

**target**connect

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**gti**

# **targetconnect for** **career readiness**

**Full careers service management  
and career discovery platform**

# Putting Career Readiness into practice

Why Edge Hill University centres their student support around a career readiness journey.

We caught up with Becca Colley-Foster, Head of Careers and Graduate Employability at Edge Hill University, to find out why Edge Hill believe a student journey centred around career readiness is leading to more successful student outcomes.



Becca Colley-Foster  
Head of Careers and  
Graduate Employability

We implemented career readiness in 2021 to help us better understand our students and target our support more effectively.

At Edge Hill, we decided to adapt Dr Gilworth's standard Career Readiness categories to Discover, Develop and Compete.

We chose the terms Discover, Develop and Compete because we wanted to support our students to discover their career options; develop their skills, confidence and competence in the context of our defined graduate attributes; and ensure they are ready to successfully compete for their next steps when their studies with us are finished.

After piloting for a year, in 2022 we introduced a fourth question: **What is your career goal/future plans?**

We are the only UK HEI to currently ask this question to-date. The responses allow us to further personalise our support to meet the individual needs of our students more effectively. We encourage students to say if they don't have a career goal in mind as this helps us to work with students to discover their options further.

# The challenge

As with most universities, a key challenge is that every student starts their career-thinking at a different point. They may then progress through the career readiness stages; get stuck or loop between certain stages; they may move back and repeat various stages (all of which is fine!).

Prior to incorporating Career Readiness as a mandatory element of the student registration and enrolment process, we did not have the full picture of career thinking and that progression journey across our entire student population.

Now, at the beginning of every year, we have the latest Career Readiness data for every student. We also require students to update their Career Readiness status when logging into our targetconnect Careers Platform.

## All of this means that we can:

- target our services and support more effectively
- report on the effectiveness of our support and iterate our interventions
- work more closely with academics and other colleagues using an evidenced-based approach
- tailor our support as our students' thinking changes and evolves.

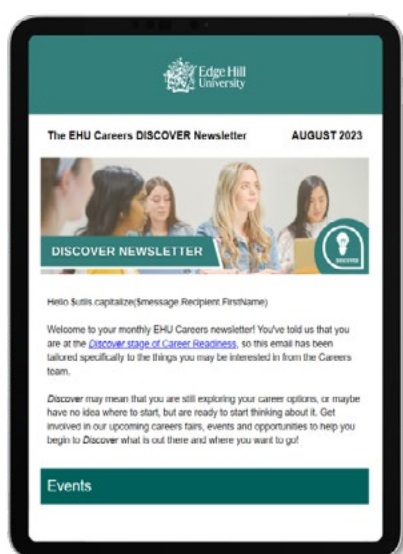
# The solution

We created an employability journey for our students that is centred around Career Readiness.

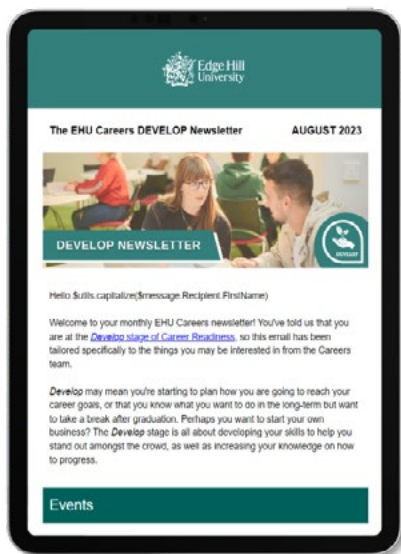
In practice, this involves:

## 1.TARGETING BASED ON CAREER READINESS STATUS

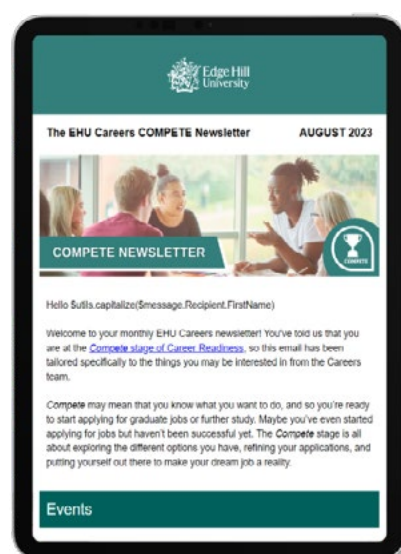
Discover/Develop/Compete Monthly Newsletters – every month we send a monthly roundup newsletter to students in each category of Career Readiness. This contains career support, events, learning Pathways and more.



DISCOVER  
NEWSLETTER



DEVELOP  
NEWSLETTER



COMPETE  
NEWSLETTER

## 2. CAREER READINESS LEARNING PATHWAYS

Students can access learning courses and guidance information, in a range of formats, that we build and share through targetconnect. These are aligned to their Career Readiness stage. These are easy to create, simple-to-share resources bringing together videos, practical exercises, assessments, tools and expert insights.

### An example of Edge Hill's learning Pathways

DISCOVER	DEVELOP	COMPETE
Generating Your Career Ideas	Developing Skills & Experience	Finding & Applying for Postgraduate Courses
Making a Decision & Creating a Career Plan		Top tips for Applications & Selection
What is Self-Awareness	Building Your Network	Job Search Strategies
The Career Planning Process		

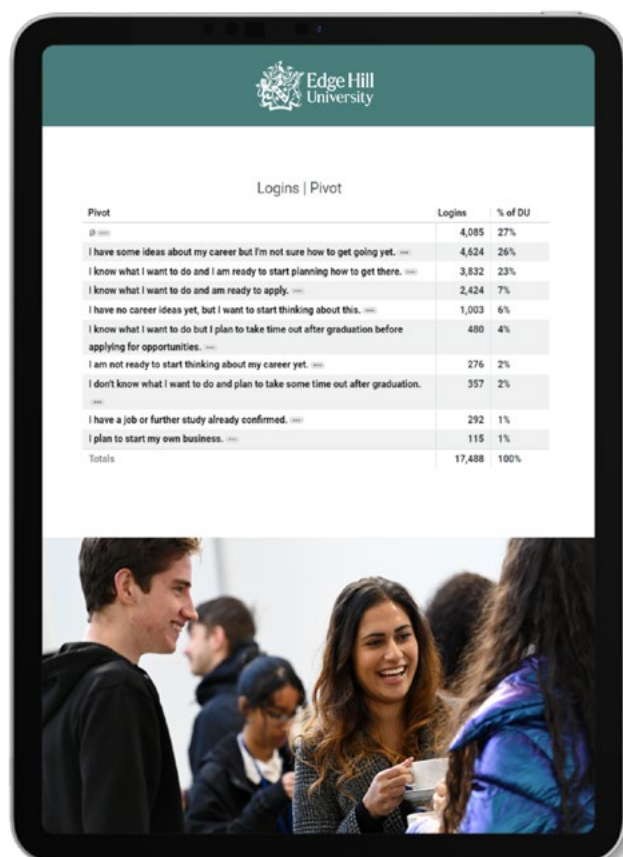
## 3. PRACTICAL CAREER READINESS WORKSHOPS

We target and run events and workshops by career readiness stage, so that students know these sessions are tailored to them and their current thinking.

## 4. REPORTING

We pivot our engagement reporting data by Career Readiness, to help us determine where our students' need the most support.

### Engagement dashboard pivoted by Career Readiness stage





## The outcomes

Since implementing this approach we have seen engagement with our services increase significantly.

Our graduate outcomes have also improved but most importantly, our students report feeling more confident about their career choices and supported by the team.

## Interested? Questions we often get asked at targetconnect

### HOW DO WE SEND OR CAPTURE CAREER READINESS DATA?

You have two options for recording and using Career Readiness data within your targetconnect platform:

- If you are capturing Career Readiness data outside of targetconnect (e.g at student registration each year), you can include the categories and stages as part of the Student Data you import into your targetconnect platform. (You can still ask students to update their career readiness throughout any year of study within targetconnect, even if you're importing the data from your student record system.)
- Students can update their career readiness category and stage when they complete their profile with targetconnect.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SEND CAREER READINESS IN THE FEED, BUT A STUDENT UPDATES THEIR STAGE IN-PLATFORM?

There are change control procedures in place that manage this for you and the platform will use the latest unique Career Readiness stage provided.



# A student journey built around career readiness

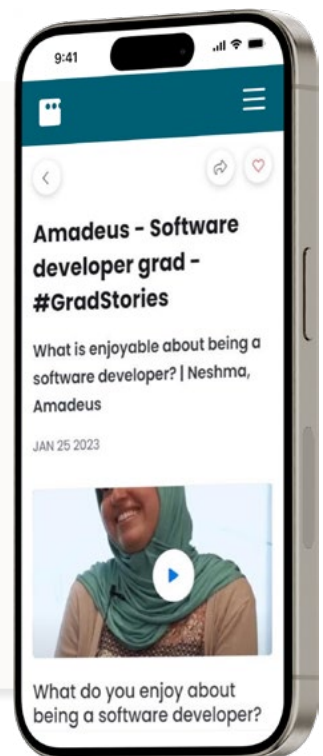
## Explore career options... with

**Career journey video stories**, hear first-hand experiences from recent graduates.

**Engaging employer presentations** providing a glimpse into the world of work and the skills that employers are looking for.

**In-depth employer profiles** containing career path resources and top tips on the recruitment process.

**Virtual job previews** to explore potential career paths and gain real-world insights into work.



## Develop employability skills... with

**Learning Pathways** providing expert insights, practical exercises, and quizzes to enrich skills.

**Skills self-assessments** to understand employability skills, build new skills, and track progress.

**Placements and internships** to gain real-world work experience.

**Expert advice** from industry experts and career professionals.

**Events and workshops** delivered by employers and the Career Service.

**Opportunities and job roles** across the broadest range of job sectors.

**121 support and guidance** from career professionals.

**Level 1: What a master CV looks like and why you need one**



But it's more than that – it's about helping young people discover options, and to develop and build confidence. To do this, we partner with employers, universities, colleges, schools and other technology providers. We support universities in delivering world class career management and student services. We offer employers student research, attraction, virtual platforms and recruiting services.



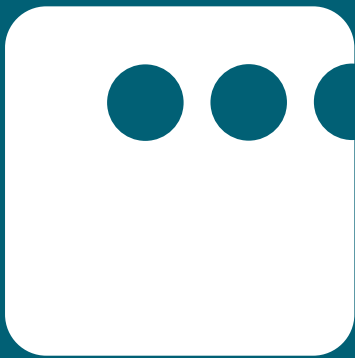
## Want to learn more about Career Readiness?

Career or work readiness is a product of an initiative led by Dr Bob Gilworth on a Careers Registration Learning Gain Project commissioned by the Office for Students.

For more information on this initiative and related topics please see:

[www.london.ac.uk/the-careers-group/careers-registration](http://www.london.ac.uk/the-careers-group/careers-registration)

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**If you would like to discuss further,  
please get in touch**

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