with our individual competencies... For me, the scheme was a great

training opportunity. It has helped me work on key skills such as presentations, public speaking, and teamwork, which have all stuck with me and came in handy not only during interviews, but also in my current role... I really appreciate the resources, workshops and support that have been provided during this experience.

Conclusions

Future studies will need to investigate how our impact on employability can trigger broader change. We plan to address the following areas:

Stakeholder perspectives

We plan on gathering comprehensive feedback from all involved parties: students, faculty, industry partners, and administrators to identify the programme's strengths and weaknesses. This insight will guide future improvements and ensure that our approach remains responsive to stakeholder needs.

Long-term impact assessment

A longitudinal study will track the academic and professional progress of participating students over time. Encouraging initial evidence comes from our case-control matching analysis of the Career Registration (CR) survey data. Out of 470 SKETCH participants, we matched 243 to non-participating peers. Initial findings reveal that 37% of SKETCH students showed positive CR movement compared to 24% among non-participants — a 13% difference, suggesting that the project has a potential lasting impact on employability.

Scale-up and replication

We will explore the feasibility of expanding the project to involve more students or extend it to other institutions and disciplines. This will require a careful assessment of resource needs, potential challenges, and strategies for maintaining quality. Anecdotal evidence indicates that there may be a break-even point, beyond which further expansion could risk diminishing the student experience. Our experience with the pillar-led model already adopted by various schools within QMUL and evidenced by the growing number of advice centres in HE demonstrates promising scalability if managed carefully.

Sustainability and institutional support

We will assess the long-term sustainability of the project by exploring avenues for enhanced institutional backing and funding. Given the current pressures on higher education, it is vital to develop self-sustaining mechanisms. This may include building partnerships with industry, securing external funding, or integrating the project into the institution's strategic plans to ensure its continued success. These planned studies will not only provide valuable insights into our programme's efficacy, but will also help refine our approach to ensure that the positive impacts on employability and community engagement are sustained as the project grows.

It is worth noting that the HE sector has been transformed by its motivation to widen access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. After initial access to QMUL, the university has a responsibility to ensure societal inequalities and stratifications are not replicated within the student journey. We have demonstrated how extra-curricular CBL in the form of live briefs from real-life challenges facilitates work-integrated learning, which integrates theory with practice (Dollinger and Brown, 2019) and enhances student career development and employability by developing graduate skills and work-readiness (Smith et al., 2009; Redden, 2015; Berndtsson, Dahlborg and Pennbrandt, 2020). Co-created and delivered collaboratively by multidisciplinary stakeholders including academics, students, and professional partners, work-integrated projects also provide direct access to industry insights. In the future, we aim to integrate such pedagogies for sustainability into the curriculum for the final-year projects where a diverse pool of professional partners has been established. By drawing on identified good practice, the purpose is to ensure that the students' journey with us begins with the intention of accessing the career ladder. Indeed, employability provision is regarded key to student success in HE.

Graduate employability is a complex concept, one which has broadened in recent years to encapsulate a diverse range of skills, attributes, and other measures such as professional-identity and active citizenship. This paper presents recent scholarship on extra-curricular work-based learning and employability, addressing the question of how work-based learning contributes to enhancing employability outcomes for students and graduates. The importance of embedding work-based learning experiences in the curriculum so they are effectively supported by appropriate pedagogical strategies is emphasised, pointing to ways in which these two perspectives can be better integrated.

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