

Values and Character:  
Higher Education and  
Graduate Employment

# Graduates of Character

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**learningforlife**  
*exploring core values*

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*This report is to be launched at the House of Lords on 23rd November 2009 by Lord Watson of Richmond.*

**learningforlife**  
exploring core values

*It is vital that young people set out on their career with a positive attitude, aware of the skills that employers require and able to demonstrate them from the start.*

*Young people can help kick-start their career by working on the employability skills they will need in the workplace before they leave full-time education. They can do this by getting work experience or doing a part-time job, or by taking advantage of work and enterprise education courses at schools, colleges and universities.*

*Susan Anderson, Director,  
Education and Skills, CBI*

*'Talent' means much more to us than simply getting good grades at school or college. We recruit people who have the courage and integrity to face difficult challenges head on, rather than taking the easiest pathway. We look for evidence that applicants have stood up for something they believe in. Our strong reputation depends on our people sharing in these core values.*

*Kate Waring,  
Student Recruitment Manager,  
PWC*

*We always strive to ensure that our students receive the very best education during their time with us. But qualifications alone do not reflect the whole student experience. When they leave St Andrews, from whatever background they have come from, our students must have developed the skills and abilities needed to become the future shapers of and contributors to a thriving economy in a cultured and caring society. The Learning for Life project helps inculcate in school leavers a depth and quality of perception and reflection which will help them succeed in their time through university and beyond.*

*Dr Brian Lang,  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor,  
University of St Andrews*

*Learning for Life provides an invaluable exercise in self-discovery that helps young people develop a can-do attitude. It encourages them to do their best to realise their gifts and talents and to believe that they can achieve more than they thought possible for themselves and for other people.*

*Sir Tom Farmer CBE, KCSG,  
businessman and  
philanthropist*

*If qualifications and training alone made one suitable for a job, there would be no need for an interview!*

*Tom Kimber,  
Kings College Cambridge*

*Learning for Life is a pioneering project which everyone concerned about young people will want to support.*

*Sir Eric Anderson KT, DLitt, FRSE,  
Provost of Eton College  
and former Rector of  
Lincoln College, Oxford*

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## **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to take this opportunity to thank the universities and companies without whose support and interest we would have been unable to carry out this research. Many tutors, members of personnel departments and directors of graduate employment gave their time freely in discussion and to them we extend our heartfelt gratitude. And, of course, we are especially appreciative of the contributions of students and employees whose willing participation contributed the serious meat to the enterprise - and a great deal of the enjoyment.

### **The Universities**

King's College, University of Cambridge;  
Canterbury Christ Church University;  
Cass Business School, City University;  
University of Essex.

### **The Businesses**

British Telecom;  
DTZ;  
PricewaterhouseCoopers;  
Tesco.

We would also like to thank members of our Advisory Board for their valuable contributions and the John Templeton Foundation whose generous funding made this research possible. The opinions expressed within this report do not necessarily reflect the position of the John Templeton Foundation.

We would like to thank in particular Professor David Carr of the University of Edinburgh and Professor Vivian Williams of St. Peter's College, Oxford for their advice and comments on drafts of this report, and Nigel Newton for his work in assisting with the analysis of the data.

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## Advisory Board

**Lord Watson of Richmond** has a lifelong involvement in public life as a broadcaster, a former President of the Liberal Party, a member of the House of Lords, a businessman and an internationalist. He is Chairman of the Cambridge Foundation, Chairman of several companies, and a member of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union.

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## **Commentary by the Advisory Board**

There is widespread public criticism of the condition of British society which often focuses on what is perceived to be the failure of the education system to satisfy the basic need of the British economy for appropriately educated, skilled and competent employees. But there is a deeper concern. We want educated people but not simply to perform an economic function. Persons who are genuinely educated will take a generous view of their role in their employment, and look for opportunities to make a responsible contribution to the well-being of society at large. Indeed in the course of this research employers frequently drew our attention to the vital dimension of character. Employers are concerned to employ 'good' people, if that is not too bland a word to cover the range of qualities which they seek when recruiting.

Employees and indeed all stakeholders in modern civil society focus – when considering higher education – on outcomes. This is the magic measure. Yet in calculating outcomes we too often miss the most important outcome of all – the quality and character of graduates. On their quality, values and character much of our future depends. For this reason, this is the focus of this report.

**Lord Watson of Richmond**  
**Chair of Advisory Board**

# Graduates of Character

## Values and Character: Higher Education and Graduate Employment

### Summary

#### Background

*Values and Character: Higher Education and Graduate Employment* is the product of an empirical enquiry into the values, virtues, dispositions and attitudes of a sample of students and employees who volunteered to be involved. They came from four major universities and four major national and international companies. It is one of five linked projects which between them cover all phases of education from early years through to Higher Education and into employment.

The students and employees in this sample are considered successes in the English education system so that the report is consistent with and follows from the earlier Bristol Report which focused on 'A' level students. (Arthur, J., Crick, R.D., Samuel, E., Wilson, K., & McGettrick, B. (2006). The voices of the interviewees are given particular prominence in the report because of their intrinsic significance. The complex results offer many insights and raise questions for further reflection.

#### Key Findings

It was generally agreed that good character implied good morals and right behaviour.

The interviewees believed themselves to be concerned with their own good character and to regard it as an essential ingredient of all successful relationships.

They had a genuine interest in the subject, entered easily into conversation and thought seriously when responding to the issues raised.

Empathy, tolerance, care for others and a capacity for friendship were accepted as essential aspects of good character.

Honesty, reliability, sincerity, trustworthiness, and integrity featured prominently both as personal qualities of good character and as essential aspects of employment.

It was regularly stated that character was what an employer looked for when recruiting since all shortlisted candidates would have the requisite qualifications and intellectual skills. It was generally understood that this would need personal effort: it did not come easily. For example, learning to play one's part in a team was recognized to require hard work, mutual understanding and commitment.

Communication skills were recognized to be vital in all relationships, at university and in employment. Insofar as the experience of university supported their development it was thought to be the result of participation in non-curricular activities, for example in clubs, societies and voluntary work, rather than a consequence of the course and/or pedagogy. A sense of humour was appreciated to be helpful as a dimension of communication skills.

No single philosophical tradition could be identified as lying behind or bringing coherence to the moral perspectives discussed.

Traditional virtues such as courage, justice, temperance, wisdom were mentioned comparatively rarely, though they could be said to underpin many of the perspectives offered.

Core values naturally overlapped with marks of good character. Good education, family, altruism, perseverance, a sound work ethic, equality and fairness all featured. There was almost universal acceptance of the importance of lifelong learning.

The primary influence on values was stated to be family, most particularly mother, though father was not infrequently mentioned. Travel and meeting different types of people made a significant impact.

It was largely through the opportunity to meet different sorts of people that higher education was thought to have been an influence in forming values: the majority claimed that their values had been formed by the time they entered university.

Employment confirmed a sense of personal responsibility since whereas at university failure impacted on oneself, in employment it impacted on colleagues and the company as a whole. Team work contributed to self-understanding and underlined the importance of hard work.

Where school or university was alluded to it as an influence on values it was almost always with reference to the influence of a particular teacher or tutor.

A minority of interviewees acknowledged the influence of religion on values, specifically Christianity but also Islam; this was often through parents, when they themselves had no particular faith. Interestingly the value of religion was affirmed as bringing moral coherence to a society even by those who themselves professed to be atheists. A few regarded religious belief as illusory, essentially inimical to human well-being and dangerous.

Almost all rejected the view that the media had influenced their values or their behaviour though there was some suspicion that it might influence others. Education had encouraged them to be aware of bias and sensationalism and to access a range of opinion in order to form well-founded judgments.

Responses confirmed that career prospects and potential future prosperity were major motives for going to university; for many this was consistent with a genuine interest in learning. Often it was thought to be the next stage in life and something which it was quite natural to do. The personal benefits of university in respect of character development were thought to come simply from living away from home, fending for oneself, managing one's own finances and meeting people from different backgrounds.

In employment, good character was affirmed to be central to effective relationships, as well as of vital importance to a company, its reputation and success. Nevertheless, most thought that companies were concerned to ensure professional compliance rather than to encourage good character as the prerequisite of good behaviour.

Motivations for employment included the vocational and the economic; they were not mutually exclusive. There were many reasons given for selecting one employer rather than another. Apart from the remuneration package which was probably assumed by the majority but not formally mentioned by a large number, great importance was attached to career support, the size and reputation of the company including its reputation for ethical behaviour, the quality of personal relationships, respect of the company for work/leisure balance and, in a good number of cases, commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Voluntary work was a major dimension of engagement with society both at university and in employment. It offered significant stimulus for developing character: it was personally testing; it increased awareness of the needs of others and provided an opportunity to give something to them. When it involved travel and working overseas there was a double benefit arising from experience of a new culture. Schools and universities encouraged it, as also often employers through CSR.

Only a few within the sample expressed a political interest.

# 1 Introduction

*Learning for Life* is a major research project, largely funded by the John Templeton Foundation and Porticus UK. It is an ambitious and groundbreaking initiative with few parallels in the UK. Indeed, there has not yet been a coherent exploration of character development that studies all educational phases and on into employment.

Within the overall project, *Learning for Life*, this is one of five separate studies: (a) a character perspective in the early years; (b) consistency in values - the transition from primary to secondary school; (c) the values and character dispositions of 14-16 year olds; (d) the formation of virtues and dispositions in the 16-19 age range; and (e) values in higher education and employment. The research focuses on the age range 3 to 25 years, which makes the scope and the approach unique. The five studies constitute the empirical background to a final report which will focus on Character Development, an often neglected but essential dimension of all sound education.

The overall sample involves tracking more than 4,000 children and young people, 300 parents and 100 teachers over a two-year period in Birmingham, Bristol, Canterbury and London, together with a series of group interviews and case-study observations. In addition, the sample contains in-depth interviews with over 85 undergraduates and 65 graduate employees. Additional case studies of particular issues have also been undertaken. Each project has a dedicated full-time research fellow working over a two to three year period.

In this study we discuss what character is taken to mean by students and employees in their years of higher education and employment. We examine what their values are, what they gain from the university, what they believe employers look for when recruiting, what they hope to give to an employer, and what they expect from their employer. We then explore who or what influenced their values and moral development. We also examined the role of the personal tutor or mentor, and the persons or services to which they might go for personal and/or professional support.

Some of the issues and concerns which arose - for example, attitude to the media and motivation for university - may seem not to impinge upon character education *per se*. The data is nevertheless presented here because it constitutes important evidence, the potential significance of which will need to be taken into account in the final report which will be based upon all five separate studies of the 'Learning for Life' project on Character Education and Development – context, policy and practice.

As far as possible the research strategy was designed to explore the ways in which young people describe how they think, feel and behave. It is difficult to report on and analyse their thinking without introducing ideas and perspectives that originate from the research team (rather than the data); but the intention was to be honest with ourselves and with others about this. A large number of concepts arise in this project: values, morality, virtues, duties, and principles. However, there is no consensus either

on the meaning of these words or on how these should be fitted into a single system of thought. Moreover, there is little agreement on how education does or should impact on these concepts.

After preliminary discussion, the following propositions were adopted as a starting point.

- First, there is such a thing as character, an interlocked set of personal values and virtues which normally guide conduct. Character is about who we are and who we become and includes, amongst other things, the virtues of responsibility, honesty, self-reliance, reliability, generosity, self-discipline, and a sense of identity and purpose.
- Secondly, there is no fixed set of values, easily measured or incapable of modification.
- Thirdly, choices about conduct are selections about 'right' or 'wrong' actions and thoughts.
- Fourthly, character does not develop within a vacuum; in order to develop as a person an individual needs to grow up in a culture, and the richer the culture the more mature a person he or she has a chance of becoming.
- Fifthly, education is concerned with active character development, not simply the acquisition of academic and social skills. It is ultimately about the kind of person a student becomes and wants to become and this includes the moral, spiritual and religious dimensions of life (Arthur, 2003 p 3).
- Lastly, at a conceptual level it is important to distinguish between the qualities of character that define virtue from other qualities of the self and/or person which we are more inclined to associate with such notions as personality.

Beyond these elements, a number of views were considered by the research team from the outset as ideas that might need testing.

The tradition of virtue language has been eroded, and as a result an impoverished discourse on character has contributed to a lack of coherence in the rationale of the educational system. There is a lack of clarity in the moral objectives that schools set themselves, especially in the area of personal responsibility. Practice in this area is rarely evaluated. Government initiatives to enhance character education remain patchy, narrowly focused and marginal rather than brought into mainstream provision. There is little support or training in this regard for teachers. Socially excluded groups of young people are least likely to be involved in character development initiatives such as volunteering. Moreover, while employers repeatedly call attention to lack of skills and relevant knowledge in their new employees, they also as often point to the missing dimension of personal 'character'.

Schools and the wider educational systems, including parents, are subject to pressure to provide the economy with functionally competent persons equipped to meet the increasingly competitive demands of employment. In doing so they may ignore or take for granted another important dimension of education – the encouragement into critical self-consciousness of the process by which a student learns to become aware of himself or herself as a responsible person.

All dimensions of education are essential if students are to assume their personal roles in society equipped with the personal qualities, dispositions, attitudes, values and virtues to take responsibility for themselves and to contribute to the common good. Good habits encouraged in the process of education underpin the ability and inclination to engage in the necessary business of further lifelong personal development and learning.

For a short literature review of the origins of character education the reader should consult the previous report - *Character Education: The Formation of Virtues and Dispositions in 16-19 Year Olds with particular reference to the religious and spiritual* – referred to in this report as the Bristol Report ([www.learningforlife.org.uk](http://www.learningforlife.org.uk)).

### **Character in the Context of Higher Education and Graduate Employment**

An investigation into the values of university students and graduates at the beginning of their careers, their sense of responsibility, commitment to lifelong learning and willingness to serve the well-being of society at large offers from one point of view a judgment on the performance of the education system as a whole. How is it performing? It produces the academic goods, which is what it is required to do and what the Bristol Report suggests that students want first and foremost from their teachers and schools. The students and graduate employees with whom this report is concerned are all deemed to be successes of the education system: all gained the requisite 'A' level grades to enter on university courses and subsequently earned degree classifications which led major employers to take them on.

However, we focus here on that equally important dimension of the education process which concerns the character, values, attitudes, dispositions and virtues which are embodied in the lives of students and graduates, and the influences which formed them. This is regarded as vital to the well-being of society at large and a matter of interest to employers. Employers want staff who are not only well-informed and competent; they want persons of integrity, who are trustworthy, responsible, loyal, courageous, committed to lifelong learning and willing to take criticism without resentment. As a matter of fact, of course, the two dimensions of education are not discrete; there is a good deal of evidence that attention to character building improves academic performance.

The socio-economic and political situation in which Higher Education finds itself today is complex and demanding. The Robbins Report (1963), for example, affirmed the traditional purposes of higher education, namely:

1. Instruction in skills
2. Promotion of the general powers of the mind
3. The advancement of learning and the search for truth
4. The transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship.

But what does it mean in our present multicultural society to talk of 'a common culture', or 'common standards of citizenship'?

Post-Robbins changes in higher education continue apace and are subject to much controversy. Numbers of universities have greatly increased as therefore also the number of students: indeed it is government policy to provide places for 50% of the 18 year old cohort as well as for increasing numbers of mature students. Part-time as well as full-time study is encouraged. Universities have to cope with increased staff-student ratios and engage in relevant research. The pressure on the universities to produce graduates qualified to meet the demands of the British economy in a competitive global environment influences students' choice of discipline and has extended the range of courses available. These developments together with the growing cost of higher education to the student and to the state have had an impact on the public perception of the role and purpose of higher education and the political priorities which govern policy.

Hard questions arise for university managements as they seek to understand and meet the needs of employers. Not unnaturally, they are tempted to focus on academic performance since that is what seems easily computable and in any case it is what produces income and enhances their attractiveness to good students. So where in the management structure is public account taken of the university's duty to form a student's character, encourage self reliance, and develop a sense of responsibility? How does the university assess its performance in this area? Is the traditional association of privilege with responsibility a thing of the past?

The main aspects of a university education as affirmed in the Robbins Report might be expected to stand: an ability to think with the necessary skills and knowledge, the transmission of a 'common' culture and 'common' standards of citizenship. Yet it is precisely the perceived failure of the universities to succeed in these two aspects which is commonly criticized by both society at large and employers in particular. Which raises the question; does a contemporary UK university education adequately prepare the student for life in the broadest sense?

Of course, responsibility for these matters does not exclusively lie with higher education. Given that the employer has a vested interest in the quality of each employee which goes well beyond mere competence, we should expect some responsibility to be accepted here too. The employer wants employees of integrity, with a broad range of personal skills, possessing leadership potential, committed to lifelong learning, with the courage to tackle difficult issues and able to work easily with others. Only thus will customers, suppliers and clients have confidence in the company and trust its future performance on which its prosperity depends. But



where in the business organization is clear account taken of this responsibility and the means whereby one can be measured and promoted? Are the criteria more than achievement, money-making, commercial success and whatever values help a person to fit into the system? (Hartman, 2006, 69).

Changes in attitudes to work and to society are significant here. Richard Sennett's (2008) analysis is illuminating. He draws attention to the importance of the notion of 'craftsman' for an understanding of personal and professional education. The craftsman is focused upon 'quality-driven work' and the pride which goes with it. There are three features: the capacity to work in a team which means mutual criticism and support in the production of an excellent product; the formation of good habits through consistent and worthwhile practice; the commitment to improve and the expectation that one can and will. These features of the life of the craftsman produce community in which a common ethical perspective underlies everything that one achieves. A common feature of contemporary society militates against this. A contemporary employee has 'jobs', a craftsman had a 'career'. Sennett reminds us, 'In old English a 'career' meant a well-laid road, whereas a 'job' meant simply a lump of coal or a pile of wood that could be moved around at will (Sennett, (2008), p.65). The craftsman had a career path which was laid out in time, a community in which to achieve it and stages of progress which could lead to his becoming a master, Very often today people do not so much have a career as a succession of jobs, since our 'skills economy' depends upon a person's willingness to move as and when the right post comes up. This means that the focus is upon the person and his or her achievement rather than on the quality of the product; it also underlines the difficulty of gaining the loyalty of staff and achieving a sense of community in any enterprise whether public or private.

The Report on the World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO (1998)) is relevant. Given the increase in world population a huge increase in the provision of higher education is necessary, it is argued. The problems are immense and complex, including, pollution, global warming, energy supply and the management of essential natural resources such as water and pure air. But the report is clear that the solution is not merely more and better trained people, it focuses on another matter – the moral framework of higher education.

*Higher education itself is confronted therefore with formidable challenges and must proceed to the most radical **change and renewal it has ever been required** to undertake, so that our society, which is currently undergoing a profound crisis of values, can transcend mere economic considerations and incorporate deeper dimensions of morality and spirituality. (UNESCO (1998), para. 3, ll, 6-10. **Bold** in original).*

The report is equally clear that this is of concern to every aspect of human society.

*The solution to the major challenges [higher education] faces, require the strong involvement not only of governments and of higher education institutions, but also of all stakeholders, including students and their*

*families, teachers, business and industry, the public and private sectors of the economy, parliaments, the media, the community, professional associations and society as well as a greater focus of higher education institutions towards society, and accountability in the use of public and private, national or international resources. (UNESCO, (1998, 9-10).*

The implication of Sennett's position and the UNESCO Report is that a close relationship between higher education and business is essential if they are together to fulfil the needs of a global society – not just of a global economy narrowly understood – for self-aware, intelligent, responsible and committed citizens capable of serving the common good.

Several recent discussions focus on the opportunity which higher education has to promote character education among its students. It is commonly recognised that schools are concerned to be coherent 'communities of practice' because it is here that social learning as well as academic performance takes place. In order to facilitate both dimensions of learning schools assume or try to create a common code of conduct through the curriculum, organisation, management structure, rules and publically demanded patterns of behaviour. But, as Wenger (1998) points out, social learning continues throughout life: it is not confined to the school environment. Adults too live in 'communities of practice' which for them are the environments in which they construct meaning out of experience, a process which provides a framework in which habits of good behaviour may be learned, experimented with and practised. The university is on the face of it a prime context in which a community of enquiry provides the context in which a search for meaning may stimulate an examination of values and the development of good habits. Moreover, each university has an opportunity to develop a distinctive culture through the public style of its community, its ethos and management which will add an individual dimension to its quality as a 'community of practice.'

This opinion is supported by Berkowitz and Fekula (1999). They extend their understanding of the emergence of moral reasoning as it develops during the phases of schooling and natural child development into the experience of higher education. They point to the impact which the university may have in teaching, demonstrating and demanding character and therefore regret the relatively slight attention given to character education in the university. A university which provides a nurturing environment will give students the opportunity for continued growth towards maturity because they will be forced to practice and reflect upon character.

Colby et al. (2003) ask whether and in what ways personal and social responsibilities do actually mature during years at university. The authors examine twelve American institutions on the basis of which they affirm the potential positive influence of higher education. Moreover, they claim, this is true not only for the student who enters university straight from school but also for returners and mature students. They draw attention to the development from simple to more complex ways of moral reasoning, the encouragement of moral behaviour and positive questioning of moral values.

The authors offer three principles as a possible framework for advancing character education in higher education. The first would ensure that institutions do not concentrate on one dimension alone but seek to cover moral judgment, emotional intelligence and ability to work with others. The second would seek to involve all aspects of the institutional experience including curriculum, extra-curricular activities and institutional culture. The third concerns involvement with the neighbourhood, and the desire to contribute to the public good, including involvement in the democratic processes of the university.

Berkowitz and Fekula (1999) and others point out that many in higher education balk at the suggestion that they should concern themselves with the character education of their students. But since the evidence supports the view that educating for personal and social responsibility does in fact take place during a person's experience of higher education, there is every reason to believe that it is a legitimate concern and should be a formal concern of higher education. This underlines the importance of making the assumed values explicit, which would have the added potential advantage perhaps of supporting the creation of a distinctive character in each institution.

But two questions immediately arise. 'How does a university consciously go about the business of building a nurturing environment? 'What procedures can the management put in place in order to judge success or failure?' Berkowitz and Fekula (1999) make two suggestions; a dedicated institutional commitment to character education with an office, staff and dedicated resources, together with 'an ethics audit of one's institution, a self-study of character-promoting elements (or lack thereof), and an identification of institutional impediments to effective character education' (p.22).

In their 2008 book, *A New Agenda for Higher Education: Shaping a Life of the Mind for Practice*, William Sullivan and Matthew Rosin claim that 'the academy's educational mission is a formative one' and that 'Higher education contributes most to society and is most faithful to its own deepest purposes when it seeks to use its considerable intellectual and cultural resources to prepare students for lives of significance and responsibility'. While many still view universities as having an educational and civic obligation to prepare morally astute individuals who will positively contribute to the communities in which they participate, the reality of what students actually think and the extent of their involvement in personal development and civil engagement is largely unknown in the UK. The contemporary educational experience of students in higher education suggests that it is not necessary for them to engage with questions of moral education or civic obligation and universities are not obliged to incorporate within the students' course anything that is not directly quantifiable. Certainly, higher education ought to intentionally foster the virtues of intellectual integrity, a concern for the truth, respect and tolerance, open-mindedness, a commitment to rational discourse and procedural fairness (Arthur 2005). Universities do this by providing opportunities for students to reflect on their own beliefs and articulate them within a circle of similar and competing beliefs. Students have opportunities to interact with each other, learn from each other, grow with each other, and together make their communities more than the sum of their parts. Developing all of these capacities in

students will often require an intentional approach above and beyond the traditional academic curriculum of universities. Educating for academic skills alone is not sufficient in helping graduates prepare for civic commitment or to understand their responsibilities as members of a community.

Character education, no less than other dimensions of education is a matter for lifelong learning. This report enquires into the actual values, attitudes, dispositions and virtues of students and recent graduates, and investigates the extent and means whereby the universities and employers variously recognize their respective responsibilities for the character and moral awareness of their undergraduates and employees in the interests of the future well-being of humankind.

There may seem to be an added complexity when one tries to put together the environments of higher education and employment, but they are not such separate worlds as one may assume, as the results of this research tend to show. Indeed, a report of the CBI Higher Education Task Force, *Stronger Together: Businesses and Higher Education in Turbulent Times* (2008), has underlined the interdependence of Higher Education and Business if either was to succeed in the very competitive world in which we live. However, it was interesting to note that while research, good teaching and the skills associated with employability were emphasised, there was no reference to the character or personal qualities of the graduate. Yet this dimension was emphasised to the researchers in the conversations they had with many employers, and it is clearly an absolutely essential dimension of any consideration of employability. Was the subject simply assumed as being too obvious to mention or should we conclude that the topic is too hot to handle. Perhaps we have simply lost the language in which to discuss the issues profitably.

Amongst others, we are left with some intriguing and important questions. What kinds of growth in the area of personal and civic responsibility occur in university settings? What kind of learning in a university is needed to meet the challenges of the workplace, our democratic processes and civic engagement? How does higher education engage with its students in developing responsible learners with a clear sense of social and civic responsibility which is matched by such qualities as honesty, accountability and a concern for social justice? Are some disciplines less resistant to moral and civic engagement than others? In what way and to what extent can and should businesses accept responsibility for the character development of their employees?

## 2 Method

This study is designed to complement other *Learning for Life* studies by including people who have demonstrated higher academic ability. At this stage participants have the experience of earlier stages of education to reflect on. Thus, undergraduates and graduates might be expected to articulate more broadly based accounts of their own character formation.

Other studies in the project have drawn their sample from a single locality or, in the case of the Early Years study, a range of localities. This study draws on a much broader range of institutions. Though many are based in London, those who have come together to study at a single business school or to work for a single firm represent quite a broad section of England (and beyond) in terms of their earlier educational experience.

### Sample

The research team sought host sites which would offer a diverse set of interviewees in gender, ethnicity, religion and aspiration. Of course, all are academic success stories, having satisfied university entrance requirements or gained employment with major employers of graduates. Thus this project further sharpens the focus of the 16-19 study, which looked exclusively at young people studying for 'A' levels.

It was important to involve a contrasting group of universities, and of commercial enterprises. Four universities participated in the project. The universities were: King's College, University of Cambridge; Canterbury Christ Church University, a Church-related University; the University of Essex, a civic campus university (1964); and the Cass Business School, a specialist School within a recently established major city centre university (1996). Although these research sites are all based in the South of England, they all recruit nationally and internationally; the sample of students is multicultural and sufficiently diverse to provide a representative set.

The four graduate employers chosen are all successful, high profile employers. They were chosen so as to include the commercial, retail, service and financial sectors and because they have large well-established graduate employment programmes, providing the necessary variety and scope for the research. The firms are: Price Waterhouse Coopers, management consultants; British Telecom, telecommunications; DTZ, commercial property management; and Tesco, Food and general retailers.

The interviewees were all volunteers, solicited with the support of named person(s) in the research sites, a director or manager in the employment organisations or a Senior Tutor / Head of Department at the University sites. Although the participants were unsystematically selected and self-nominating, care was taken to ensure a diverse sample in terms of background, gender and ethnicity so that the research sample adequately reflected the wider community of the organisations taking part. In fact,

the majority of students at London City's Cass Business school were from ethnic minority groups, describing themselves as Asian or Anglo-Asian. Ethnic minorities and women were also fairly represented in the employers. Numbers were about equally divided between students and employees

	Number of Participants		
	Face-to-face	e-mail	Total
<b>University:</b>			
Canterbury Christ Church University	21	10	31
Cass Business School (London City University)	12	6	18
King's College Cambridge	37		37
Essex University	7	1	8
<b>Employer:</b>			
PricewaterhouseCoopers	24	3	27
British Telecom	19	4	23
DTZ	12	2	14
Tesco		11	11
<b>Total</b>			<b>169</b>

This method of approaching participants made no attempt to provide a basis for calculating response rates, or for estimating whether the achieved sample was representative even of the institutions involved. Results and conclusions can only be seen as descriptive of the sample itself. They do, however, show some of what is possible and, since these students and employees may be those with most interest in character and values, what is not found in their responses to the sorts of questions asked may be rare elsewhere.

### Data collection

Because participants were expected to have very varied experiences to relate and views to express and because they were likely to be very articulate, the whole data collection phase of the study was devoted to interviews.

The interview schedule was designed to elicit views amongst other aspects on: attitudes, virtues and dispositions; influences on the formation of values including the extent to which they believed they were influenced by experience of higher education and employment; motivation for higher education; their understanding of what employers looked for when recruiting and what they looked for in, and the place of, CSR.

Although participants were used to presenting themselves in a required way and were fully informed of the aims of *Learning for Life* and the focus of the interviews, there was little evidence that their responses were prepared. Prompts and questions were often a cue for silence or even a declaration that the interviewee would have to think about the answer. Furthermore, the interviews were in part unstructured: participants sometimes conversed freely about their work or interests for a large proportion of the time. Refreshments were provided with a view to creating a less

formal atmosphere and the initial request to 'Say a little bit about yourself' sometimes led to long digressions from the interview schedule. Structure was imposed by asking questions from the formal interview schedule only where target topics had not been touched on or where the fieldworker thought clarification or confirmation would be useful. Thus, to a large extent, the statements made in the interviews can be regarded as, in some sense, authentic representations of the thinking of participants.

Responses to e-mail questions were, through the constraints of the medium, less flexible and in general provide less data for analysis. Participants gave short responses to a shortened version of the full interview schedule. These are quoted verbatim when included in the report. In reporting oral responses, comments have been tidied: the ungrammatical or fragmentary utterance as well as the hesitations that are part of ordinary speech have been removed. In cases where the precise wording is important to a subtle point care has been taken to reproduce exactly what was said. In other cases, the tidying sometimes extends to paraphrase. Since the interpretation of responses depends very much on the status of the participant and on whether questions were asked face-to-face, comments are flagged as e-mail responses, student responses or both using the symbols [e], [s] or [es]; where no symbol follows a response, it is that of an employee.

### **Data Analysis**

All face-to-face interviews were audio recorded. Abridged transcripts were made, emphasising statements that answered questions in the interview schedule regardless of where in the interview the remarks were made. These abridged transcripts were accepted by the field worker as accurate. In part the analysis worked from these transcripts together with the e-mail responses: in part it involved listening to the original tapes.

The fieldworker provided an initial analysis of transcripts, pulling together themes very much along the lines of the interview schedule. Following this three people pooled the results of three different approaches to further analysis. A member of the research team reworked the initial analysis adopting a more strategic stance and enhancing interpretation with insights and information from his discussions with managers in the companies and institutions and from the literature. An independent researcher worked from the transcripts and e-mail responses using NVivo8. Initially they began to code the transcripts using categories drawn from the interview schedule. Their aim was to allow interviewees' language and expression of ideas to be reflected in the organization of categories. This led to the use of extensive sub-categories. In many instances only two or three similar or identical terms were placed under a specific sub-category. For example, 110 codes were created under the category of 'Good Character' and 82 for 'Bad Character', reflecting the breadth of description used by interviewees. However as the analysis proceeded it became apparent this type of content analysis would be inadequate in representing nuances in the ways in which interviewees discussed the core themes of the report. Interviewees had been allowed to express their thoughts freely, often with anecdotes

and digressions from the schedule which proved significant in allowing them to explain their perspectives more fully. The research team felt it was important to allow these narratives to shape the structure of further analysis. Therefore, categories were allowed to emerge more naturally from the transcripts. Re-reading the transcripts, reorganizing previous coding and detailed checking of the semantic quality of language included in sub-categories became an important task. This aspect of the work was not designed to facilitate further quantitative analysis but to provide the research team with an authentic guide to the language and ideas used by the interviewees in relation to the core themes (see Appendix 10.6 for word lists). Although this analysis can be presented numerically, this is meant to accurately reflect degrees of frequency, rather than a precise count of terms pre-decided by the researcher.

A second independent researcher reviewed a 15 percent random sample of interview tapes, looking for nuances omitted from the transcripts, evidence that the fieldworker was or was not imposing ideas on participants, as well as themes and general patterns that had been missed. During their individual analysis work and during the preparation of this report, these three people had frequent communication with the aim of achieving an overall result that as fully as possible demonstrates the views of the people in the sample.

During this phase of analysis, for example, it was decided that the aspects of character mentioned as things that employers were looking for could not be merged very comfortably with aspects of good character. It also became clear that participants distinguished between the kind of support they needed and the source. Typically colleagues were relied on when the concern was practical. Managers, on the other hand, when mentioned were often identified with offering advice about career development and future prospects. A third example of the kind of consideration relevant at this stage is the difficulty found in separating when interviewees were describing the qualities of the person and their relationship to them and when they were referring to the teacher's, lecturer's, tutor's attributes as an educator.

An example of an insight arising from listening to the interview rather than reading transcripts is the importance of travel in developing character and values ('broadening the mind' in fact). This led on to an awareness of the more general importance of varieties of experience. Once this was noticed, it was possible to see some of the evidence in the transcripts and to insert it into the structure of coding used in the analysis by NVivo8.

## **Ethics**

The research was approved by the Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee at Canterbury Christ Church University. It was also necessary to accord with and follow the proper channels and compliance procedures of the institutions and companies where the research took place.



Prior to interview, all participants were given an accessible summary of what the research was about as well as the nature of their rights (See Appendices: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). They were informed that they had anonymity and confidentiality in the research and that they would not be named. Participants were asked to sign a consent form and advised that they could, if they wished, halt the interview at any time without being required to provide any reason for concluding the interview. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from any aspect of the research at any time.

### **3. The views of students in higher education and graduate employment**

#### **Introduction**

The face-to face interviews did not force participants into giving highly structured answers to highly structured questions. Consequently it proved quite difficult to find a satisfactory structure for reporting what they had to say. In the pages that follow some paragraphs or individual comments could easily be transferred from one section to another. To avoid excessive repetition, arbitrary decisions had to be made. In the interest of brevity these decisions are not always pointed out.

Each section is introduced with general comments about the extent to which the details contained in it fit logically into some conceptual system, either evident in the participants themselves or constructed by the research team. The breakdown into sections largely follows the structure implied by the interview schedule, even though the interviews did not adhere strictly to this structure.

Major themes covered are:

- Ideas about character and values
- Ideas about leadership
- Influences on character and values
- The role of higher education
- Graduate employment
- Engagement with society and civic involvement

#### **3.1 Aspects of Character**

##### **General Comments**

A large majority of participants spoke of good character exclusively in terms of specific qualities, partly because the scheduled interview question spoke in those terms. However, a considerable number broke with the tone of the question to give a general statement linking the notion of good character with notions such as morality or rightness.

*A person possessing good character should have good morals. [s]*

*Somebody with high morals and high standards. [s]*

*Someone who is upstanding morally.*

*Someone who has an idea of what it is to be moral. [s]*

*Someone who has beliefs and values and morals and is able to stand up for them. [s]*

*The ability to know right from wrong. [e]*

*On the personal level you come down to some basis of morality whether or not it is based around the Ten Commandments. Somebody who follows the basic rules of society.*

*A fairly strong sense of morals. [s]*

*Having a set of your own moral values and then following them. [s]*

*Good character is just sort of knowing what is right.*

There were occasional remarks which highlighted the complexity of the idea of good character.

*I don't think that any particular qualities go into someone to make a good character. I don't think it's quite as simple as that. It depends what you mean by good character. The friends that I have that I regard as good people, they have good character, they all have particular qualities. It's a whole mixture of different things. Some people are awful at things, but they're great characters.*

*Good character is different things in different contexts. Almost any quality could be good, if you use it with the right other people around. If there are four people and three of them are shy, they might need that one person who is cocky, brash and arrogant to help them. But would I normally say that being cocky, brash and arrogant is generally a good quality? But in the right context you might need that sort of boost... At another time, you might need the quiet ones. Being really quiet and getting your work done isn't healthy, but they have a role to play in fitting in with others.*

*To be honest, it's somebody who has all the good qualities of yourself. As selfish as that sounds, you mark off a good character in relation to yourself. [s]*

Any attempt to unpick the philosophical implications of such remarks or to estimate the extent to which other participants held similar views but omitted to mention them would be purely speculative, but it is clear that the notion of 'moral character' has some currency with these students and graduate employees.

Within the interviews discussion of good character and bad character mostly arose in the context of or soon after a general discussion about the participant's experience in higher education or at work. Possibly as a consequence of this, many of the

comments seem to relate more to what makes a good employee, a good student or a good leader rather than what makes a good person. This is seen very clearly in some responses to questions of what qualities constitute good or bad character.

*A good character is someone who really does their job with ethics, that's good character definitely.*

*Bad character is probably someone who keeps themselves to themselves all the time, because this is a really team work environment. You need to work well with everyone else.*

*So, I think good character is doing your job well, doing it right, doing it ethically, because the reputation of the firm depends on you.*

One student teacher responded entirely in terms that could be interpreted as how to be an effective teacher.

Only occasionally did anyone articulate a distinction between being a good employee (for example) and being a good person by explicitly stating that characteristics of a good employee were part of being a good person. Exceptional examples of awareness were shown in the comments.

*Good character? That's a difficult question. ... I think good character is definitely fairness, to be open to anything around you. I think that in business good character is very different to good character in your private life. ... In private life good character is someone ... who's helpful, someone who's ... fun, someone who you can talk to, someone who you have something more in common. I think business is much colder. I think if you want to do well in business you shouldn't really open yourself and show your emotions. You have to have strict rules that you stick to. But for a business I think that is what is good because that is what is going to make it work. I think that business is a bit of a game. People aren't really harsh or cold. I think that's just the requirement. I don't think that's something that's bad. It's just how business is... built. [s]*

*I think it's important to maintain a positive attitude to everything in life and teaching that you experience. [s]*

As the research progressed, the interest in the topic shown by the participants themselves was particularly noteworthy. One might expect this; after all they were all volunteers who knew what they were volunteering for. But they did not have to enter so freely and openly into the conversation, as they did. Perhaps this suggests that they recognised the subject to be important for the future of our society: if so, this research and reflection upon it can stimulate further conversation.

Bad character was contrasted with good character quite often in literal terms; words meaning the opposite of those applied in describing good character are used to describe bad character. The words included most particularly 'selfish', 'disrespectful',

'dishonest', 'untrustworthy'. But several others were prominent, 'rude', 'deceitful', 'lazy', 'unkind' as well as attitudes such as 'unwilling to co-operate', 'failure to pay attention or listen', 'lack of concern for or interest in others' and 'a closed mind'. Qualities that appear only as aspects of good character are, therefore, of interest.

Participants used a huge number of different character-related words in describing good or bad character and in talking about their work, studies, religion, role models and other things. Appendix 10.6.1 lists the words: the Word position in the table is indicative of the rank order of frequency. There is no space in this report to do justice to the richness and complexity of the comments made. What follows can only be a summary and categorises comments (somewhat arbitrarily in many places) under the headings:

- Attitude to Self and Others
- Attitude to Oneself
- People skills
- Communication skills and people skills
- Friendliness
- Flexibility and openness
- Honesty, reliability etc
- Intellectual & Work related skills
- Motivation
- Leadership
- Miscellaneous qualities
- Traditional virtues

There was no clear line to be drawn between on the one hand characteristics that the research team would regard as part of character and on the other personality traits or even skills having no specific relevance. This is not to say that participants would not make such a distinction if pressed; but they might well draw their lines in different places. Consequently, the attempt to distinguish moral qualities from others in the structure of the report was abandoned.

In the main, participants, even those who referred to qualities that were clearly unrelated to employment, leadership or study, did not make an explicit distinction between the aptitudes and propensities specific to those contexts and more generally relevant virtues or aspects of character.

Sometimes ideas about character and values emerged more fully in connection with other issues. For example, one student was asked about influences on values and mentioned Christianity. The interview then entered a long digression on Christianity which produced a far richer picture of characteristics of a good person than answers given in earlier and ostensibly more directly appropriate parts of the interview. This could be taken to suggest that some things which the research team would regard as part of character were regarded by participants as outside that concept. Equally it may have arisen simply from the pace and flow of conversation during the interviews.

### **3.1.1. Attitude to Self and Others**

Three problems arose when trying to organise comments made about attitudes to other people. Firstly, many remarks were difficult to distinguish from comments on aspects of character such as those dealt with below as Communication Skills. Secondly, many terms used to talk of good attitudes to other people were effectively making the same point as other terms used to talk of bad character. Showing consideration for other people and thinking only of yourself cannot sensibly be discussed in isolation from each other. Thirdly, many remarks made about attitudes to others seemed to be making exactly the same point as other remarks about attitude to oneself. Where appropriate aspects of attitude to self have been included in this section. The remaining few, such as self confidence, are left to section 1.3.

Of those comments treated as about attitudes to others, almost all can be classified as relating to concern for others, positively caring for others or being nasty/nice to others. The boundaries between these categories are not firmly drawn; but the three central ideas seem to be distinct.

#### *Thinking of others v being self-centred*

*Someone who is selfish and constantly puts themselves before others. It is OK every now and again to put your own needs before others, but if your personal gain involves someone losing out then it is not a 'good' thing to do. The more you are willing to put yourself out for others, the more you find they will do the same for you. [es]*

The general trend was for participants to imply that good character is largely about treating others as you would be treated yourself, only occasionally formulating this explicitly. One remark was subtly different: it suggested that someone with good character would simply be doing what he wanted when he helped others. [s]

About a quarter of participants made statements about bad character that used phrases like 'selfish', 'self-absorbed', 'love themselves too much', 'doing things just for the gain of yourself and not thinking of others, really', 'so self-centred that everything in life revolves around them'. The notion of arrogance, pride, being dismissive of others, talking down to people and dominating together with the opposed notion of humility, was almost equally common. Occasionally quite subtle views were expressed: one participant commented that good character required 'not so much humility but lack of arrogance.' [s]

*Arrogance. It could be because someone is not very confident on some levels and so projects this image of over confidence as compensation. [s]*

In contrast, good character was characterised by many as involving empathy, compassion, forgiving others, taking an interest in them, making time for them and understanding them.

*Selfishness and an inability to put yourself in other people's shoes so you act in a completely myopic, skewed way. Your judgement is worthless if you can't feel like another person. [s]*

Again some more subtle views were occasionally expressed. One participant seemed to place an inability to empathise outside the realm of moral reprehensibility, but to leave arrogance within it. Another seemed to see the ability to empathise as a means to an end, an aptitude rather than a virtue, though one which is required instrumentally for good character. However, these subtleties were not expressed directly.

*An inability to empathise. To generalise, if I were to be honest, there are quite a few people here who are a bit socially awkward. Because of that, they have an inability to empathise with who you are, your background. [s]*

*I think that a strong moral sense without empathy is fairly useless. It's a means of working with other people. There's no good outside of social interaction, if you're unable to communicate your values and understand other people's reasons for their values. [s]*

A related theme, explicitly raised by about one participant in five, was that of politeness, respectfulness, good manners or rudeness.

#### *Actively caring for others*

About one in five of the participants explicitly mentioned the importance of actively caring for other people, doing things for them and giving. More than one in six used the words 'helpful' or 'unhelpful'. Although helpfulness shades into good manners, there are clear examples where it is seen as going beyond that.

*Good character is sort of when you help somebody but don't get anything in return. The children in the class were really nice and kind and understanding to this boy who had behavioural problems and really supported him. The boy with behavioural difficulties was excluded for three days because he went onto the school roof and when he got back he was scared that nobody would want to be his friend anymore and that their parents wouldn't let the other children be his friend, because he was a 'bad' child, but they all still welcomed him back and it was really nice to see them helping ... If you think you can help somebody then I don't know why you wouldn't. Just wanting other people to be happy. I don't want other people to be miserable if I can try and help them to be happy. [s]*

*Prepared to give up something to do something for someone else. Perhaps helping someone out who's lost a family member. Go to the shops for them. Shows a humanity. You can sympathise and empathise.*

*There is a reward for selflessness. It's a lot more fulfilling to have a generous character. [s]*

### *Being nasty or nice*

These bland words usefully encapsulate a number of different levels of pro- and anti-social approaches to life that were raised by about a quarter of participants, about half of whom mentioned kindness. At the other extreme one remarked that a bad character is 'abusive and violent' and many more mentioned aggressiveness and violence, bad temper, bullying, back-stabbing, cruelty or being malicious and deliberately hurtful. Being manipulative, exploitative, conniving or ruthless was also mentioned in at least ten interviews.

*When you take advantage of people socially. Telling people what they want to hear as a means to an end. When you manipulate someone into thinking something, like they are a friend of yours, to gain a social reward. [s]*

*Playing some people against other people for your own personal gain without caring what gets strewn by the wayside along the way. [s]*

*An exploitive nature would be bad character, especially. In business there are always situations where at one point you may have the upper hand, but I don't think that just gives you the opportunity to exploit the other party. You shouldn't disadvantage them just because you can and you have the upper hand.*

### *Fairness contrasted with racism etc*

Equality and diversity appeared as a minority interest, with fewer than one person in ten raising it explicitly. This may not indicate that participants saw these as unimportant, but simply that they did not see these as key element of good or bad character. At least one comment, from someone who elsewhere had things to say about ethnicity, demonstrates how talking about another aspects of character can really be talking about diversity and equality.

*Empathy is good. Not everyone has that. Even if you don't understand where they're coming from you should give them the time and the space. To be aware of the fact that not everyone thinks and feels like you. To not see anyone as below or above you. The moment you start to view someone like you and if you have self respect and love, then you'll treat them in the same fashion. The moment you start thinking that someone is below you, you justify in your mind why they are treated the way they are and the moment you start thinking that someone is above you. You start to justify the way you're treated. [s]*



Such issues also seem to be behind two references that were made to being or not being judgemental.

*When people have already made their mind up. People who are judgemental and don't see past what is in front of them. These things are never going to help you as a person in society. It is damaging to other people. [s]*

Good character was not only the domain of great leaders, grand gestures or those with the courage and capacity to articulate their values and say what they thought was right. Good character was also expressed in much smaller detail in the minutiae of everyday life, as in the example of voluntary work.

Female students and graduate employees were more likely to say that good character was expressed in the 'little things' that individuals did for others, although this gender bias may be due to the large number of female student teachers interviewed who would do 'little things' in the classroom for the educational, social and emotional development of children and young people. Certainly, as explained in the extracts below, small gestures worked to win trust and build confidences. As two female student teachers suggested:

*I think that people show good character every day, in a way, in simple things like holding the door open for someone. I know that's a rubbish example, but I think it is about the way you act every day, you don't necessarily have to have a grand gesture, giving loads of money to charity. I think it is the way you treat people every day and respect people every day. It's in the little things that you do, yeah I think so. If you treat people with respect, if you think about how they're feeling, then that automatically makes you a good person, because you're being considerate to other people and I suppose it means that those other people think a lot of you. [s]*

*It's difficult to give an example of good character because there are little instances where you'll think, 'yeah, that was quite nice'. Somebody doing something that they don't have to do and they're not obliged to do, just going that extra little step. [s]*

According to research in the field of nurse education (Smith, 1992; Gray, 2009), doing 'little things' wins the trust and establishes more therapeutic relationships with patients. 'Little things' rather than grand gestures, together with surface gestures and soft skills, such as handshaking and smiling, were seen by university students and graduate employees as facilitating good working relationships and cited as everyday examples of good character. According to a student:

*Good character is to be approachable and to smile so that people aren't afraid to come up and talk to you. [s]*

In the words of two graduate employees:

*At university I was societies' and student development officer. I learned lots and lots of interpersonal skills, dealing with people, managing people, dealing with conflict, obviously things like team work, managing projects. Soft skills are like interpersonal skills, negotiation skills, persuasion skills. Hard skills are technical skills: You can do this or you can't do it. Soft skills are something that's not apparent. It's not something you can put on your CV. It's interacting with people.*

*Soft skills are something that are valued in business or valued in society, but it's not so tangible, you can't just measure it. You can't measure it on the basis of empirical evidence. It's something that's more personal.*

### **3.1.2. Attitude to Oneself**

#### *Restraint*

A small number of people mentioned aspects of character relating to self-concept but not directly to one's attitude to others. Fewer than ten mentioned greed and one mentioned immaturity.

*Going out drinking all the time. Trying to be popular or playing all the games that you used to play in school. I thought everyone would be grown up here because everyone is different and everyone has different friends. [s]*

A similar number of people mentioned restraint, patience, level-headedness, the ability to be serious or to 'keep your character in check'.

#### *Ambition*

Ambition was mentioned mainly in terms of a quality that employers looked for in potential employees rather than as an aspect of good character. In the few cases when it was mentioned elsewhere it was something acceptable rather than desirable within someone of good character, as long as it was kept within bounds.

#### *Confidence*

Confidence was mentioned by about one respondent in ten, but largely as an example of what employers and Cambridge colleges were looking for in their employees or students. Variations on this theme included happiness and being able to be a little rebellious sometimes.

### **3.1.3. Interpersonal Skills**

About one participant in ten mentioned interpersonal skills (or something close to it) in connection with what employers were looking for; but a smaller number seemed to be referring to very similar things, such as *'the ability to get along with people'* as part of good character. In employment interpersonal skills were considered important largely because of the importance of customer relations. A very different pattern of responses might have appeared if the employees had been recruited from roles that were not client facing.

Similarly about one in ten mentioned being a team worker in connection with the demands of employment or higher education; but a much smaller number referred to similar things, such as *'being co-operative'* as part of good character.

When spoken of in terms of good character, these qualities are not easy to distinguish from those dealt with above as aspects of attitude to others.

### **3.1.4. Communication Skills**

As with interpersonal skills, communication skills appear in the interviews in two guises. Almost one in five participants used the word 'communication' or 'communicate', but almost always in terms of the demands of employment or higher education. This was not always referring to presentations and formal communication, but included communicating informally with team members. A much smaller number of people referred to similar things as good character.

*Someone I'm comfortable with. I can tell who I like quite quickly. People I can have a constructive conversation with rather than just going through the motions. [s]*

*A good character needs to be able to keep someone's attention when holding a conversation, a sense of humour also plays a part but knowing when to be serious is also crucial. A person that people are able to talk to when life takes a wrong turn and know they will not be judged on their actions but will also not be told to the next person. These components all make the person approachable to talk to and are more likely to give you honest advice, something some people do not like but in the long run it will work out. [es]*

#### *Listening*

About one participant in ten referred to listening mainly as part of good character (or not listening as bad character) but with a few people placing it in the context of employment, for example one said you need to be a good listener in order to be a good teacher and another in order to be a good doctor. Phrasing varied between suggesting that this was an ability and indications that it was more closely related to taking other people seriously.

*Someone that listens to other people, someone that is approachable, I suppose that kind of ties in. Someone who respects other people. That is a big thing for me, especially when you start at the bottom of a big firm.*

*You have to be good at negotiating, listening. You shouldn't be too forceful with your opinion, but yet if you feel that you're correct, you should argue it in a way that people will understand. [s]*

*Not overly polite or formal when there's no real need – making it easier to get along and share a joke etc. Much easier to get something done if everyone's a bit relaxed with each other – more likely people will share ideas and get to a better solution. I guess you'd have to add 'good listener' to that too. [e]*

*I would judge someone as having a 'good character' if they were friendly, willing to listen and generally treated others how they would like to be treated themselves.*

*Friendly, funny, warm and a good listener. [s]*

*Good character is people sort of people. They sort of listen to each other. [s]*

*A person that people are able to talk to when life takes a wrong turn and know they will not be judged on their actions but will also not be told to the next person.*

Listening is also linked by some participants with the notion of flexibility, or with collaborativeness.

*Not listening to other people, being rude, just generally not considering other people's feelings.*

*Good character is someone you trust, someone you get on with, someone you can relate to, someone who's willing to help you, someone who will listen to you, someone who's open to new ideas.*

*A person that is willing to listen to you, is co-operative, a person that's friendly.*

*I think that good character is someone who's ready to listen to other people, not just go by their own values.*

### 3.1.5. Friendliness

In the context of values and character development, friendship is a very important notion. The possible influence of friends on personal values is discussed below. A friendship can also transform a context and lead to the expression of good character where the ability to interact morally with others is practiced and developed.

*We got into some trouble with the police in Croatia. That was pretty tense. There were four of us there and they said 'this is going on one of your heads.' One of my friends said 'that's me.' He gave his reasons later. Two of us didn't speak German and they don't speak any English there. The other one was his best mate. He had a night in the cells and got fined the next morning. We paid the fine for him. It's probably fair. But, he didn't know exactly what was going to happen.*

It is interesting, therefore, that about one participant in five gave friendliness, or something very much like it, as an aspect of good character or as a requirement of employment. In the employment context the word 'sociable' was used instead of or alongside 'friendly'.

*I guess the main thing is just having a kind and friendly personality about you. Having an openness to get on with other people, I mean even if it's people you don't particularly admire. [s]*

*Good character is being helpful and friendly all of the time, really. When the pressure's on you, that doesn't mean you should be nasty and leave people with the feeling that they can never come to you again. Leaving a conversation with the feeling that there's not a problem, there's not an issue, no bad feeling.*

*It's difficult to define good character but I suppose good characteristics would be being friendly, honest, approachable, positive. [s]*

Approachability was mentioned above in connection with listening; but can also be seen as connected with friendliness.

*Friendly, funny, warm and a good listener. [s]*

*Someone who's approachable, who's friendly and someone you can go to for advice to get a good perspective. [s]*

*Components that make a good character are a good personality, friendly, approachable, lively, enthusiastic, honest and trustworthy. [es]*

*Approachable. Friendly. Not very judgemental. Not quick to turn round and say something spiteful. [s]*

*Easy to get on with in terms of being approachable. Able to talk to. Fun to be with. You get to know more people. They get respect if they are approachable. You can get return favours.*

*Honesty, openness, friendly, approachable and trustworthy.*

One remark clearly showed friendship, rather than simply friendliness to have important moral implications.

*Good character: Loyalty to friends. Sticking up for friends. I'm not a huge fan of generic niceness. ... I think it's a mixed blessing. Because it's good to be nice to people; but there are times when you shouldn't be, when, say, you are supporting a friend on some issue ... I think you need to be a bit more aggressive. [s]*

### **3.1.6 Flexibility and Openness**

Openness was important to about one in five people partly in the sense of openness to people, shading into friendliness and interpersonal skills

*Honesty, openness, friendly, approachable and trustworthy.*

*Good character is being positive and good communication, being able to talk, being open-minded and being able to talk to various kinds of people and not being sort of closed.*

*I guess the main thing is just having a kind and friendly personality about you. Having an openness to get on with other people, I mean even if it's people you don't particularly admire. [s]*

*Open minded. An ability to get on with people. You can't wish for everyone to have the same values as you. [s]*

*Someone who will listen to you, someone who's open to new ideas.*

*Open-mindedness. You're going to see things at university you're not used to and you need to be open minded about them, new ideas and people. [s]*

These comments show the difficulty of drawing a strict distinction between openness to people and openness to new ideas. Both aspects are potentially related to diversity and equality.

*I dislike extreme dogmatism in people. I quite like extreme commitment to a cause as long as they can see that other people don't like it. People that wish to impose their views on others I find very off-putting. [s]*

*Narrow minded, not allowing themselves to see anything new or explore new possibilities, racism. [s]*

*Good character is definitely fairness, openness to anything around you. [s]*

*A person with good character would know their mind and stand by decisions and visions even if they are not popular. This person, to be a person of good character, would also have to be open to reason. [e]*

A small number of people mentioned that their employer looked for recruits who would be adaptable to change and in the same context about one in twenty mentioned creativity.

### **3.1.7. Trustworthiness: Honesty and Reliability**

Honesty, integrity, sincerity, trustworthiness, reliability or similar ideas were used by about half the respondents mainly in connection with good character and sometimes linked with the requirements of employment. Some of the words and phrases used relate to saying what is true or giving true impression of yourself, others to being dependable either because you do what you undertake to do or because your behaviour is steady and predictable.

Although, taken all together, notions connected with personal relationships were more pervasive, those who mentioned trustworthiness in its various forms were often more emphatic about this than about other things and mentioned it more than once. It is difficult to say whether the high profile given to these qualities arose from publicity about the dishonesty and unreliability of politicians and bankers, from traditional use of 'honesty' as a catch-all virtue, or from an actual day-to-day concern about the matter. The third possibility is supported by the fact that only one respondent mentioned stealing as part of bad character, presumably because this was not salient in their minds during the interview. The following immediate responses to requests for an account of personal values are examples of the emphasis given to these ideas.

*Probably honesty, trustworthiness. [s]*

*Integrity and trust. For me, these values are the bedrock of what I'm about. They enable me to work well with people and build good relationships. [e]*

*I suppose honesty and integrity. With integrity it's being true to yourself and presenting that to others.*

*Honesty*

The predominant words used were honest (or dishonest) and honesty. Almost everyone who referred to any of the qualities relating to trustworthiness used one of these words at some time.

*Definitely someone who's honest, if you ask for their opinion on something, someone with good character would often give you an honest answer. [s]*

A few remarked that honesty was not always a good thing.

*It's important to be honest because you don't really achieve anything by lying, unless it's for someone's good. Honesty is important for your integrity in anything that you do (at university/ work). [s]*

*I try to be honest. Sometimes maybe too much. [s]*

*When people say trustworthy, some people think it's always telling the truth, but I think it means do what you say, be who you are. I mean sometimes you tell the wee porky to move on – but make sure you're genuine and people can understand why you've acted in those ways.*

*A good character is someone that's genuine and will say what they are going to do and get it done efficiently. Yeah, it's just a genuine person. ... There are occasions where that slips, for the better good, but on the whole definitely that's good. ... Say you've got a customer and you know that you're getting 10% margin from wholesale, but you can't tell the customer that you're getting 10% because your margins will drop. So you say you're getting 5%. ... It's not good but it's business practice.*

One person expounded a complex view of truthfulness:

*I don't believe there is anything such as the truth so everything is a white lie, I suppose .... There is uncertainty theory, which actually means that nothing can be truthful. You can never say everything; you are always going to delete some information. You've got to be selective in what you say. Otherwise you'd never stop talking. ... People make a judgement on how truthful things sound. I think there is a difference between a deliberate attempt to mislead and not being able to deliver 100% truth. I don't think we have the communication platform to communicate the whole truth as we are limited by language.*

#### *Hypocrisy v sincerity*

The word integrity was introduced by more than one in ten participants, partly in relation to the demands of employment.



*Because the firm is accountants there's a professional requirement to be honest, how to show integrity and that sort of thing*

*Ethics and integrity are extremely important if you're going to have a good business relationship, well any relationship, particularly a professional relationship, because they're underwritten by good values. [s]*

*Integrity – if someone lacks integrity I find it hard to work with or for them. I would always expect and hope people who know me to believe I act with integrity. Integrity is vital for building trust*

*Good character is someone who's got a good measure of integrity and is actually honest. A lot of people just blow with the wind or just say one thing to one person or another thing to another person. They just want to please their audiences. I find that tough sometimes in business. I guess: people who do what they say, someone who gets involved, do what they say they'll do, trustworthy.*

*A lack of integrity is being false in numerous ways, so that's just not a very attractive quality. A lack of integrity is essentially just another way of lying.*

Others place integrity in a broader context.

*Somebody who stands by their morals. You can trust them by their integrity to be honest, which gains the support of people, which gets respect from people. At the end of the day, if we didn't have morals, where would society be really?*

*People can portray an image of good character that they want to portray, rather than an image of what they really are. [s]*

*Using straightforward language so that everyone can understand them and they could never be accused of trying to hide behind big words – or using lots of words to say nothing much. [e]*

Correspondingly, for a small number of people good character was characterised by sincerity and a lack hypocrisy.

*Fakeness, unreliability, underhandedness. With any of these in people you never know where you stand with them. [e]*

*Hypocrisy is unfair. It is unfair to set a standard for others and then go against it yourself. It is a form of elitism. [s]*

*People with bad character will also use deception and lies to divert attention from what they really believe if they think it will not be well received. [e]*

### *Reliability in undertakings*

Reliability was valued both in terms of being someone who would keep their word and in terms of being trusted to act decently even without anything being said. About one person in six used the word trust or trustworthy in this connection.

*It's important to mean what you say; at least you say what you mean because it allows everyone to know what you're standing for. People will be able to depend on you to keep your word. [s]*

*Good character is being reliable, trustworthiness, those kinds of things. Being able to trust friends and trust adults is one of the things that children speak about and is crucial. You know, if someone tells you something personal, that you're not going to share it with others, make it amusing and gossip. [s]*

*A good character of a person is someone who's honest, trustworthy. I can give an example because in my last teaching practice there were some girls in my class being bullied and the teacher and myself had to take the initiative and get in there and sort it out, really. And the girls came to us first, we didn't even realise that there was something going on, and the girls came to us and said 'we'll, I'm having a few problems and everything' and they trusted us. [s]*

*Honest and conscientious. If people say they are going to do something, they do it. Having a set of your own moral values and then following them. [s]*

*Someone who is upstanding morally. Who says what they think and lives by it. Fair and honest.*

*The firm's pretty honest and open. It's about doing what you say you'll do and treating people as you want to be treated, so not going behind people's backs and backstabbing. If you're not honest and open then you're hiding yourself, which ultimately means no one gets to really know you.*

*Being reliable and consistent. [s]*

### *Loyalty*

The related idea of loyalty, mainly to friends, was mentioned by a small number of people.

*Loyalty. People who don't value their friends are missing out. Your interactions with other people are among the most important things in your life. If those interactions are superficial and you are willing to put the knife in if something else comes along, you're missing out on forming real connections and you won't be good news for others. [s]*

*Loyalty to friends. Sticking up for friends. I'm not a huge fan of generic niceness. ... I think it's a mixed blessing. Because it's good to be nice to people; but there are times when you shouldn't be, when, say, you are supporting a friend on some issue ... I think you need to be a bit more aggressive. [s]*

*Good character? I suppose someone that's true to their word, someone who's going to deliver in what they do, someone who's trustworthy and honourable. At the end of the day, most people look after themselves, that's a basic human instinct, but people need to think 'I win, you win' rather than 'I win, you lose'. A guy in the office was told that his job was temporary, but even so he stuck in there, living and breathing the work. He held himself in a lot of dignity*

This is also mentioned once as something employers look for.

*People who are loyal to the company, believe in the brand. The brand is the collective knowledge and experiences our customers have.*

The rarity of reference to loyalty is worth remarking upon given the importance of loyalty to an employer in reducing recruitment costs. Prospective training opportunities seem to trump all other considerations. (See below 4.5. and 7.3.).

### **3.1.8. Intellectual and Work-related Skills**

Whereas about one person in three mentioned some form of intellectual ability or academic attainment as part of what employers or universities required, there were only three participants who explicitly included something of this sort in their description of good character. This softens the inference drawn above that many were interpreting the discussion of character as a continuation of the discussion of their employment or studies.

*Objectivity – i.e. they would not be quick to jump to conclusions but weigh up the evidence and seek alternative opinions. [es]*

*Good question! For good character, initially I'd look for honesty, as this builds trust. On top of this, intelligence, humour, drive and oratory ability*

*– but these are not fundamental to be of good character, they are merely attractive qualities. [s]*

*Having an opinion, based on fact or a good theory – I don't see any point in people sitting on the fence – it just seems like they're too worried to commit to their opinions. [s]*

### **3.1.9. Motivation**

This sometimes refers to self-improvement, but more usually as a personal value which is connected with pulling one's weight in a team or what a person wants to believe one contributes in employment.

*My core values are to work hard and to achieve the best I can, to value my friends and family and to be happy.*

*My core values are family, honesty, hard work and building friendships. I find these are amongst the most important things in life and together have helped me overcome perceived barriers to success. [e]*

More than one participant in four used 'hardworking' or related phrases. A slight majority used them as part of their description of good character, whilst the rest saw them as things that employers or universities wanted in their employees or students.

*Honest and hard working obviously! [e]*

*Honesty. Hard working. ... Intelligent and benevolent. I like to think I can see past my own faults to a certain extent and then I can rectify them. [s]*

About a quarter of those who saw this as part of good character only mentioned it in terms of laziness. This was seen as part of bad character, but 'enthusiasm' rather than 'hard work' or 'industriousness' was not mentioned as good.

*Arrogance, ignorance, laziness, a negative attitude because this kind of person doesn't make people happy or fulfilled in any way. [es]*

*Dishonest, untrustworthy, miserable, lazy. These qualities are bad as they would not gain respect or trust.[es]*

*Dishonesty, laziness, and spitefulness. These qualities break trust and show a lack of team spirit and integrity. [es]*

*Striving for the target in the organizations they're working for or even their personal targets, such as getting a promotion, producing the best quality of work they can get.*

*I had a friend at university who struggled, he found the course very hard, and he was put back a year, so didn't have friends in his year. It would have been really easy for him to give up but he kept trying and didn't give up. He has now graduated. I think that shows good character because it would have been easy for him to go, 'No, I'm going to get a job, university isn't for me', but he worked and he worked very hard and the university supported him and helped him as much as possible. I think that shows good character as well on the part of the tutors, the lecturers, who actually spent time with him to make sure he did the best that he can in the end.*

A few were explicitly thinking of good character shown in the workplace and an aspect of relations with colleagues rather than a response to the demands of the employer.

*In practice, in the workplace, this could include putting one's own needs before the needs of others, showing no regard or concern for others, laziness, rudeness, and pursuing selfish ambitions and self-promotion above and before all else, among other things. [e]*

*Hard working. Honest. Someone who's going to put a 100% effort in and be very conscientious about their work. They are not going to make a split decision if they have to get out the door for 5. It is difficult to work with these people and it's not good for the company because you are bound to wind up clients. It doesn't make for a good working environment.*

In all a little fewer than half the respondents used these or other words relating to motivation or self-motivation.

*What sorts of values or ethos did that charity have? - To do the best you can at your job. You do get a lot of customers that'll talk down to you. You have to have a certain integrity and believe in the cause. But you do get people who are sort of middle aged and never really had any sort of ambition to really make a difference. And so you get people who really just stumbled into it, which isn't very demanding on you (to shape a good character). Ambition is very important to have a successful career. [s]*

*People who are organised and committed to the project. Someone who can deliver and will push themselves beyond the call of duty for the good of the project (a particular community). There's always an end user who has to be supported or engaged. [s]*

*Someone who will get involved. Who won't mind going onto a construction site.*

*Dedication, drive and ambition are something important to success in big companies.*

*Core values 'Doing a good job' – if you're going to do something, you might as well do it properly as anything less is letting yourself down. [e]*

*They want you to be open to possibilities. Open-mindedness, intelligence, a healthy disregard for authority, instinct, a lack of tolerance for anything less than your best, a quest for improving things. [s]*

### **3.1.10. Leadership Qualities**

Qualities attributed to a good leader by many people were simply notions that were also applied to good character in general. This suggests that for those participants good leaders have to be good characters, not that leadership was an ingredient of good character. Good leaders were said by individual participants to be approachable, broad minded, ambitious, friendly, generous, tolerant. About one in twenty mentioned the need for a good leader to be a listener.

Some articulated how such qualities applied especially or specifically to good leaders, expressing ideas that were presumably implicit in the previous comments.

*Confidence is important because it flows through and you can sort of absorb a lot of confidence from confident people, I feel. Somebody who takes an interest in everybody, really. It's important that they genuinely care, that they want to develop you and the company. ...*

*Winston Churchill is an icon for people who work hard and try hard, even when it's quite tough. He brought confidence and a good feeling to people in a bad situation. He was very good at convincing people and brought confidence to people, which they needed.*

*People need to trust you and believe in what you're doing.*

*Someone who's confident and organised. If someone's not organised then you lose faith in them, in their ability to lead or to manage.*

*Someone who can sense when people aren't at their best and has emotional intelligence. Someone who takes on board other people's views, ideas and values so that they feel valued. If the leader does listen to them then they're a valuable part of the team.*

*A leader is one who listens, who is empathic. You've got to have a feeling for what it is you're about, what are the needs and concerns of the people you are working with, how are you addressing them, how are you helping them to address them. [s]*

Finally, some participants formulated the qualities of a good leader in ways in terms of the specifics of leadership.

*A manager is one who listens, who is empathic. [s]*

*Being in touch with grass roots is really important, so not just sitting at the top and losing perspective, which I think happens with politicians a lot of the time. Actually meeting and being involved with all levels.*

*Someone who can manage their time well, like they can help you out and they're always ready to help you, but also manage to get their work done. I think that to develop you have to think not only about yourself but also the people you're working with.*

*Those who can capture team spirit and who have time for the lower members of the team.*

*A person who is firm but fair, who make wise decisions based on careful and compassionate reasoning and who works hard to achieve great results. A person who makes others feel that their work and their input is valued, who does not patronise others. A person who recognises the skills and talents of others and puts them to good use, who enjoys work and motivates others. A person who always has time to explain why, and who recognises how much they can still learn. [e]*

*I look up to leaders who lead by example, people who work hard themselves so can expect that from people below them. You don't want someone who sits back and hands things down.*

The ease with which almost all comments about good leaders can be paralleled in comments on good character highlights the fact that qualities seen as part of good character are largely linked to making a positive contribution to interpersonal relations in society, in the organisation, in the team or among friends. Whereas there does appear to be a reasonably clear distinction between what might be called moral virtues and what might be called aptitudes, it would be possible to construe the moral virtues emphasized by most people as practical aptitudes for making society work smoothly.

### **3.1.11. Miscellaneous Qualities**

A few interesting remarks mentioned qualities that do not fit easily into the structure presented above. There was a mention of beauty, though this was in the context of what was needed for success and was not seen as at all related to good character. Someone mentioned 'being professional', some else 'being vibrant'.

About one person in ten mentioned having a sense of humour or fun.

*A good character is someone who's witty, who's funny and just someone that it's a pleasure to be around. [s]*

*A sense of humour – because you can't get through life without it! [es]*

*A good sense of humour – as this tends to make people more easy-going. [es]*

*Sense of humour. Ability not to let things get you down too much. [s]*

*One of the main components is a good sense of humour. Someone who can understand and use humour makes them have good character. [es]*

*A good character needs to be able to keep someone's attention when holding a conversation, a sense of humour also plays a part but knowing when to be serious is also crucial. [es]*

*My friends are hard working. There are one or two who are not. They just embrace their life, approach it with a good sense of humour. [s]*

*Enjoying life. It's not always about being serious. Having fun.*

*In friendship how much fun you have with someone is most important. [s]*

*In private life good character is someone who's helpful, someone who's fun. [s]*

*Easy to get on with in terms of being approachable. Able to talk to. Fun to be with. You get to know more people.*

Occasionally participants drew attention to the fact that there is a difference between the qualities of character and qualities that are merely desirable.

*For good character, initially I'd look for honesty, as this builds trust. On top of this, intelligence, humour, drive and oratory ability – but these are not fundamental to be of good character, they are merely attractive qualities. [e]*

*I believe that a good character is built upon the set of values I have outlined above. These values are then supported by both a positive attitude and a good sense of humour. I think these qualities help support the people around them. [e]*

Participants who did not make this explicit may or may not have been manifesting a failure to distinguish likability from virtue. This could be a response to the word



'character', since in the recent past 'a bit of a character' or 'a real character' has been used to mean 'a likable rogue' or 'a joker'.

### **3.1.12. Traditional Virtues**

The structure presented above is to a large extent arbitrary. Many remarks could easily be transferred from one section to another. Many sections could be radically rearranged; but how far would it be possible to bring things into line with traditional notions of virtue?

Justice, courage, wisdom and moderation do appear in the interviews, but largely in subsidiary roles. Courage is mentioned occasionally in reference to standing by one's beliefs. Justice occasionally appears as fairness. Wisdom is better represented than most and could almost have been used as a part of the structure above, absorbing parts of existing sections.

Moderation appears in a few places but is probably best seen as reflecting a notion similar to Aristotle's virtue as a mean.

Friendship plays a much more robust part in what participants had to say. Many of the qualities mentioned could be interpreted as extending aspects of friendship to a broader community.

Integrity and particularly honesty are rather old-fashioned virtues but are seen as important. This may be a relic of the time when 'character' was partly synonymous with 'reputation' and, at least for the lower orders, 'honest' was partly synonymous with 'of good character'. Whether this is partly responsible for the words rolling off the tongues of participants, these old fashioned virtues seem to be part of at least some modern ideas of what it is to be a good person.

## 4 Values

In the interviews a variety of words and phrases were used to elicit comments about character. No emphasis was laid on any conceptual difference between them. In each case, however, respondents were asked about their own 'core values'. This phrase, redolent of business, prompted a range of responses which sometimes emphasized employment. One person was aware of the business connotations of the term, but explicitly distinguished that side of life from life in general.

*I'm intelligent, honest and hard working. I have good technical grounding. Intelligence is most important as the brain is all you have. To work on that is the primary motivator for me. In the business you might position a fact very differently to different people in the business. Sales is about managing those conflicts with the head and the heart.*

*My business core values match with those of [my company's] (Trustworthy, Helpful, Straightforward, Inspiring and Heart). These are important as we need to have clear ground rules from which we do business and work with one another. My personal core values would be similar. I aspire to be a good person and grow as an individual.*

Two individuals made unique contributions questioning the importance of consciously holding core values that are absolute and unchanging.

*I'm quite pragmatic. I have no absolute values. I try my best to assess each context as it happens. They probably change but if you followed me around you'd probably see that they didn't. [s]*

*My core values? I don't know, to be honest. It's kind of an interview question where you're put on the spot. You don't know how to define yourself. I guess for me it's to have analysis skills and forming opinions. That helps in getting on with life and people from day to day.*

The term values was variously interpreted as meaning; aspects of character: things aimed at; things or people valued; imperatives to be followed. Participants frequently slid from one interpretation to another and in many of the examples given below, it appears that two concepts of value are being elided.

*The following six points represent my principle core values:*

- 1. Family. I believe in the importance of a close immediate and extended family to provide each other with support, help and experience.*
- 2. Education. I believe in the importance of education, and endeavour to continue to expand my knowledge and experiences even outside the formal structure of educational institutions.*

3. *Achievement. I think it is important to do your best in whatever area of life you choose to focus your attention on. This leads to a sense of satisfaction, and respect from others, both of which contribute to a healthy and happy state of mind.*
4. *Dependability. This relates to being true to your word and seeing things through, even if it may appear to be easier just to abandon the endeavour. This demonstrates strength of character and allows others to depend on you when they need it.*
5. *Empathy. This means two things to me. First to treat others as you would like to be treated and second, to put yourself in another person's shoes before judging them. Both of which are important in being a positive force in the world.*
6. *Good sense of humour. Because it just helps. [es]*

Some respondents showed that the idea of personal values is not something that is part of their everyday thinking. One participant, when asked what values she had, replied 'All the [company's] values. I don't know what I'd describe as a value.' When she was offered the examples of caring for the welfare of others, trustworthiness, she hesitated for some time and resumed 'Well, just picking the [company] ones ...'

#### **4.1 Values as Character**

The most common interpretation of the term 'values' was in terms of aspects of character. Many respondents spoke as if their core values were those aspects of their own character that count as good. This was made explicit by some people, including one who actually declined to describe their own character in these terms.

*I like to think I'm altruistic, not too selfish, and think about other people's needs.*

*I think I'm a fair person. I believe in dialogue. I'm good at not having confrontations, mediating a bit and meeting people half way. Conflicts are awful for both sides and one side is going to be very badly hit. It makes more sense to me to come up with a solution where everyone's happy. [s]*

*Good citizenship – We share the space in which we live and so I find it important that we respect public spaces and how we interact with each other. Integrity – I am an honest person and undertake everything I do with integrity and truth and hope to receive that back from others that I interact with. Optimism – I believe in a positive outlook on life and aim to see the best in situations with a pragmatic take on the world and its ways! [es]*

*That's not easy. I can't say that I'm modest because to do so would be contradictory. I can't say that I'm patient because that's only from my*

*point of view. I think if you want to know someone's character you ask someone else. [s]*

*And personability, while it may not seem like a value, is important in all aspects of life. Everyone prefers to work with people they get along with and it is essential to teamwork. Most relationships are based on judgements made during initial contact, and I have always felt that one of my strengths was my ability to meet people and make connections between people that are of value to everyone. [e]*

One person explicitly distinguished between the idea of her character and the idea of her values.

*I don't think multiculturalism is one of my values. It's just something that's in me. Race has never been an issue for me. I don't know, it's difficult to explain. [s]*

Analysis of detailed comments made would largely recapitulate the structure given above for notions of good character. Caring, hard work, integrity, honesty and respect, trustworthiness, helpfulness, openness were among the more popular qualities mentioned.

These core values, it is clear, are not considered private matters. They are understood to be the basis of sensible and creative society; they are concerned with how they wish to treat and be treated by others. The establishment, maintenance and development of relationships seem to be identified here as key features revealed by the statements of the participants. Honesty, integrity and trustworthiness are core values, but they also therefore include friendliness, kindness, empathy, open-mindedness, loyalty, respect, and politeness. These may be presented in terms of making time for others, being a good communicator, and caring.

#### **4.2. Values as Aims**

*I think my top values were: remuneration, working with others, variety in work.*

*My core values are to work hard and to achieve the best that I can, to value my friends and family and to be happy. [e]*

*Balance. Although I'm not very good at it, I believe that you should have balance in life between work and play, friends and family/boyfriends, and in the way you eat and drink etc ... [es]*

*My core values are enjoyment, perseverance, team work and personability/open-mindedness. I have always felt that in whatever you do you should enjoy it as that will affect the quality of your work and the*

*attitude with which you tackle any new job or challenge, and I dislike the stereotype that everyone hates their job. [e]*

*One of my core values is to make sure children enjoy themselves. If children do this, then they are more likely to remember activities which they have carried out in class. Also, some children do not enjoy going to school, so if lessons and activities are more enjoyable, then their attitudes become more positive and they are motivated to go to school. [es]*

*I'm not sure what my core values are – I've never given it much thought! But I value a good work ethic and making the most out of life. [e]*

*I believe that my core values revolve around honesty, integrity, a desire for self development. Honesty and integrity are important to me as I feel that from my experience of trying to act towards these values, in both my professional and personal life, has enable me to lead a very happy and successful life. While a desire to better myself has provided me the motivation to sense the opportunities that life presents to me. [e]*

#### **4.3. Values as Things Valued**

Friends or family were mentioned by about one respondent in ten as things to be valued. Education, freedom of thought, and happiness were each mentioned once. The environment was often implied to be something or value.

*My core values are to work hard and to achieve the best that I can, to value my friends and family and to be happy. [e]*

*Family the most important, honesty and trust. Work hard. [es]*

*I think my friends and family are always going to be the most important thing for me. [s]*

*I think my core values are like, true friendship, which is a fairly scarce commodity, instead of superficial relationships based on some sort of gain. [s]*

*My core values are family, honesty, hard work and building friendships. I find that these are among the most important things in life and together have helped me to overcome perceived barriers to success. [e]*

#### **4.4. Values as Imperatives**

Some respondents interpreted values to mean imperatives, things that one ought to do or at least aspire to. Among those who saw the request for their 'core values' as an invitation to describe the better aspects of their own character, there were still some

who described an ideal and were aware that would need to improve if they were to attain it.

*My core values are that everyone should be treated equally and this is especially important to me as a teacher as children should be respected as adults are respected. [es]*

*I believe that every child should have the opportunity to learn. [s]*

*I like to think I'm a fairly good person, that I would do the right thing most of the time. You're never going to do the right thing all the time. There will be times you make mistakes.*

*I always try and do what I think is right. ... I have a gut reaction but I also mull things over. I'm the sort of person who goes to bed and lies awake thinking about things, trying to decide. [It is difficult to articulate my values because] there are some things so deeply part of you that you can't see them. They colour your vision of the world. It's almost like a lens through which you see everything else. It's hard to see that lens. [s]*

*Being very conscientious about life and work. I live my life by quite a few rules that I formulate in my head. I don't want to break them. I'm quite contained within those rules and boundaries I have set myself. I like to see myself as fairly caring and thoughtful to other people, but I find the people who I'm most closest to I'm not particularly caring because I see them as so close that I don't need to worry about how they're feeling. I can be quite mean to my family whereas with my friends, I'm the opposite. I let them choose first or help them out. [es]*

*We should be able to look after other people. I think that's what's important in society and I think that's what's causing a lot of problems in society. People just think of themselves and it's ethical and a moral that should be instilled in you not to be selfish and care about other people's well-being.[s]*

*If you don't care for the welfare of other people, then what's the point? What's the point in society? What's the point in people? There's no point in anything. I think there are people these days who aren't bothered and don't care for anything, but I think that as long as there are people who care and I think that's why I think it's important to teach children to value other people. [s]*

*I guess my qualities and values isn't something I've ever really thought of. I think I'd like to be a little less selfish, more get up and go and helpful. [s]*

Equality and diversity were concerns that were sometimes introduced in terms of imperatives, though this was sometimes accompanied by qualifications on how far people ought to go towards allowing for diversity.

*It's important because it's good to close the gap between poor and rich or those of different colours, people from different backgrounds or creeds, and that's important. It's important because in life and at university you need to be able to treat people equally. If you treat anyone wrongly, it will come back to you. And another reason you should treat people equally because it's out of humanity, decency. You shouldn't go round with the belief that one person's better than you or someone's below you. At the end of the day, we're all human beings. We all deserve the same opportunities in life and it's not up to one person to decide and pass judgements on the other. [s]*

*I believe in equality. I don't think there is enough in the world. In the West we have so much whereas two thirds of the world is living in poverty. We tend to worry about our MP3 players but real problems are much wider than that. [My company] does try quite hard at that and does succeed in some ways. It's a company that does try to push the conventional boundaries of equality. It tries to treat its employees in an equal way. I don't know if [the company] has black lists.*

*It's really important that we value multiculturalism and that we promote access to the same things, because we have no right to decide who should and who shouldn't, unless we're in a position of power like a politician, but even then they have to use their judgement and power wisely. [s]*

Seeing values as imperatives was sometimes associated with an emphasis on Christianity. The fits well with the way that much biblical teaching on character and morality is expressed.

*My core values are based around my beliefs as a practising Christian. These include values reiterated by [my company], such as 'Treat others as you wish to be treated'. I also believe in making the right decision, rather than the most popular one. [e]*

*My core values as a Christian again goes back to my idea of service of others. I see that as the vocation of Christians. One who serves other people. Things like equality, that you see each person as an equal and I really believe that is crucial to one as a leader, as a teacher. [s]*

*My core values and core desires in my life are to be more Christ like, to be more loving, more giving.*

*I'm patient. I'm a Christian. The qualities I aspire to are qualities I think a good Christian might have. I'm quick to forgive people.[s]*

*I do feel religious and I do see that there's a higher being up there, but I'm not a real devout Christian, I don't go to Church very much and I don't let it rule my life. It makes me feel comfortable sometimes when I need it to. It's kind of this attitude of 'do as you would be done with' that I stick by. I don't disagree with homosexuality and that sort of thing because I think people should be given a choice.*

*I think for me good character is predominantly influenced by my religious beliefs. Things that are in the Bible, so: trust, love, joy, peace, kindness, faithfulness, goodness and being true to the Spirit.*

#### **4.5. Lifelong Learning**

Given the professions into which participants had entered or were considering, it is perhaps unsurprising that those who commented on the notion of life-long learning were almost all in agreement that this was something of positive value. Given the context of the interviews, it is also unsurprising that the majority of respondents interpreted life-long learning in terms of formal education or training. Professional training and qualifications were often seen in instrumental terms.

The attitude of virtually all the interviewees was positive. Interestingly there were frequent references to personal growth as well as continuing professional development. The assumption seems to be that without a commitment to lifelong learning one would lose one's capacity to be oneself and to contribute to the well being of the wider society including employment. Indeed, there was implicit, and sometimes explicit, the assumption that lifelong learning was inevitable: ordinary life experience would see to that. But it was recognised that without focus and regular scrutiny it would not be 'fit for purpose', namely the enhancement of one's career and the better satisfaction of the needs of one's employment.

*I was glad to leave university but when I was a temp I missed learning more and developing.*

*I think that training and lifelong learning are important at work because they need to be harnessed, they need to be honed in on and they are paramount if you want to do well. Employers look for doers not talkers. [s]*

*Learning while you work is important because you have to stay up-to-date with the world. The (business) rules keep changing so you have to be up-to-date with them and there's always something new to learn. [s]*

*I think it's important to keep going on courses after you've become a qualified teacher to kind of update yourself. You want to be at the*



*forefront of what's happening in the educational world, so if there's a new form of teaching that's more effective, you can sort of tap into it. [s]*

*The rewards are getting children enthusiastic and excited about learning and hopefully that will progress to senior school and that will progress to university and helping people be highly qualified. People never stop learning and once you stop learning you won't have the qualifications or a good job. [s]*

*I think as a teacher you're learning all the time, anyway, and I don't want to be the sort of stale old teacher in 20 years time. I do want to carry on in lifelong learning and taking part in new initiatives. I'd like to do more training on SENs and modern foreign languages because they are areas I haven't experienced so much. [s]*

*There's a lot of internal training as well. We have an internal training session each week, where we discuss recent cases or changes in legislation. There are other computer courses. It's important as lifelong learning, you're always improving yourself, you're always developing, so you're striving to be a better person and produce better quality work, better quality relationships and sort of broaden your horizons all the time.*

This type of life-long learning was occasionally presented in partially negative terms. The respondent who made the last remark also said:

*It is very stressful because of the exams and the expectation that the firm has on passing exams. If you fail the exam twice or get a bad mark then the contract is at an end. I think that it's a fair policy, it's a tough policy. They're [a leading company], so they expect the top people, the best people. I think the problem with exams is they make you good at exams, they don't necessarily bring out the best in people. So in that way I think it's a tough policy because they could be getting rid of good people, good people who are good at the job, rather than people with the concept of learning in a very short period of time. I think that if you're in the commercial environment and someone's paying you to do the exams then they're expecting you to pass. At university you do your own research. [Here] we have a folder and exams. Everything you need to know to pass that exam is in the folder. Generally you're very much on your own.*

In contrast, a few participants did not interpret life-long learning in terms of what we learn but suggested that it was rather the ordinary consequence of living life each day.

*I do agree with the fact that you learn something new every day and I don't think that you ever stop learning. Every day that I was in the classroom, I would learn something from those children, even though I*

*was teaching them new things. Every day I got something back from them as well. [s]*

*I don't think that in today's world people ever stop learning. My parents' generation, they left school and that was it. Even they now have realised that they need to learn new things. I mean, I'd like to think that after I've done these exams, I'll never study again, but realistically there will be other things that come up.*

A few combined both these interpretations, suggesting either that formal training contributed to personal growth or that informal learning is better channelled into a structure.

*I'm interested in employers and how they help me to learn further, you know, what they will be able to do to be able to help me continue my education and develop as a person. You only live once so you might as well learn as much as you can. If you want to have a family then you want to teach your children things that I've learnt as myself. ... I think that people have to push themselves to learn. Those that don't will lead a kind of very narrow minded life and they will live in their bubble and not know about anything else. I think it's really important for you to know about everything else in the world and everything out there because there's so much out there to learn and you never know how much enjoyment you can get from that. [s]*

*University has helped me to be more culturally aware and tolerant of other peoples' opinions and beliefs. It makes you thirsty for more information, grow as a person and it highlights what you're really passionate about. Lifelong learning is important to increase your learning curve, I guess and constantly learning about yourself. I know people in their 30s and 40s who don't know who they are. [s]*

*Lifelong learning is important because you're constantly learning and bettering yourself, I think. It's important for children to prepare them for society and obviously we all have to get jobs. It's all preparation for the working world and learning how to live properly in society. [s]*

*Lifelong learning is very important to me. You always grow as a person. You're always going to learn whether you want to or not. You might as well as embrace that and channel it in a positive kind of way. [s]*

*I think that teaching is all about lifelong learning anyway. You learn new things from every individual you get to teach, you see. They have a different characteristic to them, personality, that makes you change and your opinions change. [s]*

*Lifelong learning is important. You don't necessarily have to be in full time education. As long as you're willing to challenge yourself, go out there and learn different things, like after [university] I'm definitely going to learn French, even though my pronunciation is going to be really bad. Just to keep challenging yourself and keep an open mind. [s]*

*I've always felt that life is one learning experience and I've been very lucky to have different learning experiences. As I said, doing the diploma in youth and community work opened my eyes to a whole range of ways of doing things. It has been about taking time to reflect. All the time you're meant to be reflecting on what you're doing and who you are. [s]*

*It's something to do. It's interesting. It fills the day. My job is quite boring so I find academic type interests help.*

Employers were commended for their support and encouragement of further training, though there were questions asked about the quality of their commitment to encouraging the development of essential personal character. They were keen to recruit and retain good staff in the sense of well-qualified persons with interpersonal skills: this was apparent to both students and those already in employment. But is what is on offer focused upon enhancing professional skills at the expense of the development of those personal values essential to the company's reputation with clients and customers, and therefore to future prosperity?

*Coming in as a graduate [the company] definitely encourages your learning and development. I feel like they invest a lot of time, money and effort into you and your training.... things like financial awareness. The training is mostly personal development because it really influences the way you're going to act in the company, change things and lead people.*

*The decision to do an MA was off my own back but there was then a lot of encouragement. The masters was a positive experience. In a passive way they encourage your development. It's a very self-service culture. The opportunities are there but unless you have a particular type of line manager it's really down to you to take advantage. I think there should be more concentration on personal development.*

*I wouldn't say the company encourages learning. I'm not interested at the moment in doing further study. I'd like to do an MBA one day.*

*[The company] encourages learning. They are providing me with a lot of training for my [professional qualification]. They have a good training scheme and you can request training in certain areas.*

*Working with a strategy team taught me the importance of widening my knowledge and going on as much training as possible. Working here has*

*opened my eyes to how far you can go in any organisation and how ambitious people can be. [e]*

#### **4.6. Should Values be Taught?**

The few people who made extended comments about whether values should be taught in schools gave a variety of opinions. All were teaching students.

*Yes, definitely, although I think it is important for children to develop their own values. I think that they should be taught in a way that makes them relevant to children's lives and that children should have the opportunities to meet or find out about all different sorts of people so that they can have a wider view of the world. [es]*

*Values are an important part of life but I think they are taught in school regardless of whether they are included in the curriculum. Children are taught to respect others and adults and how to behave in certain situations. [es]*

*However I think that teaching values could cause some conflict due to different people's religions. If values were being taught in school it would probably be important to make sure that this was done in general rather than focusing/ basing on the values of a certain religion. I think that if values are taught well in school then it could make a large difference to children's lives in school as well as outside school and it is something which they will hopefully carry with them throughout life. [es]*

*Not sure it's so important at my level and stage of life but very important for younger students especially those in caring professions. [es]*

*No idea. I think questioning, thinking about values is important, but not some phony platitudes about different 'faiths', which seems to be what is on offer. My children are atheists, but they are never encouraged to explore their 'beliefs' they just have to listen to endless Christian stories. [es]*

*I was taught values both at home and at school and to some extent I think that's what's missing in education today. [s]*

## 5 Influences on Values and Character

Each interview included a specific question on the respondent's perception of who had shaped their values. About two respondents in three mentioned a positive influence from their parents, sometimes specifically mother or father, and about half of these mentioned no other influences. The remainder spoke of other family members or friends, sometimes as more important than parents.

The range of people seen as sources of personal support closely followed the range seen as influencing values, although parents appeared less often whilst other family members (particularly siblings) and friends appeared more often. Since participants were grown up, it is easily understood why friends should displace parents as the most common category. Spouses, partners and boy/girlfriends were also mentioned. A small proportion of those mentioning religion as a source of values also mentioned it as a source of support. Some mentioned people with a professional responsibility towards them - mentors, tutors.

Some interesting interviewees made clear statements to the effect that they were responsible for their own values. They were, as it happens, all students.

*I don't think anyone has guided me or shaped my values, to be honest. I don't think anyone has. [s]*

*Not sure, certainly not my parents! I have gained some values through life experience, others relate to the way I am as a person – I'm quite empathetic so have never been interested in hurting people, for example.*

*I don't know if anyone's taught me them, as such ... they're just things that I've developed as I got older. [s]*

Similarly, there is a group who believe that they should sort out their own problems, or who simply do not find it personally easy to seek support.

*I'm close with my sister, my family. I feel it wouldn't help me though as I have to sort out my own problems. [s]*

*I'm quite closed for getting personal support for things. I'm quite closed and like to deal with it myself.*

*Although I have a loving family, a good network of friends and support at work I feel very independent and I have made a lot of decisions on my own. I have developed myself on my own usually by looking at bad qualities in other people and realising that I don't want to have those qualities and fiercely refusing to incorporate those things into my personality.*

Two small aspects of the interviews are mentioned here but not fully discussed.

Role models are not dealt with separately since they fall into two categories: people close to the respondents who were also described as strong influences on their character and values and famous people who, though they may be inspirational figures, seem to be chosen as role models because they exemplify values already held by the respondents - Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama and a host of lesser figures.

### **5.1. Parents and Family**

Mention of the family was mostly accompanied by specific reference to parents. Only occasionally was the family as a whole, or particular members such as siblings, grandparents or an aunt, not accompanied by an emphasis on parents. The idea that parents are a major influence (and in some cases the only major influence) on values received more general support across the interviews than any other idea.

*People criticize me for basing my values on those of my parents but who else am I to base them on. Random people I met at school - I once said to someone 'My parents wouldn't allow me to do this'. They said 'Go, do it anyway'. 'Are you kidding? I'm still going to respect my parents. I have rather a lot to thank them for.'* [s]

*Values guided by parents and grandparents, especially mother and sister. But I would say my parents really, because they're the people who know me best.* [s]

*Who has guided my values? My mum and dad, I guess, they are the really defining people in my life.*

*My values have been guided mainly by my parents. Both of my parents have a sort of normal C of E values behind them. They didn't force me or my sister to go to church, so I've been able to form my own opinions and values by looking at the actions of other people, which I'm very grateful for. You know, twenty years down the line, I think they behaved reasonably and well, because they did try and take other people into account, in a way that is sort of polite to others. So, that's become the core of what I believe is a useful way to behave. Are my values different to my parents? My reaction is yes, but I can't think what [those differences] are specifically.*

*I guess parents – they've been there the longest. Friends do help but parents are always there and always willing to help. My parents have taught me to be passionate about what you do and enjoy it otherwise you'd get angry.* [s]

*I think that learning right from wrong is something that's instilled in you as a child. A lot of it comes from home and comes from the sort of school, but then I don't think teachers are responsible for teaching children right from wrong. I think it needs to come from home and you learn how to treat people from your home background and that just develops over time. [s]*

*Probably my parents have guided my values the most. But I don't think I really settled and decided what my values were probably until I went to university, I guess.*

*I think my dad has been quite influential in guiding me throughout my life so far. And the biggest value he has taught me is considering other people.*

Some respondents also pointed out the limitations on the influence of parents and even emphasized the way they had moved away from their parents and developed values independent of them.

*Other than being taught to do as you're told by my parents, I have learnt my values through my own life experiences socially and professionally. To some degree I think some of the values come pre-programmed with my own personality. Most people describe me as a nice guy, but it's not something I learnt its more my nature. I guess that brings in the nature versus nurture debate. [e]*

*I guess my parents have guided my values, but in a very indirect way. I've never really felt that they sort of coached me to do this or something this way, which I guess is part of what makes me. They're relaxed people and very encouraging. [I get] the more relaxed 'try things' approach from the parents.*

*My parents. I've had a lot of input in my life from my family. We have a very close family. ... Mum was always at home. Both my parents have been extremely supportive and my wider family really ... my aunt and uncle were very close to us growing up, as were my grandparents. They have really shaped me. And there are also a lot of things that my parents haven't necessarily developed in us but just happen to be in our personalities. All through our academic life my parents said do your best. Just try to pass your exams. If you come out with all Cs, that's great. We'll be really proud of you. My two brothers and I thought, that's not good enough for us, we want to have As.*

*Probably my parents have guided my values the most. But I don't think I really settled and decided what my values were probably until I went to university, I guess.*

*My values were taught to me initially by my parents, and were further refined by my time at University.*

*Mum and Dad. They haven't told me what to think but I've based my values on theirs. My mum is a very staunch Catholic. She has certain views on boys and girls that my brother and I don't agree with. We respect them, we never argue about it. Other than that we don't differ very much. We all value education, friends and doing things on your own graft. [s]*

*My parents. In some ways I feel very different from my parents. They are very happy where they are in Suffolk. They go on holiday to the same place every year. I want to go places and do different things. [s]*

*My family probably above all, my upbringing but it has been developed since coming here. Since coming to university my circle of friends is more interested in discussing political views and issues than my friends at school and college were. [s]*

*I suspect it might have been the influence of my father. He owns his own business as an electrician and employs a handful of people. The people come and go and he's the only constant – if he doesn't work hard at his business then it won't last. He's also ridiculously honest with his customers – I've overheard him on the phone telling a customer that 'they're right, he did totally over charge them – he needs the money'. [e]*

Whereas some respondents had definite stories to tell about how their parents had been role models or in other ways were very influential in developing their values, some expressed things in ways that suggested that in mentioning parents they were simply complying with the commonly accepted view.

*I assume that parents and family have guided my values the most.*

*I would suppose that respecting friends and family came from my parents something they taught me from a young age, to respect people and people will respect you back, to help and support people when needed was something I always knew since I was a child and even at the age of six knew I wanted to become a nurse which I'm training to do now and the third one, to also make time for myself' was something I learnt very quickly when I came to university because if you don't make time for yourself you end up burning out. I suppose some of my values can be looked at through past experiences and my childhood because it's partly your childhood and past experiences that make you the person you are. [es]*



*I suppose my parents played quite an important role in shaping my values. I think that your childhood always does. And then I suppose the different environments I've been in, like at boarding school and university. Being at university challenges some of the preconceptions you have. If you've grown up in a small town and you've never seen someone from a different ethnic group, going to university is quite important because it broadens your mind.*

*It's probably your parents, I think. Obviously, it's not in your genes because when you're born your parents is all you know. But I also think it's affected by school and university as well. But I think there are probably some really deep seated beliefs about what's right and wrong that come from childhood that you don't even realise.*

*Parents have guided my values, I imagine. Whether they push their opinions on you or not, you're going to end up following theirs.*

*My mother, I would imagine. She has the same open mindedness.[s]*

One person who said 'My mother, probably most of all' also listed some values learnt from his mother; but these were not mentioned elsewhere in the discussion of character.

Occasionally there was a note of positive dissent from the idea that parents were a major influence.

*I never really thought about my values until I went to university. My parents didn't guide my values. I guess it was at university where I developed my values, just from the environment of being there. I think university's where I developed my thoughts and opinions. I guess it's about society supporting those who are less well off. I think that we have a responsibility to do that.*

*I remember my dad saying when I was younger, and recently too, that no one enjoys their job, and that made me even more determined to enjoy mine and keep in perspective my job and the benefits –salary, security – and exactly what I feel I ought to be doing. [e]*

*Because of boarding school, I had a quite dislocated experience of parental or other authorities. ... I suppose my mum to a certain extent. I probably don't share many political values with my dad but perhaps some social values. [s]*

None of this calls into doubt the fact that parents are a major influence on values. Many of the one in three people who did not mention parents may have thought their influence was too obvious to require mention. Even if some were mentioning

parents partly because parental influence is a generally accepted phenomenon, this does not imply that the phenomenon is not a real one.

However, what must be emphasized is the importance of influences that complement or take over from parents: teachers, religion, friends, travel, education and employment

This moving on from what your parents have taught you was sometimes seen as stressful.

*I moved over to the UK when I was 13 so I think you do get an alternative view. I think I have adapted some of those views, where my parents haven't. Maybe not values per se, maybe opinions on certain issues will differ. ... Take the example of homosexuality. They feel extremely strong about it in one way. I don't feel as strong about it as they do, as a result of me being over in the UK, whereas they're in Ghana. I think their view is the predominant Ghanaian view on the issue. ... To be honest I don't know how I feel about [the ordination of gay bishops]. Maybe you know how you should feel, but how do you actually feel? ... I know how I should feel in one way because of my religion; but I know I don't necessarily feel that way.*

## **5.2. Friends**

Friends are also mentioned by more than one person in five, usually in combination with parents or family in general. In terms of personal support, friends seemed to be about as important as family.

*My values have been shaped by parents and friends, probably equally. [s]*

*Mainly through my parents, though also through good friends and relatives.*

*Parents. My friends also, I respect all my friends. You try and take the best part of their character and build on them. I have a tutor from school I'm quite close to. I'd have gone to him at university.*

What we see here, as with support and influence at university through staff and at work with mentors and buddies, is that mention of friends is often linked to propinquity or the intimacy of the relationship due to its longevity.

*For personal support I go to a really close group of friends. We're of the same age. We're going through the same things in life, so I feel that they understand me very well. (s)*

*If I want personal support I've got a friend, a really close friend, that I can talk to, whenever, wherever.*

*Close friends and then, depending on what, my mother. More so going to friends around here as I haven't lived a home for a few years, living in Cambridge. (s)*

### **5.3. Travel and Meeting Different Types of People**

The influence of friends can be important at any stage in life. What was most often seen as moving people on beyond the values of their parents was experiencing different environments and different types of people. Sometimes this was evident from other parts of what respondents had to say, rather than an explicit answer to the question about what they thought had influenced their values.

Those who spoke with the broadest acceptance of people with other attitudes to life were often those who had seen more of the world. Sometimes this was through travel, sometimes by having lived and worked in very different countries. In some cases it was people who had moved between very different classes of society. Sometimes it was simply the fact that coming to university had confronted them with a broader range of people than they were accustomed to - for example in a privileged boarding school or in a working class neighbourhood school.

*I suppose my parents paid quite an important role in shaping my values. I think that your childhood always does. And then I suppose the different environments I've been in, like at boarding school and university. Being at university challenges some of the preconceptions you have. If you've grown up in a small town and you've never seen someone from a different ethnic group, going to university is quite important because it broadens your mind.*

*I think it is a combination of everything really places I have worked (including temp jobs that I have had during school and uni), friends that I have made, family and through university. [e]*

*These values have appeared in all areas of my life and have been shaped by a number of factors. I credit my involvement in school and my experiences in high school with a lot of how I judge myself and my ability to get the most out of any situation. I went to high school in the United States, and while there are a plethora of opportunities to get involved with things I also feel like you were really pushed by teachers and coaches if they recognised an ability in you. Teamwork and perseverance are definitely values that were instilled during my high school experience. I was involved football, athletics, marching band, the newspaper, student council, and a few other organisations that strived for the best in everything they did and took themselves very seriously. At school I had a very rigorous schedule that started at 7:30 in the morning and usually ended with sports/band until 5pm. Enjoyment has factored greatly into this too as I quickly realised that when you invest so much time into*

*something you have to enjoy it, and I've had to make some hard decisions about activities that I used to be involved in because I realised that if I wasn't performing as well or achieving as much if I didn't enjoy the activity. I remember my dad saying when I was younger, and recently too, that no one enjoys their job, and that made me even more determined to enjoy mine and keep in perspective my job and the benefits –salary, security – and exactly what I feel I ought to be doing. Personability is something that has been very important in my life because my family has moved a lot (we've lived in the UK, Italy, the US, and I have lived in South America and France additionally) and it has been necessary for me to adapt rapidly (maybe adaptability is also one of my core values) to new situations, make new friends, and learn about them and the new place. I have had a wealth of experiences from being open-minded towards new people and places that has held me in good stead travelling on my own, visiting friends and family abroad, starting uni (twice!) and when setting out on any new endeavour. [e]*

*Not growing up in England has made me see things slightly objectively. I've seen Turkey and England and thought things were there to have an opinion on, rather than to be taken for granted. That initially made me quite sceptical. My parents were quite liberal. I went to schools that were quite the opposite in a way that they were quite English boarding schools. It influenced me but I always thought 'that's wrong'.*

*Going to Mexico has probably made me a more cautious person. Meeting people who weren't as trustworthy as myself.*

*I didn't take much [from university] in the first couple of years and then I moved to France to study for a year there, because I did French as part of the law thing and it pretty much changed my perspective on life completely .... I thought there must be more to life than the twelve hours in the library five days a week.*

*'As a person I grew a great deal at university. It changed my perspective on life very much. I was at pretty cushy private school during my education up till then. They give you a great education. They have great teachers and stuff but they put the blinkers on you. You have one quite narrow view on life and I was very glad to get into an environment where I was allowed to breathe a little bit more ... It's so interesting to meet people from different cultures, learn about their lives.'*

#### **5.4. Schools and Teachers**

A few respondents mentioned teachers as an influence on their values. This was usually one specific teacher, though on occasion reference is made to school or education in general. Those who mentioned teachers usually did this in conjunction with parents and possibly friends.

*Mixture of parents and teachers. [s]*

*Parents. My business studies teacher was quite influential. I felt like a lot of his arguments were true and made sense.*

*My mum until my teenage years, then it was my best mates. At university, my supervisor whom I respect a lot. ... He's very useful and very good. [s]*

*My values were guided probably most by my teachers at school, really, more than my parents.*

*My philosophy teacher at 'A' level. She was a Christian. She used to be a counsellor. We got on really well outside the classroom. I admired her a lot. [s]*

*I would say I learnt my values at primary and secondary school and not at university because by then I had learnt my moral values. Also you don't have such a close relationship with any of your lecturers at university and my degree was not particularly about you talk about values...[s]*

*I went to a charity school, a private boarding school, but it's paid for by benefactors. It is a religious foundation, well when it was formed in the 16th century, but now it's not primarily religious. There is a religious core to it but it's not like a C of E school, that doesn't go into the lessons. It's like any school with a chapel. My values were shaped mostly at school ... My values were guided probably most by my teachers at school, really, more than my parents. People say when you're 12- 14, you solidify who you are.*

*My values changed most when I went to secondary school. ... You get exposed to a bigger sea of people .... It forces you to break away from your protective childhood ideals. I remember being quite conservative before I went. ... My conservative values which had come from my parents I found I didn't actually share. I'm more liberal and tolerant than my parents. It may be a generational thing. ... Maybe it's a shift away ... As I met more people; friends, teachers who I could look up to, my values evolved. There is elasticity until early adolescence. After that they get pretty set. By the time people come to university they have their values. They may discover them here but they are already there. [s]*

*My values have probably been guided by teachers that I've had throughout my own education, from primary school to A- Levels. [s]*

*Teachers. At school and university. Music teachers above all because they were directly involved in my musical development. They who've had*

*the foresight to allow me to do things my own way even if they disagreed with it. That's one of the crucial things in teaching. [s]*

*A few teachers at school who encouraged me to do certain things. I went to boarding school. There was a maths teacher who I looked up to. Everyone liked him. He was very friendly but commanded a lot of respect. He's the sort of person you take a lot from. They speak and you listen.*

The few respondents who saw volunteering as influencing their character or values, also saw that in terms of encountering people different from themselves.

## **5.5. Religion**

The range of responses to the question was significantly broad; the responses were often imprecise but nevertheless intriguing. Many did not give an opinion. Many others declared that they had no religious belief. Others stated that they were atheists. Most who professed a religion or who acknowledged influence on their values from a religious tradition - even if they no longer regarded themselves to be religious - were Christian. Some were Muslim, four were Hindu.

A considerable number of those who said they had no religious beliefs said they understood why people did have a religion, and even in some cases accepted that religion was important to a society's stability. There was no evidence to support the view that religious belief was unimportant personally, nor on the other hand that it had any specific contribution to make to public debate on ethics, morality or the development of character. Only comparatively few stood firmly in a religious tradition which they found illuminating and fulfilling.

Religion is acknowledged to be an influence - in some cases by interviewees who say that they are not religious and even by some who say they do not hold religious views.

*The main values [of Islam], I think, are the exact opposite of what the media portrays and what a lot of individual Muslims are doing. The main value is peace, but obviously it's not the image that's being portrayed. ... The main values are obedience ... I'm not a brilliant Muslim, but I wish I was. It provides a sense of ethics and purpose. I think religion provides a direction and sense of purpose which in society is really lacking. Most people get involved in the rat race. ... Religion for me provides a pathway, which is not so diverse I can do anything, but it gives me a sense of right and wrong. [s]*

*Values come from parents, religion and the Bible. Christianity has influenced me, because I don't think I'd be as patient and calm. Christianity is less about what I can gain from it, it's more about what I can give to it. ... Faith is important because without it I wouldn't be who I am today. And it's just such a core part of who I am. It's really only my*

*faith that keeps me going, because otherwise I don't see much of a purpose to the world. [s]*

*My core values, I believe, stem from my upbringing with liberal but high value based parents and the Catholic faith. [e]*

*Guides to values? Family. I've met a range of people that have influenced my beliefs here [university] but not much. It's mainly my upbringing – family and church. I'm part of the United Reformed Church which I have attended all my life. [s]*

*I'm not really religious myself, but if you think about it the Christian parables ... I don't believe in the ultimate truth of the scriptures, so I sort of pick my way through values, morality and my life, trying to be as nice a person as I can and I know that sounds a bit glib. [s]*

*My values have been guided by God through the Bible, so taking the Bible as the inspired word of God. I try to read that daily. I try to listen to what God would have me do in my life and impact me. Other Christians have helped, in so far as they tell me how they have lived out those truths in their lives. My parents and my church family, people at church and my wife as well.*

*Definitely my parents. I was brought up in a predominantly Christian environment. I am not religious but I can't deny that it has had an effect on my values. I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing.*

*Ethics drives us. Ethics should be at the heart of our society. Ethics is involved with everything we do. There should be freedom of speech and freedom of action. Ethics is crucial because it gives us a sense of purpose, a sense of society, a sense of meaning that progresses further and further into the future. From what I've seen in the modern world I think that ethics has gone down the pan.*

*I'm an atheist but totally see 100% why people sort of need to have a God in their lives. [s]*

*I think that religion gives reason for living really, doesn't it? I do think it's important to consider religious beliefs and I find them really interesting myself, but I'm undecided at the moment. Nothing's been proved to me. [s]*

*I'm a Christian and it gives you a calmness because you believe that there's a higher force on your side. You never really worry too much about the future because you know it is in His hands.*

*In terms of religion, I'm not religious but I think that religion has a large part to play in society in terms of bringing a common moral ground to people. It teaches caring and compassion for others. I think it teaches you that the world is a bigger place than yourself.*

*My family are very strong Catholics and I came to university thinking I would still be a Christian. I worked for Christian Aid as a Christian but then decided, 'no, I don't believe in God'. In Guatemala I saw how powerful religion was. The Catholic priests have done a lot for social justice. I came back, then went to Dubai, started reading the Koran and got interested. I realised that I just tend to get interested in stuff, I don't really believe in anything. At the moment I'm an atheist or maybe a humanist. [s]*

*I think religion gives people something to follow, but I think a lot of bad has happened in the name of religion. I don't know if there a God or higher being, so I'm open to everyone's views and religious persuasion.*

*My religious views are enormously atheist. I'm an atheist because I don't think anyone with intelligence can believe in God, as you can't prove He's there. I really do believe it's the root of everything that's wrong with the world.*

*I'm not at all religious but we've grown up with some kind of religion. Everyone needs to be honest about it. If you were negative and only out for yourself society wouldn't function.*

A few respondents also referred to their religion as a source of support.

*For personal support I probably go to family and friends. There's always prayer, there's always talking to God. It's not that he talks back to you and says, 'do (a), (b), (c), (d)', but you get the feeling that you've told Him about it and it's in His hands and I know He would take care of it. Or you look out for signs of Him telling you what to do, which path to take. I think it just comforts, knowing that there is somebody to help you out.*

*I'm not good at sharing problems. I look within myself and turn to God.[s]*

*Probably the clergy. They are nice people and I have a lot of respect for them. I was very ill my first year and got a lot of support from the chaplain. Not so much from my parents. I find it difficult to lean on them for support. [s]*

The following two sections 'Higher Education' and 'Employment' illustrate the continuing maturation process which extends way beyond 18, the age at which the Latey Report (1976) determined that a person should be treated as an adult in the eyes of the law. Being adult does not of course imply maturity.



Many institutions and organizations tend mistakenly to assume that young adults do not need, and certainly should not expect, further assistance in making decisions and taking responsibility for their actions.

## 5.6. Higher Education

Very little was said explicitly that linked higher education with values or character development except in terms of the opportunity it gave to meet new types of people or in response to a specific question about its impact.

*In university you meet people from different backgrounds and with different beliefs. I guess you sort of compare your values against theirs and that's what you base a judgement. I don't know if that's correct or wrong (to judge others). [s]*

*I do think my values have been shaped in a way at university as I have met people from more diverse backgrounds and become more accepting of other people's views. [es]*

*These values have been shaped at university as you meet people from very different backgrounds from your own. [es]*

*Being at university challenges some of the preconceptions you have. If you've grown up in a small town and you've never seen someone from a different ethnic group, going to university is quite important because it broadens your mind.*

*I'm a bit more understanding because, when you're at school, you're with the same people from the same sort of background and then suddenly at university you're thrown in with sort of completely different people.*

*You definitely develop your values at university meeting people from different backgrounds and from different parts of the country. Everyone has different opinions and some people I lived with had very, very strong opinions. That's the first thing I learnt. Some people criticised others for not listening, but in that I thought that they weren't listening to those people. Meeting people from different backgrounds makes you question your own values and opinions. As long as you're not ignorant, you know that you can't just discount someone's opinion without first trying to understand it. It also helps you strengthen your beliefs and change your opinions.*

*Being put here, which to me is quite a big city even though it's not, and then being immersed amongst friends the whole time led me to be more open to people, more independent in so many ways which has shaped quite considerably how I go about my life. [es]*

*The college environment fosters development. You have sustained and intense contact with a number of people that are all at a similar stage from a range of backgrounds and intellectual disciplines. Since coming to university my circle of friends is more interested in discussing political views and issues than my friends at school and college were. [s]*

*You meet people of all different values and backgrounds. [s]*

*Different backgrounds, viewpoints and social classes. It has been quite a rich experience. .... Multiculturalism at university is definitely a very good thing. It's quite educational. People come to Cambridge from sheltered lives. I think if you get a range of people and cultures it helps us assess ourselves. [s]*

*It's made me more aware of different people's beliefs, attitudes and backgrounds. Cambridge is not the most diverse place in the world. I hadn't met people from elite schools before I came here. I'd been educated in the state sector with a real mix of kids then I came here and met people from very posh schools that had opinions that were completely alien to me. I myself being left wing and liberal. My attitudes to them changed entirely. I understand people a lot better through interactions with them.*

*Also, meeting other people who have different experiences. I don't learn much from the British people here because a lot of them come from good social backgrounds. It's a generalization, but people from these backgrounds spend a lot of time trying to enjoy themselves and you just see them making mistakes. I learnt from them that the grass isn't greener. I learn a lot from international students. That all people think the same. People have different outlooks but not because they're from a different country. There's a great equality of opportunity here at Cambridge. [s]*

*I do believe that university helped to shape these values further as I had more exposure to other people's beliefs and values and my employment has furthered this education. [e]*

*I've learnt about people and cultures that I may not have known before. I now have friends from different corners of the Earth. Last summer I went and stayed with a friend in India it was amazing. I got to experience the real India as the people who live there experience. Multiculturalism is a good thing. You gain so much from different perspectives. There is value in all knowledge. [s]*

Respondents generally gave little support to the idea that character development was an important part of university education. This raises questions about the wisdom of policies that influence young people towards attending college or university near to

home and continuing to reside in their home communities. This sample is not representative even of people studying or working in the same institutions; but it seems credible that at least some students derive a moral benefit from leaving home to study that may outweigh the economic cost of living elsewhere.

### 5.7. Employment

Interviewees were asked to reflect on the influence of employment on their behaviour after university and in what ways, if any, the experience had challenged their values. Those who expressed a view tended to believe that there was coherence, though in many cases the interviewee drew attention to their enhanced sense of personal responsibility and the greater public accountability for their work. This in turn brought greater self-awareness and confidence.

*With employment rather than university, what you're doing isn't just for yourself. People are relying on you to do your work. Both [the company] itself and obviously the clients. It's much more a team thing. You've got to think about other people. It's much more thinking about others rather than just passing exams.*

*Employment has changed my attitudes by making me more time-aware. You have to get things by certain dates and you can't just do it at your own pace.*

*I think that employment has made me responsible in a different way. At university everything you did was for yourself. If I didn't do something then I would fail. If I don't do something here it just doesn't relate to me it relates to everyone in the team around me. You're responsible and accountable to other people, not just to yourself*

*It's made me more aware and conscientious. More aware of how difficult it is to earn money.*

*I've become more responsible in handling money. It has also improved my interpersonal skills. My confidence in meetings, speaking to people higher than me. More self-assured. More career minded. I like to be challenged. I didn't realise that before I came here. I like getting in early and I like working a bit late.*

*I don't think [employment] has changed my values. I don't think I have to change to succeed here. ... I don't know how employment had changed my attitudes. It's sort of raised my self-esteem now that I work here, I suppose.*

*My graduate employment has made me more aware of how difficult it can be to work with others in a team, particularly when people are very different to each other. It has made me question and try to understand*

*the difference between an ineffective working style and a working style that is simply different to mine. It has raised many questions in my mind about how we can best work in partnership with others, and how we can make others feel included and valued.*

*It has made me realise that success is subjective and transient, that praise is not always forthcoming and that words are often spoken thoughtlessly. It has made me resolve to examine carefully my words and actions at work.*

*It has made me rethink the value of spending countless hours in the office and question whether my time could be better or more happily spent elsewhere. It has made me think about my priorities in life, and how the way I organise my time reflects this.*

*It has made me wonder how much I want to be successful in the business world and how healthy such a desire is. [e]*

*I have learned a lot about myself and working for a large organisation. I have had to adjust to ... living with new people and working with different teams. My attitudes have also changed as I have become more aware of what I value as previously this was financial recognition but is turning more towards being around the people I love. [e]*

## **5.8. Media**

The Majority of the responses to the questions about the media indicated suspicion concerning its influence, although the interviewees rarely saw this influence as affecting their own values. Interestingly many interviewees suggested role models who could best be described as media personalities, for example, Gordon Ramsey and Katie Price.

A small number were complimentary about the quality of some newspapers, the BBC or some internet sites.

*They are good to read because they promote thought or personal debate. It is a catalyst for your own thoughts. That is the point. Sometimes you need facts but you can't always rely on it for that. The war in Yugoslavia. I had friends living near the war zone. They told me what was going on and it was totally different to what the western media was reporting. It's a starting point rather than the end. [s]*

*It's a good thing that conflicting values and opinions are being presented and that people have to work their own way through it. You can't take on modern British culture as one thing or another. [s]*

*We have a fairly functioning free press in that it really does give free reign to a range of different opinions and values. I've never been in a position*

*where I thought my opinion was completely isolated from the media. There's always some part of the media that represents or informs me. [s]*

*In the US you won't see politicians being grilled like they are in the British media. I really respect that about the British media. [s]*

*It depends who's governing. If Labour is governing and they are trying to do things for young people, the media will portray it as all young people are criminals. If conservative was governing and they were really tough on people, they would portray it as if they were really poor and they needed help. The media is there to challenge the government.[s]*

*The nature of the media has changed so much in the last decade or so, through a huge proliferation of channels and internet blogs. Basically it means that any type of opinion on a given subject will be propagated. Now, you can get absolutely anything. When you have cohesive attitude it brings people together more. You have a common understanding. When you have lots of media it's an advantage because there's loads of information but it also means that people sort of splinter off. They have a strong opinion which they voice more loudly and in a sense things fall apart.*

About half the respondents had more critical things to say.

*I think it's good and bad the way the media works, because it can make people aspire to things. Also it can make people aspire to things which in reality they're never going to achieve.*

*It depends on what type of media. I think the internet keeps you up to date with things. It can have its downside as well, for kids and things. Television and media have a big, defining role. You're exposed so much media and it can give you information and insight. I think the internet has put you in a situation where you don't really form an opinion yourself. The first opinion you come across, you think 'Oh yeah, that's good'. You don't have time to analyse because everything is there for you.*

*I think the internet is a good thing, but I do think that the media focuses a lot on the negative news stories and doesn't focus on positive situations. I think that does breed a negative society. The more bad things are portrayed in the media the more they become acceptable.*

*The media can be quite dangerous in this country. You're always worried that it operates under a market system that will lower it to the lowest common denominator. It does mean the media is sensationalist, that it plays a blame game that is very damaging to this country. It means that sometimes people are fed the news and opinions that they want to hear rather than being exposed to others. I think an independent media is the*

*only way you can run it. The British media is probably an example to the rest of the world. It's a trade off you have to make. We have it fairly right in this country though it's not perfect. [s]*

*I think a lot of media is sensational, for example, there was a programme about phonics on Channel 4 where phonics was thought to be the only and best way. I think if you're going to do a programme that's informative then you need to look at all sides of the information and you can just go: 'That's wonderful' and that's it. If you don't even hint at the fact that there could be another view then people will only know what you present. The media is sensationalist because they're allowed to be, because we like hype.*

*The more popular newspapers are sensationalist and a lot of the time it isn't very positive. It doesn't bring out the best. It gets people carried away and stops people thinking rationally. With gun and knife crime in London it's important that's it's out there and an issue, that more people are talking about it, but what can be done is another debate. But people who don't understand will just think knives equals kids equals crime, which is not a good thing because it's just going to alienate them even more.*

*The newspapers in Germany are perhaps less insular. In Britain there is a lot of pissing about and skating over the surface and they are quite one dimensional and sensationalist. The Guardian and The Independent are very good. Germany's are much more global, intelligent and engaged with details, especially in the political world. The Times is dumbed down so much and matters of global relevance are treated so irrelevantly or not even addressed at all. Global warming for example. I believe there is opportunity for the media to really drive it into our thoughts. It's so important. For a lot of people it doesn't even occur to them. I think it's taken more seriously in other countries, certainly in Germany. [s]*

*Some aspects of popular culture in music, television or computer games seem to me to encourage and condone bad character/behaviour (or maybe I'm just getting older!)*

*The media are very clever. It's not great simply because you underestimate the amount of influence they have on your average Joe Bloggs who can be very easily persuaded. They need therefore to take more responsibility for what they print.*

*I don't know how good it is to have more channels and an Asian network for example as it creates sub/counter cultures that aren't actually there and suggest that there is one mainstream culture that is put on BBC 1 or whatever. It is a very bourgeois/middle class culture represented.*

Many of these criticisms referred to bias in the media.

*I think it's probably largely a reflection of society. Christian religious values are communicated effectively. I think the press plays to the extreme elements of Islam so that is probably not quite right. Other than that the press blows out of proportion all of the bad things people do. People don't come to work to be evil; they come to earn a living.*

*(Media biased most of time because articles produced by small number of journalists so always someone's opinions). [s]*

*The media are controlled by a select few. Let's face it, they can portray whatever they want to portray. As great as the concept of the media is, in reality I don't think that it works. Maybe it's better now because you've got the internet and more areas can get covered, more coverage. But, let's face it, predominantly it's TV and newspapers which is the way of getting the message to the masses. You can always blog about an issue, but how many people are going to read that blog compared to something on the front page of The Times. With the gun and knife crime in particular, let's face it, it's always certain types of people who get portrayed in the media as the ones perpetrating the crime. ...*

*The newspapers are constantly judging people. The Daily Mail the other day said 'There's no such thing as dyslexia' and it's very easy to say 'all right, that's true'. University makes you more aware and able to judge different sources, especially with history. Through education that way you're not looking at newspapers as 'that's a fact'. You look at it and say 'that's a writer's opinion'. [s]*

*Other than that there's a lot of bias in the press. If you look on-line, there'll be a lot of bias there. You don't necessarily get a balanced viewpoint. The research skills you get at university show you shouldn't just rely on one source and show that you shouldn't just rely on the internet as a research source, because it's biased.*

*There are different newspapers and different agendas. They always put their own values onto that story when their covering it. I think that with knife and gun crime they don't know whether it's on the increase and they're just scaring people a lot.*

*With media there are a huge number of views and formats. I think that you can't restrict what is being said. However, I think certain media is irresponsible and can have a sort of negative effect on society. Some media can have a degenerative effect. The problem is that if the media has an opposite opinion to what you believe then you're automatically going to think it's bad. Say for example the Daily Mail or Daily Express, very sort of right wing and useless in my opinion. They tend to produce*

*quite sensationalist, ridiculous arguments. But then again at the same time a lot of it is very subjective. I don't think they present a true view of what is the case. In the end they put so much spin on it that it's not reporting facts in any way, shape or form, just to present their agenda. I mean all media has that to an extent. If you look at the broadsheets they're far more considered. It is quite irresponsible the way a lot of media presents their views. But the most important thing is free speech, so you have to allow that, I suppose.*

*The media drives a lot of what society thinks. If topics aren't covered, then people just aren't going to talk about it. Often you have upsurges of opinion just because the media's covered it. They've only got a half hour programme for the news and they can't go over every single detail. Equally, people can't take everything in. We do get numb to experience. I think it's interesting how taboos come and go in the media. The fact that so few people seem to control the media especially. You have a left wing spin or a right wing spin; you can push and tweak whatever you want. I think it's difficult to get to the underlying truth.*

*It depends what you read. Some of the media here is very biased. The BBC is supposed to be more independent. You get more biased attitudes in the papers. I think that can easily manipulate what people think or believe at the time. [s]*

*I don't like the media apart from the BBC. The media is so dramatic and they make you feel so bad about yourself. Reading a good book will make you learn a lot more about values and life in general. The media are commercial- They're trying to sell you something and make you worry about things. It's not what you think it is. You kind of never know what's real and what's true. [s]*

*Dumbing down. There's less money for documentaries. It's very hard to do big, in depth political/historical things as there is very little funding. The power of the media is interesting and perhaps problematic in terms of how we receive information because essentially you have to choose your bias. I subscribe to this newspaper because it presents a view that generally I will agree with and you're shocked when you read another newspaper with a completely different spin and say this is outrageous. It's a human thing so there can never be neutrality in any real sense. I think you have to be aware of the bias and continue being critical. [s]*

A large minority commented on the influence of the media, usually for the worse. Criticisms between them covered a wide range. The media were in business to make money, were prejudiced in their reporting even on occasions inventing stories: they were frequently in bad taste, and by exaggeration gave the impression that certain bad behaviour by individuals was prevalent when it was not so: they were too focused on the cult of celebrity.



*There are other downsides as well, like kids seeing things that they're not supposed to. There's no control over these sorts of things. There's no censorship, I guess, towards violence and pornography. When I was a kid, I feel you have an age type of thing, because when you're a kid you're still just a kid. You must enjoy your childhood. I had a proper childhood. I mean, it means a lot if you have a proper childhood. If you're doing teenage things when you're a child it takes the defining part out of it.*

*The media are a big influence on what people see as the right character and how people should be. But I think that sometimes it can portray the wrong sort of characteristics, like in adverts it's all 'me, me, me- What can I get out of it and what can I do for myself to make my life better', rather than, perhaps, like 'What can I give to improve my character', because I find personally it's not through receiving that you improve your character, it's through giving, I suppose through hardships, like the death of someone, and I think that's really character growing. [s]*

*The media has had a big influence on values, but this is decreasing with the internet. People are creating their own views, you know with You Tube, My Space, Face Book. People have a lot more platforms for sharing their own views, values and ideas now than ever before. The newspapers are politically biased, not showing good role models, they're always showing the bad not the good. The bad always makes the better news. It's all about shocking us the media nowadays.*

*I think the media and internet are important, especially on young people. I think that's important when they're giving too much publicity to people like Amy Winehouse. I think that young people... I think they're really bad role models, just drugs, although they're good singers they seem to just ruin their talent. But the media can be good, with good role models, like sporting.*

*The media, the internet and TV are such a brainwashing environment. The media tells you what to think. If you see an idol doing something you might think that's right and the right way to go about it, especially if you're very impressionable and young. In that environment the wrong messages are bring broadcasted. It especially influences younger people, who are going to be the leaders of the country in the future. Sometimes I've seen things on TV that are a little bit appalling, such as dodgy videos or the lyrics of songs that I don't agree with, which maybe glamorise the drugs market or alcohol. They glamorise the use of it and abuse of alcohol or drugs and in that respect it dilutes peoples' morals and values. [s]*

*I'm just disgusted with the whole thing. There are pictures of celebrities, drunk celebrities tumbling over. No, I hate the whole thing. I think one of*

*the worst things that's ever happened to humanity is MTV. It's absolutely terrible and the values it creates. The media will do anything that sells and I hate it. People are sheep. [s]*

*It's very dangerous. It can lead a lot of impressionable people into believing that certain behaviours are more normal or commonplace. It tends to find the exceptions that are more readable and will catch the eye.*

*I think the media are very, very influential on people's values. People only know what they see. If things that are happening in the world aren't reported then people don't know about it. Therefore, people can't form opinions.*

## 6 The Role of the University

### 6.1. Motivation for Higher Education

Historically higher education has been justified in the eyes of many by its impact on the character of those who receive it. In recent years, the emphasis in government policy, and perhaps in the public consciousness, has been on instrumental economic benefits. The latter view was clearly included in many of the responses. About a quarter of all respondents mentioned career prospects as part of their reason for entering higher education.

*Education was a way to get out of the impoverished situation I was in and achieve a relatively good amount of success. If I had the chance to apply again for university I think I would go for the elite because you get better internships which are the platform for better jobs. Through my studies and internships I hope to get a better job at the end of the day. [s]*

*It gives you a lot of leverage to help in a career. You start off to prove yourself, I suppose, at university. The primary objective is a good degree and good career.[s]*

*I was motivated to be a student to get a job, obviously! I'm here to get exactly that. ... If you really want to learn something, you can do it yourself. For most people university is just a stepping-stone to getting another job. I went to UCL to get a good grade, a good job and have some kind of career. [s]*

*I've always wanted to get a Masters and it's obviously very helpful in my job prospects. [s]*

*I wanted to go into HE to add more value to my profile. Without a qualification you really can't expect to compete on the market. It is a very big and competitive market place. You really need to be qualified.*

*I thought I could get a good degree that would stand me in good stead for my career. I didn't want to go per se as I had no desire for knowledge. Before university it was always a qualification issue, the track towards employment.*

This motivation was often linked with the idea that for some types of people going to university is just the natural thing to do.

*My main motivation to come to university was to study hard and get to know what I wanted to do as a career. Maths being my strongest subject, I thought I'd go for maths. All of my friends at home went to*

*university. Even the ones who didn't necessarily want to go to university just did, it just felt like the natural thing. [s]*

*University was I suppose a stepping stone to getting a job, a good job. I guess going to university was something I decided on and something I always assumed.*

*In many ways it was an assumption that I'd go to university. Not that I didn't want to go but almost like it was a non- question. It's the next stage in becoming a normal member of society in some ways. It was a requirement to remain competitive individually and get a degree, whereas with my parents' generation it wasn't a requirement. More and more people are getting degrees. If I wanted to get certain jobs then I knew that a degree was a requirement.*

*It was an expectation. It's what you need to get a job that will keep you in the lifestyle you're used to. Everyone at school went. I couldn't think of anything else I wanted to do.*

*I really wanted to become a solicitor. [s]*

*I originally went to Art College with the plan to become a Graphic Designer. I loved anything creative at school so I thought this would be a perfect job. When I completed my degree I had the opportunity to work with children using my art and design background. I found this rewarding and enjoyable so decided to become a teaching assistant. I loved this, but it wasn't enough so I decided to become a teacher. [es]*

*I have always wanted to do nursing and go to university to study it. [es]*

*I was motivated to become a student because I enjoyed working with children and wanted to train to become a primary school teacher, this is the career that I am passionate about. [es]*

*I was never motivated to become a student; it's not an occupation, it's a path to your future. I couldn't be a teacher without becoming a student first hence that is why I'm a student! [es]*

*I wanted to be a student because it was the number one route to teaching and even if I didn't want to go into teaching I would have wanted to come to university because you only get one opportunity. [s]*

A smaller number spoke of academic success as their motivation, though this is not incompatible with seeking to improve career prospects and may even be an indirect way of referring to instrumental motives. Others emphasised purely intellectual aspects.

*The prestige of achieving a degree. It was expected by my employer. [es]*

*The course drives you to succeed. It sort of inspires you, I guess, and you really want to do well. It's important to do well because it's your future, your bread and butter. When you do well you get a good grade and get a good feeling. [s]*

*My mother, because she didn't go to university, always wanted me to go to university, so it really wasn't an option. I had to go to university. I enjoy any sense of achievement that sort of goes from education, so I was so ecstatic with my GCSE results. You know, my hard work actually paid off and it was the same with my A-Levels... [s]*

*Also if I stopped at the end of school I would have felt very unfulfilled in work. There weren't that many challenges up until the point I left school. [es]*

*I know that I'm quite intelligent and it would probably be a shame if I didn't get a degree. [s]*

*I wanted to do the best I could within a subject and I wanted to go somewhere I could better my abilities as far as I could. [s]*

*I just really enjoy learning and I knew I wanted to go to university. I love the challenge of learning every day. In research you don't always have the answers you have to find a way of getting them. [s]*

*University is the next step for someone good at academia. Nowadays it is just a general transition. I wanted to prove myself that I could work to that level and get a degree, especially from Cambridge. [s]*

*I've always loved philosophy. I've always questioned things and wanted to know more. I can't see a direct career path if I just studied philosophy. I found the combined course here and thought it was perfect. It's challenging but I enjoy a challenge. [s]*

*The structure of the course. You start off general. Later on you specialise. As I was unsure what I wanted to do, it gave me time to decide. It gives you breadth. It wasn't necessarily the best thing career wise but it was interesting. [s]*

*The course. It is the only university that does social and political sciences which is a four part first year course. [s]*

*I always enjoy studying, to be honest. Learning is a big part of my life and I always enjoy it. If I wasn't at university I'd go to adult courses and such because I always like to learn more. [s]*

*I wanted to be a student because I've always loved learning. It was always sort of expected by my parents and at the school I went to everyone went to university. I took a year out and worked in a supermarket and I hated it, I hated not learning, it was sort of dull and repetitive. I desperately wanted to get back into education because I was just bored. I had nothing for my mind to focus on. [s]*

*I became a student generally because I didn't want to leave education when I was 18 or 16, whenever you leave school. I really have a passion for lifelong learning, hence wanting to be a teacher. The university just offers everything I want in a degree. [s]*

*I wanted to gain a wider context into my practical music making. I have a love of finding out about things which fascinate me. A general obsessive curiosity. [s]*

*I believe in education for education's sake because I enjoy the subject. Not to please anyone else, e.g., the employer. It is the furthering of my education around some really interesting minds. [s]*

*I like learning. I spent a summer working as a cleaner and waitress at a hotel. It was so boring. I need to be stimulated all the time. [s]*

*I had my sight set on it before I realised what I was letting myself in for. Before I went to high school, I picked up a Steven Hawking book and thought I really want to be working with this guy. I thought seven years ago that I'd apply and that was it. I didn't realise there was this strenuous application process. It was really the first university I'd heard of other than the one in my home town. [s]*

Occasionally respondents referred to a desire to move away from home.

## **6.2. Benefits**

Various respondents indicated a number of ways in which the benefits of attending a university extend beyond those that acted as motivations for doing so. Having to cope with freedom and the responsibility attached to moving away from home were occasionally mentioned as stressful; but actually coping with these demands was more often seen as a highly beneficial contribution to character development. It encouraged personal discipline and time management.

Opinions varied greatly (and reasonably so) on whether courses provided the opportunities for creativity whether the formal structures of the university encouraged character development or influenced values. More frequently opportunities and influences of this type were connected with extra-curricular

activities involving societies and sport, and most particularly in the broadening of experience which flowed from participation in a more diverse community of peers. Each of these things was seen by some to be both of personal benefit and a necessary preparation for employment because of the vital importance of the interpersonal skills that could be acquired.

### **6.3. The formal system in relation to character development and personal support**

Responses relating to sources of personal support further emphasise the importance of informal structures rather than formal student support mechanisms. The university context was from time to time mentioned in both positive and negative remarks. In most cases the support sought from relevant university staff was in relation to academic or professional matters, only rarely with personal concerns. The question of trust is raised from time to time though not often – ‘how can you be sure that something you report of a personal matter will not be stored away for future use by the employer?’. The influence of university and work place on values is discussed below.

The comments made on the context of employment were very similar.

*On a day to day just sort of support life, I'd go to my managers, if I needed questions answered or help with something. They're the ones with the answers.*

*I go to my mum and dad for personal support. There are people at work ... and friends that I approach. It depends now personal the problem is. I wouldn't like to share too much [at work].*

*My boyfriend. We have a helpline here at [work] that you can ring if you have any problems. It sounds really sceptical but you never know if they're going to tell anyone else. [The company] employs them. They say it's confidential. You have to be careful what you say to anybody.*

Few students said there was an explicit ethical dimension to the courses which they did unless it was in some way intrinsic to the course, for example in theology, philosophy, psychology or the study of literature. Where it did impinge on some professional programmes though even here there was some doubt about its relation to personal values and ethics because the focus was more on compliance than building the character of the person involved.

*I don't think at university anybody has been talking to me about values and that kind of thing. [s]*

*Is there a course on business ethics? I don't know, to be honest. There's one on corporate governance but that's more for regulation, but I don't think there is one on ethics. [s]*

*I did a course on professional ethics a few years ago that has business ethics in it. Confidentiality is the only thing I can remember from it.*

*I've only done ethics [in employment], none at university where I read economics*

*I asked a few friends what values are and they didn't know. Therefore, yes, it should be on the curriculum so people understand what they are. [es]*

*I haven't done a course on business ethics so far, but to become a qualified actuary there is one coming up. I don't know what we'll do on that. [s]*

*I experiment on animals. ... We had a brief three or four lectures on ethics. Not in much depth. [s]*

#### **6.4. Personal Tutors**

There are of course outstanding examples of good practice.

*My personal tutor's absolutely amazing... I was having a few problems at the beginning of the year. ... I've had a few medical problems ( ... ) and he's shown such great support. He'll call me and say 'are you okay, is there anything you need', so he's shown great character. [s]*

*My personal tutor was lovely. We got on well. I suppose we got on well because there weren't any real problems. The tutor is someone who is not in your discipline. They are interested more in a kind of pastoral way. You discuss your progress and tell them if you have any problems. [s]*

*I look up to my grandparents, my parents, my secondary school economics teacher, and my academic/personal tutor at university. I look up to these people as they have all achieved something in their own way, they are all people of principle which they will stand by and they all gain pleasure from helping others succeed. [e]*

Unfortunately the reported outstanding examples are outnumbered by poor experience. Indeed in many institutions the formal structures seemed to create many of the problems, while personal relationships and support for example through a wise course tutor could be positive. The comments were mirrored by employees discussing mentors and buddies. The evaluation of experience seems to depend upon the accessibility, visibility and approachability of the tutor or mentor or how often they have opportunities to talk with them, formally, through tutorials or meetings, or informally, after class or while working.



*Unsure of who my personal tutor is: I haven't had much to do with them. [s]*

*I had a personal tutor at university but I only saw him once in my first week and never again. I think that was because I was getting good exam results, so it was never really an issue.*

*Personal tutor's role is more academic. You'd go to someone more external for personal problems, would you not? [s]*

*I think I must have had a personal tutor, but I didn't really go and see him. I had a couple of chats with him but I didn't have any personal, on-to-one chats with him.*

Some relationships are based on sensible mutual judgements.

*I haven't seen my personal tutor since last term. Internalise it first. See if you can sort it out yourself. ... He's very supportive, level-headed. [s]*

*I don't see my personal tutor because I don't see there ever being enough time for her to be a consistent support system. I don't know what function the personal tutor really has. [s]*

*At university my personal supervisor was the only one I had contact with. For academic work.*

For some interviewees it is the degree to which students feel the member of staff knows them personally that is important, to others it depends on the nature of support they are looking for.

*I wouldn't go to a tutor (for emotional or personal support) because I think in university you don't have to; in a primary school a child would probably come to me because I know them and they know me, but in a university where there's so many people, I just don't see how they can get to know you better personally for you to talk to them about that kind of thing. It depends how urgent it was. If it interfered with my university course then I would probably speak to my head of year 3 who's actually my tutor as well. [s]*

*There is a strong network of personal support in place with the personal tutor. I think some people choose to use it more than others and it suits some people. It depends a lot on the type of problem. I have come to personal tutors on some things but not on others. It depends on how far you need the practical support of college and how far you need the emotional support of friends. [s]*

Some of the most enthusiastic remarks about personal tutors were made on the basis that the tutor had gone beyond what his job required in making time for people and helping them. Thus even where personal tutors are praised it is sometimes their part in what appears to be an informal system of support that is valued.

*There have been certain individuals who are very approachable and go out of their way for you. You can tell when someone's really making an effort, to be supportive and taking time to point you in the right direction.*  
[s]

## 7 Graduate Employment

### 7.1. Motivation for Employment

For the most part students were not in a position to comment on employers and employment, although those training for specific professions did express some views. Not surprisingly, there was a strong division between on the one hand those who for various altruistic or emotional reasons had 'always wanted to be' a teacher or a nurse or had turned to such professions and on the other those who saw management and similar professions as a route to economic benefits. The division, however, was not an absolute one.

*I've wanted to be a teacher ever since the age of 11 when I used to teach in the Church. I want people to go away having learnt and having more knowledge and understanding a bit more. [s]*

*I'm not in teaching for economic rewards. The starting salary I think is about £20-25,000. The reward is knowing that you're doing something benefiting others. Working with other people and seeing them benefiting and progressing, and progressing yourself at the same time. [s]*

*That's what led me into teaching and I enjoy getting on with children. After doing a city job, which is about 'me' time and earning good money, I wanted to do something that was more community based like teaching, with community values and maybe give something back. [s]*

*I've wanted to teach since I was 7 years old. I've looked at my teachers and thought, 'that's something that I want to do'. I want to be standing at the front of the classroom and helping 20 or 30 individuals to achieve their full potential. [s]*

*I'm hoping to go into genomics research. I'm not sure whether I want to work in academia or charity research. I'm not comfortable with pharmaceutical companies because of their mandates to make money. There are conflicts of interest and stories of researchers having their data suppressed. With Cancer Research UK, the aim is to improve the health of people. [s]*

*My father's an accountant, so I was always exposed to the profession, as such. I had some friends who had gone into it and it was something that people did, so I wasn't doing anything crazy by coming here.*

*I've always been interested in properties as well as history, architecture, old buildings and gardens. After graduating from Durham I worked for three years in a location planning consultancy which dealt with the socio*

*economic context of buildings. What they might be used for or what the sites might be used for. That made me interested in property even more. I then decided I wanted to become a surveyor.*

*I always wanted to work in real estate but I didn't know how. When I was quite a lot younger I wanted to work in residential property development. I wanted to work in a more professional environment especially at the start of my career.*

The motivation for trying to join one firm rather than another, more often showed concern for things other than professional advancement, although the majority referred to benefits the firm offered them personally.

*They've got such a good graduate programme and they're always coming top in graduate recruiters and things like that. Social responsibility as well, they do a lot to help the community. There's opportunities, you can go and help out in schools and help out in reading and stuff. Just to give a helping hand to the community. We had an away day a couple of weeks ago where we went and helped out on a community project farm. I think that any employer that is going to survive and do well have to have a good social responsibility policy, because in general that's the way they're attracting graduates and stuff. For me personally, I wouldn't want to work for an employer that isn't sort of helping the environment or just a corporate machine. The environment is important. The volumes of paper we go through every day is just ridiculous. So, it's little things like that, if we can just recycle all the paper and I think there's a scheme [here] to plant trees as well.*

*I came to [this company] because it sort of adhered more to my values than other employers. I got the impression that it was more open, less hard-nosed, less profit driven, which of course it's not it's a company, but it's the way it goes about it. And the people within the organisation are quite different.*

*Another thing I think it's important to look for is corporate social responsibility. You don't want to work for someone where you're embarrassed to say their name. [This company] does a lot of charity work, like mentoring in a secondary school, we can go and encourage students and there's a lot of charity work and team away days, where we're doing something to help the community. By doing the work [the company] are looking good but there is also the thing that they genuinely want to help the community.*

## **7.2. Benefits and Disadvantages**

As with higher education, the benefits perceived to arise from working in a particular firm were broader than the factors that motivated joining it. There was a large

overlap and in some cases the benefits, for example, of working in a friendly environment where people would put you at your ease were obvious even at the interview stage.

Opportunity, support and training, personal interest, challenge were frequently mentioned. The remuneration package was obviously a factor, but rarely listed as the number one consideration; the quality of the personal relationships and work life balance were of greater concern.

The interviews took place as the credit crunch began to have an impact on job security. For those participants who discussed this in their interview, many were concerned that the policies embraced by the company to deal with the matter should be transparent and be seen to be fair. Since personal relationships were considered to be of the essence of an enjoyable working environment and of the success of a business, it is interesting to observe that while there was undoubtedly personal concern about job security, there was almost equal concern for the reputation of the company and its future success.

*The one thing I was worried about applying to companies was that they would just disregard you and you would be just a small cog in a big organisation. I was worried nobody would really attend to you. But after my internship, my boss was really caring and you felt that they invested in you; they were interested in your development. .. It's important to be challenged in order to realise your potential and go on to better things.*  
[s]

*Prospects, opportunity to develop. Progress in terms of salary. ... I wouldn't say security as I don't think in today's market you should expect that.*

*Big company, good training – that was my key focus. If this is going to be a qualification I want it to come from somewhere good. I quite liked the idea of having a good graduate intake. A good peer group level.*

*Tolerant and attentive to the demands of family life.*

### **7.3. Employers' Requirements**

The expectations of employers are well documented and appreciated by the interviewees, both students and employees. Intellectual competence, willingness to learn, personal confidence and ambition, inter-personal skills, good team work and hard skills, though the latter were recognised as being easier to compensate for than the absence of soft skills. The ease with which employees talked about this may have been responsible for some things being mentioned here rather than in response to the more challenging question of what constitutes good character. They might be under this heading because considered as employment-related abilities or propensities rather than aspects of good character *per se*.

*These days employers are not looking for academic qualities. They're more interested in what you do outside, if you're involved anywhere else. They're looking at your communication skills, your interaction with people, more or less how you fit into a team and work with a team. When I went to my first interview the interviewer seemed very interested in what I had to say about my voluntary work. [s]*

*Employers look especially for good team workers. Are they good potential leaders? Can they work on their own? Are they suited to the company as much as anything. ... I think that when someone's assessing you in an interview they're very much assessing would I want to work with this person? Today, everyone's got very similar qualifications and I think that when employers are looking at your application they look at your C.V., but when you go to the interview they're looking at you as an individual. They've already done 'this guy's good enough to work here' based on his qualifications. Now it's what from these qualifications has been created and who is this person? ... Are you confident enough to express your own ideas? How do you take pressure? That sort of thing. [s]*

*You have to be comfortable in all the interpersonal areas, such as good communication and interpersonal skills, rather than being a very bright academic, and that's what employers look for in a candidate. [s]*

*A broad range of skills and experiences. Obviously if you're going in at a higher level you'll need more technical skills. For the grads, they don't really care what degree you've done, but they are interested in if you can justify what skills you've got from the degree and how they could be applicable in work. You have to be able to take on the pressure and be quite pro-active.*

*Generally I think employers are looking for team-building skills. You will get that mostly at clubs and societies at university. On courses it's very much individual work and you do your own work.*

*Someone who's hard working, a good communicator. A balance between being able to work in a team and to have leadership and certain personal ambitions that make you more motivated. Creativity. Ability to work in a team. [s]*

*A good employee – someone who will get involved. Someone who will talk to people. You've got to be intelligent and willing to learn.*

*Rounded people. They look perhaps more at your character and whether you are going to fit into the team, the culture. Are you prepared to work and also do what is required? A lot of business is done through*

*relationships people have. Also number-crunching and professional diligence.*

*Employers want more than just a good degree. Debating is good for critical thinking, thinking on the spot, interpersonal skills, public speaking. Transferable skills like essay writing technique. [s]*

#### **7.4. Character development**

Employment was sometimes not thought to influence values at all.

*Graduate employment has definitely eaten a lot of my own personal time, so that has changed my life somehow. Has employment changed me as a person? I don't think so.*

*I don't think it has particularly. I knew what to expect from the internship. I grew a lot at university and those lessons are true for the time being. Perhaps after the honeymoon period in two years, things will have changed.*

About a quarter of all respondents (including students) mentioned influences that just arise naturally from being in the job. This resonates with views expressed about higher education mainly affecting values and character because of meeting a wider range of people or the freedom and responsibility that comes with moving away from home. In a similar way employment was seen as leading to a more serious attitude to life. Some of the changes were clearly positive but others can be seen either as a move towards greater prudence or as a move away from some of the things presented above as aspects of good character.

*At university everything you did was for yourself. If I didn't do something then I would fail. If I don't do something here it just doesn't relate to me it relates to everyone in the team around me. You're responsible and accountable to other people, not just yourself.*

*It makes you more mature. You learn how to get along with people you are stuck with. You learn how to manage your time, the work life balance.*

*I think that employment has made me value money more. Obviously, when you're at university you have no money so you don't really value it. When you do work and you're paying the bills it's more important than it was before. I value my free time, it's definitely more important.*

*I never really appreciated when people would moan about paying taxes and other people who don't pay into the system who benefit from it. People with lots of children who earn more than me annoy me. Work has made me appreciate money more.*

*Employment has made me become more serious about my career. I suppose going from university to full time work you have to grow up a bit, become a bit more professional and things like that.*

*It has made me realise that success is subjective and transient, that praise is not always forthcoming and that words are often spoken thoughtlessly. It has made me resolve to examine carefully my words and actions in work. [e]*

*I don't feel that at my stage of my graduate employment I have changed as a person or changed my initial attitudes. [e]*

*I don't know how employment has changed my attitudes. It's sort of raised my self-esteem now that I work here, I suppose.*

*It has broadened my understanding of other people's beliefs and values. I think I have become more tolerant and patient of other people's actions and behaviours. [e]*

*I am a more confident person as a result of my graduate employment both professionally and socially. Public speaking was difficult and nerve wracking in the past, but I am much more relaxed and confident with presentations and group work. [e]*

*I guess employment has shown me a kind of different world, where people are competitive. People from different backgrounds, with different morals, different ages. I don't think you get that at university. I think that competitiveness can be a good quality but it can be a bad quality as well. It's good to be competitive, because it's about your personal achievement. But when it's 'He's better than me. How can I make him less better?', then that's when it's bad.*

*Employment has made me value my weekend and plan my time more wisely. As a student, you felt that you had forever off and could be lazy, whereas now I'll get out more and do more things. I'm a bit more cynical about the unemployed now. I can't see why people would be sitting there and not getting hands out when they could be busy and progressing more.*

*Employment has made me a bit more realistic. I think at university there's a natural tendency to be a bit idealistic, sitting around in pubs talking about utopian societies, talking about philosophers or whatever. Basically and obviously real life just isn't like that.*

*I think that working has made me more sort of belligerent with people who don't work or people that don't have any drive. They really puzzle*



*me somewhat. Part of me wants to be a housewife who looks after the kids and does the baking and that sort of thing; but another part of me want to fulfil my potential. So, people who don't sort of have that drive to see what they can do, see what they're good at, kind of confuse me a little bit. I think that's become more apparent since I started full time work.*

*University honed my time management and communication skills, while [my company] has re-enforced my lateral thinking and desire to be the best. [e]*

*Developed me as a person yes – or maybe I'm just growing up? The challenges I've faced have made me do things I would never have faced if given the choice, like how to tell someone who works for you that they're rubbish at their job. [e]*

*Work has increased my professionalism, my impact management, the realisation that people will judge you very much based on how you are perceived to be rather than who you are.*

*I used to be a lot more patient but I realised if you are too patient people can take advantage of it. You have to be a bit more selfish sometimes and more demanding. I expect more from others now, whereas I didn't before.*

*I wouldn't say I behave very differently now but I certainly have a better understanding of how I react to all kinds of people and circumstances. My attitude is more open than before and more willing to take on board training and advice. [e]*

*Well my time in the company has been far from enjoyable and it has opened my eyes to the difference between dealing with situations from a 'people' point of view and from a business perspective. I have learnt that a business has no heart and results are all that matter. Employees can always be replaced. I think I may well be in the wrong working environment but I guess it pays the rent and bills. I have learnt to not be so trusting towards people and I'd say it's made me a less sociable person, wanting to keep my head down and just keep moving as I've stuck my head above the parapet once too often only to have it hammered back down. I've learnt that in this environment it pays off to be ruthless and dishonest and that people rarely do what they say they will. [e]*

A much smaller number saw employers influencing character and values in a purposive way.

*I think that [the company] encourages technical skills and soft skills, you know interacting with people. Previously, I guess, if I'd seen anyone really senior I'd have been embarrassed. But now meeting with people and*

*speaking to people [here] you can actually go to them and speak confidently.*

The most commonly mentioned intentional contribution of employers in this respect was their policies on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Since this is the only aspect specifically probed in the interview schedule, it may be that other equally important contributions might have come to mind had other probes been used.

There is an increasing expectation from the public, the government, employees and employment organisations that employers will engage in CSR for the 'common good' of society, the communities in which employers are based and the personal and individual development of employees (Gallimore, 2006; Moon et al., 2005, 2006; Matten and Crane, 2005). A good CSR strategy certainly adds to the kudos, standing and respect of companies, leading to the perhaps cynical suggestion by some students and graduate employees interviewed in the *Learning for Life* project that CSR is a matter of public relations, of image management, rather than being genuinely motivated. CSR may even increase a company's sales and profit margins (Hill and Knowlton's Corporate Reputation Watch, 2002).

It could also be suggested that there has been a shift or sea change, in so far as CSR activities are increasingly expected as a routine matter of course, whereas ten or twenty years ago CSR was far less prevalent, promoted and expected (Matten, 2005). Matten (2005) also questions whether the rise in CSR is down to corporations hitherto being 'socially irresponsible'.

In the main, CSR initiatives could be taken as demonstrating the potential for employers and their employees to demonstrate moral and social awareness, contribute to society and the communities in which they are based and therefore be seen to engage in a high standard of business ethics.

This is considered from many points of view. It is seen as something good in itself, a significant piece of PR, integral to the life of the business or a necessary add-on to maintain one's reputation and keep up with other businesses in a very competitive market. It may indeed be a combination of any two, three, or indeed all four. Few people held the opinion that CSR represented a genuinely altruistic attitude. Occasionally a respondent said that it did not matter that people encouraged or engaged in CSR for cynical reasons as long as some good came of it.

One student mentioned it as something to look for in a potential employer; no employee said that it had influenced them when choosing their employer though many were impressed by the work done by the company, and regarded it as important that the company should give something back to society. Many personally engaged in CSR of their own volition. One employee was critical of the whole enterprise for a serious and well-considered reason: some claimed to know nothing about it.

*I'm not for CSR I'd rather companies were taxed and that money proportioned by bodies independent of their value judgements. I don't think companies are equipped to make decisions like this.*

*I don't know much about the company's CSR and do not know what drives people to do it.*

*I don't think any firm has genuine CSR but they like to show they have. We love to show CSR. But I'm glad that CSR does happen because at the end of the day, it doesn't matter what the motivation is behind these kinds of gestures, people do benefit.*

*There's definitely an ethic of CSR here. Every large company needs to show CSR, I know that's a bit of a cynical way of looking at it. But I think they genuinely care and it's not all PR.*

*The company takes CSR seriously and it's not just for show as well. And the work is not just about advertising ... it's about going out there and doing stuff.*

*I don't think CSR is just PR, because we don't really promote it that much. But I don't think it's that authentic and that genuine. If you do take it up then that's good for your personal development and good in terms of your career. I don't think the recession will make us cut back on CSR.*

*CSR is a good idea. To put something back of what they take. Cynically it's keeping up with the Jones's. Everyone else is doing it. There is genuine good will I think.*

*In ethical terms, CSR is a good thing. It's seen as something you should do. It's probably to get more business in the end.*

*I think it is not publicised hugely in the media. The company undertakes a lot of community work behind the scenes which the mass public are not aware of, this might be a good thing because it doesn't hinder the work. A lot of individuals put in a lot of extra time to organise and take part in charity and community work. The company tries to instil a sense of community in its employees which could easily be lost given the number of people but it isn't. [e]*

## **7.5. Ethics in Business**

The importance of ethical behaviour to company success was agreed by all the interviewees who chose to respond to this question. In fact, however, it was not clear in all cases whether this was a practical business matter, a matter of compliance, or a genuine concern for morality. For example, all the companies had officially published

codes of practice or statements of core values, but few could list what they were. Confidentiality, client-centred behaviour, were the most mentioned aspects of business ethics. It was, however, fully recognised that a business without integrity would be found out and suffer losses through lack of client trust.

*Business ethics crops up. There are various things, like how you deal with certain situations which would be illegal; a lot on client confidentiality; when you can and can't do things. It's come up in various modules. A lot of people, like myself, just look at it and go 'yeah, that's obvious, it's commonsense', but if it was that obvious there wouldn't be any problem.*

*The company has taken large legislative efforts to make the redundancies seem as fair as possible. ... I think it's relatively fair, about as much as you can be in these types of situations.*

*Business ethics is part of our professional training as well. It's about character rather than just the corporation [and compliance], so you know, being mindful of your stakeholders and taking into consideration what their feelings are.*

*Values? [The company] believes integrity is absolutely key. If you slate your reputation in any industry, you're in trouble. It's important to be ethical because reputation is everything. A lack of integrity does not constitute good business practice.*

*Know nothing about the company's values though I should.*

## 8 Engagement with Society and Civic Involvement

### 8.1. Volunteering and Charity Work

Volunteering has been suggested by Hodgkinson (2003) to be a central part of most societies throughout history. Moreover, the current weight of expectation about the contribution it can make to personal and individual development, addressing social exclusion and need, as well as promoting community involvement and cementing social cohesion has never been greater. Volunteering is a growing and global phenomenon (Rochester, 2006; UN General Assembly, 2005). Universities increasingly promote the voluntary activities of their students, through schemes such as Widening Participation which aims to recruit people into Higher Education from more marginalised and non-traditional scholarly communities, such as people from ethnic minority groups and working class backgrounds.

Opportunities to do voluntary work while at university are multifarious and complex. Most respondents contributed to a wide ranging list of activities in which they had engaged, including work with disadvantaged groups such as people with learning disabilities; work with ethnic minorities; helping the elderly, visiting schools to help in classes, for example with reading or personally mentoring a child and sports coaching, or encouraging aspiration for HE; working with youth organisations; and manifold charity, fund raising and awareness raising events with environmental issues, working.. In a small number of cases the activities were specifically linked to communities to which they had an allegiance, the local church or the Asian community.

A small number reported helping to encourage young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to aim towards higher education. This was virtually the only activity not also mentioned as something done at school or during the gap year.

### 8.2. Motivation for Volunteering

As is the case with CSR, the motives for engaging in voluntary work are many and various.

They may be grouped under three heads: those that were genuine – it's good for its own sake; self-interest – it looks good; utilitarian – what matters is the outcome, never mind the motivation.

*I think that it's important to give something back to the world. If you're just in it for yourself all the time, then it's a very sad life it's going to be. And also you learn about yourself as well, you learn about other people and I think it makes you appreciate things more ... You need to try and make a difference. [s]*

*Voluntary work is very important: for example caring for the elderly and children. It's natural to do so, not learnt. [s]*

*I've worked in Oxfam. I cycled to the South of France a couple of years ago for Action Aid. Instead of just sitting in front of the TV, it's important to help people who aren't as well off as I am. I'd like to continue to do charity work when I'm working and plan to cycle to Australia. [s]*

*I've done voluntary work [at school]. You get a certificate for 50 hours, you get a t-shirt for a hundred hours. It's something you can put on your c.v.*

*I did some voluntary work. I helped with disabled children. It was very rewarding, because although you had some difficult weeks, I was there for about a year and a half and you can really see them improve. I've just volunteered at work to go into schools and help by giving them academic or career advice.*

*I've done loads of voluntary work. At school I was charity prefect and we did loads of work with Marie Curie. Hopefully I shall do some charity work with the company. It's important to do charity work just to help people. To help them even in a small way is pretty important and rewarding.*

*I did some voluntary work in South America working in an orphanage for a few months. I did a trek in India actually through the company to raise money for a children's charity. From the professional point of view I'd really like to develop myself.*

*I have volunteered for several organisations (Amnesty International, Jesuit Volunteers, Greenpeace) and at a school for autistic children. The two voluntary experiences prior to university shaped my future plans: choosing to study psychology, and choice of a career in the charity sector.*

*In the sixth form I worked in an old people's home and with students with severe learning difficulties. I also volunteer each summer with a charity that takes kids on outdoor education holidays. All this work I've really enjoyed. The summer camp volunteering I do because I enjoy it more than the fact that it's helping people. I enjoyed the volunteering in the old people's home but the reason I did it was that it would look good on my university application. I think you gain a lot of transferable skills from volunteering. [s]*

*I coach sport at a local school weekly. I did that in my gap year. I find it a lot more rewarding than my work. You can more easily see the rewards.*

*At university I taught Spanish in a local Primary School to year 2 pupils. I also did a range of volunteer work whilst in Mexico and worked with the Red Cross for a year. All of my voluntary work has been of extreme value and I believe should become part of a compulsory qualification for all*

*students to allow them to engage in their community and understand the importance of helping others. On a personal note, my volunteer work has also helped me to learn a lot about myself as well as meet different sorts of people from different backgrounds. [e]*

*I also do a lot of youth work. I'm a scout leader and a sports coach. I was a scout and I've always been a sports person. I had such a great time when I was a kid and young adult that I'd like to pass that on. I did a lot of fund raising for local community projects. I helped put a bid in for a community centre with lottery money. We got it. They are our future. They're the guys who are going to be paying our pensions. They do need those social groups or they're just going to be the ones lolling around on street corners being accused of doing things. The main thing is the bonding and experiences. You start as a beaver at six, you go aboard and you meet hundreds if not thousands of people all with the same common goals and all within the security of a family.*

*I have done a limited amount of voluntary and charity work. At Durham I did a couple of sessions in the soup kitchen. I wouldn't say it's something I'd put on my CV. It wasn't something I did consistently. I had a friend who did it and he sort of quite enjoyed it. I had some afternoons free so I thought I might as well go and do something productive. I hadn't done any community action before, so I thought it was quite good. There were quite a lot of homeless people and alcoholics.*

### **8.3. Benefits of volunteering**

*[Working with children with disabilities] was such an eye-opening experience. I was quite ignorant when it came to special needs and disabilities. It was a case of it's in my world and so I didn't want to go find it. I was quite ignorant but when I got hauled in, I just got there myself into it. It was fantastic. I went between the autistic unit and the special care unit. Autism ... There's no physical disability and it's just heartbreaking, you see these children with just such a heartbreaking disability. [s]*

*During my Gap Year I spent 3 months in Romania volunteering in orphanages and Children's hospitals, working with children from 5 month old to 19 years old. This was an amazing experience that taught me a great deal about dealing with my emotions, looking after myself and others, and the importance of trying to have fun and enjoy life even when things are hard. I think the children really appreciated it too, and the older ones used as a way to improve their English. [es]*

*I've done loads of voluntary work. At school I was charity prefect. Hopefully in my company I will do some voluntary work and fundraising.*

This suggestion that volunteering should be compulsory for all students was a unique remark. However, the research tends to show that there is a strong link between the voluntary work of students and the CSR activities of graduate employees. Those who had engaged in voluntary work at university were more likely to participate in CSR when they came into graduate employment. Not only did these individuals participate more frequently, genuinely and happily in voluntary and CSR activities but they would also advocate these activities to peers, colleagues and seniors. They saw voluntary work of whatever useful kind, as leading to people's personal development and as a means whereby they could fit in with and contribute to the core values of their organisation.

According to two graduate employees:

*At university I worked with autistic children. I did some voluntary work. I helped with disabled children. I've just volunteered for something in my company where you go into schools and you get given a child and you help, give them academic advice or career advice. The core values of my company are that they expect everyone to work really hard but at the same time they encourage you to take part in stuff that's not directly related to your job, so like going to volunteer and help out in the community. I think they think that's just as important.*

#### **8.4. Civic Involvement**

There was very little mention of involvement in civic or political activity, though this could be because in the minds of most respondents did not link political activity is not seen as a form of voluntary work or as related to character. Political figures were mentioned among 'leaders or people to look up to'; but the political activity of such heroic figures as Mandela and Obama may be seen as a forum within which they exercised their good character or as part of their heroic status rather than as something that counts as good character when engaged in at less exalted levels.

*I'm a president of a society we made up called the One World Club. It's trying to promote cultural diversity and remove barriers, like racism and stuff. We tried to set up a night called the Global Night, celebrating culture and food and diversity and things. There were some disagreements between the Chinese and the Taiwanese because they don't get on. China claims that Taiwan is part of China. We had these booths, like stalls with different food and posters and things. The Chinese wanted the Taiwanese under their stall. The Taiwanese wanted their own stall to sort of imply that they were independent. [s]*

*Working with the green party. To help change the world! [es]*

*I've been on demonstrations against top up fees and the war. I'm a pacifist. I'm very optimistic. The most important thing to me is peace. It is the ultimate aim for me. The less I knew the more pessimistic I was.*



*Many people I think are the opposite. I read a very good book of essays on pacifism. Peace education was one of the chapters. Teaching children pacifist values. I don't think violence is ever justified. The logical thing is to talk things through rather than to resort to violence. I don't think war is justified under any circumstances. [s]*

## **8.5. Political Views**

Despite the apparent lack of political or civic engagement, respondents were generally able to say something about their political views. About one in ten explicitly spoke of left wing or Labour Party sympathies. A similar number spoke of being undecided or confused about politics. Rather fewer expressed views that were clearly liberal, and there were occasional mentions of things like pacifism. Explicit avowals of right wing views were less common, although some of the other comments made seemed to imply a preference for small government and for people who worked hard and could earn good money (like the respondents) being able to keep their earnings.

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## 10 Appendices

### 10.1 Information sheet for potential participants

**Learning for Life**  
Higher Education and Employment  
(Canterbury Christ Church University)

The *Learning for Life* research is a new and large scale project that looks at people's values and character across all phases of education from Early Years to University and in employment. It is a neglected dimension of education of which policy-makers, Universities and Employers are becoming increasingly aware.

The research seeks to understand the values, skills, dispositions and attitudes that people have and which help in good team working, entrepreneurship, leadership, lifelong learning, responsible citizenship, caring for the welfare of others and the like.

The research wants to ask you about your core values and the ways in which these have been shaped at University (if a student) or by your employer (if a graduate employee).

Interviews will last approximately 45 minutes and are recorded, but anything you say is confidential and anonymous. Nothing you say will be able to be traced back to you and you will not be named.

At the end of this 2 year research, a report, seminars and a web page will sum up the findings. You will be able to access these, which will be of some benefit to you and give you feedback about the project as a whole.

Your participation in the research will be very important, as findings may influence University education in the future and also help in the recruitment of graduate employees with the skills and values that employers want.

We would very much like you to take part in this important research. Your thoughts, perspective and opinion about values and character are very important in developing resources, training materials and the collaboration between Universities and employers in the future.

Many thanks.

## **10.2. Information sheet, consent form and interview schedule for students**

### **Learning for Life** *Higher Education and Employment.*

#### **Information Sheet for Participants**

##### **Introduction- The research, its aims and your rights**

Thank you for coming today. You will have seen this information leaflet before (which has been handed to you by the researcher, e-mailed to you or posted to you). This is to give you the opportunity and a 'cooling-off' period in which to consider your willingness and suitability to take part in the research.

This research is part of a wider project on *Learning for Life* at Canterbury Christ Church University. The purpose of the *Learning for Life* project as a whole is to explore people's values and character development. This particular part of the research focuses on values and character in Higher Education and employment.

You have been selected today because you have expressed an interest in taking part in the research and feel willing and able to take part.

We want to ask you some questions about values, character, life-long learning, leadership, morals and the like in Higher Education. Your experiences of Higher Education are vital to the understanding and development of better Higher Education in the future.

Today's interview will last approximately between 45-90 minutes.

If you take part, anything you say will be completely confidential and nothing will be traced back to you individually. Interviews are anonymous and confidential. Any information you give us will be stored securely in filing cabinets at CCCU or password protected if held on computer. Any information you give us will be given a unique code so as not to be traceable back to you.

In spite of these precautions, it is still conceivable that someone may recognise you in the research report and find out things about you that you would rather not have known. You will have the opportunity to veto the use of any information that applies specifically to you.

You should feel under no obligation or pressure to take part in the research and will be given a 'cooling-off' period to consider if you want to take part or not. Information about yourself will not be shared with third parties (for example, your employer or University). You may withdraw from the research at any time and at any stage of the research and not have to give a reason for doing so.

What we're going to do today is discuss the characteristics of the type of person that we may wish to develop, grow and change into - the type of person we wish to become. Part of this is to do with us having a set of personal core values. We will be focusing on what sorts of attitudes, dispositions, ethics, morals and values people have in Higher Education.

If you feel uncomfortable, you may halt the interview or withdraw from the interview if you no longer want to take part.

The research is important, though, so your comments and ideas are very valuable. We want your views of values and character development.

Any feedback about the interview or issues you think we have missed can be discussed at the end of the interview.

If you have read and understood the above and wish to take part in the interview, please fill in the details below.

Name (Block Capitals):.....

Organisation:.....

Date:.....

Signature:.....

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

This interview schedule is to be used in a semi-structured way. The questions are primarily to help the researcher in identifying the main topics that are of interest to the interviewee and allow the interviewee to elaborate on issues that matter to them.

The questions should be used as prompts to allow the interviewee to tell their story on the issues involved (as well as to cover the research questions and aims of the research in a thorough and empirical manner).

We want to ask you some questions about values, character, life-long learning, leadership, morals and the like in Higher Education. Your experiences of Higher Education/ employment are vital to the understanding and development of better Higher Education/ employment in the future.

Today's interview will last approximately between 45-90 minutes.

### **Part 1 – Individual qualities**

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and what you do?
2. How would you define 'good' character? What does 'good' character mean to you?
3. What do you think are the qualities and characteristics that make a good person with good character?
4. What qualities in someone's behaviour show you they have good character, that they are an ...honest, caring, trustworthy, reliable, etc... person? What kind of actions show us they are an ...honest, caring, trustworthy, reliable, etc ...person?
5. Please can you think of any examples or instances in which people have shown good character?
6. Can you think of someone at University/ work who has shown good character? What did they do?
7. If a person has shown good character and a positive quality at University/ at work ...e.g. *friendly, caring, compassionate, loving, honesty, trustworthy, reliability, determination, confidence, etc* what might they be thinking – what kind of thoughts might they have? Can you give examples?
8. If a person has shown good character at University/ at work ...e.g. .... *honesty, caring, determined...* what kind of ....*honest...* feelings and attitudes may they have? Can you give examples of these?
9. What are the main qualities of a person or individual that can be regarded as 'good' at University/ at work?

10. What are the main qualities of a person or individual that can be regarded as 'bad' at University/ at work?
11. Could you say why these qualities are considered good and bad?
12. Please can you give examples where yourself, friends, teachers or colleagues have shown good character?
13. Please can you give examples where yourself, friends, teachers or colleagues have shown bad character?

## **Part 2 – Leadership qualities**

1. Can you think of examples where people senior to you, friends or colleagues have shown good character and good qualities? What are these good qualities?
2. How have they shown these qualities in their behaviour? What have they done?
3. What sorts of thoughts, feelings and attitudes do you think they have when they are showing this quality e.g. *determination, leadership*?
4. When you have seen a friend or colleague showing good character and good qualities has this affected the way that you act with others? Have you tried to change your behaviour to be more positive?
5. Can you give some examples of people (colleagues, friends, seniors) who you think have shown bad character and bad qualities? What are these bad qualities?
6. How have they shown these qualities in their behaviour? What have they done?
7. What sorts of thoughts, attitudes and feelings do you think they have?
8. Do good/bad thoughts, feelings and behaviour make someone a good/bad person? Why?
9. Can you think of a well-known person, such as someone who is famous, and the qualities that they have which are good or bad?
10. What leaders and sorts of people do you look up to and why?
11. Would you say that your University gives you room for your imagination or creativity? In what ways?



### Part 3 – Qualities of self

1. What sort of qualities/values would you say you have as a person?
2. What positive qualities/values would you say you have as a person?
3. What negative qualities/values would you say you have as a person?
4. What behaviour would show you are acting ...*generously, caringly, compassionately, etc?* How do you demonstrate this quality or other qualities in practice?
5. Can you think of one or two examples of what you have done that shows this or another quality you can think of? Please tell us about it?
6. With this quality .... *e.g. ....generosity, caringness, compassion, determination, etc....* if you were in a *generous, caring, compassionate, determined* mood, what thoughts or feelings might you have?
7. What does it mean to be *generous, caring, compassionate, determined, a leader, etc?*
8. Who has helped you decide upon your values? Who has guided you the most?
9. What is your attitude to religious belief? Have you a religious faith and if so in what tradition do you stand?
10. If you want personal support, where do you go for it?
11. Who has helped you decide upon your values at University? Who has guided you at University the most. How have they guided you?
12. Can you think of moments when you may think and feel that you should behave in a certain way but you behave in another way? For example?
  - a. An old lady has fallen on the pavement, you think you should help her, you feel that you should help and yet you walk-on and don't help.
  - b. A colleague or friend asks you for help with an assignment, you agree to help face-to-face, but later email them to say that you haven't time.
13. Can you explain why you think and feel that you must behave in a certain way but behave in another way?

#### **Part 4 – Qualities of self in different situations**

1. What does it mean for you to be a good person in Higher Education/ employment?
2. What does it mean for you to be a good person at home, with friends, colleagues, a citizen in your local community and in the global community?
3. Can you give examples of your behaviour in these different situations?
4. How can you show the same type of behaviour from one situation to another?
5. How do your values and beliefs change from one situation to another at University/ work?
6. At University/ at work, how do you cope with conflicts? What people help you to resolve differences of opinion and conflicts?

#### **Part 5 - Qualities of being a student**

1. What motivated you to become a student and why?
2. What sorts of qualities make up a good/bad student/person here? What does it mean to be a good/bad student/person here?

*...let's talk about some of these...hardworking, intelligence, respect, punctuality –*

3. Do you think these qualities can be negative/positive or both.... ?
4. What does a student/person here think of/feel and behave like? What does it mean to be...*respectful, hardworking*? Can you give some examples?
5. Do you behave differently with different people i.e. friends, teachers? How do you behave differently and do you know why?
6. Would there be some people who you think you would be more, e.g. *...respectful, honest, caring...* with? Who and why?
7. Who has told you about the qualities of a good/bad student?
8. Do you agree with the qualities? What happens if you disagree with these? What opportunities are there for you to discuss these?
9. What do you believe Higher Education has added to your understanding of yourself and your idea of responsibility, values, character, etc?

## **Part 6 – The importance of life-long learning and training**

1. What sorts of life-long learning/ training have you been involved in?
2. Why is life-long learning/ training important and valuable?
3. Has life-long learning or training developed your character? In what ways?
4. Has life-long learning or training expanded your horizons and (employment) prospects?
5. Has life-long learning or training influenced the way you think about yourself, others and society?
6. In what ways has life-long learning or training influenced your core values and developed you as an individual?
7. What challenges or barriers have you encountered in accessing life-long learning or training?

## **Part 7- Additional comments**

1. What has been the place of technology and the media in your understanding of values and character? (e.g. TV; newspapers; WWW, etc).
2. Is there anything else you would like to add or which you feel that hasn't been covered?

Many thanks for taking part in this interview. Your views and experiences will help us to understand and improve things in Higher Education and employment.

Interviews are anonymous and confidential, so no-one will know your name and personal details, which will be kept secret.

### **10.3. Information sheet, consent form and interview schedule for graduate employees**

#### **Learning for Life** *Higher Education and Employment*

#### **Information Sheet for Participants**

##### **Introduction- The research, its aims and your rights**

Thank you for coming today. You will have seen this information leaflet before (which has been handed to you by the researcher, e-mailed to you or posted to you). This is to give you the opportunity and a 'cooling-off' period in which to consider your willingness and suitability to take part in the research.

This research is part of a wider project on *Learning for Life* at Canterbury Christ Church University. The purpose of the *Learning for Life* project as a whole is to explore people's values and character development. This particular part of the research focuses on values and character in Higher Education and employment.

You have been selected today because you have expressed an interest in taking part in the research and feel willing and able to take part.

We want to ask you some questions about values, character, life-long learning, leadership, morals and the like in Higher Education/ employment. Your experiences of Higher Education/ employment are vital to the understanding and development of better Higher Education/ employment in the future.

Today's interview will last approximately between 45-90 minutes.

If you take part, anything you say will be completely confidential and nothing will be traced back to you individually. Interviews are anonymous and confidential. Any information you give us will be stored securely in filing cabinets at CCCU or password protected if held on computer. Any information you give us will be given a unique code so as not to be traceable back to you.

In spite of these precautions, it is still conceivable that someone may recognise you in the research report and find out things about you that you would rather not have known. You will have the opportunity to veto the use of any information that applies specifically to you.

You should feel under no obligation or pressure to take part in the research and will be given a 'cooling-off' period to consider if you want to take part or not. Information about yourself will not be shared with third parties (for example, your employers or Universities). You may withdraw from the research at any time and at any stage of the research and not have to give a reason for doing so.

What we're going to do today is focus on what sorts of attitudes, dispositions, ethics, morals and values people have in Higher Education/ employment.

If you feel uncomfortable, you may halt the interview or withdraw from the interview if you no longer want to take part.

The research is important, though, so your comments and ideas are very valuable. We want your views of values and character development.

Any feedback about the interview or issues you think we have missed can be discussed at the end of the interview.

If you have read and understood the above and wish to take part in the interview, please fill in the details below.

Name (Block Capitals):.....

Organisation:.....

Date:.....

Signature:.....

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

This interview schedule is to be used in a semi-structured way. The questions are primarily to help the researcher in identifying the main topics that are of interest to the interviewee and allow the interviewee to elaborate on issues that matter to them.

The questions should be used as prompts to allow the interviewee to tell their story on the issues involved (as well as to cover the research questions and aims of the research in a thorough and empirical manner).

We want to ask you some questions about values, character, life-long learning, leadership, morals and the like in Higher Education/ employment. Your experiences of Higher Education/ employment are vital to the understanding and development of better Higher Education/ employment in the future.

Today's interview will last approximately between 45-90 minutes.

### **Part 1 – Individual qualities**

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and what you do?
2. How would you define 'good' character? What does 'good' character mean to you?
3. What do you think are the qualities and characteristics that make a good person with good character?
4. What qualities in someone's behaviour show you they have good character, that they are an *...honest, caring, trustworthy, reliable, etc...* person? What kind of actions show us they are an *...honest, caring, trustworthy, reliable, etc ...*person?
5. Please can you think of any examples or instances in which people have shown good character?
6. Can you think of someone at University/ work who has shown good character? What did they do?
7. If a person has shown good character and a positive quality at University/ at work *...e.g. friendly, caring, compassionate, loving, honesty, trustworthy, reliability, determination, confidence, etc* what might they be thinking – what kind of thoughts might they have? Can you give examples?
8. If a person has shown good character at University/ at work *...e.g. .... honesty, caring, determined...* what kind of *...honest...* feelings and attitudes may they have? Can you give examples of these?

9. What are the main qualities of a person or individual that can be regarded as 'good' at University/ at work?
10. What are the main qualities of a person or individual that can be regarded as 'bad' at University/ at work?
11. Could you say why these qualities are considered good and bad?
12. Please can you give examples where yourself, friends, teachers or colleagues have shown good character?
13. Please can you give examples where yourself, friends, teachers or colleagues have shown bad character?

**Part 2 – Leadership qualities.**

1. Can you think of examples where people senior to you, friends or colleagues have shown good character and good qualities? What are these good qualities?
2. How have they shown these qualities in their behaviour? What have they done?
3. What sorts of thoughts, feelings and attitudes do you think they have when they are showing this quality e.g. *determination, leadership*?
4. When you have seen a friend or colleague showing good character and good qualities has this affected the way that you act with others? Have you tried to change your behaviour to be more positive?
5. Can you give some examples of people (colleagues, friends, seniors) who you think have shown bad character and bad qualities? What are these bad qualities?
6. How have they shown these qualities in their behaviour? What have they done?
7. What sorts of thoughts, attitudes and feelings do you think they have?
8. Do good/bad thoughts, feelings and behaviour make someone a good/bad person? Why?
9. Can you think of a well-known person, such as someone who is famous, and the qualities that they have which are good or bad?
10. What leaders and sorts of people do you look up to and why?

11. Would you say that your University/ employer gives you room for your imagination or creativity? In what ways?

### **Part 3 – Qualities of self**

1. What sort of qualities/values would you say you have as a person?
2. What positive qualities/values would you say you have as a person?
3. What negative qualities/values would you say you have as a person?
4. What behaviour would show you are acting ...generously, caringly, compassionately, etc? How do you demonstrate this quality or other qualities in practice?
5. Can you think of one or two examples of what you have done that shows this or another quality you can think of? Please tell us about it?
6. With this quality .... e.g. ....generosity, caringness, compassion, determination, etc.... if you were in a generous, caring, compassionate, determined mood, what thoughts or feelings might you have?
7. What does it mean to be generous, caring, compassionate, determined, a leader, etc?
8. Who has helped you decide upon your values? Who has guided you the most?
9. If you want personal support, where do you go for it?
10. Who has helped you decide upon your values at University/ in employment? Who has guided you at University/ work the most. How have they guided you?
11. Can you think of moments when you may think and feel that you should behave in a certain way but you behave in another way? For example?
  - a. An old lady has fallen on the pavement, you think you should help her, you feel that you should help and yet you walk-on and don't help.
  - b. A colleague or friend asks you for help with an assignment, you agree to help face-to-face, but later email them to say that you haven't time.
12. Can you explain why you think and feel that you must behave in a certain way but behave in another way?



13. What is your attitude to religious belief? Have you a religious faith and if so in what tradition do you stand?

#### **Part 4 – Qualities of self in different situations**

1. What does it mean for you to be a good person in Higher Education/ employment?
2. What does it mean for you to be a good person at home, with friends, colleagues, a citizen in your local community and in the global community?
3. Can you give examples of your behaviour in these different situations?
4. How can you show the same type of behaviour from one situation to another?
5. How do your values and beliefs change from one situation to another at University/ work?
6. At University/ at work, how do you cope with conflicts? What people help you to resolve differences of opinion and conflicts?

#### **Part 5- Qualities of being an employee**

1. What motivated you to become an employee of the organisation for which you work?
2. What sorts of qualities make up a good/bad employee/person here? What does it mean to be a good/bad employee/person here?  
*...let's talk about some of these...job commitment, hardworking, respectful, punctuality –*
3. Do you think these qualities can be negative/positive or both? Why?
4. What does an employee/person here think of/feel and behave like? What does it mean to be...*respectful, hardworking, honest, committed, diligent*? Can you give some examples?
5. Do you behave differently with different colleagues? How do you behave differently and do you know why? Would there be some people who you think you would be more, e.g. ...*respectful, honest, caring...* with? Who and why?
6. Who has told you about the qualities of a good/bad employee?
7. Do you agree with the qualities? What happens if you disagree with these? What opportunities are there for you to discuss these?

8. What motivates you to work where you do?
9. How would you describe your job-satisfaction? What achievements have you made that you are most satisfied with?
10. What factors contribute to your well-being at work?
11. How has employment changed your attitudes? In what ways?

#### **Part 6 – The importance of life-long learning and training**

1. What sorts of life-long learning/ training have you been involved in?
2. Why is life-long learning/ training important and valuable?
3. Has life-long learning or training developed your character? In what ways?
4. Has life-long learning or training expanded your horizons and (employment) prospects?
5. Has life-long learning or training influenced the way you think about yourself, others and society?
6. In what ways has life-long learning or training influenced your core values and developed you as an individual?
7. What challenges or barriers have you encountered in accessing life-long learning or training?
8. What forms of training are available to staff/ colleagues/ students here?

#### **Part 7 - Additional comments**

1. What has been the place of technology and the media in your understanding of values and character? (e.g. TV; newspapers; WWW, etc).
2. Is there anything else you would like to add or which you feel that hasn't been covered?

Many thanks for taking part in this interview. Your views and experiences will help us to understand and improve things in Higher Education and employment.

#### 10.4. Information sheet, consent form and email interview for students

##### Learning for Life: Higher Education and Employment

Dr. Ben Gray, Canterbury Christ Church University.

Email: .....@canterbury.ac.uk

Dear Sir/ Madam,

As you are unavailable for a face-to-face interview for the above research project run by Canterbury Christ Church University, it would be very helpful indeed if you could spend 45 or so minutes of your time answering the questions listed below. Please take your time in thinking about your responses and answer them as fully as you can. The longer your response the better (as this will get your stories and experiences of being a student).

The research project has a web-site that you might want to look at:

<http://www.learningforlife.org.uk/home/>

If you would prefer to take part in a face-to-face or telephone interview, please feel free to email me at the above address and say so.

You and your answers are anonymous and confidential, so great care will be taken to protect your identity and you will not be named. No information or data about you will be shared with third parties (including your university).

Please return your completed answers by email: .....@canterbury.ac.uk

Many thanks,

Ben

Your name:

Organisation:

Date:

Signature:

*Please write a little about yourself and what you do.*

*Why did you decide to go to university? For what reasons?*

*What are your core values and why are these values important?*

*Who has taught you these values? How have your values been shaped or changed by being at University?*

*What components or qualities make a person with 'good character'? Why are these qualities good?*

*Can you give an example when you or someone else showed 'good character'? What did they do?*

*What components or qualities make a person with 'bad character' and why are these qualities bad?*

*What sorts of people do you look up to and why?*

*Has being at university developed you as a person or changed your attitudes?*

*Have you ever engaged in voluntary or paid work? If so, what sorts of voluntary/ paid work and with what sorts of people? Why was it of value?*

*Who has supported you the most at university?*

Many thanks, Ben. Email: [benjamin.gray@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:benjamin.gray@canterbury.ac.uk)

**10.5. Information sheet, consent form and email interview for graduate employees.**

**Learning for Life: Higher Education and Employment**

Dr. Ben Gray, Canterbury Christ Church University

Email: [.....@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:.....@canterbury.ac.uk)

Dear Sir/ Madam,

As you are unavailable for a face-to-face interview for the above research project run by Canterbury Christ Church University, it would be very helpful indeed if you could spend 45 or so minutes of your time answering the questions listed below. Please take your time in thinking about your responses and answer them as fully as you can. The longer your response the better (as this will get your stories and experiences of graduate employment).

The research project has a web-site that you might want to look at:

<http://www.learningforlife.org.uk/home/>

If you would prefer to take part in a face-to-face or telephone interview, please feel free to email me at the above address and say so.

You and your answers are anonymous and confidential, so great care will be taken to protect your identity and you will not be named. No information or data about you will be shared with third parties (including your employers).

Please return your completed answers by email ([.....@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:.....@canterbury.ac.uk)).

Many thanks,

Your name:

Organisation:

Date:

Signature:

*Please write a little about yourself and what you do.*

*What are your core values and why are these values important?*

*Who has taught you these values? How have your values been shaped by being at University or in your employment?*

*What components make a person with 'good character'? Why are these qualities good?*

*Can you give an example when you or someone else showed 'good character'? What did they do?*

*What components make a person with 'bad character' and why are these qualities bad?*

*What sorts of people do you look up to and why?*

*Has your graduate employment developed you as a person or changed your attitudes?*

*Have you ever engaged in voluntary work? If so, what sorts of voluntary work and with what sorts of people? Why was it of value?*

*Who has supported you the most at work?*

*What do you think of your company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?*

Many thanks,

## 10.6. Lists of words from NVivo8 analysis

These lists represent the frequency of significant words as shown by the coding used in the NVivo8 analysis. They are included because of their intrinsic interest when considering matters concerned with character formation and the language used.

### 10.6.1 Good Character (in descending order of frequency)

honest	goodness	giving & generous
helpful	relative to situation	having opinions
trustworthy	team worker	lives by values
friendly, friendship	conscientious	loving
kind	consistent	motivated
integrity	dependable	according to God's standards no one 'good'
work hard	gives advice	not aggressive
empathy, sympathy for others	happy	not ruthless
sense of humour & fun	individual distinctiveness	objectivity
openness, open-mindedness	intelligence	organised
caring	knowing capabilities	peace
listeners	perseverance	philanthropic
not arrogant humble	pleasant	responsible
positive	proactive	seriousness
interest in others	punctual	share their talents
morals	awareness	sharing
respectful	supportive family	time keeping
approachable	tries to do good to society	true to the Spirit
generosity	well-mannered	understanding
reliable	able to be serious	vibrant
selfless	active people	voluntary work
stand up for beliefs	beauty	loyalty
compassionate & understanding	brave	non judgemental or prejudiced
straightforward	can converse meaningfully	ambition
enthusiasm	committed to their studies	looking after others
patient	cooperative	outgoing
tolerant	courage	passionate
communicate well	depends on situation	in business professionalism
doing what they say they would	develops others	interesting
politeness	doesn't take advantage	joyful
striving to do their best	doing as you are told at work	judgement
treat others how they would be treated	easy going	keep someone's attention
a range of qualities	egalitarian	level headed
confident	faithfulness	well meaning
fairness	flexible	without malice
genuine	following instinct	working ethically
get along with people	forgiving	

### 10.6.2 *Bad Character* (in descending order of frequency)

selfish and self absorbed	lack cooperation	apathy
dishonest	insincere	loud
arrogance	unmotivated	unsupportive
not taking an interest in others	bullying	make people feel inadequate
disrespectful	stab you in the back	no morals
laziness	dismissive of others	conniving
rudeness	keep themselves to themselves	cruel
aggressive & violent	cowardice	spiteful
hurtful	stubborn	thieving
untrustworthy & treacherous	image conscious	too busy
negative attitudes	bossy	moaning complaining
intolerant	no loyalty	poor communicator
greedy	racist	puts others down
not caring	unethical	unorganised
not listening	relative socially	dogmatism
pride	lacks focus and drive	no self-restraint
impatience	disruptive	
unhelpful	abusive	
ignorant	close minded	
deceitful	fakeness	
manipulative	exploitive	
jealous	argumentative	
malicious	egotistical	
unkind	not doing what they say they would	
narrow minded	unpunctual	
angry	not smiling	
hypocrisy	not persevering	
unreliability	we can all be 'bad'	
bad temper	no empathy for others	
judgmental	immature, going out drinking all the time	
dominating	disloyal	
gossip	not committed	
ruthless	sexist & racist	



### 10.6.3 Core Values (in descending order of frequency)

honesty	enthusiastic	diplomacy
hard working	moral	do what others would view as good
integrity	personable	don't look down on people
do best	self development	earnest
helpful	tolerance	education
respect	understanding others	enjoyment
trustworthiness	work life balance	environmental
empathy	achievement	everybody has potential
caring	Christian qualities, Christ-like	focused
friendly	commitment	forgiving
reliable	conscientious	freedom of thought
friendship	consistency	goodness
openness	creative	happiness
sociable	easy going	head and heart resolved
approachable & accessible	leadership	healthy attitude
communication	learning & education	help children enjoy themselves
listener	loving	humility
loyal	organised	keep your word
open minded	passionate	make time for me
straightforward	recognise my good & bad qualities	making the most of life
equal opportunity for all	sensitivity	non-judgemental
family	speak up for what you believe	not hurting others' feelings
intelligence	time management	not opinionated
compassionate	altruistic	optimism
determined & dedicated	ambitious	perseverance
fairness	analytical and opinion forming skills	pleasantness
kind	balance	pragmatic
politeness	be there for others	remuneration
team worker	benevolence	same as company
generosity	citizenship	self-restraint
inspiring	competitiveness	strong minded
patience	considerate	structure
sense of humour	cooperation	teaching sharing knowledge
thoughtful	courage	tenacious
confidence	dependability	unpretentious
do the right thing	diligence	variety in work
do to others as you would have done to you		

### 10.6.4 Influences on Character

<b>Friends &amp; Peers</b>	Friends & peers		90
	Girlfriend/boyfriend		27
<b>Media</b>	Media		3
	TV characters		1
<b>Meeting a wider range of people</b>	<b>Employment</b>	Colleagues	22
		Mentor	19
		Managers	18
		Coach	12
		Buddy	11
		Supervisor	6
		Directors	2
		Boss	2
	Travel & Places Lived in	Environment where I've lived	6
	<b>University</b>	University tutor or supervisor	53
		Meeting people from different backgrounds	16
		Mentors	15
		Head of Year or Director of Studies	10
		Chaplin	5
		Counseling service	3
		Welfare officers	3
		Nurse	2
Support system		2	
Link tutor		2	
Careers service	1		
<b>Volunteering</b>	Appreciate different perspectives	1	
<b>Parents and Relations</b>	Parents		95
	Family		59
	Mother		34
	Father		14
	Partner		10
	Sibling(s)		3
	Wife		2
<b>Religion</b>	Religious belief		14
	Christianity & other Christians		5
<b>Educational Provision</b>	Teachers & Lecturers		15
	School		12
	Scouts		1

### **10.6.5 Political Beliefs and Convictions (in descending order of frequency)**

political beliefs non specific  
left wing  
Conservative  
liberal  
people disillusioned with politics  
welfare state  
important to consider political values  
centre  
difficult to define  
don't like Tories  
freedom of speech essential  
interest in political beliefs  
like to be more aware  
no objectively right decision  
pacifist  
people should have an interest  
political awareness important  
pro EU  
questions political motives  
right wing  
social democrat  
waste of time  
western bias negative

### 10.6.6. Religious and Other Beliefs List (in descending order of frequency)

not religious	no one religion is right
don't believe in God / atheist	related to sexual morality & culture
I am a Christian	values can exist without religion
agnostic / open minded	believe strongly in Islam
belief in higher being / God	prayer helps
nominal Christian	importance of love
undecided about religion	reject church dogma and the Bible
confession and forgiveness take away guilt	Christian but don't believe in God
provides common morality	balance or karma important
non-practising	having problems with faith
Christian values of social worth	privately religious
religion contrasted with spirituality	good thing to believe in something
religion offers core values	social value
negative opinions:	conflict with sexual orientation
religious people can be hypocritical	Catholic
Religious people are not independent	Hindu way of life
can lead to extreme views	faith a positive thing
religion causes problems	atheism is shocking
creates fears which limit experience	Christian humility leads to openness
religion is the basis of racism	scientific evidence lacking to support evolution
not a Christian	Christian right dangerous
religion needs to be in background	respect humans and environment
in relation to brainwashing	relativism essential for tolerance
drilled into as a child	exclusive claims of Christianity negative
being a Christian & social community values	religion provides answers to the meaning of life
no need for God	difficult to describe
Christian belief brings calmness	people shouldn't try to impose their beliefs
moral restraint	atheistic or religious
play along for sake of family	Buddhism or Buddhist ideas
	faith and reason different things

### 10.6.7 HE Motivation (in descending order of frequency)

career related – many specific to teaching or nursing	mother
expected of me	something I could do
enjoy & continue learning	not sure
subject interest	networking
natural progression	meeting new people
encouraged by teachers	recommended
opportunity for personal development	friends going
reputation	place
parents	qualification
reputation for being the best university/ course	education for transferable skills
challenge and use intelligence	entry requirements
good degree	college influence
personal ambition	right feeling about university and course
experience university life	research intensive
learning culture of institution	good feeling
open day	diverse subject mix in the college
parents' influence	teaching reputation
course structure & content	school support
academic success	inspired by author academic from university
move away from home	encouraged by others
culture	school's influence
recommended by student	
diverse & state intake	
academic excellence	
instrumental	
giving something back	
make a difference	
campus	
quality of learning opportunities	
local	
childhood aspiration	
empowerment status	

### **10.6.8 Benefits of HE (in descending order of frequency)**

independence	become better organised
personal development	knowledge
time management	problem solving
academic skills	networking
understanding others different backgrounds	verbalise values and views
communication skills	media discernment
responsible for own learning self motivation	coming of age
critical & analytical skills	team sport
confidence	belong to societies
interpersonal skills	managing conflicts
meeting new people	creativity & imagination encouraged
get along with others	more tolerant
team working	changed perceptions of different cultures
grew up	perseverance
employability	patience
making friends	processing information
work hard	preparing for real world
leadership	stand up for beliefs
self-motivation	subject passion
learn how to learn	political awareness
self-reflection	standing up to arrogant people
intellectual development	tolerance
responsible mature	articulate my beliefs
skills	education
grounding for work	transferable skills
thinking about careers	experience freedom of choice
experience new things	
open minded	

**10.6.9 HE influence on values, attitudes and dispositions**  
**(in descending order of frequency)**

doesn't influence values	just enjoy life
broadens thinking, makes you question	straightforwardness
meeting people from different backgrounds	conflicts with values from HE context
reinforced & shapes values	related to leadership and management
confidence	Gay rights
self-reflective & self-knowledge	narcissistic
responsible	value of communication
as a consequence of environment you are influenced	less proud of abilities
tolerance and open mindedness	equality
grow up	integrity
independence	moral problems and the law
time management	education should be for all
political awareness	value of support
work ethic	friendship
hard work	breaks down prejudices
related to learning	desire to share knowledge
creativity	appreciate teachers
learned about self	less certain of beliefs
people from different backgrounds	less apathetic
through intellectual activity	HE led to questioning
social role of education	aware of opportunities
self-motivation	independence academically
dislike of strong ideological positions	
interpersonal skills	
more focused	
critical thinking & being self-critical	
self-confidence	
more detailed	
more positive	

### **10.6.10 Employment Motivation (in descending order of frequency)**

*What influences interviewees' choice of employer*

training & graduate scheme  
reputation  
wage  
big company  
benefiting others  
job opportunities within company  
career potential & advancement  
interest in work area  
people  
job satisfaction  
company culture caring  
work location  
recommendation  
social responsibility  
work life balance  
recommendation  
investment in staff  
flexibility  
family background & influence  
natural progression  
recruitment program  
support  
prior experience  
job security  
offered a job  
good ethos  
loved learning  
environmental concern  
test oneself  
student loan  
approachable  
business experience  
make a difference  
being valued  
contribution



### **10.6.11 Core Employer Values (and Qualities) (in descending order of frequency)**

*What interviewees thought were important to employers and their business*

best client service  
team work  
being distinctive  
encourage learning and development  
trustworthiness  
integrity  
care of employees  
progressing the company's success  
communication  
making it happen  
work hard  
helpful  
inspiring  
straightforward  
passionate commitment to job / 'heart'  
image  
don't want cleverness  
social responsibility  
tries to act ethically  
profit  
people focus  
developing people  
honesty  
instrumental view of employees  
high quality work  
attract best graduates  
it is all about public image  
professionalism  
self-development  
employee support network  
flexible  
sincere  
diversity  
work life balance  
leadership  
skeptical of business talk  
development not really appreciated  
profit driven  
isolated  
too complex to state  
innovation  
personal responsibility  
openness

**10.6.12 Qualities important to Employers in Employees  
(in descending order of frequency)**

*What interviewees thought employers were looking for in employees*

communicators	increased profitability
academic skills & qualifications	punctual
interpersonal skills	responsible
hardworking	reliability
team work	passionate
ambition	dynamic
well rounded character	good morals
intelligence	not so trusting
initiative	trustworthy
commitment & effort	presentable
learning disposition	competitive
confident	breadth of skills
sociable	take pressure
flexible	politeness
work experience	well educated
leadership qualities	customer focused
honesty	loyal
Integrity	organisation skills
knowledgeable	innovation
wider experience	genuine
organised	think outside the box
creative	character suitability
technical skills & knowledge	problem solver
brightest	people management
empathise with others	maths skill
dedication & determination	interested in business
approachable	respect
listener	caring
outgoing	diligence
challenging inspiring	working under pressure
motivation	depends on job
enthusiastic & eager	time management
diversity of people	
independent opinion	
transferable skills	
patience	
equality	

### **10.6.13 Qualities HE considers important (in descending order of frequency)**

*What personal qualities interviewees thought were considered important by HE institutions*

intelligence  
originality of thought  
potential  
confidence  
enthusiasm  
creativity  
hard working  
achievers  
problem solving  
rebellious disregard authority  
academic career aspirations  
astuteness  
brightness  
broad subject interest  
communication skills  
competence & consistency  
depends of director of study  
fit in socially  
focused on study  
humility  
innovation  
instinct  
knowledge of study area  
literacy academic skills  
open mindedness  
self motivated  
striving to be the best

**10.6.14 Employment Influence on attitudes & values**  
**(in descending order of frequency)**

grow up responsible  
confidence  
no influence  
time aware  
more focused  
realistic  
values awareness  
importance of image  
presentation  
self-confidence  
work ethic  
working with others  
appreciate money  
careers focused  
cynical of unemployed  
interpersonal skills  
professionalism  
100%  
careful with words  
contact with competitive people  
importance of development  
training  
lateral thinking  
less patient  
listening to people  
more committed  
more open  
more selfish  
sceptical of 'good' motives  
self-esteem  
success is subjective  
tolerance  
understand others  
work life balance