

Handshake

The role of careers tech in helping create a diverse future workforce

Universities are critical in helping to achieve a truly diverse workforce. By fostering communities where students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds want to study and providing them with the support they need throughout their academic journey, they help to propel students into those first steps in their careers, ensuring the future workforce is more diverse and representative.

Whilst institution-wide widening participation and EDI strategies are integral in supporting these students, careers management platforms - like Handshake - can also help to amplify these efforts to help support successful graduate outcomes for students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Handshake works alongside careers professionals to complement universities' existing EDI strategies and APPs as they work to build student confidence, support students to make connections, provide students with access to more opportunities and set them up for long-term career success - whatever that success looks like to them.

How are universities using Handshake as part of their wider EDI strategy?

While student needs, accessibility and inclusivity are central to Handshake's design, partners have complete autonomy when it comes to utilising the features and functionality to support their individual EDI strategy. This ensures that careers professionals are empowered to provide personalised support to their students so they can deliver against their APP.

To highlight how Handshake can be used in a variety of ways to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, partners have provided different examples of how they're using Handshake as part of their wider EDI strategy:

"Activity that happens via Handshake is so easily reportable via a series of high-level dashboards. For example, the student equity dash provides an instant demographic view of who we are reaching within our student population, valuable insights to help us shape our student communication and World of Work plans."

Lucy Wilson-Whitford
Associate Director
Coventry University



"Regent's University London is committed to creating an educational setting that is inclusive in which everyone has equal access to opportunities. Handshake is vital in helping achieve and maintain this goal through its employer vetting process (formerly employer trust score), as well as giving a transparent and easy overview of all important employer details, so we can choose to engage with those employers that align with our philosophy."

Valerie De Saegher
Chief People Officer
Regent's University London



"1. Allows us to proactively build relationships with employers to facilitate targeted EDI activities that we have identified as being a strategic priority.

2. Enables us to identify and communicate to relevant groups of students with appropriate and tailored EDI activities."

Claire Crux
Assistant Head Careers & Employment
Hertfordshire University



At Bradford, EDI and a commitment to social mobility are at our core and we similarly recognise the significant social and economic challenges of our region. Because of this, our APP is critical in everything we do and as such, we ensure we utilise software to help us execute on this and meet our goals, like Handshake.

Brad-ATTAIN is a programme which encourages students from ethnic minorities into postgraduate research Internships, with Handshake's email tool we're able to target relevant students to promote the programme.

Graduate Workforce Bradford is an initiative to help boost the job prospects of our most in-need graduates across a variety of industries. Through the job opportunities on Handshake and data available in the Analytics tool, we can easily track the needs, engagement and progress of these students entering the world of graduate-level employment.

By utilising Handshake we are able to better support our students and connect them with the relevant programmes that will help them to secure a bright future."

Andrew Rowbatham & Urfan Faqir

Careers Information & Communications Coordinator & Business & Community Engagement Consultant
University of Bradford



How does Handshake promote equality, inclusion and diversity amongst students and graduates?

Handshake's mission is to democratise students' access to opportunity. We achieve this by supporting students from any university, regardless of their background, to access the same

information, opportunities and connections as their peers.

Not only this, but we empower career services with the tools they need to deliver an inclusive service and provide personalised support to students to help support EDI initiatives and ensure all students' success at a strategic, demographic and individual level. Here is an overview of some of the ways the Handshake platform is helping meet EDI goals across our partner universities:

- **Access for all:** Any student with an ac.uk email address can create a profile for free and any employer can create a profile and post a job with no cost.
- **Student information:** Universities can pull in their own diversity data points into Handshake to provide tailored support, while students have the option to self-report their gender, race, ethnicity and socio-economic background to help EDI strategies.
- **Reporting and analytics:** Data from advanced customisable reports is easily shareable with external platforms and campus stakeholders to inform design and strategy.
- **Connections:** Handshake creates a level playing field for students to start building their network - connecting with students, alumni, careers professionals and employers.
- **Personalised experience:** Tools like Targeted Emails makes it easy for careers professionals to provide personalised support to students by sending opportunities and resources personal to them.
- **On-demand access:** The mobile app helps keep students informed about the opportunities right for them whether or not they have access to a laptop.
- **Shared experiences:** Reviews allows students and alumni to share their experiences of working at organisations on the employer profile; providing a richer, peer-oriented picture of opportunity providers for students to learn from.

To find out more about how Handshake can support your university's EDI strategy, reach out to the team today:

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