

# NOTTINGHAM BUSINESS SCHOOL

---

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY 

## Professional Competence Frameworks and Personalisation: Their Role in Employability

Seamus Allison, Richard Howarth and Helen Sharp



European Business Schools  
Ranking 2019



# Overview/ prompt for the session...

- Starting point - recent discussion during the launch of 'squiggly careers' (Tupper and Ellis, 2020) and reflection on Cashian et al (2015)
  - Cashian et al (2015), in their CABS paper, suggested it was time to move the employability debate on. In doing so, there was focus on Holmes (2013), and a suggested need to move beyond the dominance of the 'possessional' view which is grounded in the acquisition of skills and approach (alone?) was seen as neither useful nor sufficient in employment 'markets' nor attributes. This over time.
  - **Leads us to Question 1 and the sharing of insights and comment/ challenges**
- Grounded in our own experience(s) - we are interested in how approaches move beyond simple hard skills too (specifically in practice)
  - Also questioned by Cashian et al, 2015
  - May seek to emphasise, for example, behavioural aspects of employability (with behavioural skills not so easily possessed?). May represent more immediately transferable, soft meta skills.
  - Given profession-focussed nature - they may support/ underpin the 'positional' approach and, due to hierarchies and levels of skill (E.g. CIM) they may promote a 'processual' approach (Holmes, 2013)?
  - **Connects us to Question 2 and associated reflections and insights**

# Question 1:

To what extent is the dominant approach to employability within business schools the acquisition of knowledge and skills rather than a focus on professional behaviours

Holmes (2013):

- **'possessional'** – dominant approach and based on acquisition of skills and attributes?
- **'positional'** - " - *individuals can make a difference to the likelihood of gaining desired employment by what they do, the actions they take*" (Holmes, 2013, p.548)
- **'processual'** – graduation, not an end state "... *higher education is merely one stage, albeit an important one, within the biographical trajectories of students and graduates*" (Holmes, 2013, p.548)

# Question 2:

What contributes to successful personalisation of the student experience and do, or how may, professional body competence frameworks contribute to this?

Personalisation in 4 dimensions



Professional Marketing Standards



## Question 3:

What insights can we develop and share regarding the links between employability (education) and the personalisation of higher education and what might (a) new approach(es) look like?