

# Driving a careers transformation across the University of Liverpool with Handshake at its heart resulted in mega leap in student engagement

“At Liverpool we wanted a platform that aligned with the transformational change we were working towards in terms of careers and across the institution. We wanted to create a community feel amongst careers alongside our peer-to-peer service and Handshake’s functionality has helped us to achieve this personalised employability journey for our students”

<b>Name</b> Jason Steers	<b>Location</b> Liverpool and online	<b>Institution</b> University of Liverpool
<b>Job title</b> Communications and Engagement Project Officer	<b>Enrollment</b> 21,000	<b>Career services staff</b> 80 full time staff and 20 Careers Coaches

## Challenges

- 1. Centring the student voice**– Liverpool’s strategy is to create a progressive careers service with students at its heart, the introduction of the Careers Studio created a physical space for this community, but a similarly progressive virtual offer was key to ensuring the accessibility and effectiveness of this approach.
- 2. Embedding employability** – enhancing curriculum-based approaches to careers is vital to ensuring support can be accessed by all students regardless of background or levels of engagement with extra-curricular offers.
- 3. Driving career outcomes** – Profile completions, employer engagement and student engagement with jobs are all important steps on a student’s journey and indicators of career progress. Monitoring and evaluating these diverse milestones, wherever they take place (inside or outside of the platform), is key to refining future offers and supporting student success.

## Key stats

- 11%** above target on student account activations since using Handshake
- 66%** of students have actively engaged with Handshake this academic year
- 69%** of Liverpool’s alumni are engaged with Handshake
- 97%** of students opted to make their profile public to employers

“Providing a personalised career journey for our students is an integral part of our careers strategy. Handshake helps support this by providing us with a centralised hub to host all of our content which we can then promote to specific groups of students based on demographic data or activity. Always linking back to Handshake via our socials, emails, resources and assessments is what drives our students’ engagement with careers.”

## Solutions

- **Creating a careers community** – Implementing Handshake in May 2020 allowed Liverpool to amplify the student voice and expand their community of careers into the virtual world. Their Career Coaches have been key to this, generating dynamic, student-focussed social media content linking back to Handshake, as well as sign-posting students to toolkits, resources, and encouraging networking with alumni and peers - in fact, a recent TikTok video created as part of their Class of 2023 campaign has generated over 100,000 views. This use of social media allows Liverpool to tap into existing student communities as well as encouraging the exploration of different student journeys, featuring students and graduates as the face of all virtual activity.
- **Driving an institution-wide approach** – With the support of three faculty teams promoting awareness and engagement, Handshake has helped Liverpool create a platform which is explored by academics, empowering them to support students at different points in their journeys. As such, curriculum content is not only regularly linked back to Handshake, but it also provides a platform for a host of personalised resources, follow-on activities and even assessments.
- **Measuring success** – Handshake's suite of pre-built, user-centric dashboards and reports, have placed easy-to-access data from employers and students at the University of Liverpool's fingertips. This data can be cut, filtered and personalised to review demographic data, assess top job roles, industries and locations, and review on-campus interviews, outcomes and salaries. This real-time data allows the Liverpool team to be responsive, helping them to evaluate employer engagement, design the most necessary resources and events, and implement new methods of attracting students to the platform. Handshake data now forms one of the eight metrics used by Liverpool in their impact scorecard.

## Liverpool's top tips for using Handshake

- Incentivise students to explore the platform, not only to activate their accounts. Using the Journeys tool is a great way to encourage students to engage with different aspects of the platform.
- Use Handshake to increase access for students from underrepresented groups. You can even sync the system with your student record system to allow filtering by EDI data and demographic fields. You can then match up students to bespoke events and jobs.
- Make Handshake do the heavy-lifting by aligning it to all aspects of your strategy. It works really well with a student-centric, peer-to-peer approach, and is also a great resource to amplify embedded employability work.

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“Having the Handshake app available to our students and graduates has helped careers to remain in the forefront of our students’ consciousness even when they are not sat at a desk. The ability to push through recommended content has provided us with a great opportunity to make Handshake a ‘sticky’ tool for our students to use as part of their everyday student experience.”

**Learn how to level the playing field for your students today**

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