Developing Employability for Business
Maryvonne Lumley & James Wilkinson
OUP (2014)
Review by Christine Smith

Do you ever ask academics at other universities what they have on their reading lists? ‘Developing employability for business’ (Maryvonne Lumley & James Wilkinson, OUP, 2014) is newly published and was recommended by an academic at a UK university for use with employability modules.

Written primarily for students, the project-based content could be worked through by a student independently but is designed to support curriculum content on employability and professional skills. Readers are encouraged to reflect on their own skills as they progress, with activities including audits, projects and exercises.

Not only aimed at business students, it is 'your guide to developing the attributes needed for successful job hunting and to making a successful transition into the workplace'. Taking a broad view, the book ends with looking at long-term employability, not stopping at graduation but rather when the first graduate job starts.

Detailed and practical, the writers strive to get a balance between theory and skills, challenging the reader to engage with self-reflection and development whilst also encouraging students to start now and take responsibility for their career. Case studies and comments from employers, students and graduates bring a sense of the realities of the current graduate recruitment market. In a competitive market the book emphasises how employability skills are the differential and takes the reader through how to make them the person who is the desired candidate. Much of the book is taken up with looking in detail at specific employability skills, with an acknowledgement that the content in section 3 such as CVs, cover letters and interviews is probably what most would expect to see in a book about employability.

Where would this resource best fit? Difficult to answer without knowing what already exists within each curriculum. Possibly as a textbook for an employability module or equally, and potentially more powerfully, used at strategic points throughout a degree/post-grad programme to reinforce a cyclical spine of developing employability skills through the course.