

# ENhance Case Study

Edinburgh Napier  
UNIVERSITY

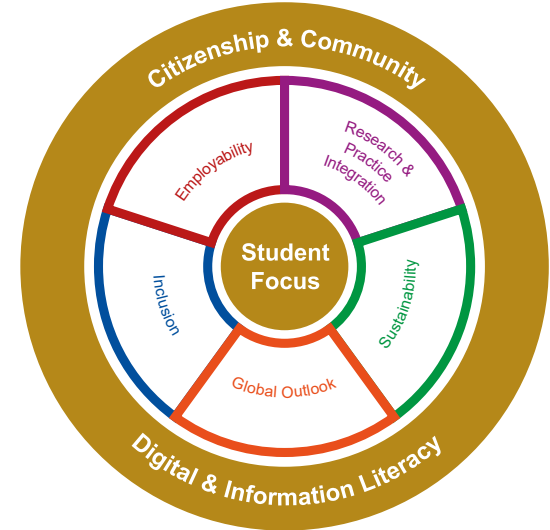
Department of  
Learning & Teaching  
Enhancement

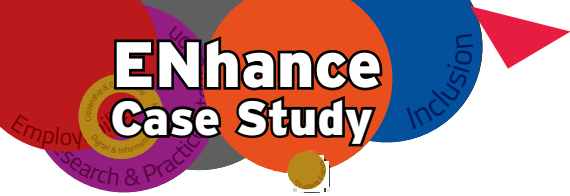
## Increasing internationalisation & inclusion for improvement of student employability in construction

Suha Jaradat PFHEA (SCEBE)

### Themes presented:

Student Focus, Inclusion, Global Outlook, Employability, Research & Practice Integration





# Internationalisation, Inclusion for Employability in Construction & Surveying

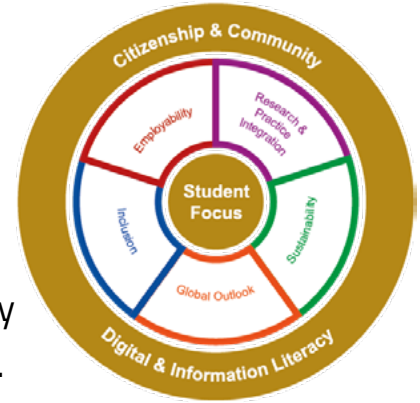
## Starting point:

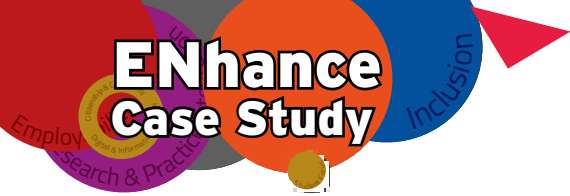
On my arrival at ENU, I encountered a stark lack of diversity and significant gender inequality in construction and senior leadership roles, both within our school and the broader industry. This echoes findings from previous research highlighting gender disparities in academia and the workplace, especially in STEM fields (Casad et al., 2021; Todd and Bird, 2000; Gelber et al., 2022). When I joined ENU seven years ago, the Construction group included only one female staff member, and the entire staff was white British.

10% of graduates had been unemployed compared to 0-5% from other institutions.

## Early steps:

As Head of Construction and Surveying Subject Group, I implemented strategic change within the school, university, and wider profession, led the successful recruitment of new staff from a wide range of backgrounds and provided a role model of a woman, from black and ethnic minority groups, leading in a male-dominated field.



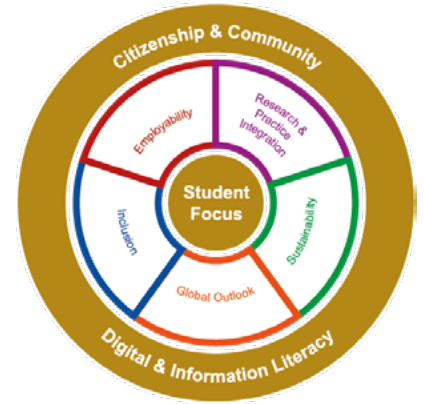


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## Initial Impact:

Workplace culture transformed, gender balance as well as **diversity improved in the team** including members from minority groups (female and black and ethnic minorities). In addition, **staff retention significantly improved** and no staff have left since 2021 while other groups in the School have lost a substantial number of staff.

The positive shift in the mood of the School has impacted through to students, **enriching their learning and elevating the quality of teaching** at ENU by **introducing international perspectives and opportunities** through the expertise of our new staff, as well as research activities through the **links** and opportunities those new staff have **worldwide**. This was **commended in the recent Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) reaccreditation** event and highlighted in the report: "The Panel commends the Department on the local and overseas site visits arranged for the students"



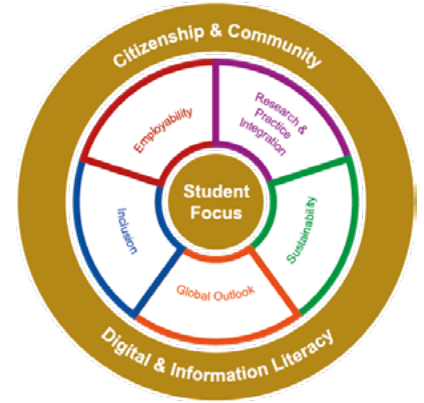


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## Empowering colleagues and students:

I participated in the Springboard Women's Development Programme for the benefit of myself, colleague mentees and students. This CPD offered tools to assess our current standings, seek support, navigate our environment, and enhance our visibility. It taught me the **importance of assertiveness, energy management, anxiety reduction, achieving work-life balance, and broadening our networks.**

I also initiated a **mentoring process in the group**, inspired my **team to pursue HEA fellowships and professional chartership** and volunteered to **mentor CIAT members** who aim to become chartered.





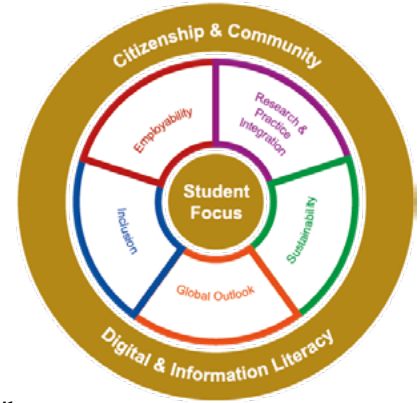
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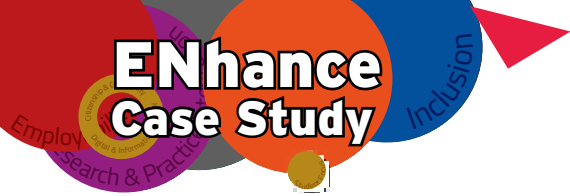
## Initial Impact:

I inspired our students to establish professional profiles on platforms like LinkedIn, encouraging them to forge supportive networks and seize opportunities for growth. This included advocating for **summer placements**, where two of our **female students excelled**, resulting in the following feedback:

"You might be aware that 2 AT students did an Insight Week with HAB: (Enhancing Natural Habitat) Architecture. I wanted to let you know that XXX and XXX's experience went well. XXX was even **offered a part-time role** with the business and is due to start work soon. Great news!"

I have worked with **over 10 colleagues, including women and people from black and ethnic minority groups, who successfully became chartered**. I was interviewed by the CIAT to talk about the mentoring experience and benefits. The interview was published in the CIAT magazine. I was also invited by the CIAT in the **1st group of Chartered Fellow Members (FCIAT) which is the highest level of membership** in recognition of my **outstanding contribution and expertise** in architectural technology. As a result, I became a **role model to my students and staff** members and inspired them to **become chartered**.





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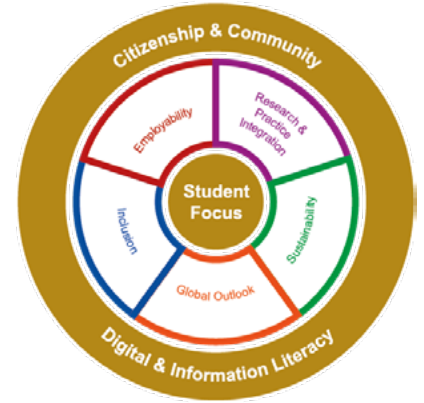
## Diversifying pathways:

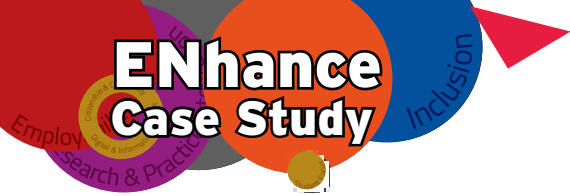
I developed the first **Graduate Apprenticeship (GA)** programme in Architectural Technology (AT) in the UK. This provides experiential learning for students while in paid employment, in line with sectoral policy imperatives. ENU L&T Strategy Enabling Objective 4 focuses on supporting the development of more programmes and courses that are **flexible and accessible to a diverse student community** including apprenticeships. This programme built **partnership with employers** and helped us to fulfill **industry current and future requirements**. This is the first programme of it's kind to be accredited by CIAT, and has served as an **exemplar for other institutions**.

## Initial Impact:

The Construction and Built Environment Graduate Apprenticeship Framework at ENU is now the **largest GA programme in the country, popular with students and employers**.

We have **over 30% female students** in the AT pathway, additional **mature students looking to upskill** and progress their career.





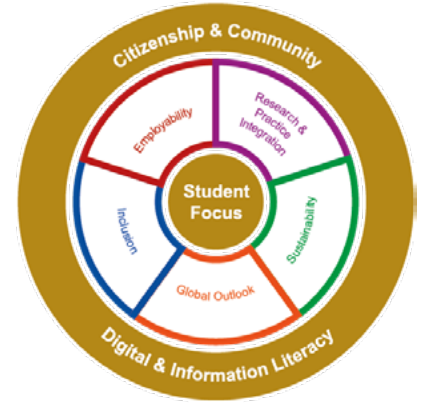
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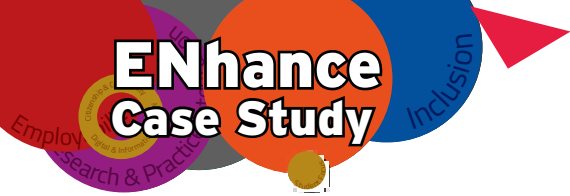
## Broader impact:

I have been invited to **share our experiences at multiple UK institutions and events**, including Keppie Design in Glasgow, Ulster University, and the **apprenticeship symposium** at Technological University Dublin. The GA AT programme which was **used as an inspiration for similar programmes nationally and internationally**.

I have been involved in **developing perception and implementation of CPD provision**. I have arranged funding and been involved in organisation of Events, seminars, conferences in **collaboration with CIAT and Manipal Academy of Higher Education in Dubai**.

These events were designed to **dissect and disseminate innovative teaching, learning, and assessment strategies tailored for CPD**, as well as to **tackle the pressing design challenges** at the intersection of preserving our architectural heritage and **forging the future of the AT programme**.





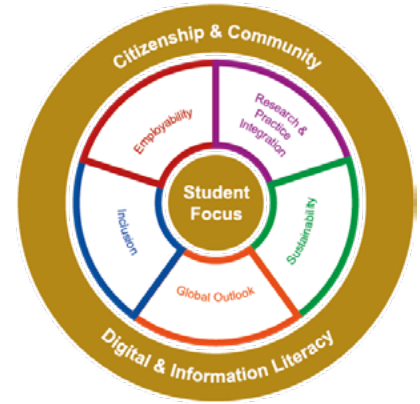
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## Further partnerships:

Integrating employability skills based on conversations with students and practitioners, through industry links and contributions to teaching, through development of the GA programme. International study trips, employability workshops, programme accreditation fed into the programme. I worked with business partners including employers such as CSY Architects and the Business Development Manager to develop a proposal for funding to **develop a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) for bidirectional sharing with the industry**. Additionally, I have recruited **practitioners with industrial backgrounds** to support students.

## Initial Impact:

I was awarded (£173,647) from Innovate UK in collaboration with CSY Architects as an Academic Lead for a KTP. This is a partnership between the University, firm and associate which has benefits to the company as well as the University. The outcomes of the KTP project inform research, scholarship, teaching and assessment in the AT programmes, bridging the gap between theory and practice, preparing students for the workplace through first hand involvement with architectural practice and using recent case studies and examples from this project.







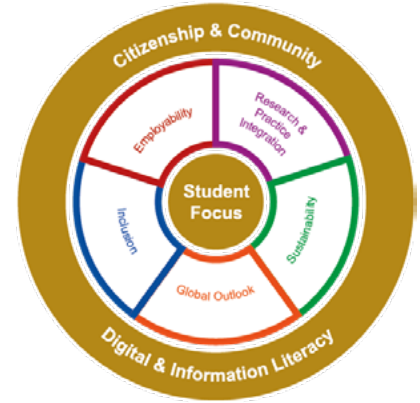
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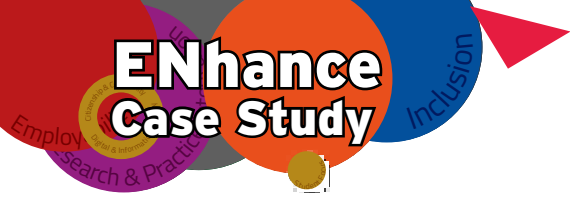
### Internationalising the curriculum:

I had observed a narrow-minded focus in the curriculum, at ENU and other institutions, on local context, culture, climate, design projects, client requirements, construction materials and methods. In response to this, and **thanks to our broadened connections with our diversified team, I introduced various international trips to Dubai**, and worked with colleagues to create **opportunities for our students to go to Egypt, China, and Ghana as part of externally funded projects**, which not only **changed the perspective of staff and students** but also became regular events in our academic calendar.

### Initial Impact:

Home students do not usually consider working abroad however after joining international trips such as the Dubai study trip which I initiated, feedback from students showed a shift in their thinking: "I had never considered a career in Dubai but I'm shocked at how much **visiting Dubai has both changed my perception culturally and actually made me crave to live there...** I also claimed contacts over there and I am definitely **putting more effort into my degree as a result of it**. It's an experience people that are seriously considering a future in the built environment should definitely undertake as the scale and design of projects are incredible."





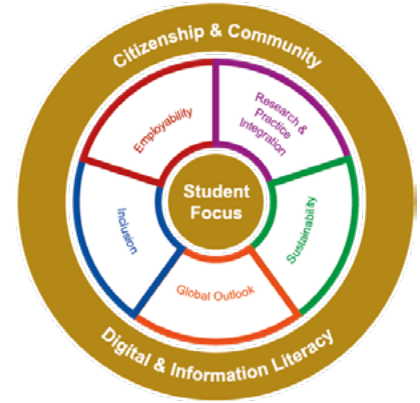
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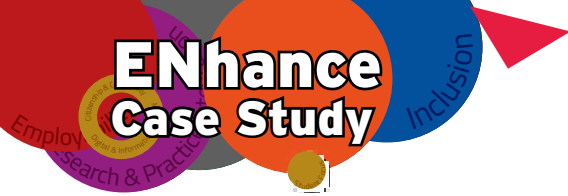
### Initial Impact, continued:

The trip to Dubai provided students with a world-class experience, including opportunities to connect with global industry leaders and exceptional access to construction sites.

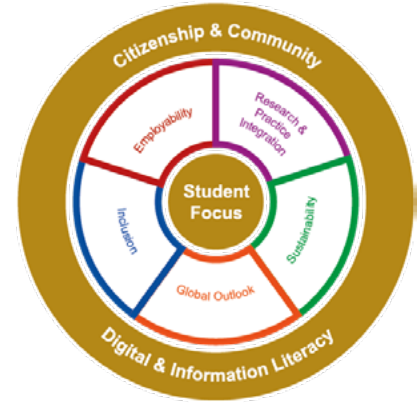
Student: "This has honestly been the **most amazing and worthwhile trip I've ever had**. Not only was Dubai an incredible city to see (especially given that we had **exclusive site visits** which was extremely beneficial to our education) I've also made connections with the people in industry over there and overall, it has **confirmed what direction I want to take in life after my degree** and potentially doing an MSc...

So, in essence - this experience has had an extremely **positive effect on my mindset/mental health** over the last few weeks. We are all so grateful for this experience Suha, thank you"





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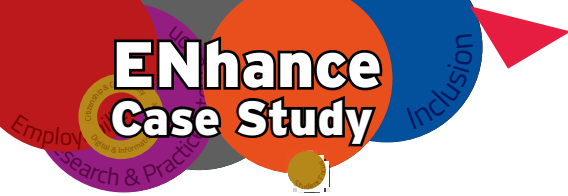


## Initial Impact, continued:

Employer: “XXX has enjoyed her time whilst at Edinburgh Napier University. She recently enjoyed a university trip to Dubai and is looking forward to university trip to Ghana next week. She recently commented that she **could never have imagined that she would ever have the confidence to attend the upcoming trip to Ghana** and credits this in part to her time at Edinburgh Napier University.”

## Impact on colleagues:

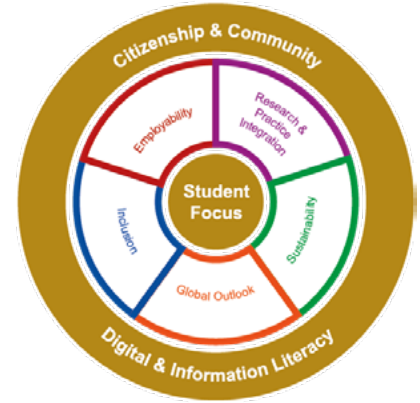
Staff: “The Dubai trip provides a valuable experience which not only includes opportunities to cultivate strong networks with industry leaders in the region but has **provided the impetus to internationalise module delivery and assessment.**”



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### Broader impact:

New links were instigated with leading employers such as DAMAC (property developers) and Fam Properties (real estate consultancy) who are interested in employing ENU graduates, MSc programmes and distance learning offered at ENU to upskill their own employees. I am leading the development of a 'Talent Nurturing Programme' with DAMAC, an eighteen-month programme in which graduates can join DAMAC as junior employees in Dubai with an opportunity to secure permanent employment at DAMAC after the completion of the training programme."



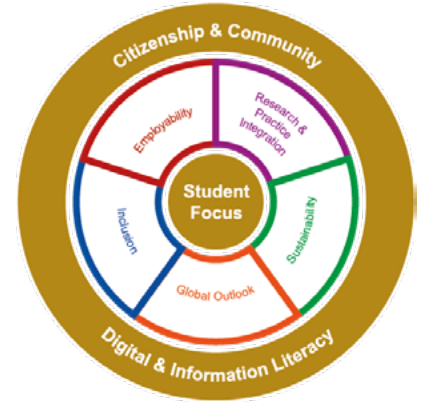


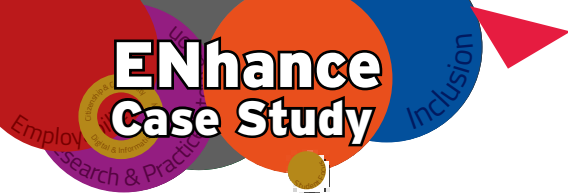
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### CPD & Employability Workshops:

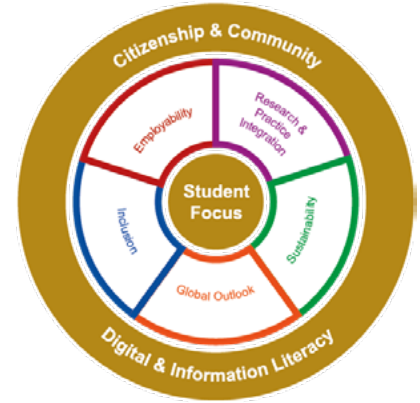
I initiated and oversaw employability workshops and supported staff who worked closely with the Student Futures Team and professional bodies to organise student and industry mentoring events.

I often organise CPD events that will not only be beneficial to me but also to my students and colleagues. For example, I invited industry experts to deliver certified training about current developments and critical issues within the industry including courses on how AI is impacting the architecture sector, Better Information Management (BIM), Digital Twins, and asbestos awareness in construction projects.





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## Initial Impact:

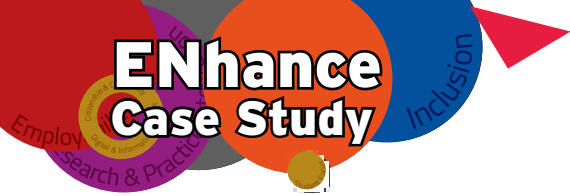
Feedback from students confirmed that the workshops were instrumental with lifting their confidence. The students appreciated the added value of the CPD certificates, stating:

"I just wanted to say thank you for arranging today's lecture by XXX on BIM followed by the Asbestos Awareness training delivered by XXX from XXX. XXX's lecture was really fascinating and informative. The Asbestos course was very interesting and **well worth staying late for**. I appreciate it takes a lot of effort to arrange these courses and wanted to say that they are appreciated".

Colleagues expressed that the Digital Twins event was 'An excellent event and eye opening for our students and potential for their future careers.'

## Broader impact:

Robert Gordon University got in touch, wanting to replicate a very similar event. Taylor Wimpey East and Cala (one of the UK's largest developers) offered to support student placements and employment.



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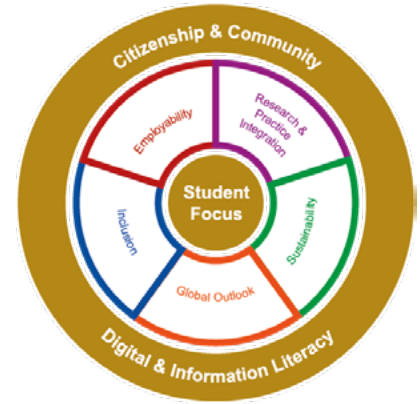
## Impact on employability:

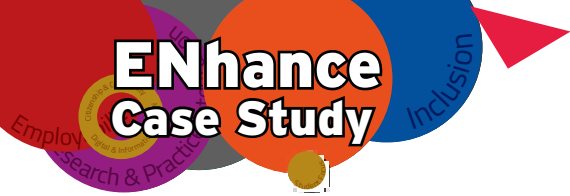
**Graduate unemployment rates improved 2% in 2 years** (11% 2020/21 to 9% in 2022/23).

CIOB Panel included a commendation in their recent report: “The high employment statistics which demonstrate the **relevance and currency of the curriculum to industry**”.

The final year students were also satisfied and provided positive feedback in the module evaluation form of Architectural Practice and Management: “To be honest I felt the way this module was ran by the lectures did a great job in making it **engaging and relevant to the working world**”.

Final year student feedback: “A lot of the class time seemed **dedicated to our next steps post university** (portfolios and CV advice, employability, etc.) and was the focus of many guest lecturers – this is **very useful**”

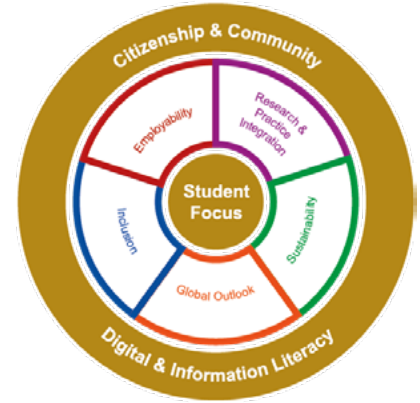




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## Accreditation:

I led the successful accreditation of the AT programmes by CABE, CIAT, CIOB as well as the CIAT Centre of Excellence and CIOB Accredited Centre status. ENU is **one of only three universities in the UK that hold the CIAT Centre of Excellence status** which is associated with a culture of research and knowledge exchange that has a **direct impact on the evolution of the discipline of AT**.

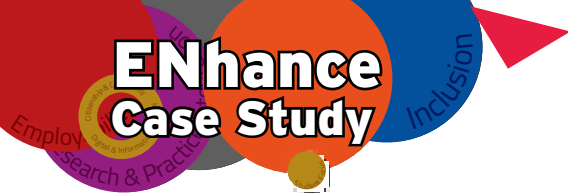


## Broader impact:

I was appointed as an External Advisor at several programme review and accreditation events which **encouraged Programme Leaders from universities across the country to get in touch seeking advice and guidance**.

An AT Programme Leader at another university approached me stating that: "We post pandemic have really struggled to retain students into Year 2 + and with a rise in entry qualifications across the sector we are just not getting the numbers on entry to stick with the status quo of our current degree... we are developing a new degree... You were really helpful at our last approval and keen to seek your advice first and maybe take a visit round the department?"



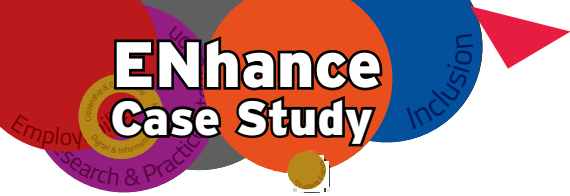


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### Local Impact:

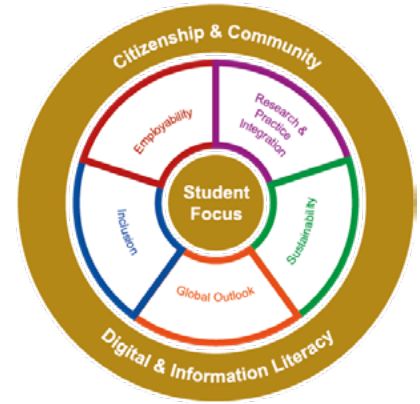
My engagement as an External Advisor provides **insight into other institutions' programmes** which **inform my own strategic leadership** and **develop L&T practices at ENU** thus benefitting ultimately our students and their learning





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**You can use the [Curriculum Management Environment](#) to find out more about the construction and surveying programmes in SCEBE, including the Graduate Apprenticeship in Architectural Technology.**