

# A Rising Tide Raises All Boats: the Work of the Graduate Employability Project

## Summary of Project

- 3-year, cross-university project
- January 2013 to December 2015
- Funded £898k per annum by SFC
- 23 staff plus academic time bought out
- Steering Group to oversee progress
- 5 strands of distinct but inter-related activity:
  - student employability development
  - curriculum development
  - employer relations
  - student mobility
  - monitoring and evaluation

## Key Objectives

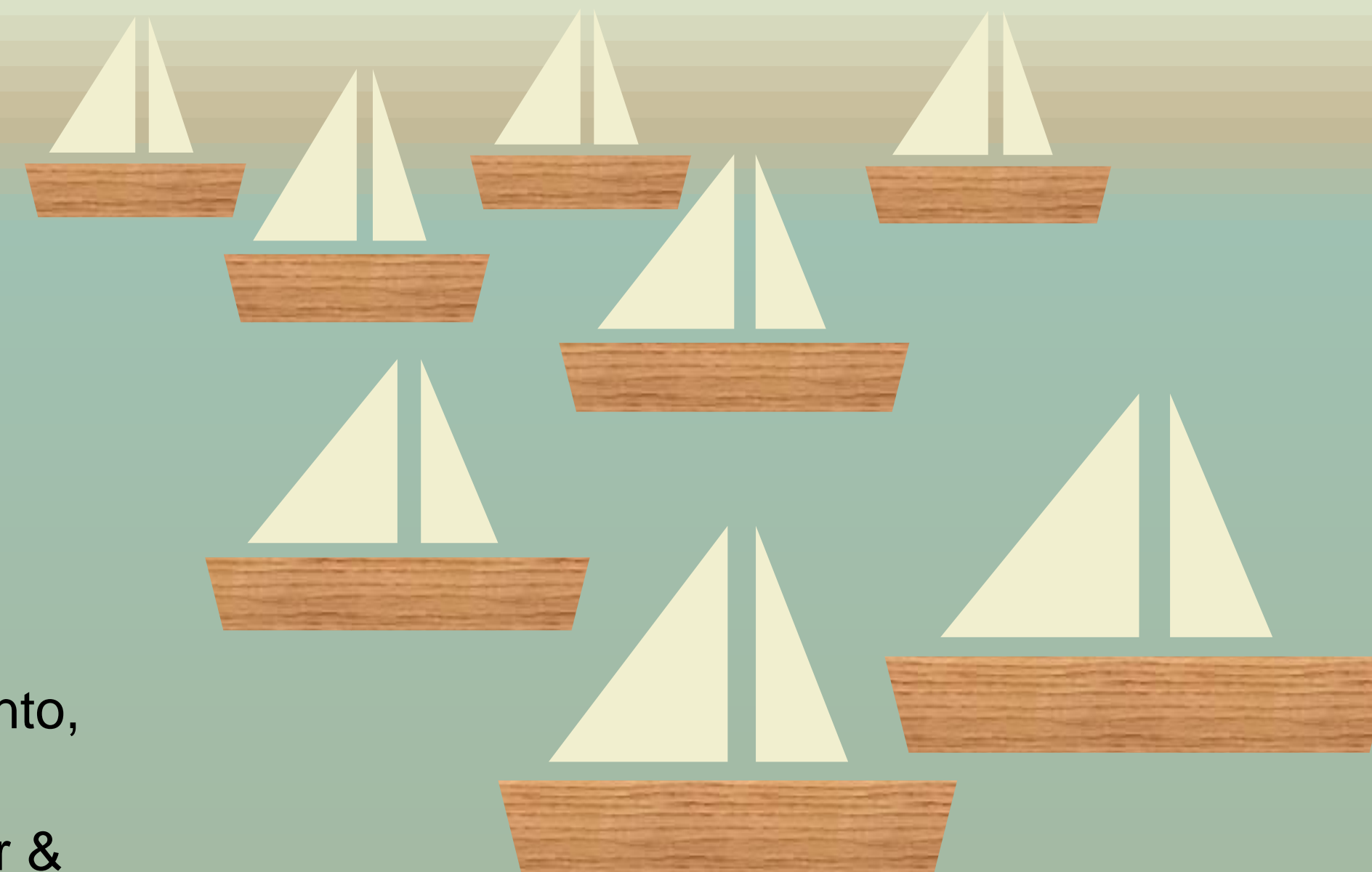
- More students into employment (particularly professional/managerial)
- Embedding an outcomes & evaluation focus:
  - tracking specific groups, e.g. MD20 & MD40, care leavers etc
  - demonstrating 'additionality' and value & impact
- Balance between innovation and doing more of what we know works
- Extending the number & variety of work-related & mobility opportunities
- Embedding partnership working approaches
- Aligning to our SFC Outcome Agreement

## Underpinning Principles

- Strong institutional commitment to employability
- Explicitly integrating graduate attributes and employability into the curriculum
- Aligning employability to subjects and to the relevant labour market
- Variety & capacity in work-related experiences
- Involvement of employers & professionals in design and delivery
- Systematic & tailored opportunities for skills development for everyone – not only MD20 students.
- Formal preparation for employment-seeking

## Celebrating successes to date

- Met or exceeded nearly all Year 2 targets
- Focused curriculum development in all Faculties
- Mapping of work-based/related learning within all UG modules and programmes
- Significant new opportunities for students to gain insight into, and experience of, employment
- Significant increase in student internships (e.g. Santander & University schemes)
- More coherency & capacity with employer engagement
- Significant increase in student participation in Careers activity and Personal & Professional Development
- Expansion of employer mentoring and student mobility provision
- Embedded evaluation and tracking of cohorts has enabled us to demonstrate project value & impact



## Lessons Learned

- Large, complex projects take time to bed in
- Governance arrangements key to sharing best practices
- Outcomes focused approach has:
  - driven debate,
  - promoted clarity around objectives; and
  - underpinned the evaluation framework
- Additional resources have created space for innovation & creativity
- Additionality comes through delivering more existing provision that works, as well as through innovation
- Embedding employability within the curriculum is the most effective approach to engaging with students
- The project focus has acted as a 'collaboration enabler'