

Greenhalgh, J 2010, *MPA Roses international student creative awards exhibition* [Show/Exhibition].

The MPA Roses National Student Creativity Awards is co-ordinated in Manchester by 'The Drum' and a representative from a local University, who serves to facilitate links between the learning community and the network of design industries directly involved in the awards. I undertook the role of education representative on the project. This role required me to collaborate with a team of 8 design professionals from across the region, as well as event organisers with the aim being to deliver a competition of national standing. The project proved successful with over 300 entries and the exhibition was held at Urbis in Manchester on the 26th March 2009.

Initial consultation with MPA Roses representatives (Katy Thomson and Lisa Fraser). This was required to define the parameters of the project and develop a strategy for engagement and delivery. This process took 1 day to complete, and further developments were discussed through email and telephone communication with regards to deadlines for publicity, exhibition and judging.

I was also responsible for sourcing funding and hiring of a suitable venue to hold judging and the exhibition. This activity also included sourcing exhibition materials to display submitted entries and arrangement of catering for the event. This activity took a further 2 days.

A further 3 days work was allocated to the development of the publicity and marketing. Given the nature of the placement the opportunity to integrate the event into the curriculum was taken and the design of the marketing was set as a 3 day brief to students. This activity included co-ordination of the design process and workshops to produce final designs. A final design was chosen by the MPA representatives and the tickets for the event were printed at the University.

The competition judging day was held at Urbis on 26th March 2009 and required a moderate amount of project management to ensure the venue was prepared for the event. Key duties included organising delivery and set up of display boards, development and discussion of judging guidelines and judging and reviewing of work. The exhibition was primarily set up by the team, which showcased the winners and the runners-up of each category of which seven students were from the University of Salford. In addition to this discussion workshops were also held throughout the day debating the usefulness of such an event like this which enabled industry partners to work closely with educators and create courses that were industry facing and ultimately teach design graduates the correct skill sets. Given this it was felt that the event was beneficial as it also allowed competitors the opportunity to showcase their work to professionals, who may choose to 'cherry pick' suitable students for placements and potential employment at their agencies, whilst giving the students real life practice working on live competition briefs and working to deadlines. This phase of the project took around 4 days to organise.

Follow up activities from the event included a substantial amount of contact with design agencies involved, primarily to provide them with lists of suitable 3rd year imminent graduates to assess suitability for ongoing placements and potential employment opportunities. Discussions regarding future opportunities to work collaboratively, e.g. workshops in the new academic have also been discussed.

The placement has allowed me to develop links with key organisations across the region. In turn this has allowed me to feed these opportunities back into my core work base which is predominately focussed around teaching and learning activities in the form of student brief and industry based contact. This is important for a course such as Graphic Design, which due to its nature, requires a great deal of industry based assessment. With the help of the school's AHE I also wish to look at how we can further develop industry links and link this to any funding which might fit the activity.

I also believe that the placement has enabled me to develop my project management skills. The organisation of the exhibition and awards evening required a great deal of liason with external parties, time management and budgetary control, all of which needed managing carefully.

One of the placements main benefits was that it allowed professionals to talk with, view work from and pick suitable students for both work based placements and potential employment at their agencies. Links made with the designers and their agencies have been progressed with ideas for further collaborations, including agreement that they would be open to University of Salford design students visiting their studios and carrying out interviews, with the intention of securing work placements.

New links and contacts have been were made with a number of local design agencies including Karl Sanderson from 'Vivid', Billy Mawhinney from 'BJL' and Rob Taylor from 'Like a River' to name but a few. New collaborative ideas have been discussed with each of these parties such as workshops and the development of a mentoring scheme, which could attract funding opportunities. These are likely to be realised in the next academic year. Suitable 3rd year imminent graduates have also been highlighted and there details have been sent to interested organisations, with the hope being of gaining employment.

It is likely that The University of Salford will be invited to be involved in similar projects in the future, which is likely to yield further benefits for the University as a whole in terms of engagement with the community as a whole and also more specifically to student groups with in the graphic design discipline.

A great deal of collaboration has already occurred with a number of design agencies either involved with the event or invited to the exhibition, and this has led to the benefits previously described. These relationships are likely to be ongoing.

New links and contacts have been were made with a number of local design agencies. As previously identified, these have led to a number of student placement opportunities. Due to the nature of these links and creation of a working relationship between the agencies and the University, it is thought that further work relationships could be developed in the form of a KTP with one of these organisations. The idea of developing a student placement network in the field of graphic design is also being discussed with enterprise funding managers which could attract a substantial amount of funding.