

An Investigation of Current Events Management Education (EME) in Relation to the
Requirements of the Events Industry: A LEGS (lecturers, employers, graduates and
students) perspective.

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ABSTRACT

Events management education (EME) is an area of education that has seen considerable growth since it first appeared in the UK twenty years ago. This in-depth review is centred on the perspective of the four main stakeholders, namely the lecturers, employers, graduates and students (LEGS). Conducted between 2011 and 2016 using mixed methods research, the thesis follows a grounded theory interpretative approach and contributes to the progress and direction of future EME awards.

A central concern of this thesis is to investigate the supposed gaps that exist between education and industry and challenges many of the perspectives that bring into question the quality of EME in the 21st century that have dominated much of the EME debate. It highlights concerns from within the teaching environment that are central to the design and delivery of EME awards. By doing so, this thesis sets up a new research agenda focusing more specifically on issues of real concern to EME and the relationships of those involved in managing the expectations of each of the main stakeholders. This thesis provides value by presenting an account of the challenges facing EME and the experiences of graduates entering the events industry today. It draws together insights from EME literature and fieldwork, industry and academic professionals, students and graduates, and provides a strong basis from which further research can be developed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page	i
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Declaration	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
List of illustrations & Figures	viii
List of Appendices	ix
Abbreviations	x
 Chapter 1.	
Introduction	
1.1. The journey to and choosing an Ed. D	1
1.2. Introduction	4
1.3. Background to the study	7
1.4. Defining events	7
1.5. Origins and growth of events and EME	8
1.6. Industry Landscape	9
1.7. The significance of university choice	11
1.8. Understanding & misunderstandings between education & industry	12
1.9. Significance of EME	14
1.10. Availability of EME awards	16
1.11. Contributions to knowledge	18
1.12. Thesis outline	20
 Chapter 2.	
Literature Review	
2.1. Introduction	22
2.2. The EME curriculum	27
2.3. Knowledge and skills required for the events industry	28
2.4. Curriculum & Pedagogy	32
2.4.1. Obtaining knowledge and skills through practical activities	36
2.4.2. Group Work	37
2.4.3. Experiential Learning	39
2.5. EMBOK/CMP-IS/MBECS	44
2.6. Challenges for lecturers designing and delivering EME	48
2.7. The professionalisation of events management	51
2.8. The visibility of EME	55
2.9. Conclusions	56

Chapter 3. Research Design

3.1.	Introduction	58
3.2.	Ontology and Epistemology	60
3.3.	Etic – emic validity	63
3.4.	Research paradigms	65
3.5.	Methodologies	68
3.6.	Methods of data collection	71
3.6.1.	Interviews	71
3.6.2.	Questionnaires	72
3.7.	Sampling	74
3.8.	Validity & Reliability	76
3.8.1.	Pilot study	77
3.8.2.	Maintaining a reliable and valid approach	78
3.9.	Ethics	80
3.10.	Procedure	86
3.11.	Data analysis	89

Chapter 4. Findings and Analysis

4.1.	Section: 1.	
4.1.1.	Introduction	93
4.1.2.	The design and delivery of EME awards in England	94
4.1.3.	Incorporating NOS into the design of EME awards	98
4.1.4.	Defining the current focus of EME awards	102
4.1.5.	Desired and actual learning focus	109
4.1.6.	Factors contributing to the design of an EME award	114
4.1.7.	Lecturer Knowledge and Industry Experience	116
4.2.	Section 2.	
4.2.1.	HE EME awards and the expectations of students and employers	122
4.2.2.	The role of academic study in developing requisite skills necessary for work in the events sector	130
4.2.3.	Learning the requisite EM skills in HE	132
4.2.4.	The growing case for attention	137

	to gender	
4.2.5.	Student preferences and preparation for work	139
4.2.6.	The significance of First Destination Employment (FDE)	144
4.3.	Summary	148
Chapter 5.		
Conclusions		
5.1.	Introduction	150
5.2.	From gaps between education and industry to managing expectation	151
5.3.	Meeting industry need	154
5.4.	‘Event’ Events’ and ‘Management’	156
5.5.	Meeting the employers skills, knowledge and ability expectations	157
5.6.	Improving education through industry alignment and support organisations	163
5.7.	NOS and Professionalisation	166
5.8.	Considering FDE	170
5.9.	Attention to detail	171
5.10.	Fixing the holes	173
5.11.	Strengths and limitations of the study	176
5.12.	Contributions	178
	5.12.1. Contributions to knowledge	179
	5.12.2. Contributions to policy & practice	181
5.13.	Future research & recommendations	183
References		186
Appendix		198

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of the Doctorate in Education (Ed.D) being studied at Staffordshire University. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised the work of others.

WG Ryan

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS & FIGURES

Figure 1.1.	Annual income from events	10
Figure 3.1.1.	Corresponding themes and research questions	56
Figure 3.5.1.	Convergent Mixed Methods Design. Creswell (2003)	67
Figure 3.10.1.	Original thesis proposal Wednesday 14th December 2011	80
Figure 3.10.2.	Principal contributors to understanding EME	81
Figure 3.10.3.	EME research design, procedure and segments	85
Figure 4.1.1.	Lecturer support	91
Figure 4.1.2.	Research skills, critical analysis, confidence to be creative, research integrity	93
Figure 4.1.3.	The use of NOS in designing an EME award	95
Figure 4.1.4.	Teaching and subject specialism	99
Figure 4.1.5.	EME Top 3 Subject Areas	102
Figure 4.1.6.	Key Events management occupational roles	103
Figure 4.1.7.a.	ACTUAL learning approach of your EME award	105
Figure 4.1.7.b.	DESIRED learning approach of your EME award	106
Figure 4.1.8.	Lecturer experience	113
Figure 4.2.1.	Award meets individual learning requirements	118
Figure 4.2.2.	Student attitude towards learning events management theory	125
Figure 4.2.3.	The use of EL through real events	128
Figure 4.2.4.	Gender & level of seniority in events employment	132
Figure 4.2.5.a.	Preparation for work Level 6 compared to responses from all.	134
Figure 4.2.5.b.	Preparation for work – Level 4 only (from 43 responses)	136
Figure 4.2.6.	Effectiveness of EME award in preparing for work in events	137
Figure 4.2.7.	Planning to work in a particular area of events management	138
Figure 4.2.8.	Preferred FDE sector of work when ranked 1-7	140
Figure 4.2.9.	Individual student suggestions for FDE	141

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX I:	A selection of national & international events management associations	188
APPENDIX II:	Events management domains of knowledge	190
APPENDIX III:	Student survey 2013/4 statement of invitation	192
APPENDIX IV:	Consent form	194
APPENDIX V:	Employer semi-structured interview questions	195
APPENDIX VI:	Hours of data collection by interview and data codes	196
APPENDIX VII:	Questionnaires	198
APPENDIX VIII:	List of teaching subjects provided by author in questionnaire	205
APPENDIX IX:	Specialist areas of teaching	206
APPENDIX X:	Functional map 2013	210

ABBREVIATIONS

Association for Event Management in Education-----	AEME
Association of Event Organisers-----	AEO
Bachelor of Arts with Honours -----	BA (Hons)
British Education Research Association -----	BERA
Business Visits and Events Partnership-----	BVEP
Certified Meeting Professional-----	CMP
Certified Meeting Professional-International Standards -----	CMP-IS
Complete University Guide -----	CUG
Convention Industry Council -----	CIC
Corporate Social Responsibility -----	CSR
Skills Centre for Administration-----	CFA
Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education -----	DLHE
Doctor of Business Administration -----	DBA
Doctor of Education -----	Ed. D
Events Industry Forum -----	EIF
Events Management -----	EM
Event Management Body of Knowledge-----	EMBOK
Events management Education -----	EME
Experiential Learning -----	EL
Final Year Project -----	FYP
First Destination Employment -----	FDE
Global Economic Downturn-----	GED
Group Work -----	GW
Higher Education -----	HE
Higher Education Statistics Agency-----	HESA
Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism -----	HLST
Health & Safety at Work Act -----	HSW
Institute of Events Management -----	IEM
Institute of Hospitality Management -----	IHM
The International Special Events Society -----	ISES
International Vocational Qualification -----	IVQ
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis -----	IPA
Joint Academic Coding System-----	JACS
Lecturers, Employers, Graduates & Students -----	LEGS

Master of Business Administration -----	MBA
Meetings and Business Events Competency Standards -----	MBECS
Mixed Methods Phenomenological Research -----	MMPR
National Occupational Standards -----	NOS
Doctor of Philosophy -----	PhD
Professional Development Portfolio -----	PDP
Quality Assurance Agency -----	QAA
Small To Medium Sized Enterprises -----	SME's
Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities -----	SIC
Student Satisfaction Survey -----	SSS
Tourism Management Institute -----	TMI
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service -----	UCAS

Chapter 1

1.1: The journey to and choosing an Ed. D

This research project is part of a professional doctorate in education and it can be put down to a unique set of personal circumstances and a desire to explore HE teaching and learning. It is these personal circumstances that have drawn me to a Doctor of Education (Ed.D) rather than a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) to research this topic. Having come to education from a long career in the events industry, I have continually worked on finding the levels of confidence I rely on when working in industry. This comes from experience and while postgraduate certificates contributed to this, active academic experiences provide further opportunities to improve and develop my skills as a lecturer and understand the ways of the academic environment.

In order to achieve this beyond the usual teaching experiences, I would put myself on committees that focused on academic procedure such as programme approval and extenuating circumstances. These responsibilities have helped in understanding what makes up an award as well as the student experience but they did not offer much in the way of supporting the student researcher. Therefore, I concluded that the ultimate means of improving my academic skills to be in the best position to support students at every level was to undertake an Ed.D.

The Ed D programme was preferred over the other doctoral routes because of its systematic approach to developing skills in research. The way in which the award is structured into key stages allowed me to progress by combining my external

professional activities with academic research and the academic workplace. Stage One introduced me to research concepts and critical approaches on educational policy while transporting me through an understanding of a rationale for a research design. This led to identifying an area of learning practice and producing theoretical perspectives that challenged the defined education policy. Before this final stage, the Ed D supported me in developing an initial but effective literature review. This was an enormous learning curve that was central to developing so many academic abilities including my exploratory, critical and evaluative skills.

My final thesis has been developed out of a dedicated five-year Ed. D based study of EME. However, it is difficult to pinpoint the psychological start date of the research. My involvement with events is substantial. I completed my first live performance to an audience in 1969 and commenced gainful employment as a musician in 1974. As I went through my time-served apprenticeship as a musician, I would take on other jobs that would be considered suppliers or support organisations to the events industry. These included working in music shops, working as crew for bands, as a driver for touring bands and later after a successful career as a musician, the management of a globally famous venue. Even when working for major artists, I would constantly be involved in the organisation side of the event. This desire to plan and manage grew into self-employment providing entertainment for private events which continues today. However, in 1996, I experienced a very personal enlightening realisation that completely changed my direction and ultimately my future.

The mid-90s were difficult times for many jobbing musicians and on an evening I had free, I went along to watch a band with whom I had toured with some years prior that were performing at a local social club. This band had achieved global success; attracting audiences of tens-of-thousands, but were now only managing to perform on the local social club circuit. The venue was relatively full, but instead of coming to

watch the band, the audience was largely made up of club members who would attend these events on a weekly basis. I observed the audience talking amongst themselves paying only sympathetic attention to the performance. Added to this, the public address system was particularly poor and it was evident that the band members were also not enjoying the experience. It was then that my belated realisation occurred. I am primarily a drummer and if I had to live through what these one-time legends were experiencing to maintain a living beyond retirement age with no other form of income, I should be concerned for my own mental state. My continued involvement with the music industry has always been because I get excited from being involved. These experiences I was seeing in front of me were very different and a clear indication of what was to come. If I was to continue as a musician in any form, I needed a plan to come off the stage.

I completed a Bachelor of Arts with Honours (BA [Hons.]) in Performing Arts Management and completed a Master of Business Administration (MBA) majoring in music industries all within a four-year period as a full-time student. Upon graduation from my MBA I took on a role with a funding agency specifically for the music industry which amongst other responsibilities included organising conferences and exhibitions, funding and providing an array of support for small to medium sized enterprises (SME's) and delivering educational seminars whilst leading on international trade visits. This role unexpectedly led to being invited to deliver more guest lecturers at local universities and eventually to becoming the events manager for The Cavern Club in Liverpool. This role not only involved music events, but corporate hospitality and sporting events. My life-long interest in education was given the opportunity to grow and the inevitable application for full time employment in education was made. Since embarking on a life of academia, I have taught EME in four universities.

It is appreciated that I cannot knowingly draw on the very earliest part of my journey in events management for this research, but the experiences I have had throughout my time as a musician and in the events industry on and off the stage form part of who I am. A great deal of my life has been and continues to be as an events practitioner. However, my primary concern today is education and completing a doctorate will provide me with the necessary expertise to guide students appropriately in their research. Achieving this is not a destination, but instead a key milestone in my continued educational journey. Completion will represent an academic ability that is grounded in a comprehensive academic training process.

As a relatively novice academic I have a number of research interests that are based around where I have come from and where I am going to. The subject areas I come from include the impact of community based events, festivals, and international events. EME is the focus of where I am going to. From my time in industry, I have a proven track record to show that I have the skills and knowledge to deliver events at the highest level. This Ed D focusing on EME is at the heart of developing a proven track record in education. By combining the two, I hope to put myself in a position where students remain confident in the teaching and learning experience I provide.

1.2 Introduction

At present, anyone can plan, design and manage an event. However, to be an events manager requires a complex and diverse set of skills many of which will be specific to the type of business the company or individual will be trading in. The events industry itself is hugely diverse and its requirement for suppliers covers a wide-ranging breadth of professions, from staging and structures to water management and waste recycling

(Rogers, 2014) with an abundance of other trades in between. Significant capital investment from governments and operators continue in developing the necessary facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the events industry (Presbury and Edwards, 2005). Moreover, considering the importance of events on so many levels, appropriate education in the management of events is paramount to the industry as mistakes caused by the lack of appropriate management competencies can be costly, if not disastrous (Perry et al., 1996).

Events Management Education (EME) is currently provided at 88 institutions across the UK, with 292 Higher Education (HE) courses (awards) available (UCAS, 2014). The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) own and maintain a coding system which is used for subject differentiation across HE in the UK. Known as the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS), it separates awards into related groups. The study of travel, events management, tourism, transport, hospitality, recreation, sport management and leisure subjects are classed under N800 with Events Management “the study of managing one-off events such as conferences, shows and visits” (HESA, 2013) coded as N820. This is the focus area of this research project.

It has now been 20 years since Leeds Metropolitan University (now Leeds Beckett University) introduced the UK’s first undergraduate (UG) award in events management. EME has developed from other routes of study, particularly Tourism, Hospitality and Geography which are often inextricably linked to EME but also in many ways somewhat dissimilar. For example, events occur in a particular place and are therefore linked to tourism and geography due to any number of impacts that may occur, such as economic, environmental and social. However, tourism focuses on the movement of people from one destination to another, while events management focuses on the delivery of something that exists in a place for a specific period of time.

As these other related subjects allowed EME to establish itself as a means of study, Thomas and Thomas (2012) observed that EME is currently considered by JACS and the HESA as a sub-sector of Hospitality and Tourism even though recruitment numbers on EME courses is now greater than both of these two subject areas put together.

Events Management is a fast-growing and multifaceted area of employment with significant differences in roles and responsibilities throughout the industry. EME is designed to support this industry and aims to provide employable graduates who can meet the needs of a highly demanding and in many cases an extremely specific sector within the broader industry. As the industry has grown, the number of higher education institutions (HEIs) offering an EME award has doubled since Bowdin et al. (2006 p.iv) suggested there were 44 institutions providing an events award. During this period of substantial growth a detailed review of EME practices and methods has not been undertaken by any representative body within HE.

This thesis presents a case study of EME. It investigates the curriculum and pedagogy of EME. In particular, data is generated from lecturers, (the term 'lecturer' is used in order to include all those involved in the teaching of EME including teachers, lecturers, instructors, senior lecturers, tutors and so on), employers graduates, and students (LEGS). The students and graduates involved in this study are sourced from four English institutions (A, B, C & D) while the lecturers involved come from ten English institutions. The triangulated data presented allows a detailed understanding of the current delivery methods within EME institutions to be developed with regards to the challenges, developments and strategies to provide the events industry with new recruits to their workforce with consideration for the requirements of employers.

1.3: Background to the study

Given the broad spectrum of the events industry and that employment is concentrated not just on skills but ability and knowledge, the main focus of this research is to understand how EME is designed and delivered to meet the requirements of the employers. Many believe it is not possible for EME to adequately prepare new recruits for such a broad industry and therefore, the purpose of this study is to assess EME and to understand if EME is capable of meeting the needs of industry. The magnitude of this requirement is emphasised when the breadth of the industry is considered and the assumption that employers, customers, or attendees of events expect professionals not only to have knowledge of their role but also to have a broad understanding of the dynamics and needs of the people and the community who are involved (Gursoy & Swanger, 2005). Moreover, the technical or hands-on skills necessary to undertake each given role are a further requirement to be imparted during education to satisfy even the most basic of employer need. Combined, these issues amount to a series of realisations that EME must be able to accomplish.

1.4 Defining events

To understand events management, the term 'event' itself needs to be defined. An event is something that is of importance to a few, or many people which is normally planned in advance to occur at a specific time in a specific place. An event covers many life situations including leisure, business, tourism, sports, religion, individual and calendar related anniversaries. Events are extremely diverse and each one has its own characteristics and requirements which need to be identified and met (Barhamain,

1997). Jago and Shaw (1998) defined an event as a unique happening or something that happens with an infrequent occurrence, limited in duration, providing consumers a time of leisure and social opportunity that go beyond the experiences of everyday life. Allen et al. (2000 p3) suggest that one could reasonably argue that the term 'events' has been used to define that which is extraordinary in popular culture. For simplification purposes, the thesis will use the Silvers (2003) Events Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) definition which is:

“Events management is the process by which an event is planned, prepared and produced. Like any other form of management, it involves the assessment, definition, acquisition, allocation, direction, control and analysis of time finances, people, products, services and other resources in order to achieve objectives.”

1.5 Origins and growth of events and EME

Junek et al. (2007) suggest that EME curriculum covers a wide spectrum of subjects and studies exist that identify the various topics in order to provide a framework for the EME curriculum. Topics include incentive travel for rewarding employees, festival management, sports events, conferences & exhibitions, religious and political events and an abundant array of private and social anniversary related events that are celebrated throughout the year by nations, communities and individuals. Harris (2004 p107) considered this broad spectrum and suggested that the provision of courses and training in events management has resulted from opportunism on the part of education providers. This may be difficult to identify or determine either way and may also be limited to a trend that only existed over ten years ago. With these issues in mind, the

perceptions of the four key stakeholders in EME have been examined to highlight matters from four different perspectives.

As well as the evident growth in EME, the events industry is a rapidly growing phenomenon (Jago and Carlsen, 2010 p5). The demand for formal education and the importance and wide use of events is evident by the increasingly important role events now play in the public, not-for-profit, charitable, private and corporate sectors. Since this broad use of events is evident in almost every walk of life, it is relatively easy to find proof on the benefits events bring in terms of stimulating economies both local and national (Barget, 2007, HEA, 2007), increasing tourism (Lee, 2008, Ross, 1997, Getz, 1991), developing communities and their awareness of the area they live in (Ryan, 2014, Clarke and Jepson, 2011, Earl, 2011), or enhancing education and improving quality of life (Henderson and Lissiman, 2010). In fact, events have become so important to business, they are used by corporations as a means of generating revenue through events such as conferences, meetings, exhibitions, rallies and concerts. Also, many sports events rely on companies to market their products and for corporate sponsorships and partnerships which have become critically important to the survival of many events.

1.6 Industry landscape

Shone and Parry (2013) rightly argue that attempting to quantify the events industry landscape and its value is an exercise best avoided. However, academics and those interested in pushing the professionalisation agenda require quantifiable evidence of the industry's economic contribution. Depending on how recently the figures have been reviewed the events industry in the UK is valued at £42.2 billion (EIF/BVEP,

2011). Only last year a Market Review of the Events Industry business visits and events estimates were £22 billion (BVEP, 2010). This is a trend that has been continuing for some time and considering the recent Global Economic Downturn (GED) this is a commendable achievement for any industry. The industry is projected to grow over the coming years and confidence in the sector appears buoyant.

Figure 1.1. Annual income from events (BVEP, 2010)

Sector	Estimated value in 2010 (£ billions)	Estimated value in 2015 (£)	Estimated value in 2020 (£)
Conferences and meetings	18.8	21.8	25.2
Exhibitions and trade shows	9.3	10.8	12.4
Incentive travel	1.2	1.4	1.6
Corporate hospitality	1.0	1.2	1.3
Outdoor events	1.0	1.2	1.3
Festivals and cultural events	1.1	1.3	1.4
Music events	1.4	1.7	2.0
Sports events	2.3	2.8	3.2
TOTAL for discretionary events	36.1	42.2	48.4

While this is an excellent forecast for the industry, the difficulties presented to EME in providing work-ready graduates are first appreciated by the diverse and fragmented industrial landscape. A People 1st report (SectorSkills, 2008) suggests that the events industry itself has a distinct lack of comprehensive and consistent information which is partly due to the fact that it lacks a Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities or SIC code. These codes benefit an industry as they are used to classify business establishments by the type of economic activity in which they are engaged. People 1st also suggest the complications are partly due to the difficulties in defining the events industry as it covers so many sectors. In light of this, EME has the

challenge of being able to reconcile graduates' skills with industry needs at entry level (Robinson, 2008).

1.7 The significance of university choice

The ongoing expansion in university attendance in the UK from what was previously a select group of users to what can now be described as an accepted culture of HE for all has prompted a focus on the significance of many HE awards. In conjunction with observations such as ensuring graduates have the ability to plan, organise and prioritise work or grasp technical knowledge related to the job (Adams, 2014), some universities in the UK have come under intense pressure to equip graduates with more than just the academic skills traditionally represented by a subject discipline and a class of degree (Mason et al., 2009).

There is also a culture of differentiation between graduates from British institutions which is based on the length of time a university has been recognised by the Privy Council to award degrees (Matthews, 2014, Scott, 2012). Dorling (2014) even suggests that the U.K's educational system is designed to polarise people and create an elite who can easily come to have little respect for the majority of the population. Supporting this outlook, Giles (2013) maintains that outside of a Russell Group institution, what students are paying for is a tumbleweed degree that is going to float straight past employers.

This lack of respect has been evidenced in some events employers deciding to employ only from institutions that appear in the top 20 Complete Universities Guide in the UK (CUG, 2014). The upshot of this means many graduates including those from EME are being excluded when it comes to first destination employment (FDE) (Benjamin,

2014, Fisher, 2013, People1st, 2010) because events subjects are not taught in these top 20 universities. For EME, the highest placed university that provides an events related award in the UK is ranked 28th in the CUG and does not actually deliver the N820 events management award.

In response to these disapproving accounts of EME institutions, more favourable statements on the quality of EME institutions, its awards and graduates have also been witnessed (Edwards, 2014) with backing from a wide-range of events management stakeholders. Also, Junek et al. (2007) suggest that students believe an events management degree will provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to obtain jobs in their chosen field. But while the multidisciplinary aspect of the industry offers a wide range of employment positions, problems exist in the lack of consistency in terminology throughout the industry (Nelson and Silvers, 2009) contributing to challenges in a consistent curriculum and career entry and progression by job designation.

The expansion in university attendance in the UK has contributed to the development and growth of a number of vocational awards. Amongst these, Events Management has become one of the fastest growing areas. From live music events and conferences & exhibitions to private events and incentive travel, the different skills required are profession-specific.

1.8 Understanding & misunderstandings between education & industry

The misunderstandings between education and industry are evident for a number of specific reasons. First, as suggested above the area of events is considerably wide-

ranging and includes many different disciplines contained within its name. Without an understanding of what makes up an EME award, it will always be difficult to effectively demonstrate that the needs of the events industry can be satisfied through an UG programme. This requires considerable knowledge of the events industry itself from those who deliver the modules combined with substantial support and focus from the school or institution in which the award is based. This needs to be reinforced with substantial access to the industry. Each of these options is a challenge as each requires considerable effort to create, and resilience to maintain, for any period of time.

Second, contemporary research suggests that the key to the effective teaching of events is often more about transmitting the technical or hands-on skills rather than intellectual knowledge (IK), (Jiang and Schmader, 2014, People1st, 2013b, Ryan, 2013a). It is accepted that IK is an extremely valuable skill in itself to any industry, but events management is largely a hands-on occupation.

Third, my experience of working in the events industry over a forty year period suggests that the industry is known for and remains to a large extent a sector without university graduates. Naturally, due to the changes in access to HE in recent years and the burden now placed on school leavers to obtain a university degree, this situation is rapidly changing. There is also considerable evidence of looking towards the future of the occupation itself from the continued debate on the professionalisation of events management (Bladen and Kennell, 2014, Brown, 2014, Jiang and Schmader, 2014, Dredge, 2013, Thomas and Thomas, 2013b, Arcodia and Reid, 2003, Getz and Wicks, 1994, Royal, 1994).

This is a debate that will be highly significant to and to a large extent rely on the future development of EME. How EME is supported by its host institution might be contributing factors in the professionalisation of the industry. However, there is still time to develop this area as Nelson and Silvers (2009) suggests that events

management has not yet reached a number of important milestones indicative of a profession. In contrast, as mentioned above, a potential future concern for EME given the amount of EME awards currently on offer in the UK is if EME remains under the now seemingly less significant hospitality and tourism JACS/HESA coding system.

Getting the curriculum right is as Nelson and Silvers (2009) suggest a question of developing quality programmes with underpinning knowledge and skills based on industry need. This is without doubt a fundamental objective for all academics.

However, as previously discussed the problem for EME is much more complicated and in response, EME lecturers seek not only to develop the skills and competencies needed to succeed in today's workplace but to prepare students for the changing nature of the events industry (Robertson et al., 2012). It seems the challenging demands of the events stakeholders have little if any relation to the customary expectations of HE.

Such considerations raise the question that if EME is designed in order to meet the particular needs of the events industry, why is it often considered unsuitable by the industry itself? If this is the case, is it possible for vocational based studies such as EME, to engage students in the level of analysis that is expected in tertiary institutions or is the view expressed by some industry practitioners because of an upsurge in the availability of EME awards and the whole perception of EME graduates has been affected? It is these circumstances that underpin my philosophical framework and act as the starting point for this research project into EME.

1.9 Significance of EME

A great deal more interest in EME is evident through the growth in events research leading to dedicated events management journals. Significant research has been geared

towards professionalisation with education a fundamental aspect in achieving such status. Furthermore, a number of factors have contributed to open debates on the quality of education being provided. Unusually, the unique challenge EME appears to have to address is an obligation to prove that the necessary skills event managers require can be taught through an EME award. Without this study and an understanding of the quality of education available, the contention that anyone can manage an event will always be difficult to defend.

This challenge is kindled by suggestions that EME is providing events management graduates entering the industry only to fill non-graduate positions (Eade, 2010, Pool and Sewell, 2007). The Kashef (2015) study found that little desirability from employers was attributed to Events Management qualifications. Alongside this, People1st (2010 p64) established that some employers bring into question the ability of certain lecturers teaching events management awards suggesting it is detrimental [to either the industry or the award] if lecturers have no first-hand experience of running events and instead depend on an academic understanding. Raising the same concern during the International Conference on Events, one panel member flippantly questioned how many lecturers had actually set up a music stand? (ICE, 2013). This may not be an appropriate identification or analysis of industry need but it does expose a debate that perhaps exists in industry about the suitability of EME lecturers. These observations highlight some of the challenges being faced by EME HEIs and the complexity of the problems that exist for those who design and deliver EME awards.

What is perhaps most difficult to comprehend for those involved in EME is when events management graduates are excluded from the recruitment process by events stakeholders because of a prejudice towards EME awards (Benjamin, 2014). This matter is intensified since there are no standards of entry (degree, certification,

licensing or other form of credentialing) for the events industry (Nelson and Silvers, 2009).

1.10 Availability of EME awards

As a starting point for this study, baseline data were introduced with a discussion from my empirical research about the availability of EME in the UK. To provide a deeper appreciation of EME, a review of UCAS and university websites over a twelve month period was undertaken between May 2012 and May 2013. The research conducted into UCAS and university websites has provided a foundation for the more detailed research into EME. The information that universities provide is important as it has a major influence on the decision making, expectations and perceptions of students before they even enter HE. These preconceived perceptions are the first influence on students. All of these expectations and perceptions will inevitably affect the student's education experience.

By the end of the desk-based research of UCAS and university websites, a total of 292 EME awards were identified in the UK which were taught in 88 different institutions (UCAS, 2013). At the start of the study, the figure was 274. During the study period, 2 institutions removed their Events management award while 20 institutions introduced awards that were not previously listed in the previous academic year. Of the 292 awards, 52 are offered under the JACS code N820 (Events management). Other variations of this coding system include awards that are essentially the N820 but will be variations that include fast-track (N826) or with placement or 4-year study options (N823). Other award variations offer a variety of routes including foundation,

HND/C and 3/4 year BA (Hons) with 5 institutions offering a BSc. This research has focused on the N820 award.

There is an abundant number of events related support organisations that focus on their respective area within the industry (see appendix 1). There are currently three prominent representative bodies that have all-encompassing titles suggesting a remit for all the different sectors of the industry. These are AEME, Association of Event Organisers (AEO) and IEM. All three claim to engage *with* education providers, AEME and IEM claim to be engaged in *the development* of education. Other representative bodies such as Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (ABPCO) are working towards building an education remit that includes recognised awards. These focus on a sector of events management and are therefore considered too specific to include. At the time of the research AEME's membership contained 42 HEIs based in the UK. No known institutions are members of IEM and its membership data are not currently made available by IEM. AEO is a trade body representing companies which conceive, create, develop or manage trade and consumer events (AEO, 2016). It does not make any claim to represent the education sector.

Data available from each of the 52 UK institutions offering the N820 events management award, suggests many institutions are attributing themes or specific specialisms on the delivery of these EME awards. These include an attempt to focus the award on certain events management disciplines such as festival management, conference delivery or legislation. From an industry perspective, this can be considered as a constructive approach as students are able to choose and receive explicit guidance in a specialist area of events management. For example, an institution based in the midlands offers 'the professional skills needed to develop and manage successful conferences and exhibitions' and an institution based in the

southwest highlights ‘the practical skills to put on events, festivals and club nights’.

The direction of the award in each of these institutions may actually be influenced by their geographic location as the National Exhibition Centre Group (NEC) is situated in the midlands and Glastonbury Festival in the southwest.

It is also worth noting that considering the on-going debate on the ‘professionalisation’ of events management (AEME, 2013), institutions remain undecided on the preferred title EME awards should embrace. Of the 52 N820 awards, 31 institutions name their award ‘events’ management and 19 ‘event’ management. Two other institutions remain undecided on either and have utilised both throughout their award information.

1.11 Contributions to knowledge

I demonstrate that the existing body of research and theory on EME is deficient in a number of respects. There is an apparent lack of information on what constitutes an EME award and the available research does not explicitly refer to the complications involved in assessing the skills required by industry. Moreover, little attention is applied to the variety of roles undertaken by students, the different varieties of personality that fit the diverse roles and the corresponding skill sets required when practical activities feature in the curriculum. My analysis of the content of EME provides the reader with important contextual detail on the current content and assessment of EME awards and the experiences of graduates who fulfil the employer’s needs.

In relation to the design and development of EME awards and because of the limited collective communication and widespread co-creativity in designing EME awards, attempts to provide guidance on improving the design of awards are principally unseen

by the majority of lecturers. While a more integrated approach to communication is needed, the claim that can be drawn from this research is that those who teach EME believe that the regular reviews undertaken by institutions do not go far enough and a much more detailed review of EME would be preferred.

LEGS have all been separately referred to in different ways in the existing events literature; usually from a much narrower individual perspective or from one perspective on another. The contribution of this thesis is analysing them jointly to understand the sophisticated relationship that exists. By developing an analysis of these relationships in terms of their importance to each other highlights the value in reviewing EME theory.

In relation to the inclusion of work-based learning and by taking into consideration the perspective of employers and students, an overarching claim that can be drawn from this research is an original approach developing current practices concerning placement opportunities. The current practice of providing placements within the course of study is improved by adapting the process to better accommodate those involved.

The detailed review of education and industry demonstrates clear examples of agreement and collaboration. This is particularly evident in the various existing bodies of knowledge. This research shows that certain sectors of the events industry are well advanced in their own education abilities. With further collaboration this knowledge will help shape the future of EME and provide a sound underpinning in the development of a professionalised industry.

One of the most problematic recurring themes in recent years from events professionals has been to question the background and industry experience of lecturers. This research accepts that an academic background is vital and that all new academic teaching positions include the requirement of a doctorate. However, through

meaningful research, the thesis challenges all accounts of a lack of industry experience from lecturers.

My suggestion for a new research agenda focusing more specifically on issues of educational practice and managing expectation rather than seeking out gaps between education and industry provides a pathway forward to develop closer relationships with the two sectors while at the same time highlighting innovative research opportunities to improve the curriculum. By doing so, it is envisaged that greater amounts of research will focus on how each of the keys stakeholders in EME relate, communicate and actually influence each other.

1.12 Thesis outline

The focus of the remaining chapters is as follows:

Chapter Two critiques the literature on EME and the EME curriculum. It discusses how EME has developed as well as some of the main attributes of the EME curriculum, including GW and EL (EL). A selection of industry-designed training programmes are examined to compare against what and where knowledge is sought to support the design of EME awards. This in turn leads to how such methods can be used to improve EME and the professionalisation of the sector. The effects of the limited visibility of EME through both industry-related and education-related organisations are highlighted as this raises questions on how EME is perceived by its representative stakeholders. Furthermore the challenges that exist for EME lecturers based on this limited visibility are augmented by the challenges that exist in designing a curriculum that tests knowledge and skills that the industry demands.

Chapter Three justifies the research design of the study. It sets out the primary and secondary research questions the study will address and provides an in-depth explanation of my ontological and epistemological position. In light of this, a section is included on my etic and emic situation explaining my knowledge and values from each perspective. There is then a discussion on the possible and eventual research paradigms the study considered which leads directly into my methodology. The methods of data collection and the pilot study are discussed, as well as my ethical considerations and the chapter is completed with a detailed explanation of the procedure that was undertaken followed by how the data were analysed.

Chapter Four presents findings and data analysis. The chapter illustrates the perspectives of the four main stakeholders (LEGS) and the combination of data from interviews and questionnaires highlights the depth of study and the complications involved in EME. From these data sets, valuable insights into the focus of EME awards and the perspective of the various stakeholders is provided with a deeper understanding of the relationship between industry and education.

Chapter Five offers a conclusion to the study. The chapter considers the future of EME, the limitations of the study and areas for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

To best understand the position of this research it is necessary to highlight the starting point of an important debate on EME. That is how it can be seen as an academic discipline and/or a field of study (Getz, 2012, Tribe, 2006). While this whole debate is considered important to a number of EME stakeholders, it sits on a different level to this research and this research should contribute to rather than take from this debate. Their importance is acknowledged but to include these discussions here would weaken the emphasis from understanding the content and focus of an EME award and how the necessary skills are taught.

Similarly, it is important to acknowledge previous research around more particular aspects of EME that is extensive and conducted in some depth. For example, (Getz, 2010) undertook a large-scale, systematic review of the pertinent English-language research literature that outlined the nature and scope of festival studies. This remains a seminal text in the field of EME research and contributes somewhat towards this study. However, it must be remembered that while such studies bring value to this research, a much more comprehensive approach was required for this research.

The development of an events industry has resulted in a world-wide demand for education and training programmes in events management (Fletcher et al., 2009). In the UK, despite the introduction of tuition fees there has been a rapid growth in demand for under-graduate programmes related to events (QAA, 2008 p6). The events sector itself has grown exponentially throughout the world and as education on

the subject reaches 20 years in the UK, research is now well established. Research on and around EME nationally and internationally however is limited and has been overlooked as an area of research (Fenich et al., 2012, Marcketti et al., 2011, Robson, 2011, Sperstad and Cecil, 2011, Zeng and Yang, 2011, Emery, 2010, Jones, 2010, Lee, 2009). While education research remains limited, EME itself has come under scrutiny with critical comments on EME awards more evident than ever before (Sou and McCartney, 2015, Benjamin, 2014, Edwards, 2014).

From a local perspective, studies on the economic and social benefits that events bring to host communities suggest they bring considerable value in terms of financial prosperity and well-being (Jepson and Clarke, 2014a, Barget, 2007, Walo, 1996).

From a global perspective and since a review conducted by Harris (2004 p103), the worldwide events industry continues to receive a much higher profile as awareness has been raised through events such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) World Cup. These global events that are meant for all but the most isolated of populations play an influential role in attracting new students.

This rapid growth in events is reflected in the progress of EME both in the UK (HLST, 2008) and around the world in order to meet the needs of the events industry, the industry's closely related professional fields and the organisations that comprise them (Bowdin et al., 2011 pxxv). This is leading to an established academic position for EME internationally (Foley et al., 2012 p8). While much of this development is encouraging, research that highlights issues of the events establishment, or journalistic style research that might criticise the social and economic interests behind events are largely non-existent. (Rojek, 2014) suggests:

“If one examines the professional literature, one quickly finds that throughout the world, event management is overwhelmingly uncritical and

self-congratulatory. The relationship between Events, manipulation, corruption and social control has not been rigorously examined”.

From an academic perspective, as EME has grown, the pursuing research in the area that should naturally have followed suit has not materialised leading to a lack of research in the area. Other topics such as impacts, tourism and behaviour are favoured with education only appearing as a sub-topic (Mair and Whitford, 2013). Taking these observations into account, there is a necessity to better understand the approaches, content and what constitutes EME at UG level. This chapter will review EME approaches and content and compare these with the requirements of the industry. What is identified and discussed will provide a starting point for improving the overall provision of EME at UG level.

While events studies can be found from 1970s, (Middleton, 1974, Ritchie and Beliveau, 1974) the literature relating to events commenced in earnest in the mid-1980s; particularly on the evaluation of festivals, special events and visitor attractions (McWilliams and Mills, 1985) more as a development from tourism related studies. The earliest authors were principally located in Australia and the appearance of courses of study in the mid-1990s in this region suggests a relationship with the awarding of the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney in 1993.

Brown (2008) suggests that even though there was no acknowledgement for a need in events education in the U.K, Leeds Beckett University became the first institution to offer an Events Management UG award in 1996 as a specific course of study. For that first course, 35 students enrolled. The course has since grown tenfold, recruiting between 300-400 students each year (Mulligan, 2010). As the subject became more widely available and more institutions began to offer events management awards, the Association for Events Management Education, (AEME) was established in April 2004. This Association was set up not just for HE study, but in order to advance the

education of the public in the subject of events and events management with the aim of supporting and raising the profile of the events discipline through the sharing of education and best practice through its members and as a central contact point for policy makers (Bowdin, 2008).

The demand and professional growth of events has had some significant effects on attendance and participation; particularly in sport and music related events. For example, at the time of the first London Marathon in 1981 participation was considered to be very impressive for a first event with 6,255 completing the challenge. In 2012, 37,227 people crossed the finishing line (virginlondonmarathon.com, 2012). Glastonbury Festival has grown from being a small independent music festival to the largest and most influential green-field music and performing arts festival in the world. When the festival was first held in 1970, the event attracted 1,500 attendees and was considered a major success by its organisers. In 2010 attendance had grown to an audience of 140,000 with an extra 37,500 passes mainly for crew, performers, stewards and traders. The exclusive value and popularity of the event has not gone unnoticed either as during this same period, the festival ticket price has risen from £1 (which included a free pint of milk) to £185 (Anon, 2011).

These and other successes have led to the establishment of many thousands of events around the world and while it is impossible to provide an exact figure on how many events are in existence today or the total amount of investment, the attractiveness and increased number of events and festivals has certainly been a catalyst in the development of new areas of work in the industry and educational opportunities to study within the subject area. For example, literature suggests that the events industry is fast growing (Lee, 2009), expanding (Eade, 2010), has grown dramatically (Reid, 2006), receiving growing attention (Lee and Goldblatt, 2012, Lee, 2009) and a vibrant

sector of the tourism and leisure industries (Arcodia and Reid, 2005). These claims of growth were emphasised by Bowdin et al. (2006 p11) who explained:

“The importance of events as an industry is beginning to be recognised, with the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) now recognising the meetings and exhibitions industry as an official category in its Tourism Satellite Account”.

It is well documented that colleges and universities have established events management courses in large numbers (Robson, 2011) and that academic expansion in this area is now widely recognised throughout the world. This recognition of a newly established discrete area of study for events is reflected in the 2007 creation of a unique key for EME in the revised JACS coding system. This is the N820 which is defined as, “Events Management, the study of managing one-off events such as conferences, shows and visits”(HESA, 2012).

Events Management comes under the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (HLST) sector or sub-group. The QAA considers the HLST sector (in its broadest definition) as one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the global economy (QAA, 2008). Considering some of the other subjects in the acronym have been in decline in recent years, much of this growth is largely attributed to the growth in the events sector. Since 2008 the QAA (QAA, 2008 p6) has recognised EME as a subject for academic study in its own right and provides a specific subject benchmark statement. There are efforts to review the HLST acronym to include events but as yet, no official change has been approved. To put this into perspective, according to Gibson-Sweet and Rudolph (2008).there are no UG subject benchmark statements for degrees in Marketing.

2.2. The EME curriculum

On account of the breadth of the events industry today, the events management curriculum has to provide knowledge in a number of different subjects and test a number of skills to effectively meet the demands of the different sectors within the events industry. Considering the growth of EME and that EME has grown from other subjects, Harris (2004 p107) suggested the provision of courses and training in events management resulted from opportunism on the part of education providers. This approach is not proven to be widespread today as (Yeoman, 2015, Lee et al., 2008, Ryan, 2016) suggest lecturers and institutions must continually adapt to changes in the needs of both students and industry partners.

To give an indication of how broad the EME curriculum can be, a survey by Zeng and Yang (2011) identified a total of 27 event management modules (courses) from a single 4-year degree programme. However, some pioneering studies (Perry et al., 1996, Stafford, 1994, Getz and Wicks, 1994) have suggested a number of special business knowledge areas that EME should cover. These align with the Silvers (2003) Event management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) and the Convention Industry Council (CIC) Certified Meeting Professional-International Standards (CMP-IS) (discussed below) and include the teaching of event planning, management, administration, co-ordination, as well as the ability to manage interpersonal relationships and marketing. It is also suggested that in addition, students should have knowledge of event history and development trends, as well as insight into the motivation of related stakeholders and the effects of events on the economy.

The Perry et al. (1996) survey attempted to address the curriculum content issue by asking 53 event managers to rank the courses in an EME programme. The

methodology of the survey will be discussed later in the chapter. However, the following ten courses were identified as being of greatest importance: project management, budgeting, time-management, relating to the media, business planning, human resource management, contingency management, marketing, sponsorship, and networking.

The breadth of content within awards is considerable and while EME is meant to provide the events industry with new employees, some institutions have proven to be over confident in some aspects of their promotion. One institution in this study attempted to define what students might expect to be doing upon graduation with a definition of how completion of the award leads to ‘managing’ major and mega events. Their marketing material provided examples of students graduating to work with global mega events. What the award title implies is not actually what the award is capable of delivering. Material from Institution A states:

“You'll be capable of overseeing the organisation of events as diverse as product launches, fundraising, corporate meetings, personal gatherings (such as weddings and reunions) and mega-events such as the Olympic Games.”

The reality is that these high achievements are really only possible after many years’ experience and success in the industry.

2.3. Knowledge and skills required for the events industry

There are a considerable number of knowledge areas and skills required for work in the events industry. These are best categorised into two categories, namely hard skills and soft skills. While education tends to focus on teaching the hard skills, a greater demand from the events industry for education to test soft skills is now widespread.

Hard skills can be considered as the technical skills that are required to perform a particular task. These will be specific depending on the area of work and sector of events. Examples of hard skills in events include, events planning, report writing, set design, stage management, Health & Safety, waste management (environmental issues), accountancy, a foreign language and knowledge of software programs (sound & lighting, Microsoft Project etc.). Soft skills are the intra and interpersonal skills belonging to the individual. Examples of soft skills in events include communication (emotional), time management, commitment, teamwork (social skills) and leadership. Soft skills are largely self-taught and can be developed through regular engagement in specific activities. These link to what Vygotsky refers to as elementary mental functions that include an aptitude for attention, sensation, perception and memory (Topel, 1998, Ghassemzadeh, 2005). From a business perspective, a lack of these soft-skill elementary mental functions results in an extremely costly waste of time, energy, and money (Laker and Powell, 2011) due to the increased time and effort required to bring new employees up to required standards. Therefore, there is a need for events employers to concentrate on soft skills when recruiting new staff because of the amount of personal interaction in events, but also because of the increasing time and cost to acquire and their ultimate value to the business.

The literature suggests that industry demands a number of skills that the individual must possess if they are to be employed in the workplace. Outside of the subjects that are covered in EMBOK, CIC and CMP, is the ability to interact effectively with others (Pool and Sewell, 2007 p55). Formadi and Raffai (2009) states that the main skills and abilities required include: problem-solving, conflict-resolution skills, team spirit and ability to work with different people, good communication skills, self-management skills such as punctuality, time management and flexibility, creativity, networking and human capital, decision-making ability, IT skills and adaptability.

The literature also indicates that the majority of practitioners working in events today tend not to have completed a higher degree (Robson, 2011). The consequence being that unfair demands are being placed on institutions and graduates that many current employees may not have achieved themselves. From a personal perspective, the desire to develop soft rather than hard skills was the distinction between leaving school and getting paid employment in the events sector rather than continuing formal education.

The literature also suggests that this lack of formal education by events managers is due to their natural soft-skill mindset and an aversion of hard-skill learning traditionally taught in the classroom. Instead of seeking an education for these skills, research conducted before and around the time EME first began in England suggests events personnel have preferred to rely on a hunch, intuition and/or tacit knowledge as they progress through the industry (McHardy and Allen, 2000, Nonaka, 1995, Bastick, 1982). The suggestion is that these skills are considered part of an individual's personality rather than something that can be taught in a HE institution. Fletcher et al. (2009) suggests EME is not capable of teaching the required skills. If this premise is to be accepted, then the needs of the industry cannot be met through HE. However, if EME can provide an understanding of the hard and soft skills that industry requires, more prepared personnel (graduates) will enter the industry. Moreover, considering the growth of EME in England with 20 years significant expansion and an annual 28% increase in student numbers (O'Prey, 2011), one can rightly assume that a considerable number of the workforce today fit into the category of HE EME graduates.

While highlighting the importance of a good education, Shone and Parry (2013) suggest that even when graduates enter the workplace an events company will still need to tailor the graduate to their particular organisational role. Davidson (2011) corroborates this view by stating industry associations representing meetings venues have an obvious education and training responsibility with regards to their members.

This is true of all professions though it arguably remains the responsibility of the institution to ensure the graduate has the skills and knowledge to succeed at the point of interview.

The difficulties for EME do not stop with the graduate. More industry managers have recently come forward and expressed concerns about those who teach events management. People1st (2010 p64) included statements from employers that questioned EME lecturers first-hand experience of running events. The main concern raised was that lecturers had no previous experience in the industry and were exclusively relying on theory to teach the subject.

The unique challenges EME faces are augmented by other evidence that suggests EME is providing events management graduates entering the industry to fill non-graduate positions (Eade, 2010). Goldblatt (2005) argues that event leaders themselves must continually develop their skill sets, while Pool and Sewell (2007) suggest questions need to be asked about whether or not the graduate is using the skills, knowledge and understanding gained in their degree studies in a graduate level job. This in turn opens up an entirely separate debate about what exactly a graduate level job entails.

From an employment perspective, the specific skills sought by employers include management, communication, time management, problem solving, team working, and a commitment to handling stress (Yorke, 2010, Ehiyazaryan and Barraclough, 2009, Junek et al., 2009, Arcodia and Barker, 2003). Arcodia and Barker (2003) found that communication skills feature prominently in event job advertisements. Junek et al. (2009) suggest more emphasis should be placed on communication while Ehiyazaryan and Barraclough (2009) maintain the need for team working and communication skills to be strongly embedded in the curricula to meet industry need is paramount. There

would probably be no end to a list of knowledge and skills that the events industry might request and Bowdin et al. (2006 p60) maintain that:

“Devising appropriate knowledge categories for the events management field presents a challenge, given the range of alternatives available. Some consider it appropriate to use a traditional management approach, focusing on traditional disciplines, for example, management, finance, human resources and marketing. Others may consider an event-specific approach more suitable, incorporating health and safety, production and logistics. Although either approach is appropriate for categorising knowledge and skills, research suggests that neither approach would currently provide a comprehensive framework.”

In spite of the obvious extensiveness of EME, Reid (2006) argues that imparting the necessary knowledge is achievable and the success of the process can be monitored through testing. Moscardo and Norris (2004) state that further challenges exist and are particularly acute in the area of convention and events management as not only are these relatively new areas of study within academic institutions, but they also rely on inter-personal skills. Teaching inter-personal skills can be difficult to impart in a classroom situation. Other skills, including, a decision making ability (especially on the spot and under pressure), developing clients, being creative (in areas such as event design or how events are presented in terms of look and content), individual flexibility and responding to change or incidents as they happen are just as important to the employer and cannot be appropriately taught in a classroom teaching environment

2.4. Curriculum & Pedagogy

Harris and Jago (1999b) mapped events related subjects taught and discussed a number of previous studies. They identified substantial consistency in the key required training/knowledge domains and emphasised then that if further programmes were to be created, they would need to be underpinned by an understanding of the

skills required of practitioners in the area. Silvers et al. (2006) maintain that a HE course of study in EME will provide professional skills and knowledge to enable graduates to enter the workplace with technical knowledge, specialised skills and an ethical approach to working practices. More recently, Eade (2010) agrees the view that industry has expressed a preference for ‘on-the-job’ training for new recruits that is tailored to the company’s needs.

Moscardo and Norris (2004) state that graduates are a critical resource in bridging a gap that has appeared between academics and practitioners. The fundamental suggestion is of a need for institutions to increase the professionalism and standards of planners and managers because the industry has lacked confidence in institutions to provide knowledgeable, skilled graduates. However, education and industry providers are often in disagreement as to the important subjects and topics to be taught (Harkison et al., 2011). While much of the curriculum has been designed around the needs of the employer (Lee, 2009) differences of opinion have appeared between what skills the individual events business want their new recruits to have and what skills academic institutions consider important for graduates to have gained by the end of their studies. Moreover, Lee (2009 p62) suggests that institutions ‘often fail to reflect the needs of the industry’ in the curriculum. Eade (2010) on the other hand considers this to be less important and highlights the benefits when industry provides training opportunities after employment by suggesting, “if we train people up the ranks from events administrator to events director, we know they have no skill gap”. Moscardo and Norris (2004 p48) see value in each approach and suggest,

“For the academics, practitioners can provide feedback to enhance teaching practice and support and opportunities for research. For practitioners, academics can improve the practice and professionalism of conference and events management through their teaching of potential new recruits to the sector and through the dissemination of research results.”

This view is however not wholly supported as Getz (2012) states that experience is often said to be the best teacher and that graduates are fond of saying they learned more in the first week of employment than they did in their entire academic career. However, the overall objective of EME is not just about the individual but rather as Emery (2010) suggests created so that a more meaningful, informed and unified profession can develop.

The events literature discusses issues in finding the right subjects for an EME award and while some suggest a gap exists between events management theory and events management practice (Fu, 2011, Zeng and Yang, 2011, Sperstad and Cecil, 2011, Eade, 2010, Emery, 2010, Lee, 2009, Robinson, 2008, Reid, 2006, Moscardo and Norris, 2004, McHardy and Allen, 2000) others (Arcodia and Reid, 2005, Getz, 2002a, Harris and Jago, 1999a), suggest a collaborative approach is the right way forward. The pedagogical approach is unique to the institution and the design and delivery methods will naturally vary between institutions.

With these points in mind it is important to differentiate the subtleties of EME theory and practice. EME theory, (amongst other things), is best explained as being based around setting objectives and goals for events, understanding motivations to attend, event impacts (on the environment or community) and or the experiences attendees display after attending, such as good, bad, valuable, enlightening and so on. EME practice is best defined as the processes involved in the actual delivery of the event. These, (again amongst other things) include procurement, design, planning, infrastructure requirements, marketing and so on. Some topics naturally have both theoretical and practical implications which include other areas outside of those already suggested such as health & safety, legal aspects, crowd control, teamwork, co-ordination, finance and IT.

The pedagogical methods involved or how best to test the necessary skills highlight the challenging balance in EME curriculum design. The question of how much to engage with industry in the process is also open to debate. Zeng and Yang (2011 p233) state that it is “very important to involve industry professionals in the planning, development, and evaluation of curriculum”. The actual level of involvement is not presented, but the recommendations suggest a re-writing of the curriculum to meet the industry observations.

As EME curriculum covers a wide spectrum of subjects (Junek et al., 2007) and as courses have become established, developments in relation to the delivery of EME were evidently introduced. These include changes to the methods of delivering EME curriculum itself, responding to change in the industry due to technological advances that lead to increased audience participation (through ease of access) or enjoyment (through interactive facilities, site visits and visuals) and change to the industry due to political, local or world events. The latter is well reported in the press and is often a catalyst for change in the curriculum (Karakas, 2010) as acts of terror, sporting disasters, crowd control (Moscardo and Norris, 2004) and a better understanding of how management practices affect decision making in the supply to events (Ryan and Kelly, 2012) need to be considered.

Developments in the curriculum, which are often due to the aforementioned changes or events in society, are debated in a number of ways. For example, the QAA (2008) report takes into consideration the recommendations of the Leitch Report (Leitch, 2006) for increased engagement between employers and HE in workforce development. The need for such relationships is most notable in support of major events such as the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games as these types of events rely heavily on large numbers of informed support staff and (as was the case for

London 2012) the training of 70,000 event volunteers; without which the Games could not be delivered.

Curriculum developments have also come about in response to the need for EME to realise its own identity from its tourism and hospitality roots (Jones, 2010, Junek et al., 2007, Landey and Silvers, 2004, Silvers, 2003). Introducing these developments can prove to be a challenge to implement. Particularly when existing methods of delivery retain a traditional, vocational focus that is based on other business subject delivery methods and approaches (Alexander, 2007 p218).

2.4.1. Obtaining knowledge and skills through practical activities

Many lecturers now accept that a variety of experience and skills required for working in events necessitate physical activity to obtain the knowledge. Outside of a typical classroom environment of a lecturer teaching to a class of students, two key characteristics and delivery processes appear to be prominent in the delivery of EME. The first is Group Work (GW) and the second is Experiential Learning (EL). The EL approach to learning has been described by McHardy and Allen (2000 p501) as ‘making sense of learning by doing’. This is considered important to events employers as many of the required skills can be tested and experienced throughout the provision of an EME award.

Swaray (2012) suggests that in today’s HEIs, it is not simply enough to expect students to be passive recipients of knowledge from the lecturer. For example, group or team work where students become active participants in the learning process is considered valuable to event employers as, like EL, it addresses the skills and experiences they expect graduates to have learned (Swaray, 2012, Watering, 2008).

2.4.2. Group Work

Within the EME curriculum, GW has become a central component of the learning process. For example, the Mulligan (2010) survey of HEIs in Yorkshire, found that all courses required the students to undertake GW. This is often the adoption of practical activities which the EME curriculum is evidently reliant upon (Landey and Silvers, 2004). From a student involvement perspective students have been found to be far more likely to contribute to discussions if they felt their views would be valued by others in the group (Jepson and Clarke, 2014b).

The literature suggests that GW in EME practices is somewhat widespread in the delivery process. It does not appear to be a prerequisite in any educational course to include GW but having students work in small groups offers another element of variety to the curriculum (Race, 2001). Its inclusion also meets with HLST's teaching learning and assessment recommendations by "providing learning opportunities to ensure that students are engaged in subject-specific contexts throughout the programme" (QAA, 2008 p15). The finding that GW provides further opportunity for contributions from students can be beneficial to those with less opportunity or ability to engage. However, GW does raise a number of assessment and practicality issues such as time restrictions when planning EME courses (McHardy and Allen, 2000) and the over use of such practices when a lack of cross-module planning exists. These effects of misuse and the time it takes to organise such activities can have knock on effects across the whole curriculum.

A particular problem in EME GW is when the students involved adopt a minimum effort to the task and do not support the group's common interest (Lockstone et al.,

2008, Moscardo and Norris, 2004) or are ‘free-riding’ as Hancock (2009) explains.

The term ‘free-rider’ refers to a member of a group who obtains benefits from group membership but does not bear a proportional share of the costs of providing the benefits (Albanese and Van Fleet, 1985 p244). When free-riding is evident, it reveals tensions between the principles and the actual practices in EME curriculum design.

Moscardo and Norris (2004) allowed groups of students to plan, manage and evaluate a live event. The data from their research highlighted a number of issues from both teaching and learning perspectives. From a learning perspective, the issues related to conflicts within the group itself which included complaints from students about other students on their required effort and how much application is actually put in from each student. From a teaching perspective, the complaints included a lack of structure to the work and assessment and the lack of assistance provided by the staff. It appears that in a safe educational or boss-less environment, students are more likely to fight to force their views on the group and complain about their experiences whereas in the real world of work, it is likely they would act more professionally and address their issue responsibly and professionally. Free-riding also raises the contentious issue of fair grading of students work when group members receive the same grade regardless of individual effort.

Other difficulties with GW can include, providing individual formative and summative assessment (Reid, 2006) and the problems that arise when students do not manage to gel into an effective group (Fox and Morrison, 2010). Reid (2006) discusses objections to the size of groups the students were expected to work in when the group was so large it was difficult to assign a task to an individual to complete. These experiences are similar to those found in studies of volunteers for events where the experience the volunteer has can be counter-productive (McMorrow, 2015, Pate and Shonk, 2015) when there is a lack of individual contribution or activity. In Reid’s

study, group members did not feel a sense of team effort or that any real contribution to any task could be experienced as it was shared between so many. However, the study also raised issues of conflict prior to the task and that students preferred doing assessment they found easy.

McDonald and McDonald (2000) state that many aspects of GW in EME were considered beneficial to both the student and the lecturer but also note a range of negative reactions including student frustration with both the teaching and learning process, apathy and that the group event became hampered by students wishing to give up on the task. This could relate to what Ruël et al. (2003) label the sucker-effect hypothesis that draws active students into being less active. The free-riding of some students demotivates other diligent students and the overall team performance is affected.

2.4.3. Experiential Learning

As well as the widespread use of GW throughout EME awards both in the classroom and outside, many of the group-centred learning methods used outside the classroom are based around EL which Drummond (2003 p1) identifies as “one of the most important components of the modern university curriculum”. EL is an approach built in to the events curriculum to support student employability (Beaven and Wright, 2006). EL is defined by Kolb and Kolb (2005 p194) as learning that results from ‘synergetic transactions’ or the interaction between the person and the environment. The key to EL in EME, which all four institutions involved in this research have implemented, is the cyclical process involved and the four-stage learning cycle that must be present for learning to occur (Kolb, 1984). In their most basic of terms, these

include thinking, feeling, doing, and reflecting. Kolb's EL theory is based on 19th/20th century philosophical studies by John Dewey and Kurt Lewin. EL is designed to develop a holistic model of learning where the student can express a whole person with body, mind, emotions and spirit (Kolb, 1984) while engaging participants in open reflection and dialogue (Becker and Burke, 2014).

The value EL brings to EME is that it allows students to be active in the process and thereby addresses the skills that are difficult to teach in the classroom (Pate and Shonk, 2015, Yang and Cheung, 2014, Fu, 2011, Lockstone et al., 2008, Reid, 2006, Kolb and Kolb, 2005, Daruwalla and Fallon, 2005, Burley, 2005, Davies, 2002) but are central to the skill requirements of an events manager. The use of EL as an alternative to traditional teaching-oriented methods has been recognised in other closely related disciplines (Yang and Cheung, 2014). EL is considered important to EME for a number of reasons. Most importantly, students have the opportunity of putting on an event and experience the sense of responsibility first-hand. In addition to this, because of the diversity of employment opportunities in the events industry (Fenich et al., 2012) and the wide ranging levels and specialisms available to graduates, a first-hand experience provides a platform for students to prepare for the challenges they would face once they pursue careers in events management (Moscardo and Norris, 2004). It also allows the student to better understand what aspect of events they are most suited to. Many courses also allow the student to choose their own preferred approach or role in the project (Fortenberry, 2011, Burley, 2005, Daruwalla and Fallon, 2005).

Reid (2006) found that EL is well suited to EME because students have suggested it adds value to their learning experience as it helps them learn to learn and with good guidance develop a number of other skills and abilities. Although it is not directly stated, the underlying suggestion from the students is that this is only the case when

EL is used in conjunction with theoretical study. Jowdy et al. (2008 p198) suggest that to fully engage with EL, students should bring a personal foundation and intent to each experience that influences what they develop from their experiences.

Marcketti et al. (2011), based their research on the previous work of Kolb (1984) and found that through EL, students are engaged at the emotional, physical, and cognitive levels and as a result help students make connections between their learning and their personal lives; thereby forming deeper, longer-lasting learning. The paper draws on non-EME data particularly on the work of Komives et al. (2005) who discuss the ability to find and synthesise diverse sources of information, to manage self, and to empower others and Shertzer et al. (2005) who focuses on the need for students to learn to distinguish between the requirements for and implications of positional leadership, authoritarian leadership, democratic leadership, shared leadership, and civic responsibility (p172).

It would appear that the events industry is also in favour of EL activities in EME. On hearing positive feedback on EL, one employer recommended that all courses should have on-site experience built into them to ensure students understand the practical side, rather than just the theory (People1st, 2010). Beaven and St George (2009) conclude that EL opportunities, such as work placements and project work provide value in supporting employability. Whereas Lockstone et al. (2008) suggest that the application of EL is supported both by educators and the industry and a vital component to events management courses. In fact, EL is considerably more widespread in the workplace as new employees are often trained and coached in particular areas whilst on the job (Kinder, 2012, Hilliard, 2006).

There are other benefits that EL brings to the EME curriculum and Reid (2006) notes the benefits of work experience. When EL is used in conjunction with local business, it can enhance the networks between the university, the events industry and the

student. This has the potential to develop well timed links between the university and industry and a possible means of progression into the workplace for graduating students. Zeng and Yang (2011 p237) suggest HEIs need to make more of an effort to co-operate with industry partners to provide work-based courses for the students. Fox and Morrison (2010) similarly suggest that by incorporating a practical component in the curriculum, EME students found the experience beneficial to the potential of employability.

Designing and delivering EL is not without its challenges (Lamb, 2015, Becker and Burke, 2014, Pauline, 2013, Lockstone et al., 2008, Daruwalla and Fallon, 2005, Moscardo and Norris, 2004) but neither is any other aspect of curriculum design. While deeper, longer lasting learning can be achieved by any teaching approach the added value of EL when used in EME is apparent because of the aforementioned complications in testing events management skills in a classroom environment. In some of the data reviewed (Daruwalla and Fallon, 2005, Moscardo and Norris, 2004), EL activities takes place during level 6 studies. This is where there is often added pressure on the student to achieve a good mark either because of the weighting in the marking process or because the student has realised the importance of a good grade as they near the end of their studies. These influences may return more positive observations from students in order to achieve a better grade. In reality, they could be less representative of the actual learning that took place. Not only should the significance of their observations be considered with caution, assessing the quality of the EL activity provided is often based on these student reflections.

Ensuring the EL experience provided and the assessment that goes with it is robust will remain challenging in a HE environment. The confidence that can be obtained in results from tests and written work is much more difficult to obtain in EL. EL is further complicated while being practised within an educational situation as it is

fundamentally sheltered from the realities of real life just by existing in an academic environment. Students who over or under spend on projects, generate poor marketing material and campaigns or complain of in-fighting within the group will find it difficult to understand the meaning and extent of such realities in a real SME.

What also needs to be considered is that while the result of the experience and the learning is being tested, the outcome can be subjective and largely dependent on the student's own awareness of having learned something. While commendable results from such teaching approaches are evident in the workplace, graduate perspectives should be considered for a more comprehensive understanding of the quality of the programme that was undertaken.

There is however other research that is not so supportive of EL or EME. Gardner (2012) suggests that EL is part of a number of teaching initiatives that has its roots in the UK's highly unstable education system due to the constant tinkering by central Government over the past 30 years. It is further suggested that EL has been re-introduced to the curriculum in recent years to enable learners deemed unsuitable, unwilling or incapable of completing a traditional subject discipline that uses traditional forms of assessment (e.g. History, English and Mathematics). In effect, the suggestion is that vocational awards such as Events Management are considered the low status alternative to academic qualifications that are intended for the working class. The Ineson (2012) article title suggests EME is a pointless education while actually discussing its value. However, Kaplan (2015) considers EME to be worthless and advised:

“If you really feel spending £27,000 on a degree in Events Management from the University of Derby is more cost effective and beneficial to your career than three years actually planning events, then a poly is exactly where you belong. You'll leave with nothing but bang average grades and a piece of paper that is as useful in the real world as a Frosties swimming certificate.”

Similar issues are discussed further in Taylor (2011 p6) who explains the ‘Mickey Mouse’ attitude towards EME and other related vocational HE courses. However, Taylor does acknowledge that EME is taken much more seriously now due to the growing set of industries which EME graduates have moved into.

2.5. EMBOK/CMP-IS/MBECS

To understand the complexities EME faces in maintaining a consistency with developments in industry, it is prudent to consider the Event Management Body of Knowledge EMBOK, the CICs Certified Meeting Professional International Standards CMP-IS and the Meetings and Business Events Competency Standards (MBECS). There are other bodies that provide guidance and standards similar to these but are more specific to certain territories around the world. Silvers (2003) defined the knowledge domain structure of event management headed by five associated functional units namely:

1. Administration
2. Design
3. marketing
4. Operations
5. Risk

Each knowledge domain is accompanied by a number of functional units further supported by a classification or taxonomy of topics that may be adopted as part of an EME curriculum. Appendix II A. presents the EMBOK domains and their functional units.

EMBOK has its origins in education and was suggested in a paper at an International Special Events Society (ISES) conference in 2000 (O'Toole, 2015). The other organisations have their origins in industry. For example, when working in the events

industry, it is possible to become a Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) by purchasing a course and completing an exam to demonstrate in-depth skills, knowledge and abilities in events. The CIC has certified more than 14,000 meeting professionals in 55 countries since the programme's inception in 1985 (CIC, 2015). To successfully obtain the CMP award, participants have to demonstrate mastery of the 10 domains that are tailored to specific sectors of the industry. The CMP-IS domains are:

1. Strategic Planning
2. Project Management
3. Risk Management
4. Financial Management
5. Human Resources
6. Stakeholder Management
7. Meeting or Event Design
8. Site Management
9. Marketing
10. Professionalisation

It is important to stress that CMP and MBECS are largely designed and aimed at working professionals in specific fields of events management while EMBOK has largely been developed with a much broader scope and maintains a strong connection with education. However, the methods and attention to detail used in CMP and the taxonomy that has been created for EMBOK can be of extreme value to the design and structure of each EME award. From an education perspective, it is crucial to understand how each sector of the industry proportions these levels of competency to each individual task. By doing so, awards could adopt these into the EME curriculum. Furthermore, many EME awards have moved away from including exams as part of the assessment. The CMP-IS is an exam based course of study that has been developed by experts who already hold the CMP designation and are working in the field. The CMP-IS is updated every five years to ensure that the exam reflects the current knowledge needed to be a successful meeting professional (CMP, 2016).

The CMP-IS programme appears to rank the levels of importance between skills, knowledge and ability. This is an observation of something that has often been difficult to distinguish or observe in an EME award. It would appear that through a body of knowledge, CMP-IS consider the importance of competencies thus:

1. Ability: The competence to apply the knowledge to the task
2. Knowledge: Minimum level of comprehension and understanding of the sub
3. Sub Skill: Specific functions needed to perform the skill
4. Common Knowledge: General knowledge relevant to the skill
5. Skill: The task under the knowledge based domain

To provide a more coherent understanding of this information, Appendix II B. defines 'Domain A' Strategic Planning with its related sub-section 1.01 of the CMP-IC body of knowledge in detail and categorises the skills, knowledge and abilities required by an individual in order to successfully undertake this activity in a professional environment.

This is a comprehensive set of data set out in a concise means that guides the employee through the various levels of competencies required and how they will be tested on each of the elements involved. It is just as comparable a method (if using a different approach) that MBECS has adopted for their training programme. Much of the detail is similar but provided in its own distinct manner.

The MBECS consists of 12 domains, 33 skills, almost 100 subskills, and more than 1,000 learner outcomes. The twelve domains include:

1. Strategic Planning
2. Project Management
3. Risk Management
4. Financial Management
5. Administration
6. Human Resources
7. Stakeholder Management
8. Meeting or Event Design
9. Site Management
10. Marketing
11. Professionalism

12. Communication

These domains describe the competencies required by professionals in the field of meetings practice as they go on to increase their knowledge and abilities in the subject. These are achieved by progressing through three workplace curriculum levels - coordination, management and direction (MPI, 2012). See Appendix II C MBECS Curriculum Levels that displays the table that is used to provide evidence of the progression.

While the framework in both these industry based methods is meticulous, it is likely that these have not been adopted by EME because the entire set of standards can be assumed to be somewhat overwhelming for an UG student. They also, in the case of MBECS reflect a level of competency that can take over a decade to accomplish (Krugman et al., 2014). However, the comparability of domains is notable throughout all three approaches signifying complete agreement between education and industry on the focus of the events curriculum. The fact that the industry model has been established for fifteen years more than the academic model indicates the direction of influence.

Benefits to industry employers naturally exist around an on-the-job learning experience. The benefit education has over these industry methods is the continued level of support in formative and summative feedback. Employees can be expected to attend sessions on an ad-hoc basis, while EME students not only receive regular feedback on their progression, but also have continued access with the lecturers as and when they need.

When bearing in mind the domains of EME, research that has reviewed the actual content of EME awards suggests that there is considerable variation depending on the provider. The Mulligan (2010) research of institutions in Yorkshire suggested that the

topic of ‘administration’ retain the highest proportion of course content. This is juxtaposed with short-course providers in EME that also lead to an UG award through organisations such as the British Accreditation Council (BAC) who focus more on ‘operational’ subjects for course content. There is undoubted value in the EMBOK/MBECS and CMP-IS frameworks but while awards cover many of the knowledge domains identified in each, it is unknown which informed the other. The wider extent of this is largely under researched but considering these frameworks in effect cover all the theoretical possibilities of EM in the minutest detail, every award reviewed will have an assortment of these functional areas.

This holistic approach of EME is perhaps the basis for the criticism expressed by academics (Bladen and Kennell, 2014, Krugman et al., 2014, Barron and Leask, 2012) who consider these frameworks to be either too challenging, unrealistic or too vocational. Lecturers need to consider delivering the EME curriculum in a manner that engages the student, or considering what Smart and Csapo (2007) called strategies to involve students actively in the learning process.

2.6. Challenges for lecturers designing and delivering EME

As lecturers endeavour to design and deliver EME, a number of challenges become clear. Most notable is building an appropriate and dependable course of study that reflects the subjects articulated in the professional frameworks above. Furthermore, the relative infancy of EME is matched by the limited research and a number of strong views on the quality of education provided. Lecturers are designing, delivering and publishing ideas whilst having to defend their occupation. Disapproving comments on EME awards are increasingly being exposed and recently a debate appeared online

with numerous academics, students and others contributing their perspectives on the strength of EME and its graduates (Edwards, 2014).

A number of oversights in delivery and award design have been observed in some teaching practices as well as the ability of event managers themselves. For example, Moscardo and Norris (2004) incorporated an entrepreneurial approach to teaching when not all EME students are or need to be entrepreneurial. There are many other employment opportunities in events management that would benefit students gaining experience in that can easily be applied to the award. However, recently, including entrepreneurship in education has helped to promote a culture of entrepreneurial graduates by providing the necessary training and skills (Culkin and Mallick, 2011). Other academic studies suggest it is in a company's interest to train its own staff on the particular area it specialises in, rather than employ a graduate who has been taught a great deal of potentially unnecessary skills. Fletcher et al. (2009) for example, labels new EME graduates as "wannabes" suggesting new graduates are "many years of experience away from meeting a workplace entry standard" (p53).

Getz (2002b) considered why events themselves fail and a number of suggestions were put forward as possible explanations including poor marketing, external sources/forces and financial incompetence. There was no consideration for the level of education or whether training had been undertaken by the events managers involved.

McHardy and Allen (2000) considered the different methods of learning between education and industry and proposed students should learn the way practitioners do. Their main proposal is that practitioners tend to be creative by improvising in a complex world of broad patterns using 'feel' to detect subtle changes in customer perceptions. However, practitioner methods are also susceptible to failure. Emery (2010) noted that the emergent industry is too often associated with examples of mismanagement. Getz (2002b) implied widespread poor professional competence in

the workforce and advised that failed events are highly substitutable by other leisure activities.

One emergent trend in the literature is the negative reaction often received from students during the learning stage being far outweighed by the positive evidence and overall enjoyment suggested by the student upon completion of the award (McCabe, 2012, Marcketti et al., 2011, Reid, 2006, Daruwalla and Fallon, 2005, Moscardo and Norris, 2004, McDonald and McDonald, 2000). The leadership and self-management research undertaken by Marcketti et al. (2011) focused specifically on the willingness of students to seek out and conquer challenges and promoted a process where students would behave in a way that others should copy. The process was evidently successful and reported some exceptional and inspiring remarks from the student participants.

Another major challenge in designing appropriate awards is the expectations that lecturers have towards their student. This plays a significant role in setting the reality of the student learning experience (McEwan, 2015) or managing their expectation. From an observational perspective, engaging EME students with the benefits of feedback on their work to achieve these expectations on an academic level has raised an ongoing concern. The problem for the research is that very little has been written with EME in mind. While this remains an area of research it is also a key influence on learning. Achieving an optimum grade is the student's ability to respond to feedback (Murphy et al., 2015). Providing continuous formative assessment to students has been recognised as a significant benefit to student learning (Bierer et al., 2008) although student motivation to engage in some of the academic processes has proven to be a cause for concern (Jepson and Clarke, 2014b).

Harrison et al. (2010) suggested that when feedback is provided in a summative context, it is not always used effectively by learners. Weinberg (2013) asserted that written comments are often ignored by students who only seek out their grade in such

communication. Research also shows that when students engage more actively with feedback, more positive responses can be achieved (Pauline, 2013). Evans et al. (2014) suggested incorporating an active learning element and quiz-based approaches to encourage less motivated students to engage more effectively to achieve further academic development.

While the concept of learning styles recognises that individuals prefer different ways of learning (Charlesworth, 2007), from an EME perspective, Getz (2012) suggests that mental engagement in EME is probably more difficult to realise than physical engagement. Unusually, another contributor to managing expectation of students is that physical engagement in events is often used to promote other more cognitive content of EME awards that in fact turns out to be more theoretical in its delivery.

2.7. The professionalisation of events management

The professionalisation of the events industry is an on-going debate. From a business perspective, Sperstad and Cecil (2011) highlight the influence of the profession of events management itself by suggesting that after having been misrepresented historically as an immature and informal line of work, a much more professional industry exists that is responding to industry need and is now more than capable of delivering a return on investment for businesses. Comparisons to other professions have been made that emphasise the matter. Thomas and Thomas (2012) consider law as an ideal comparison when it comes to gate-keeping those who practise and discuss how students specialise in different areas of the law. The same can be said for other professions. However, lawyers would not under any circumstances practise in any other field than their own. Although, even if specialist areas for EME were followed,

employers have said that in general, there are far too many graduates in the sector which has led to confusion as to the relative value of each qualification (Leyne, 2008). Robinson (2008) suggested that collaboration with business is the correct way forward for the delivery of EME and proposed a more combined approach with an innovative industry partnership strategy to refresh and redefine the academe-industry relationship.

The consideration of these different sectors leads to another predicament that has been raised which is to understand whether students of EME are simply studying for an occupation or to gain access to a profession. The professionalisation of events has been described as occupations gaining their standing as a profession (Deery, 2009). This is a significant area of discussion because a HE award in events management is either essential to the industry or essentially irrelevant depending on this key point.

Thomas and Thomas (2012) suggested that attempts to professionalise the industry have largely failed as far as festivals management is concerned and possibly for general events business as well because of the impossibility to professionalise the industry. This situation may be a reflection of the fragmented landscape of the industry bodies. Event Managers have a number of professional organisations and associations they can join that appear to splinter rather than unite the different sectors. Nevertheless, while membership to these organisations is simple and many organisations exist with titles that cover specific groups within the industry, membership uptake is less than encouraging. England alone employs in excess of 500,000 people in the sector (Leyne, 2008). With representative industry bodies obtaining little more than 150 members, they have limited ability to exert their influence (Thomas and Thomas, 2012).

Jiang and Schmader (2014) considered what characteristics constitute event management professionalism and suggested EME is central to addressing the issues of “untrackables,” and “uncalculatables” in this industry. Goldblatt (2000) suggested that

event management has produced a climate that is confusing, lacking in credibility and compared to other professions, detrimental to its long term growth. Robinson (2008) suggested a further problem is reconciling the graduates' learned skills with industry needs at entry level while Harris (2004) highlighted the different subject specialisms students are afforded in their final year as an acceptable approach to undoing the problem.

When the industry itself is considered, the magnitude of professionalisation becomes apparent. According to the most up-to-date Labour Market Review of the Events Industry the industry in the UK is served by 25,000 businesses and employs around 530,000 (People1st, 2010) which as a comparison is more than double that of the UK telecoms industry. Business visits and events are estimated to be worth over £39 billion to Britain's economy and the industry is extremely diverse and fragmented (Fletcher, 2015). In contrast to these figures, Sectorskills (2008) suggest the events industry itself has a distinct lack of comprehensive and consistent information. Such differences are partly due to the difficulties in capturing a definitive scope of events industry as it exists in so many sectors. Furthermore, the lack of a Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (SIC code) is another contributing factor. A SIC code was first introduced into the UK in 1948 for use in classifying business establishments and other statistical units by the type of economic activity in which they are engaged (SIC, 2016).

Without a definitive leading body or a minimum standard of education or certification to exclude those who are not formally educated in events management, the industry will continue to find it difficult to professionalise itself. From a teaching perspective, Cecil et al. (2011 p185) argue that:

“As long as the industry remains highly fragmented and ill-defined, educational programs will be the result of situational curriculum planning, typically based on the experiences of those planning that curriculum.”

Based on this suggestion, EME can only endeavour to improve the quality of the human resources in events management through education and training (Fenich et al., 2012) and not the overall respect of the trade or the individual. Jiang and Schmader (2014) suggested event management is like a priceless jewel with many facets; each one cut slightly different, but no less important to the value of the whole. Nelson and Silvers (2009) however suggested that problems exist making career entry and progression difficult. Goldblatt (2011) noted that it was only a few years ago that education was considered a minor requirement for employment in events.

This is something that other subjects such as law has for some time managed to provide and something education is beginning to be recognised for. Silvers (2006) sums up the situation thus:

“For events management to attain the status as a true profession... an agreed-upon scope of skill competencies necessary for one to be considered qualified to practice must be identified... and an equitable system of accountability must be developed. Only then will this occupation warrant... a legitimate profession.”

As the debate continues, the students' first place of employment is arguably a good indicator as to the need for such status and to a large extent, how well EME is meeting the needs of the industry. Tracking EME graduate activity is largely limited to each institution and it has been suggested that since the move to mass higher education, many students do not satisfy the needs of employers (Tran, 2015). Responsibility for the employability of graduates has also been imposed on their respective higher education systems (Culkin and Mallick, 2011). This has placed an emphasis on institutions tracking FDE. The Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey asks what graduates are doing six months after graduation with about three quarters completing the survey. While such data is of value, the quality of data may be seriously impaired because of the way in which it is collected (Johnes and

Taylor, 1989). Particularly, some institutions ignored the prescribed deadlines and variations across universities in data collection methods.

Professionalisation begins in education. While education can provide graduates with the necessary skills for their chosen field, it cannot ensure graduates apply for events-related positions. Data is available that suggests high numbers of graduates had secured unrelated careers (Shah et al., 2004). Professionalisation would reduce the numbers for the latter and a more professionalised events industry can only be beneficial for the different events stakeholders.

2.8. The visibility of EME

A key factor in the recruitment of students to a HE award is its visibility. In terms of recruitment, EME is now essentially the market leader in its associate group of awards. Even though EME continues to grow ahead of its main associate subjects (HLST), it remains a sub-sector of them. The QAA publishes subject benchmark statements that provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject or subject area (QAA, 2008). The QAA's benchmark statement is the definitive example of where the study of events is positioned within its academic community, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (HLST). Even though it has become a much more popular sector in terms of student numbers, it does not achieve recognition in the title. The perspective created is that Events Management is a much less significant area of study. This is not representative of the sector. From an external stakeholder perspective, this can be seen as a disadvantage for EME awards.

While recruitment of students to events awards has increased, the disappearance of awards in Leisure is just as significant. When the UCAS website course search tool is used to find courses in 'Leisure', the case for changing the title of the academic community becomes indisputable. Of the 88 Leisure courses found in the UK, not a single course or award is dedicated solely to the study of Leisure while 34 have adopted the word 'Event' to improve the visibility of their Leisure awards (UCAS, 2015). The lack of recognition in the QAA's academic community's title is most unfavourable to EME while the perseverance with Leisure can only be put down to either habit or ignorance to the current state of affairs. .

2.9. Conclusions

The growth of the events industry means an increase in the need for qualified personnel who are able to create, organise, coordinate and manage events (Formadi and Raffai, 2009). EME has evolved to meet the needs of the employer by presenting theoretical and experiential opportunities. This is not a new phenomenon in education, but the widespread adoption of EL within EME is noteworthy as while it aligns with the suggested industry frameworks, the teaching approach is moving from theory towards more practical activities. It is evident that in an attempt to address this broad area of study and to test the required skills event managers will use, EL is getting the event student out of the classroom and into a working environment. The involvement of EME students in (physical) practical events, allows them to realise academic capabilities (mental) through reflection which can then be assessed to meet course requirements.

The difficulties faced by EME in providing work-ready graduates are complicated by the industrial landscape because the N820 award is a wide-ranging education with limited in-depth focus on any of the many sectors that exist within the industry. This approach has a potential knock-on effect that has affects the professionalisation debate.

Because the business education landscape on the whole is undergoing significant change due to new educational technologies, a new generation of students, innovative competitors and the withdrawal of public funding (Harrington and Kearney, 2011), even greater demands are placed on lecturers and institutions to provide excellence in education to meet industry need. Moreover, as Arcodia and Barker (2003) discussed, employment opportunities are broad and often go far beyond the immediate boundaries of EME. Therefore, greater collaboration between academics and events practitioners is seen as necessary in order to produce graduates who have the necessary knowledge and skills to work in this industry; or to be more specific, in a particular sector of the industry. As the sector continues to grow, there is the potential to saturate the labour market with graduates from EME who are either not adequately prepared for the work they are about to undertake or, specialists with the wrong skills for the industry. However, many lecturers might consider this irrelevant due to the transferable skills gained and the growing need for events management graduates in developing nations assisted by the global nature of the industry.

What emerges from the literature review is a need to understand what the graduate is experiencing after their engagement within the workplace and what kind of on-the-job training is or is not necessary to fulfil the employer's needs. This is notably absent from current EME literature. Without the professionalisation of events management, the curriculum can avoid professional regulatory standards and continue to be comprehensive rather than focused.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design of the study. It will begin with a framework for the ontological and epistemological approach before justifying the research design.

It was considered relevant to include information about my role in this research as both a practitioner of events management and as a lecturer because of the influence this has had on the design of the study. An ethical approach was employed throughout the research process and this is outlined in this chapter. This chapter will also provide information on the procedures used for data collection and analysis, validity & reliability and the influence of the pilot study on the design of the final study.

The study addresses the following two primary research questions, each followed by three secondary questions,

- 1 How are EME awards designed and taught in England?
 - a. What is the focus of EME awards?
 - b. What factors contribute to the characteristics of an EME award?
 - c. How are the required EM skills taught in HE?
- 2 Does a HE EME award realise the expectations of students’?
 - a. Does academic study help develop the necessary skills required for work in the events sector?
 - b. To what extent is First Destination Employment (FDE) a factor?
 - c. Does an EME award adequately prepare students for work in the events sector?

Considering the broad nature of data being returned and in order to fully answer all the research questions, it was decided to use the themes that had arisen during the research to answer the research questions. This allowed for a much richer and flowing method

of developing the data into answers that were presented in a much more comprehensive manner. Therefore, Figure 3.1.1 below provides guidance on how each question is analysed and addressed through the themes in Chapter 4, (sections 1 and 2) and the discussions in Chapter 5.

Figure 3.1.1. Corresponding themes and research questions

Theme	Covering research question
The design and delivery of EME UG awards in England	1. B 2. C
Incorporating NOS into the design of EME awards	1. B 2. C
Defining the current focus of EME awards	1. A 2. C
Desired and Actual Learning Focus	1. A 2. C
Factors contributing to the design of an EME award	1. C 2. C
Lecturer Knowledge and Industry Experience	1. B, C 2. C
Lecturer experience	1. B, C
HE EME awards and the expectations of students and employers	1. B 2. A
The role of academic study in developing requisite skills necessary for work in the events sector	1. B, C 2. A, C
Learning the requisite EM skills in HE	3. A, C
The growing case for attention to gender	1. B, 2. C
Student preferences and preparation for work	1. B 2. B
The significance of First Destination Employment (FDE)	2. B

3.2 Ontology and Epistemology

My theoretical and philosophical foundation for the research is based on the fact that EME can be categorised as being influenced by human subjectivities and is not a hard reality (Basit, 2010). EME is arguably the most appropriate route to employment in the events industry. However, tensions between education and industry are widely reported. In this section, in light of what Shah and Al-Bargi (2013) consider ontological and epistemological positions the foundation of the research is discussed.

Because of the ongoing debate about the needs of the events education and industry provision, there are different perceptions on who may be responsible when differences between the two are detected. For example, employers have questioned the value of graduates (Docherty, 2014, Cooper, 2012, Sargeant and Matheson, 1996). At the same time, education researchers have highlighted the lack of employer support for the skills of the workforce (Keep, 2012) and the inadequate level of private sector expenditure on adult and continuing training (Schuller and Watson, 2009).

To contextualise my ontological position for the research, a personal professional goal as an EME lecturer is to provide education that is academic enough to warrant a HE standing and applicable enough to produce graduates with managerial capabilities.

The transfer of these managerial capabilities might be understood in the broader sense as the reality of what is actually happening through education as opposed to what academics would like to imagine is happening. The latter would appear to be the current position of both EME and industry. From here, my goal becomes constructing an evaluative, ethical, intellectual and ideological truth as to the state of EME today.

Based on the conflicting positions of EME and industry and in order to fully understand if any major discrepancies really do exist between the required skills and knowledge provided through EME and those required by industry, my “preferred place” (Burgess et al., 2006 p54) comes from a starting point that considers the

knowledge of events management and employment in events management being positioned at opposite poles to each other. By doing so, EME can be placed in the middle as the provider of both the link and the break in the chain to satisfy industry need.

As discussed, a lack of understanding and communication exists between education and industry making the design of a fully effective award challenging. From this perspective, rather than consider them united and attempt to find gaps between education and employment, the research is put into a position that allows for the examination of the potential attachments and detachments. This approach will thereby define the nature and scope of the actual situation that exists in reality. By exploring the perspectives of LEGS, more meaningful insights and a deeper understanding of each will present a central point into which shared meanings and disagreements, commonalities and discords will appear creating a holistic set of data on the subject. Having selected my *place* in the research and positioned the subject area accordingly, a variety of preconceptions of EME and industry-need can now be introduced to further explain the physical characteristics of the research.

I am bringing together the different frames of reference from the four main groups of participants. This creates a reality that is made up of a comprehensive set of circumstances by gathering data about each different understanding of EME. Previous research has involved a study of each of the four groups of participants individually from within either the educational or the work environment. My approach brings complexity and roundness to the methods of data collection (Mason, 2002). This approach equates directly with the suggestion that while ontology refers to how reality is defined (Burton, 2008), or alternatively the kind of things that exist (Burgess et al., 2006), the perspective and experiences of the individual from their personal journey or

role become key to this research. Ultimately, a better understanding of the quality of EME is achieved.

From an epistemological perspective the knowledge that exists for EME comes from a mix of experience and theory. However, many events practitioners are known to have entered the industry direct from secondary education which may be a contributing factor for the difference of opinion on the ability of HE to provide quality graduates. From an academic perspective, one can assume that knowledge is imparted during the learning process and therefore begins with the lecturer. It is important to accept therefore that it is not a static environment as EME lecturers will not only develop their own knowledge but contribute their own experiences and individuality and work with a group of lecturers to deliver an award. So it is expected that a complex set of epistemological stand points will exist within a teaching team. This is likely to affect the learning process.

These questions of ontology and epistemology will combine to provide a shared reality of the current situation in EME. This form of research, as Basit (2010) explains is providing a personal and subjective approach to knowing. The graduate will be able to give an explanation on both the value of their educational learning compared with that of the workplace (Ho et al., 2014). The UG is able to discuss how they feel about their potential future employment (Mausolf, 2014) and provide an additional perspective that brings important information on the perceived view on future employment.

The findings contribute to the overall picture of EME. However, it is accepted that the multi-dimensional state that exists in EME is ever-changing and a single study of this nature is in the present. EME has not undergone a deep examination of this kind and a point of reference that provides realities on the relationship between the basic categories of existence in EME is necessary for the benefit and development of EME

as a whole. The resulting effect is a philanthropic outcome when conveyed in practice. Not only does it become possible for academic peers to adopt the findings (both positive and negative) to improve an award, it should also present a much clearer perspective for both the industry and ultimately the student bringing the two poles suggested above much closer together.

There are a number of principles that are central to my broad range of ontological assumptions that have affected the study. Most importantly, as discussed in the next section, coming from an industry background it is possible to take on the role of an insider academic attempting to make sense of the differences between long-standing industry experiences and current academic experiences.

3.3 Etic – emic validity

Johnson and Christensen (2008) suggest the first validity in mix-methods research is etic (insider) – emic (outsider) validity. Understanding the perspective from both these perspectives is important in producing fully informed descriptions and explanations. Insider research has been defined as a researcher who carries out research on a community to which they belong (Jagiello, 2014). Because of a sustained involvement with industry, it is possible to include being a practitioner who has researched their own practice. In view of the criticism that social science research fails to provide adequate interpretations, Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest that insider grounding is particularly crucial.

The research is advanced somewhat with an insider-researcher approach in the knowledge that when conducting interviews language, terminologies, and industry processes are immediately understood and clarification is largely unnecessary. The

neutral or detached observations that the outsider may be much admired for providing would not add to the quality of this research and could arguably be seen as detrimental. Therefore my practitioner's insider perspective has brought benefit to the research.

By following this path, a rather unique location of positionality that aligns with Banks (1998) indigenous-insider in knowledge and values has been achieved. As an indigenous-insider one is perceived by people within the community as a legitimate community member who can speak with authority about it. While my research position can be considered to have a self-interested perspective, it nonetheless creates a comprehensively practical purpose for all involved. My knowledge and experience of working in industry allows me to move between the distinct worlds of education and industry to create an informed perspective that can be of benefit to industry and education. Subsequently in conducting this research project, there are personal benefits that include furthering my own knowledge of the subject and my ability to teach events management in a way that meets the needs of the four main stakeholders involved.

More recent research (Kerstetter, 2012 p100) on the 'value' to a study from insider and outsider researchers suggests that sociologists and qualitative researchers have engaged in an extensive debate about the benefits and drawbacks of researchers being from the communities they study and the drawbacks are a potential threat for all qualitative and mixed-methods research. The key limitations for insider-research include ensuring quality of data and avoiding burdens of influence. Having worked for many years in the events industry prior to education and continue to be involved in delivering events, it is difficult to avoid agreeing with the view of the insider-researcher doctrine, which holds that outsider-research will never truly understand a

culture or situation if they have not fully experienced it. Research from pure academics on an industry such as events can be seen to lack credibility.

For me, the position of insider researcher exists, though it can be upheld that an independent existence (Shah and Al-Bargi, 2013) has been maintained throughout the study. The possibility of allowing researcher-bias into the research has been at the forefront of my mind. For example, it is easy to be drawn by the data from the literature review or my own experiences and influence the one-to-one interviews. However, throughout the research, constant consideration for undue influence of my own predisposition (Menter et al., 2011) on any aspect of the research has been maintained.

3.4 Research paradigms

There are a number of potential research paradigms that would be considered suitable to conduct research that is capable an in-depth examination of EME. However, a single data set was not sufficient to answer the questions proposed. To do this effectively, the research design needed a more practical approach that presented more freedom (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011) to research the various social actors. For this purpose, a mixed methods approach was the preferred mode for investigating EME.

Due to the nature of the questions, research paradigms that lend themselves to the more strict quantifiable research, generally known as the ‘hard’ sciences are less applicable as this research is focused on a social science (Savin-Baden and Major, 2012, Brand, 2009). The questions do not lend themselves to a quantifiable approach. Therefore positivism (Willis, 2007), empiricism (Blaikie, 2007), falsificationism

(Corfield et al., 2009) and other similar approaches were omitted as the sole approach as the research is not attempting to generate a singular reality (Quinlan, 2011, Ringer, 2006). The data, for reasons of quality, must include substantial individual judgements. An interpretative approach or mixed methods phenomenological research (MMPR) (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie, 2015) was considered more suitable as this holds that human actions and social constructs (such as EME and the event industry) cannot be interpreted in the same way as natural objects (Tribe, 1999).

Even within mixed methods, there are a number of challenges that exist that make certain approaches unsuitable to this research. These include transformative worldview and pragmatist as these are too theoretically based. Because of my active interaction with the subject, the most appropriate approach was to follow a Grounded Theory, Constructivist approach as the overarching philosophy, with quantitative post-positivist components embedded into an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Scott and Morrison, 2007, Ormston et al., 2003).

An IPA embraces the iterative characteristics of Grounded Theory. These included, data driven theory, capturing context and complexity in social action, investigating an emerging topic, applying themes to data and the triangulation of sources to gather rich data (Rose et al., 2015, Charmaz, 2006, Glaser and Strauss, 1967). By following a constant comparison method, my research has used the Edmonds and Kennedy (2013 p121) definition as the main inspiration towards analysing data which states:

“The analytical process moves from concrete codes to abstract themes and categories that are reflective of the meaning that participants attach to their experiences, rather than the generation of objective truth.”

My research is best explained as primarily a qualitative interpretative case study method reinforced with quantitative strands that provide a supportive secondary role. This approach brought together an understanding of the world of the events employer

and academe fused together with the perspectives of the student and graduate. This has enabled a considerably focused and contextualised interpretation of EME and the needs of the industry. The approach has underpinned my research actions and created a network of coherent ideas (Morrison, 2009, Bassey, 1999). By doing so, a clear lens is created through which my research is viewed.

The main emphasis of phenomenological research is to describe or to interpret human experience as lived by the experiencer in a way that can be used as a source of qualitative evidence (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie, 2015). This paradigm is considered as constructivist, naturalist and humanistic which emerged in contra-distinction to positivism for the understanding and interpretation of human and social reality (Shah and Al-Bargi, 2013). From the origins of the study of human action and its intended meaning (Schutz et al., 1972), phenomenologists have strived to see things from the individual's point of view.

The approach has allowed the social actors (LEGS) to transfer their perspectives and understandings about their involvement with EME and the events industry. LEGS will have significant data to contribute by means of their ideas, feelings and motives (Douglas, 1970) or following the Kuma (2014) correlational research approach of exploring a relationship between two or more variables. The IPA approach was advanced further by maintaining an appreciation for the Gunter (2005) conceptualisation model which considers the core purpose of enabling and developing learning through the contribution of ideas, facts and values. For example, each events management award will attach certain individual skills, knowledge and influences coupled with place, space and equipment that will contribute to the design of the award. In methodological terms, the IPA is concerned with understanding, often on an individual level (Boudah, 2011, Burrell and Morgan, 1979). An IPA is a much better

fit for this research because of the assumption that all meanings are contextual and that all knowledge is a matter of interpretation.

Grounded Theory and IPA are not without their critics, but the criticism often relates to how fitting these approaches are in other methods of study. The criticism of accepting data without proper reasoning or questioning that has been associated with Grounded Theory cannot be applied to this study because a deeper validity and closer accuracy is achieved by using this as the basis of my research paradigm. The known or assumed cause that is being proceeding from is evidenced from prior research. No other approach could portray the perspectives of the participants in my particular area of research in such depth. The IPA approach also allows for the expressed thoughts, feelings and experiences (Johnson and Christensen, 2008) of those who have not only taken part in the study, but have abundant experiences to share on the topic.

3.5 Methodologies

A similar study might consider using just a qualitative or quantitative methodology in order to complete the research. If just a qualitative methodology was used, all the four main components could still be included as the quantitative strands only supplement the data from students and lecturers. A quantitative methodology would struggle to gather a considerable amount of necessary data in order to answer the questions. As the research had different questions that require different types of data, a mixed methods was chosen in order to enhance the data collected.

Mertens (2005) suggested that a way to assist in choosing the appropriate research methodology is to review the nature of the research questions. In order to answer my research questions appropriately, it was necessary for me to use a mix of qualitative

and quantitative data collection methods. While a mixed methods approach is used, the research is qualitative dominant. It followed a systematic interaction between theory and data (Haralambos et al., 2008) and while this can suit both qualitative and quantitative methodology, a quantitative dominant approach would have proven inflexible and uncondusive to the interpretivist method being carry out.

Other considerations in the design of the methodology included the approach towards sampling and numbers (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). The ‘what to study’ element of the numbers for this research is drawn from the tendency of previous research to review EME from a more linear or singular viewpoint (Pate and Shonk, 2015, Ryan, 2013a, Ryan, 2013b, Ineson, 2012, McCabe, 2012, Mair et al., 2009, Lockstone et al., 2008, Moscardo and Norris, 2004, McHardy and Allen, 2000, Perry et al., 1996). In considering these previous studies, this research is provided with a broad scope of what is already known about EME which has helped identify existing knowledge and formulate the design of the research. The attention of these previous research papers are studies that have reviewed particular aspects of EME or the effects of EME and discuss EME on its own or EME through another singular dimension, such as the workplace, the gap between education and industry, the student and/or the employer. Also, the shared approach to these studies is often reflective while this study is concurrent and conducted entirely within the span of events. It would also be unwise to undertake a study of EME in the same way that the hard sciences pursue their investigations. The ability to ‘know’ comes from the inside, in context, and no hard, unchanging reality can be identified (Brand, 2009).

Creswell et al. (2003 p165) suggest:

“A mixed methods study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research.”

3.6. Methods of data collection

3.6.1. Interviews

A central component of this research was conducting interviews in order to elicit qualitative data from LEGS. There were a number of possible interview processes that could have been adopted for this research. These include the structured interview (Basit, 2010, Burgess et al., 2006) , where all questions are asked in a predetermined order from a prepared schedule. The exploratory interview (Oppenheim, 2001) in which the question areas are pre-determined but some freedom to answer is allowed to probe for more information in areas of interest or the semi-structured interview (Basit, 2010, Burgess et al., 2006, Oppenheim, 2001) which is based on a set of questions although is flexible enough to have a discussion that allows the respondent more freedom. The researcher is then in a position to control the direction of the discussion to keep the responses relevant.

From these options, it was possible to use a semi-structured approach as other options were considered too rigid. Applying too much structure to the interview process would reduce the quality of data returned. While the first two methods may be useful in building a case at the start of the research, my interviews were designed to add support to the other data being collected. Therefore, a considerable amount of flexibility was both maintained and required to probe for data.

The inclusion of one-to-one interviews allowed me to shift the defined questioning plan or focus of the interview based on the interviewees reply to create a much more natural flow or conversation (O'Leary, 2014) and discuss in more depth what had been

uncovered in the questionnaire. By doing so, this method also allowed the interviewee to go off on some interesting tangents that provided further quality data in the process.

3.6.2. Questionnaires

The use of questionnaires can be considered a hazardous approach to gathering data as a considerable amount of prior knowledge is required for questionnaires to work. In light of the unique position of an insider researcher, a position to understand a number of potential issues faced by the LEGS was possible. In this situation, it was necessary to maintain a neutral perspective throughout the process to ensure unprejudiced questioning ensued. This was achieved through guidance from supervisors on how to maintain an unbiased approach in the design of the questionnaires and interviews. The interview process required constant awareness throughout each conversation and every conscious attempt was made to provide neutral data. Allowing the interviewee to talk without interruption and following where the discussion flowed with limited direction proved to be the most appropriate method. Furthermore, two questionnaires were designed, piloted, tested and re-designed; one for students and one for lecturers to reduce bias and increase the quality and depth of data. The resulting data provides a detailed inside education perspective. Extracting additional data focused on the student's employment plans and the industry knowledge of the lecturers.

While a basic structure had been formed, new data obtained from the questionnaires added quality to my probing capabilities. It was then possible to add substance to the quantitative data from the questionnaires with the qualitative responses received during the interview stage. This process was considered critical to the design of the research from the start.

The questionnaires used mostly closed questions with multiple-point Likert style choices as well as straight forward yes or no questions. This allowed for answers to specific questions designed during the desk research. It also reduced the time it took to complete the questionnaire which was considered important to increase the chances of participation. It also included a number of open-ended questions.

The questionnaires returned considerably more informative data than originally expected. Using the tools and filters available through the online software package employed, it is possible to probe deeply into the data and show copious comparisons of the perspectives of students across institutions, their level of study and their future plans. For example, it was possible to compare level 4 responses from one institution with responses of level 4 responses from another institution. However, while all the possible permutations of data were fascinating, it was deemed necessary to limit the application of filters to the responses in order to maintain a focus on the research questions.

My understanding of the subject allowed me to design a group of highly specific questions that maintained a constant relevance to an events award. Both questionnaires were made available online. The advantages with this approach allowed respondents to engage with the questionnaire in their own time. A face-to-face approach may have been more worthwhile but the time, the cost and effort required to accomplish it would have been too demanding. The face-to-face approach was however used as part of the Lecturer questionnaire because of the fewer numbers involved.

There are a number of disadvantages when using questionnaires (Kuma, 2014) some of which were experienced in this research; notably, the inability to clarify or obtain further information on responses. However, within the design, an option to provide personal contact information to engage further was added which allowed for some

clarification from respondents. The design of a largely closed-question method did reduce the possibility of added data from a personal perspective, but considering specific questions were being asked, further elaborations were not sought. The questions that did require further elaboration included an “other” option to reduce the chances of this being an issue.

3.7. Sampling

When collecting data, it is generally the case that the larger the sample size, the more reliable and precise are the survey findings (Veal, 2011). However, it is also suggested that there are no benefits in working with large data sets, since these encourage a positivist mentality towards analysis Travers (2001). What is important to this research is ensuring a sufficient sample of the population has been reached while ensuring involvement with EME is central to the sample’s core activity. The number of one-to-one interviews for each element of the research was considered sufficient due to the fact that considerable responses to the questionnaires had already been achieved and the one-to-one interviews were adding value to the data collected.

The rationale for the numbers therefore relies on the overall design. Considering the holistic approach, it was important to obtain as many participants to the research in as less a demanding process as possible while at the same time warranting the sample size was satisfactory for a fair and true reflection of the sampling population to meet the goals of the analysis (O’Leary, 2014). This was achieved to a satisfactory level that eliminated bias and delivered maximum precision (Kuma, 2014).

This study has followed a selective approach towards sampling because the research does not seek to generalise the results (Rose et al., 2015, Basit, 2010, Yin, 2002). By

doing so it was possible to not restrict attention to general findings (Ashworth, 2008). Instead the focus is the interaction of EME with individuals (Allport, 1962) to generate the data. For this reason the research used a purposive sample which involved purposefully choosing participants on the basis that those selected are knowledgeable of the subject and will therefore be more likely to provide relevant data (Kuma, 2014, Basit, 2010).

The sample of this research study is made up of the LEGS attached to events management. Each of the universities in the study offer EM awards at a number of levels including UG, masters and doctorate level. The lecturers who were interviewed all teach at English institutions as well as the four in this study. Graduates are from these four universities while the employers were based in England, employ graduates and are involved in the events industry. Employing events graduates was not a prerequisite to being included in the study.

I decided it would be beneficial to the research if a number of prerequisites for employers were put in place. This included trading in the events industry, a minimum of ten employees and to have been trading for a minimum of ten years. These prerequisites meant that those interviewed would have employed staff in the industry and have experience of dealing with graduates from any background. Outside of these, no other employer obligation was required. An accompanying review of UCAS was conducted to provide additional contextual data to the research on the availability of EME awards.

The data was collected from four different English HEIs for the student questionnaire with an estimated population of 800, 164 were completed (38% level 4, 25% level 5 and 37% level 6). Therefore the response rate is 20.5%. The questionnaire was followed up with 25 one-to-one student interviews. The lecturer's questionnaire was posted on an online mailing list forum designed that had a subscription rate of 187

specifically for higher education and research communities. This was completed by 39 respondents while a further 15 lecturers completed the survey at an annual EME conference. This was followed up with 14 one-to-one interviews with lecturers from ten English institutions. The questionnaire was closed at the beginning of March 2014 with a response rate of 21.91% being achieved. 91% (48) of the respondents declared they came from the UK, 3% (2) from mainland Europe and 6% (4) from elsewhere.

There were a number of limitations to using this research approach as the sample size is limited at each stage. For example, the forum used is a closed group for members only. The fact that the members are predominantly lecturers in events outweighed this limitation. Also, there was limited time for both questionnaires which would have affected participation. However, considering the stringent controls on accessing students and lecturers outside of an individual's own institution, the methods used were undoubtedly the most penetrating means of connecting with these participants.

3.8 Validity & Reliability

Shuttleworth (2016) considers the principles of validity and reliability to be fundamental cornerstones of empirical research. Validity is largely concerned with truth and how the study approach relates to what is being explored. However, the reliability aspect is more a positivist indicator and is mainly concerned with consistency with results under repeated trials (Creswell, 2013). This research adopts a more dependability approach which “accepts that reliability may not be possible, but attests that methods are systematic, well documented and designed to account for research subjectivities” (O’Leary, 2014 p62). Furthermore, as Teddie and Tashakkori (2009) propose for a reliable mixed methods approach, researching what was intended,

rather than something else. In order to enhance the validity and reliability of the research (Basit, 2010), a pilot study was first undertaken.

3.8.1. Pilot Study

It is widely encouraged to conduct pilot studies when using questionnaires as part of the research (Boudah, 2011, Basit, 2010, Bell, 2010, Best, 1970). The value of such a research instrument is to check the reliability and validity of the questionnaires designed. By conducting a pilot study for each research instrument, it was possible to test the research techniques and methods to see if they work in practice (Burgess et al., 2006) and to gauge the responses and review the survey design. As explained earlier, EME covers a broad range of subjects and the pilot study provided an opportunity to reorganise the research instrument accordingly. By adopting the trial, test, develop and evaluate approach, (DfES, 2001) additional confidence in the method to provide more relevant findings from the preliminary consultations was achieved.

In order to test some of the concepts for each element of the study, questionnaires were piloted with access provided through one HEI. The student questionnaire was offered to one cohort of students while the lecturer questionnaire was offered to staff in the business school. The pilot study provided an opportunity to measure a number of potential irregularities accordingly.

The piloting process proved to be a steep learning curve in the design of questionnaires as it was possible to identify a number of flaws including the wording of questions, repetition, relevance and the flow of each questionnaire. From the responses and comments, it was possible to make a number of improvements. However, a positive reaction was that both pilot questionnaires had served as an

opportunity to bring attention to the nature of the study which brought further support from two academic staff. These brought more detailed comments and recommendations that were then applied to the final questionnaire. By allowing a period of reflection from the original pilot to when the initial responses were returned, issues that may have been considered glaring mistakes to a seasoned questionnaire designer became apparent.

The pilot student questionnaire proved to be most useful in terms of evaluation as the data collected was largely unfit for use. A link was emailed to a single cohort of 85 students which returned 13 completed questionnaires. While the response was low, it proved large enough for inconsistencies in the design to be identified. The pilot contained 11 questions which were increased to 17 in the final version. This was considered necessary as the research questions were not being adequately addressed.

Similarly, a link was emailed to a single institutions academic team of 47 which returned 4 completed questionnaires. As in the student questionnaire, the number of questions was raised from 11 to 15 due to insufficient data being collected. The most important experience from the exercise was how piloting improved the final questionnaires and became more appropriate to my research questions. By extending each of the questionnaires both the flow and structure became more workable for respondents and the additional questions provided further value to the research.

3.8.2. Maintaining a reliable and valid approach

What has been paramount in the collection of data is the internal consistency of the research process (Cohen et al., 2011). While it is possible to ensure a reliable approach in the process of gaining access to institutions and students, the planning of

interviews and meetings, ensuring participants agree to take part and have the interview recorded, it is recognised that a large proportion of the data collected is merely a reflection of an individual's thoughts and perceptions at a particular time that is fixed in the moment. The evidence generated is therefore contextual, situational and interactional (Mason, 2002). What is important in this study is the credibility of the findings based on the methods used. My objective throughout has been to return credible and accurate data while taking specific steps to ensure validity and reliability is achieved. This is evident from the first pilot study tests through to finalising the data collection.

The selected samples from the available population have come from highly reliable and trusted sources. Lecturers, graduates and students from reputable academic institutions provide the lion share of the sources while company directors make up the rest. There is no apparent reason for bad data to be provided from these sources. The processes attached to the study method are just as robust. These include drafting and re-drafting of questionnaires and interview questions with the help of academic supervisors in constructing semi-structured interview schedules, pilot studies for each of the questionnaires and interview schedules and the use of 'critical friends' for an external perspective.

In order to triangulate the data, more than one method of data collection has been applied. A combined level of triangulation (Denzin, 2009) has ensured that the validity and reliability of the data remains sound and tests the possibility of competing perspectives on EME. Data been collected from a variety of stakeholders (LEGS) including those inside and outside the HE bubble (Williams, 2013). These are important and contrasting viewpoints which allow for greater understanding and confidence in the final data (Cohen et al., 2011). Furthermore, two different methods of data collection have been used for additional triangulation of the data. Triangular

techniques have proven to be most suitable when, (as is the case here) a more holistic view of educational outcomes is sought (Mortimore et al., 1988).

Beyond triangulation, the central contributor to the reliability of the research is the quality of the responses to the questionnaires. With this in mind, the inherent weakness in the use of questionnaires has to be acknowledged. Academics conducting similar studies have discussed complications in the design of questionnaires for some time. Hayden (1998) describes the same experiences when conducting similar research:

“It has to be acknowledged that however carefully a questionnaire is designed and piloted prior to implementation, what it actually gathers in terms of data is what those responding choose to convey in their responses. It is hoped that what they choose to convey is actually the same as what is believed.”

While it has not been necessary to remove any of the data from this study, the data returned would stand up to further scrutiny. Furthermore, the questionnaire design is considered strong enough to contribute and inform understanding in other academic subjects if just the vocational element was changed.

3.9 Ethics

I have conducted research that investigated a social phenomenon. The nature of this research means that ethical issues are not just prior and during the research, but will occur and may linger long after the research activity (Oliver, 2008) has been completed. Moreover, the ethical issues are not typical and this type of research comes with its own peculiar set of ethical difficulties (Brand, 2009). While the ethical considerations informed all aspects of this research from the outset, approval to

proceed was granted by the host institution and essentially considered limited in this study. This research meets the host university's ethics procedure and has obtained the necessary approval requirements. Nevertheless, the process of following ethical guidelines was paramount to the research.

English institutions are protected by policies which include the constant control of outside contact with students and lecturers. Naturally, this is vital in all academic institutions today although it made the process of selecting those to take part and gaining access to them a challenge. The only way of guaranteeing access that met the strict constraints universities was to use reliable contacts that had been built up in recent years. This approach ensured that trust already existed between the researcher and the particular institution. Three other English institutions were contacted but the right of access was denied by university management.

During the research, the question of maltreatment was permanently on my mind, especially during the fieldwork stages when in direct contact with participants. The questions being asked were not considered harmful, but the potential for 'politics' to emerge during the process could have led to misinterpretation. Questioning lecturers about their teaching methods or asking students about their satisfaction with the quality of their award are very sensitive subjects even from within an institution itself. Having someone from an outside institution required a considerable amount of care to be applied during this process.

HEIs retain a position of ownership on their awards and access to both students and information about their award is ordinarily refused. At the time of the research, institution C was in the throes of prohibiting all access to students from outside institutions. These issues were overcome by providing detailed ethical disclaimers prior to any contact with students. Institution B insisted on a number of reviews to the initial wording of the disclaimer to meet their specific requirements. For consistency

purposes, this reviewed document then formed the content of all communications that requested participation in the project. (See Appendix II).

My attitude towards an acceptable ethical approach is built on personal beliefs and underpinned by the codes of ethical practice established by the British Education Research Association (BERA, 2011). However, while every effort to conduct interviews in the highest professional manner has been made, the sensitive nature of the discussions often returned some emotional responses that have contributed to the research.

Voluntary Informed Consent of participants was obtained and the process ensured that participants understood and agreed to participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway (BERA, 2011). Participant information sheets that explained the purpose of the study and the level of participation required were attached to the beginning of all participatory communications such as emails that asked participants to take part or directed participants to questionnaires where a secondary brief was also provided.

In order to maintain an ethical approach for the one-to-one interviews with LEGS, a consent form was produced for those who took part (See Appendix III). A process of recording all interviews to a password-protected personal digital device and saving to a password-protected computer was implemented. This was adhered to throughout. It was explained that all notes made during interviews would be anonymised with the option 'not to record' if the participant felt uncomfortable with any topic under discussion. Such a position never emerged.

All forms of interview transcripts such as field notes were anonymised with a systematic code that was conceived and stored privately. The code to identify participants was based on a letter for the institution in question, the pseudonym for the participant followed by the date, time and place of the interview. A meticulous

approach towards confidentiality was maintained throughout the research and the subsequent thesis and ensured the avoidance of acknowledgment of comments to any identifiable persons or institutions. In addition to the processes observed above, the consent form communicated the fact that participants had the right at any time to withdraw from the research without giving a reason. If it was felt necessary, this aspect was reiterated during interviews; particularly when the discussion appeared to touch on more sensitive issues.

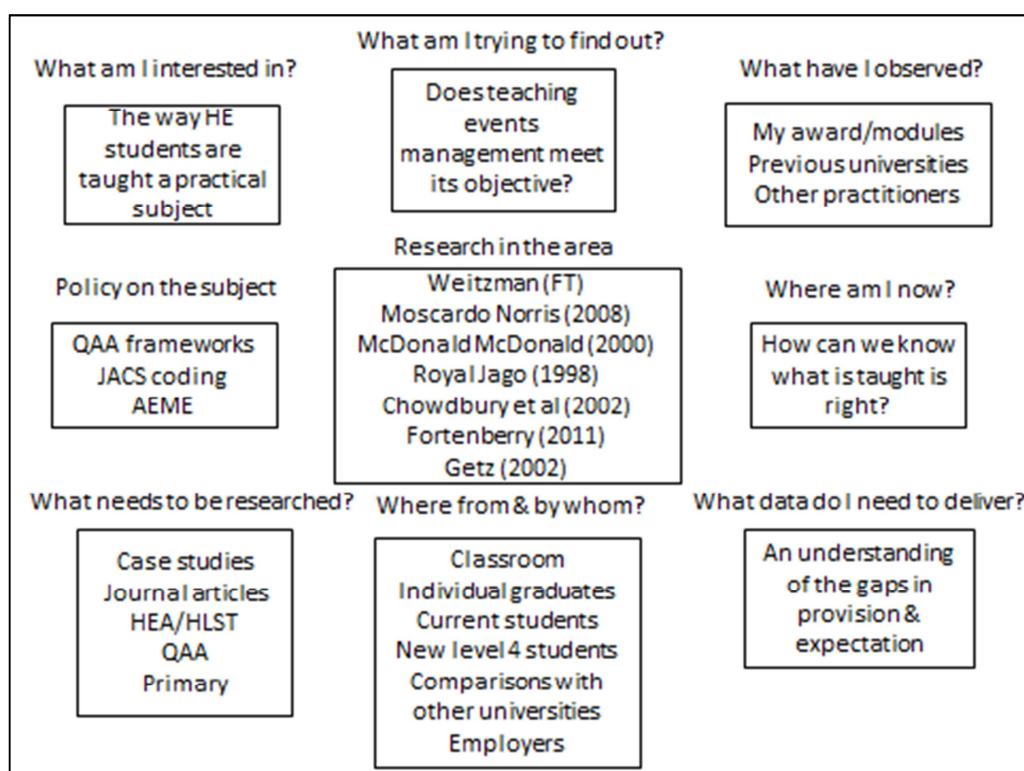
Although not covered in the BERA ethical guidelines, my attention to equality between participants was always maintained. In particular, shortcomings that are recognised in previous research conducted in this manner when interviewing your peers (Platt, 1981). Equality during insider research can be of concern at the interview stage. The interviewees (when interviewing lecturers) and the interviewer (when interviewing students) can assume to some extent to hold a position of power from within the same restricted community. By ensuring a sense of equality was observed throughout the interviewing process, these obstacles were avoided allowing me to maintain an independent sense of criticality throughout.

Considering the aforementioned tensions between industry and education, the potential to indicate a biased preference to the ongoing debate on EME was always on my mind. However, by sustaining attention to these ethical procedures throughout the whole process of the study, it was possible to present a stable analysis of a variety of perspectives on EME.

3.10 Procedure

The basic outline of the research, including the social actors of the research was developed. A working title of “HE Events Management Training: Provision & Expectation” set the scene. The original proposal was one slide and presented as follows:

Figure 3.10.1: Original thesis proposal Wednesday 14th December 2011

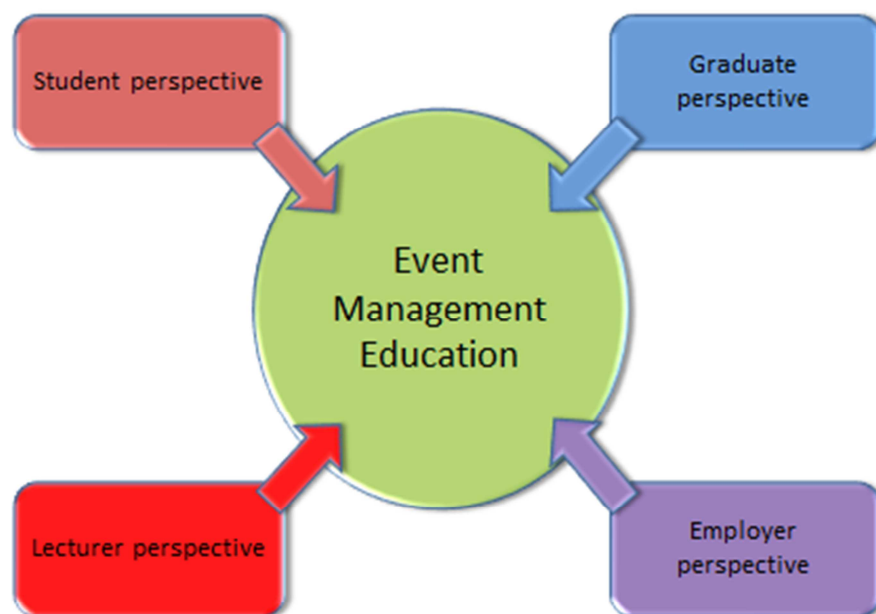


The basic principles to the original proposal have been maintained throughout the study and the manner in which the research was carried out will now be presented.

In order to properly understand EME and the requirements of the workplace, data was gathered from a range of social actors. There are numerous stakeholders in EME from governments to parents and other related subject areas such as tourism and hospitality. The choosing of the most appropriate approach required sifting through the many possibilities to find one that had a direct influence on the research questions. The most

relevant was the need to collect data from an academic perspective. The more complicated aspects included which principal stakeholders should be included in the research and how access would be achieved. Additionally, finding and arranging interviews with numerous professional stakeholders while fully engaged with their work was a daunting prospect. Figure 3.9.2 below shows the chosen groups (LEGS) and how they contribute to the holistic understanding of EME.

Figure 3.10.2: Principal contributors to understanding EME.



The first target was to complete the two questionnaires, then interview at least ten representatives from each of the 4 groups and so on. These data sets formed the foundation for the first level of coding. From these, emerging themes and approaches to EME were revealed.

It was decided that one questionnaire would be insufficient for the study while offering a single questionnaire to both employers and graduates would prove overly challenging to access as a group. Therefore, two questionnaires were drawn up, one

for employers and one for students and piloted in March 2013. They were distributed towards the end of 2013 amongst the chosen groups of lecturers and students for participation.

There are many ways to distribute the questionnaires to the selected samples, personal mail, telephone, fax, e-mail, and internet (Zikmund, 2003). Distributing an electronic link via email was my preferred method. However, gaining access to the institutions who took part in the questionnaire survey took six months to plan and execute. The length of time was largely due to a lack of accessibility during the summer period. The discussions with institutions on accessing students were conducted during a conference.

The research was not intended to be limited to post-1992 institutions as the original concept was to gather as much data as possible by making the questionnaire widely available to as many institutions as possible. However, the restraints involved in such an approach were considerably more restrictive than first anticipated and considering the research was not following a more traditional normative approach, gathering such a broad set of data was deemed unnecessary. Therefore, a number of programme leaders were approached to see if access to their students was permissible. Some made clear the impossibility of such a request while others explained that they would prefer just not to get involved. Eventually, a satisfactory number of people in senior enough positions agreed to assist with providing access to research participants. After the amendments to the questionnaires from the associated pilots, a link was emailed to four post-1992 institutions with a written statement assuring them of anonymity and other ethical considerations to be disseminated their EM students. The data was collected over a two-month period.

Graduates were sourced via a business-oriented social networking service. Finding EME graduates was a case of searching the chosen institution's graduates and using

one's initiative. Once sourced, 15 were contacted directly through the same networking service. None of the graduates contacted refused to take part, but five graduates were unable to agree a mutual time to meet during the research period. Similar situations were experienced with all the other participant groups.

In order to complete the interviews, a strategy was devised that would maximise the time and effort in gaining access. By monitoring relevant events it was possible to discuss the research with the event organiser. By doing so, permission was provided to contact delegates directly and invite them to take part in the research. It was then possible to pre-arrange an interview around the event. This allowed the opportunity to meet and interview up to three different stakeholder groups at the same event. One event returned one-to-one interviews with four students, two employers and two lecturers while another returned interviews with three employers and four students.

The one-to-one interviews were semi-structured based around a set number of ten prepared questions (See appendix IV). This allowed me scope to follow the interviewee and the subjects they raised. So the length of any interview was indeterminate. However, the email did state "a brief one-to-one interview". The student interviews lasted no more than 45 minutes but no less than fifteen minutes.

The employer, graduate and lecturer interviews all came within a similar range of 20 minutes to just over an hour. Maintaining a focus was central to my questioning approach. Furthermore, confidence in the prepared questions was necessary.

However, some interviews, particularly those held in public bars with employers and lecturers continued long after the interview was completed and the recording instrument was turned off. This occasionally meant retrieving the writing pad to make a note of an interesting comment or two in the process.

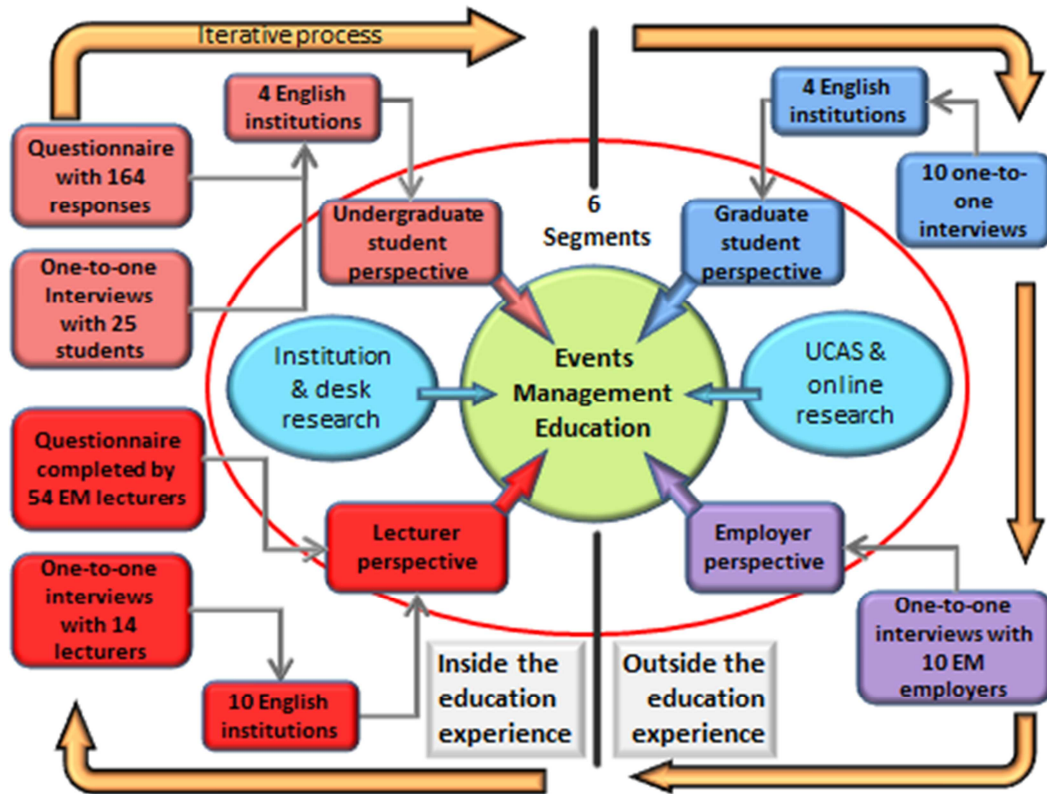
The interviews started with a brief introduction outlining the basic areas being covered and communicating the structure of the interview. It was usual to begin with a general

question about the individual's engagement with EME in order to get the respondent talking comfortably. It was often useful to backtrack later in the conversation when the respondent touched on a theme which required further exploration. This allowed the respondent to go back over a topic that had been discussed briefly and provide a second opportunity to obtain more data.

The student questionnaire received 164 completed responses while the lecturer questionnaire received 54 responses. Relevant interviews were obtained from 25 students from four institutions, 14 lecturers from 10 English institutions, 10 graduates from four institutions and 10 employers with businesses based in England. The four institutions that the students and graduates were from were the same for both sets of data. The lecturers who contributed taught at these same four institutions at the time of the survey, with another six lecturers from other English HE institutions contributing to the data.

Figure 3.10.3. below shows the research process. There are a total of six segments to the study. Two sections can be considered tributary research sections and the other four principal segments. Each of the four principal segments would inform the other as the data was gathered in an iterative manner. Two segments of the principal research are considered inside the EME process, with the other two segments considered outside the EME process.

Figure 3.10.3: EME research design, procedure and segments



As can be seen in Figure 3.10.3 the statistical power (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2013) in this research has been created through the various data points included. By simultaneously measuring the perspectives of stakeholders from ‘inside education’ and ‘outside education’ a unique approach has been developed. The manner in which the data has been analysed will be discussed in the next section.

3.11 Data analysis

Many typologies to mixed methods data analysis have been classified (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie, 2015, Edmonds and Kennedy, 2013, Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, Hartmann et al., 2011, Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009, Johnson and Christensen, 2008, Mertens, 2005, Creswell et al., 2003). With this in mind this section aims to make the coding techniques, data collection and my analysis approach as transparent as

possible. For a complete detailing of the total data collected and codes see Appendix V.

The qualitative data is made up of interview transcripts and recordings, field notes and individual perspectives from open questions returned from the questionnaires. The quantitative data calculations were largely worked out by the online software and analysed and compared with qualitative data. Most of the quantitative data were made up of number sets that simply involved a numerical code or value for each response; e.g. male/female and calculating the total. Similarly, the Likert questions included were used to ascertain how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed to certain statements. Numerical values and percentages were assigned to each answer.

The qualitative data was collected from all four key stakeholders by means of recorded interviews, field notes, interview transcripts and open survey questions with approximately 60 hours of recorded interviews collected (see appendix VI). With this plentiful qualitative data to analyse, two techniques were used to analyse this data. First, by collecting interviews through a digital voice recording (DVR), interviews would be repeatedly analysed in electronic format with notes being taken along the way. Electronic data allowed me to repetitively listen to recordings through a personal listening device. Bluetooth technology also allowed me to do this while driving. Second, a software package was used to cross-reference data collected from other sources. An introduction to a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package called NVivo proved helpful to some sections of the data. NVivo was designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required (QSR, 2015). Using NVivo produced a reassuring effect on the quality of the research as themes became more identifiable. It proved particularly useful in cross-referencing DVR and data from the questionnaires.

For example, once a DVR file of an interview was uploaded to NVivo, it was possible to draw attention to sections by attaching codes to specific areas of the interview such as frustration, satisfaction and the varying perspectives on EME (see appendix VI for a full list of codes). It was possible to cross-reference these with the data from the questionnaires. For example, when students commented on their employment perspectives, these could be compared with the questionnaire data. Likewise, when graduates made observations with the quality of the education they received, it was possible to make comparisons with the data from the questionnaire expressed by current students.

I was also able to transcribe sections of the DVR that were relevant rather than having to transcribe a great deal of unnecessary text. For example, in this short response below from a graduate (institution-B, 2014 graduate), it was possible to attach a number of codes on the issue of the inclusion of certain modules in an EME award:

“Maybe [students] would have managed our expectations a bit better. Since I’ve left I’ve realised the reason for it and that actually everything that we learned was really valuable. So maybe just something a bit more in the induction about why a lot of the content is general would have just helped for people to understand why we were doing the modules we were doing.”

The data segment above was coded as ‘Institution B’ including the year of graduation and the type of participant. Codes including ‘managing expectation’, points of ‘value’ were also attached to the award as well as some level of ‘frustration’ during her studies as well as ‘reflective satisfaction’.

The repeated analysis of each of the interviews would often depend on its length with each interview being analysed a minimum of three times. Longer interviews were analysed up to six times to ensure effective coding was achieved. The coding continued in this way until the data reached what might be considered theoretical saturation (Rose et al., 2015, Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and no new codes were being

added. At this point, further data analysis was required as some themes appeared more dominant than others. It was necessary to check for inconsistencies in the more frequent themes or to see if others had been overlooked in the less common themes. This allowed me to review some of my codes to be more representative of the themes that had emerged. For example, where a coded section was made in student responses as 'complaining', because this was limited to just two responses, these were added to the 'frustrated' code.

Using the NVivo software supported the management as well as the analysis element of the data. In the beginning, it made sense to code each topic that was raised and review the codes into related themes before selecting what was considered to be the most relevant or 'focused themes' (Charmaz, 2006) to proceed with more detailed analysis. The relationships NVivo provided between the different data analyses towards the end of the study contributed considerably to the consistency and relevance of the findings.

Chapter 4: Findings & Analysis

Section 1.

4.1.1. Introduction

To develop better understanding, this chapter is divided into two sections. Section 1 focuses on the delivery of EME largely from the point of view of lecturers while Section 2 focuses more on the receiving of EME largely from the point of view of students. Alongside one-to-one interviews with 14 lecturers, ten graduates and ten employers, the research is largely centred on two concurrent questionnaires, one for students and one for lecturers. One questionnaire was completed by 54 lecturers predominantly via an online survey but with 15 more lecturers completing a hard copy version at the 11th Association for Event Managers Education (AEME) Educators Forum in 2014. Subsequently, in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 lecturers. The questionnaire contained questions regarding the participant's background, specialist knowledge areas, approaches to award delivery and design, the focus of their institutions events management award and knowledge & understanding of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for events.

The second questionnaire gathered quantitative and qualitative data from 164 events management students from four institutions who at the time of the research were either at level 4, 5 or 6. The data gathered was then further reinforced with qualitative data gathered through one-to-one interviews with a further 25 students from all three levels. The questionnaire asked questions regarding their gender and their experience of an EM award. It also sought their perspective on how an EME award prepared them for employment, the importance of research, critical analysis, research integrity and how

these contributed to the necessary skills or attributes required for work in the events industry. The questionnaire also sought the student's perspective on their understanding of the skills and knowledge of their lecturers, which modules they considered most relevant to their own plans for the workplace and how much of a factor EL played in the learning experience. (See Appendix V for the questionnaires).

The graduate and employer data was obtained through semi-structured one-to-one interviews with a total of 10 EME graduates randomly selected from each of the universities in the study and 10 employers from a variety of industry sectors. The graduates reflected on their award, how relevant they considered their time at university to have been and how their award has been of assistance to them (or not) in the workplace. The employers discussed topics regarding the graduates they had employed and their overall experience with graduates on a number of different levels from their experiences during the interview process to actual employment situations.

A number of key themes have emerged through the study, namely, the comprehensive inclusion of EL in an award as expressed by both students and lecturers, managing the expectations of both students and employers, and the reflective view on the quality of education received as expressed by graduates. Other themes included the complications lecturers experienced in their attempts to manage the curriculum, managing award content and the award itself from a personal influence, subject-specific or departmental bias.

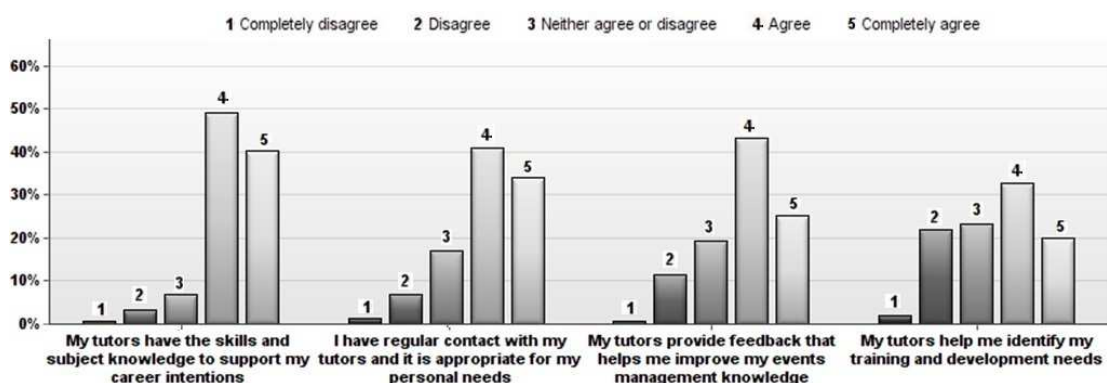
4.1.2. The design and delivery of EME UG awards in England

It is accepted that standards of vocational education methods have been established throughout the world and teaching HE awards in England follow relatively

comparable models of delivery that include taught sessions in the classroom with the aid of PowerPoint presentations by a qualified lecturer on a variety of subjects. These sessions/lectures are often supported by tutorials and other forms of further investigation that allow students the opportunity to explore the topic of the day in more detail both individually and in groups. These activities, while similar throughout the UK, are often delivered within a local or institutional setting. It is a number of other nuances specific to EME that the research is attempting to uncover.

The student survey began by collecting data on less subject-specific investigations and more in relation to their experience of HE, academic ability, research and learning styles. For example, Figure 4.1.1 shows academic support and satisfaction features such as, lecturer skills and knowledge, contact time, feedback and academic support. The importance of which is emphasised by Jepson and Clarke (2014b) who suggest students who had frequent contact with their lecturers contributed more in class leading to improved student motivation.

Figure 4.1.1: Lecturer support



The importance students place on both lecturer knowledge and connections with industry was emphasised by Camilla (institution-D, level-6, 2015), who suggested:

Generally they [lecturers] are really knowledgeable and confident and they've got good connections and are willing to bring people from outside in to lecture to give us a practitioners view (institution-A, graduate, 2013).

The broad perspective from the students to the statements in Figure 4.1.1 suggests substantial levels of satisfaction with lecturers of EME particularly when it comes to lecturer skills & knowledge and the contact time students receive. Similar perspectives are found later in the study when the responses to the effectiveness of the award in Figure 4.2.6 (p136) are considered. However, less satisfaction is evident when it comes to providing appropriate feedback and identifying individual training and development needs. There is research that suggests this can be attributed to the student themselves as formative feedback is often overlooked. Most students would admit to ignoring written comments on their work and instead only seek out the awarded grade (Weinberg, 2013, Harrison et al., 2010).

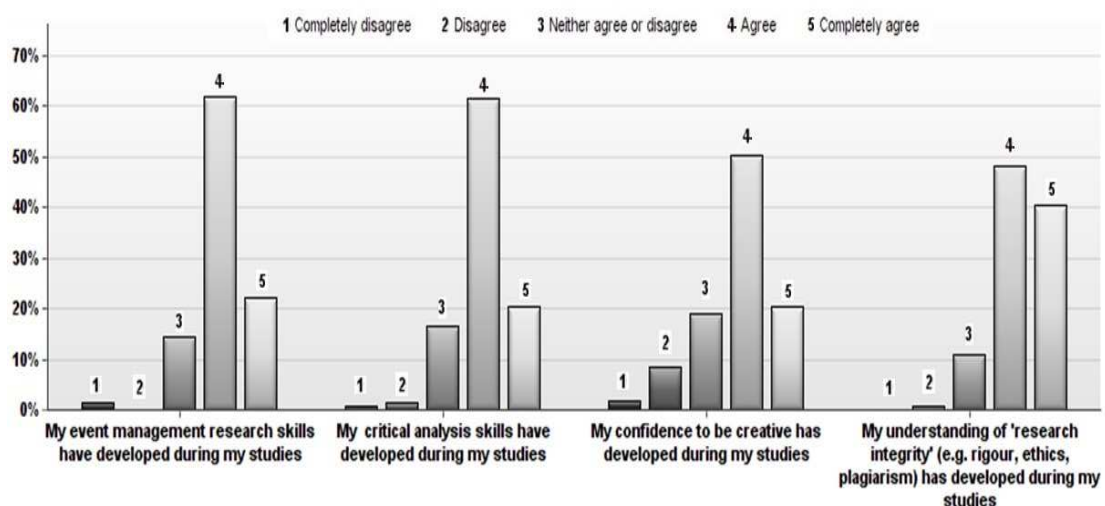
While EME lecturers believe formative feedback is a means of improving student learning and a means of increasing student grades, there is the possibility that formative feedback can have a negative effect on students and can in some cases undermine intrinsic motivation and lead to a culture of over-dependency (Murtagh, 2014). With EME incorporating active learning opportunities through EL and knowledge being transferred to the learner through live events, formative feedback is often provided through observation with students less satisfied and often at odds with the lecturer's interpretation of their contribution.

Other reasons for this supposed lack of student support could relate to the character of the class itself. In some institutions, the diversity, (of the student's faith and origin) has developed a more plural presence; particularly in the institutions where EME is popular. Research suggests that with the breadth of ethnic and cultural differences in HE, establishing relationships and even understanding support from lecturers can often be challenging. Experiences of minority ethnic students can involve more isolation

and difficulties in adjusting to life within a group, which has several different social backgrounds (Connor et al., 2004). Considering much of the assessment in EME is around group-based activities, the whole process becomes highly complicated. These discussions are worthy of substantially more research and debate as providing the correct balance of support for all students is a complex matter outside of the focus and limitations of this study.

When considering how EME students respond to academic requirements in relation to non-subject specific skills, including research, critical analysis and research integrity, Figure 4.1.2 suggests that students embrace the need for academic ability and development.

Figure 4.1.2: Research skills, critical analysis, confidence to be creative, research integrity



Research and critical analysis are fundamental to the entire purpose of HE, and Nelson and Silvers (2009 p32) propose that, “formal academic knowledge must be linked directly to industry knowledge to fulfil the needs identified by their prospective employers.” Considering the breadth of prospective employers in the events industry, it is difficult to understand how EME can consistently produce graduates that meet all

the needs of this broad industry (Ryan, 2016) without explicit awards tailored towards specific employment areas.

Obtaining agreement from academics to the Nelson and Silvers proposal above requires very little thought and is almost certainly achieved in the other more specific events awards (not covered under the JACS N820 coding). Furthermore, linking industry knowledge to learning is the basis of the Events Management NOS. How lecturers engage with these is the area discussed in the next section.

4.1.3. Incorporating NOS into the design of EME awards

NOS are statements of the standards of performance individuals must achieve when carrying out functions in the workplace, together with specifications of the underpinning knowledge and understanding (UKCES, 2013). These are of value to employers as the cost of improving the skills of a workforce is substantial while the actual ability of each individual is central to the success of any organisation. One method HE can exploit to certify the provision of a minimum level of skills and knowledge is to link modules and awards to the NOS.






There is no set provision for lecturers or institutions to adopt the NOS guidance and there is no evidence or research to suggest they are used in designing EM awards.

Figure 4.1.3 shows the response to how EME awards are designed with specific consideration given to the EM NOS. NOS connect many of the requisite skills to roles across a variety of disciplines within the events industry. They specify the standards of performance that people are expected to achieve in their work and the knowledge and skills they need to perform the role effectively. The NOS have been agreed by employers and employee representatives (NOS, 2006) and approved by AEME. This

has been an important recent alignment for education and the events industry which was emphasised by Fenich (2014 p112) who considers the introduction of event competency standards as “truly the dawning of a new age for meeting and event professionals”.

Figure 4.1.3 below focuses on the lecturers’ knowledge of the attachment to NOS in the design of EME awards. NOS are based around four key roles an events manager should have knowledge of. This question is considered later in Figure 4.1.6 where the focus of the award is discussed.

Figure 4.1.3: The use of NOS in designing an EME award

#	Answer	View	Responses	%
1	Definitely yes		20	37%
2	Probably yes, but I'm not sure		20	37%
3	Probably not, I wasn't aware they existed		4	7%
4	Definitely not		6	11%
5	No response		4	7%

The data reveals that more than half the respondents are cannot be certain whether the NOS are taken into account when designing event management awards with 6% unaware of their existence. NOS are considered pivotal for vocational qualifications and can provide considerable guidance for all academics in designing awards. Considering these standards are established with employers, it seems a major oversight for these not to be fully incorporated into award design. Furthermore, their value in settling differences between education and industry seems elementary. The standard setting organisation summitskills (2014) considers NOS to be:

“Providing employers and training providers with templates to carry out assessment of a candidate as to their capability to perform the required tasks while providing the building blocks for qualifications.”

With a considerable number of challenges being placed in front of EME today, it is difficult to understand why greater effort is not being made to ensure developments such as the incorporation of NOS are communicated more thoroughly to EME lecturers. Moreover, if such limited numbers of lecturers are applying NOS in award design the data is emphasising evidence of a lack of co-creation and collective communication.

The data returned also suggests that it is also worth questioning why a discretionary quality standard that is both industry and student focus is not adopted by all institutions who offer EME awards. The visible and widespread adoption of NOS is a starting place and very straight forward considering they relate to the workplace, with specifications that underpin knowledge and understanding (Quainton, 2010).

In light of a lack of an accreditation for EME awards, institutions are currently using a number of bodies to define the worth of their EME award. A typical example is that institution B states: “The Events Management award has been formally accredited by the Tourism Management Institute” (TMI). Institution C suggests “we are accredited by the Institute of Hospitality Management” (IHM). While this practice offers a robust means of value to the awards it may be considered an unusual way to suggest excellence in EME particularly when EME research upholds strength and growth over the other sectors while at the same relying upon tourism and hospitality to accredit awards.

Communication does exist between EME lecturers across HEIs, not least through AEME. If AEME are in the process of approving NOS standards that can revise the key purpose for event management, then there is no reason why a dedicated accreditation, kite mark or standard of EME that informs industry and other external stakeholders that an academic benchmark is provided. If it is not to be an

accreditation, then perhaps there should be a requirement that institutions or even individual lecturers agree to uphold and visibly demonstrate.

The aim of AEME is to support and raise the profile of the events discipline through the sharing of education and best practice (AEME, 2014a). AEME, (in the UK at least), is therefore a natural arbiter of a self-policing quality control for EME. The potential benefits are considerable and while the ability to discuss these in detail is not possible, two key consequences would be:

1. A starting point to advance the quality of education, training and professional qualifications in HE
2. Reassurance to stakeholders of the quality of education provided

During the course of this study, the existence of the IEM has gained some ground.

The IEM suggests at present that it approves, accredits and validates existing courses but the evidence of this has yet to be discovered. However, a reputable accreditation from a leading representative organisation would go some way to circumnavigate the complications that aligning with other business or leisure-focused bodies bring to an EM award.

Not only are there considerable cost implications to institutions in gaining accreditation but there are also limitations awards can impose upon themselves by choosing one body over another. The ‘non-events’ accreditation suggest a tourism, leisure or a business focus. It could affect student intake simply by the way this is received by prospective students.

The EME awards in this study all reside within a school or faculty encircled by other related awards often accredited by two or more bodies. Considering the universal use of accreditation for business awards, it is likely that EME institutions would welcome the opportunity to include an accreditation that confirms that their EME award aligns with the educational leadership set out by its foremost representative body rather than

having to align to a specific business or leisure focused body. The need for accreditation was best summed up by Adam, a lecturer in institution A who suggested:

“We’re not allowed to have both business and leisure membership anymore, it’s one or the other because funding has been gradually clamping down. We used to be a member of everything but now we’ve reduced it down to two business-related bodies that we feel are best aligned to our award.”

The exploration of an events accreditation requires considerably more analysis than can be provided here. However, in the long term, the consequences for EME not implementing its own accreditation can only be damaging. For example, those championing the cause for professionalisation may consider the lack of accreditation problematic. Accreditation has proven to be advantageous to the professionalisation case. Thomas and Thomas (2013a) recognised that support from industry associations was the basis of a move towards professionalisation in Hungary. By starting from within EME itself, it should be considered likely that further support can be obtained from a much broader group of stakeholders.

4.1.4. Defining the current focus of EME awards

To determine how the actual subject areas currently taught in EME awards were focused, it was necessary to develop a comprehensive list of subjects that was made available to the lecturers. (See Appendix VI for the full list of subjects). Lecturers were asked about the areas of teaching in event management they were involved in. The intention here was to determine whether they were teaching their own specialist area, if they were a specialist and not teaching their specialist area or if they were teaching a subject about which they had limited knowledge. Whilst the data gathered provides statistics on how dedicated the teaching may be to events management, it has the added value of highlighting the popularity of the EME topics taught.

Respondents were also invited to suggest other topics that were taught with specialist knowledge outside of the given list. These included, Production & Staging, Sports Events, Celebratory Events, Event Design, Financial Planning, Project Management, Creativity, Technology, Legacy & Policy, People Management, Finance & Strategy, Small Business and Consumer Behaviour and Entrepreneurship. Figure 4.1.4 below shows the top 10 chosen subjects in each of the categories. The original list contained 22 subject areas. (See Appendix VII for the full list of responses).

Figure 4.1.4.: Teaching and subject specialism

Subject	Specialist and teaching	Subject	Teaching but with limited knowledge	Subject	Specialist and NOT teaching
Festivals	17	Sustainability	12	Venue management	5
Venue management	17	Conventions	10	Operations	5
Cultural events	17	Sponsorship	10	Marketing	5
Operations	17	Fund raising	10	Cultural events	4
Conferences	14	Health & Safety	9	Logistics	4
Marketing	14	Exhibitions	9	Private events	4
Health & Safety	13	Community events	8	Community events	3
Community events	13	Public relations	7	Corporate events	3
Corporate events	12	Law	7	Business start-up	3
Exhibitions	11	Festivals	7	Festivals	2

Whilst the data in Figure 4.1.4 reveals the respondent's teaching and subject specialism, it also identifies the most popular topics taught in an EM award while disclosing the respondent's individual level of knowledge with each topic. Most notable are the areas each lecturer considers themselves to be specialists in and not teaching, and teaching but with limited knowledge. The response is consistent across multiple institutions.

Each institution will have its own set of processes when developing an award and it is in the interest of both the institution and the award to deliver the best education possible. This may still be achieved although the data suggests teaching could be

better than it is. It is possible that a specialist in a particular subject is fully engaged when the award is reviewed and lecturers' schedules are updated. The recruitment of new lecturers and other management processes may also contribute to these circumstances. Lecturers with similar specialist knowledge areas within a small team or insufficient knowledge of the wider skills and specialisms available within a team could contribute to teaching but with limited knowledge.

There is of course the potential aspect of discrimination or cliques within teaching groups that impact on the delegation of certain roles amongst the delivery team. HE can be a highly stressful workplace and decision making of a political nature can be a devastating ingredient in award design and delivery. There is also empirical evidence that suggests employees have stressful reactions to work-related injustice (Greenberg, 2006). However, while this could be an important contributor to the subsequent quality of EME, validating the extensiveness of this here would require considerably more research. The existence of stress and discrimination was notable during the research but only in a few instances. However, it remains an emerging research area for the future.

When considering the actual focus of the award, Edwin (lecturer, institution C), who is also engaged in delivering modules not in his specialist area, made clear his perspective on teaching; particularly with reference to teaching subjects with limited knowledge. Edwin stated:

“Design the course around the individuals (lecturers) and share the reasoning behind the course. If we all taught to our strengths we’d transform the SSS (student satisfaction survey) in an instant.”

With EME and many other vocational awards there are a considerable number of complications that are accompanied by such focused teaching; none more so than sourcing lecturers who have the necessary experience of the industry. There is also the

mobility of these lecturers with specialist knowledge who relocate to other institutions and the systematic and essential development of awards that ensure trends and developments in the industry are addressed. These circumstances affect the quality and design of all academic awards.

The list of subjects provided in this study and the added suggestions provided by lecturers highlight a number of issues; none more so than the complexity of designing the N820 event management award when a specific focus does not exist. Most importantly, it emphasises the broad capacity of an events management award. It also highlights that from such a large number of subjects, an EM award can be organised to focus on any number of sectors. On the other hand, an events award could be based around the school within which the award is delivered. A limited team of event-specialist lecturers concentrating on certain topics central to their own expertise make use of general business school modules to make up the award. For example, Graham, (lecturer, institution D) explained:

“Our award is essentially 50% business studies and 50% events. The first year is all about contextualising learning processes with no actual events modules. The further the student progresses, the more events focused the award becomes. So year two has two dedicated events modules and year three is focused on the students FYP (final year project) that is either a live event or an in-depth study of an event-related topic.”

There is also a continuous demand from business and academics to address contemporary issues in events alongside the subjects considered central to the award. At the time of this research, sustainability and Health & Safety came into both these categories and appear predominantly in the ‘teaching but with limited knowledge’ column. This may need to be a consideration for future recruitment policy or alternatively taking into consideration guest sessions and site visits which can provide

a means of focus on subjects outside of the delivery teams specialities. This is discussed in more detail later in the study.

From understanding how knowledgeable lecturers were of their subject, the study now moves to consider the popularity of the subjects that make up an EME award.

Figure 4.1.5: EME Top 3 Subject Areas

Events Management Subject area 1st choice	Times Chosen	Events Management Subject area 2nd choice	Times Chosen	Events Management Subject area 3rd choice	Times Chosen
Marketing	8	Health & Safety	5	Operations	8
Event Opearations	5	Marketing	5	Health and Safety	7
Festivals	4	Logistics	4	Sustainability	5
Health & Safety	4	Operations	4	Law	3
Law	3	Sustainability	3	Marketing	3
Finance	2	Venue Management	2	Incentive Travel	2
Logistics	2	Management	1	Conference and Meetings	1
Convention	1	MICE	1	Corporate	1
Creativity	1	Project Management	1	Cultural Events	1
Event Design	1	Promotion	1	Event Production	1
International events	1	Sponsorship	1	Festivals	1
People Management	1	Technology	1	Production and staging	1
Practical experience	1	Sociological Perspective	1	Project Management	1
Range of event contexts	1	Business Start up	1	Research	1
All types of events	1	Cultural Events	1	Critical and Creative Thinking	1
		Festivals	1		
		Conferences	1		
		Consumer Behaviour	1		
		Corporate Events	1		

By using the list of subjects listed in Figure 4.1.4 (p99), Figure 4.1.5 reveals in more detail the main subjects of the Event Management award as it focuses on what respondents consider to be the three most important subject areas covered in their award. Their selections have been listed in descending order and each selection is followed by the number of times it was selected. This is an interesting contrast to Figure 4.1.4 and reveals a marked consistency across each preference.

The subjects that have received single choices may be suggesting individual expertise that is part of the award or as suggested above, have come from the influence of the school. What is notable is that while lecturers may have previously suggested their

award does not have a particular focus, the data returned suggests a particular focus does exist. Furthermore, if an UG EME award is made up from a combination of Marketing, Operations, Health & Safety and Sustainability, (which appear as the preferred selections in each section), a sound focus is provided along with a distinct grounding in events management being conveyed.

The question posed for data collection in Figure 4.1.4 (p99) also included the option ‘other’ which allowed respondents to include a subject choice of their own. All of the suggested subjects provided by lecturers appear to be repeated in Figure 4.1.5’s ‘other’ suggestions and may therefore relate to specific modules or individual specialist areas delivered by the lecturers who participated in this survey. The extra insertions included, Event Design, Finance & Accounting, Creativity, Technology, People Management, Finance & Strategy and Entrepreneurship

So far, the study of lecturers has generated data largely based on their individual knowledge of the award. The research now considers lecturer perspectives on stakeholder need within events to see if the focus of an EME award could be obtained from this alternative perspective. To discover how lecturers concentrated their efforts on employer needs and activities, a question was included that examined the lecturers understanding of their own awards and modules and what occupational roles they considered to be most important to the curriculum.

Figure 4.1.6: Key Events management occupational roles

	Key Role	Choice →	1st %	2nd %	3rd %	4th %	5th %
1	Managing the creative and commercial aspects of an event		35	18	32	15	0
2	Managing event operations		53	24	21	3	0
3	Managing event marketing and sales		9	29	38	18	6
4	Event evaluation		3	29	3	65	0
5	Other, of your choice		0	0	6	0	94

The key roles in Figure 4.1.6 are based on information provided in the Events Management Functional Map (AEME, 2014b) (See appendix VIII). A document containing details on this was distributed to AEME members in January 2014. The purpose of the document was to:

“Create and deliver opportunities for people to participate in an event to meet audience and stakeholder needs to achieve economic, professional or social objectives. (AEME, 2014b p1).”

One of the aims for distributing the document was to develop a means of delivering achievable outputs linked to a set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for events. The data gathered for this research suggests that lecturers consider stakeholder need as central to the development of the award. Furthermore, according to respondents, of the functional areas specified in Figure 4.1.6., there are two definite areas of focus in an EM award. If responses are considered by calculating the number of 1st 2nd and 3rd choices in descending order, (notwithstanding the manner in which marketing and sales are presented), two focus areas become clearly defined.

‘Managing Event Operations’ is the most popular area of focus for EME with ‘Managing the Creative and Commercial Aspects of an Event’ second. The two other options, ‘Managing Event Marketing & Sales’ and ‘Event Evaluation’ were strongly ranked as second choices but were much less popular as a first choice.

A fifth option of ‘other’ was included in the original study and was consistently chosen by respondents in fifth place. The data from this choice may have proven useful to the study, as the individual perspective may have offered further topics that had been overlooked. However, none of the respondents chose to add data in the text field provided to offer a description of what they considered as their ‘other’ option.

What is most notable in Figure 4.1.6 is that Marketing has, not just in previous figures such as Figure 4.1.5 (p102) in this study but consistently throughout previous studies

(Sperstad and Cecil, 2011, Getz, 2010, Moscardo and Norris, 2004, Slaughter et al., 2003, Perry et al., 1996), remained one of the foremost subjects of an EME award. However, the subject becomes much less significant once it is grouped together with Sales and Management. It is unmistakable that the subjects are inextricably linked but this data suggests they should not be coupled together.

While Figure 4.1.3 (p95) may suggest a lack of alignment with NOS in award design, Figure 4.1.6 suggests that the ability to present a focus for the award would be a simple process and from an ‘occupational role’ perspective does appear to be achieved.

4.1.5. Desired and actual learning focus

By considering my own teaching experiences, the input from lecturers and in connection with the data gathered above, the research has examined whether there could be a distinction between the actual learning focus of the award (Figure 4.1.7a) and a desired learning focus of the award (Figure 4.1.7b). Respondents were given the opportunity to provide their perspective via a sliding scale between 0 and 100 to rate the value of each part of the delivery process. Each Figure shows the lecturers focus on each of the respective questions.

I have made an additional examination into how subjects are actually taught and this is discussed in Figures 4.1.7a ‘Actual learning approach of event management award’ and 4.1.7b ‘Preferred learning approach of event management award’ below.

However, this is a very complicated area and considered worthy of further investigation beyond these initial findings.

Figure 4.1.7a: ACTUAL learning approach of your EME award (%)

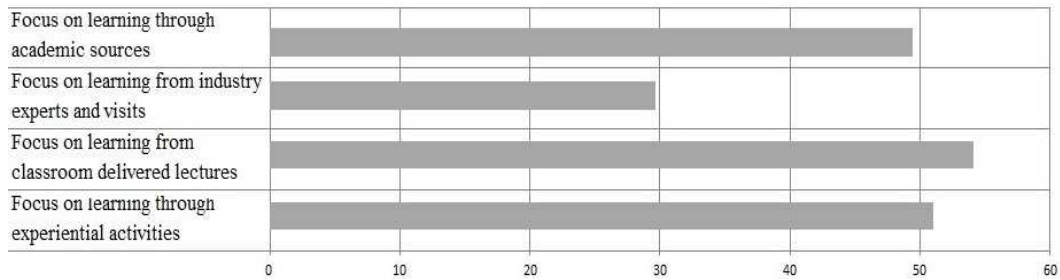
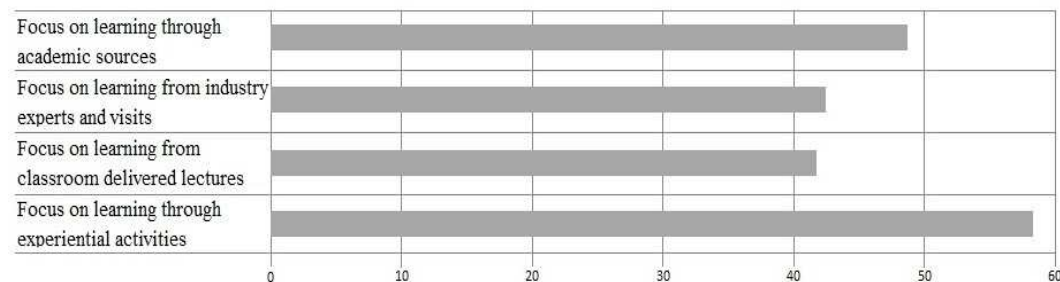


Figure 4.1.7b: DESIRED learning approach of your EME award (%)



When comparing the two Figures, the responses suggest that lecturers would prefer an increase in experiential activities by 7%, a reduction in classroom based lecturing by 12% and support from industry experts and site visits increased by 12%. The focus on learning from academic resources remained consistent in both responses. These ‘desired’ preferences could be considered to be contemporary approaches to the delivery of EME as they are a deviation from the traditional characteristics of a HE classroom-based approach to teaching.

This preference towards change in the delivery methods supports the suggestion that the present model of the predominantly business-focused awards is outdated and the present pedagogical model should be discarded in favour of the development of a more reflective practicum (Bladen and Kennell, 2014).

However, a much deeper analysis on this topic alone may be needed as Gibbs (2001) for example questions the principles in the relationship between institutions and lecturers, when the institution pursues its own interest and seeks greater efficiencies by

increasing academic workloads. These internal hierarchical forces on lecturers are then often compounded by external forces that may prevent such a ‘desired’ approach being implemented. These include, the opportunity to engage with site visits depending on the size of the class and where the institution is based, the potential extra cost to attract industry experts and the likely seismic shift such developments would have on an institution’s existing approach to education.

These desired learning approaches suggested above could also be presented as a preferred future direction sought by lecturers. If institutions were to adopt these contemporary approaches the current “performance efficiency or value for money” approach (Gibbs, 2001 p85) would require some thoughtful re-evaluation. However, if institutions choose not to adopt these approaches, students may consider other options outside of the established educational environment providing private organisations with a foothold.

Opportunities to address these directional decisions exist to some extent to award leaders by amending the curriculum through regular reviews. However, because of the interplay between the rapidly changing environment of the events industry and the suggested range of forces and factors that shape education, there is a risk that EME award leaders could become reactive rather than strategic and forward thinking (Dredge, 2013) when updating an award. These desired approaches may not be exhaustive, but EME lecturers are evidently suggesting that there is much improvement that can be made to current delivery practices.

As already discussed, if an institution prefers the broad approach to teaching business management and EME is positioned within this system, award leaders may be restricted from making the desired changes to the EME award. Such proposals might be perceived as excessive or even radical by the school in which the award is based. Therefore, those lecturers who would prefer the contemporary approach but are

blocked by the hierarchy of the institution would have to consider other development options in order to create some kind of balance between the desired teaching approach and the restrictions imposed by the school. These might include continued lobbying to highlight the potential effects of not considering a more contemporary approach or introducing incremental development approaches where minor modifications over time allow for the inclusion of more contemporary elements.

The four elements of teaching and learning in Figures 4.1.7a and b can be considered as characteristics of the teaching methods of an EM award. The adoption of EL requires a specific approach that must consider the particular industry sector in order for it to be fully effective. For example, Rawlinson and Dewhurst (2013) measured EL and Spa Management; Moscardo and Norris (2004) investigated conferences and fundraising activities through EL; Fu (2011) examined EL and tourism marketing and Agrusa et al. (2008) looked into involvement of EL with sports events. EL is evidently now an integral part of the overall learning experience in EME awards.

Amelia (lecturer, institution B) explained:

“In their FYP, the students can choose which sector of the events industry they want to focus on. For example, the festival they deliver includes aspects of live music, meetings & conferencing, music, film and all aspects of management including marketing, logistics, venue management and so on. So our award does genuinely cover all sectors of the industry.”

In order to understand the focus of awards in more detail, lecturers were asked if the award focused on a particular area of events. Retrieving the data for the focus of the award appeared confusing to the respondents as some chose to discuss the wider suite of awards available in their respective institution instead of focusing on the N820 EME award. However, a number of suggestions were made by the respondents and these included a focus on, festivals (5 times), marketing (3 times), with tourism & events, conferences, fundraising and sports all receiving one choice. This suggests

that lecturers are aware that their award does have a specific focus even if this is not explicit in the available material for the award or by adopting the N820 code.

The textual responses in the questionnaire have given detailed accounts of how comprehensive awards are including those that have “electives and 4 different specialist top up degrees”, another suggested “it includes almost everything” and the more detailed response:

“We have top-ups in conference & exhibition management, sponsorship & fundraising, sports events (as well as full degree) and managing cultural & major events (festivals).”

While these three comments have gone beyond offering just a single subject or focus, the responses indicate how some institutions are actively addressing industry need and allowing for the broad spectrum of focus opportunities available to them. Instead of choosing a single focus such as festivals or marketing as suggested above, a number of institutions have introduced a system of a two-year grounding in events as a whole supported with top-ups and electives in individual routes to complete the award. As suggested above and in contrast to some graduate perceptions, lecturers remain focused on providing content that is as event focused as possible. For example, Francis (lecturer, institution B) suggests:

“We don’t get the opportunity to fully design our awards because of the existing Business Management modules that are populated across the school. A lot of the content is shared with other business degrees, such as Marketing and Finance, International Business and sometimes even other schools and my students have to attend these classes. I’d prefer to create our own event specific marketing and financial modules to keep the focus on events. Some of the other modules do touch on this, but I’m not in a position to change the events award at that level because of the depth of integration between awards.”

However, when graduates have reflected on their education after experience in the workplace, they accept that the non-events modules were much more constructive than

they considered whilst at university. This is discussed in more detail in the graduate responses later in the study.

4.1.6. Factors contributing to the design of an EME award

Once lecturers had expressed their understanding of the subjects taught in the award, it was considered important to discover a number of factors that contributed to the design of the award. Across each of the institutions, a number of consistencies were evident. For example, all N820 UG awards were based around daytime lectures. Lectures were delivered on campus in classrooms and required student attendance. Each of the four institutions offered built-in residential activities as part of the curriculum.

To differentiate between site visits and residentials it is suggested that for a visit to become residential, it requires at least an over-night stay outside the institution's host city. All four institutions engaged in residential activities in different ways. At the time of the study, three institutions provided residentials both in the UK and abroad. Two institutions travelled to Barcelona and one to Vienna. Home-based residentials included overnight stays in Liverpool, Manchester, London and Edinburgh.

Lecturers were asked if there were any areas of events management that were not taught that lecturers considered should be included and if there were any areas of events management that were taught that lecturers considered should not be included in the award. The 'should include' response established that 48% of respondents had reason to suggest their award did not cover specific areas they believed should be included. Suggestions included, 'Practical Marketing', 'Entrepreneurial Development and Financial Management', CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), 'Staff

Management’, ‘People with Special Needs’, ‘Business to Business Marketing’, ‘Sales Management’, ‘Client Management’, ‘Sociology of Events’, ‘New Technology’, ‘Business Strategy and Audience Development’. This is a significant 48% of lecturers suggesting their award does not include topics they consider to be important.

This phenomena may well relate to what Gibbs (2001) argues as being the distance in thinking between the institution and its lecturers when an institution pursues its own interests and the commodification of education in skills packages to be managed through market principles rather than pedagogical guidance. The effect of such approaches links us back to lecturers delivering modules with little or no experience through the inclusion of multi-accessible modules populated by students from numerous awards throughout the school. This is an example of political behaviour that has been proven to be the biggest cause of stress in the workplace (Roffeypark, 2007). For many, organisational politics are an inevitable and unavoidable aspect of their workplace experience that often leads to counterproductive activities (Wiltshire et al., 2014). In HE, the outcome of such activities can have a negative effect on the student experience.

Having established these elements of frustration within the delivery of awards, the ‘should not include’ response established that 86% of respondents advocated satisfaction with the content of the award. Those subjects that were taught that should not be taught included, ‘very philosophical discussions’, ‘private events especially weddings’, ‘Project Management’ and ‘Economics’. Aside from the inclusion of ‘very philosophical debates’ which suggests that the contributor is making more a comment on delivery rather than a module within an award, the topics suggested in each of the ‘should/should not include’ are all singular or one-off suggestions. While these are of interest to those who suggested them, no theme or trend is revealed. It is tempting to discuss each of these suggestions at length, but this would go beyond the focus of this

research. Furthermore, the data is problematic to analyse in any depth on its own and will require further research. However, the data could be unearthing some further questions around the control of the curriculum.

It may be difficult to avoid the presence of philosophical discussions or private events (or any other subject for that matter) if other members of the delivery team with more control over the curriculum consider them important. The design of EME awards and the sharing of modules with other business awards is another distinct possibility that could be the basis of these issues. Preferred subjects such as those previously suggested may be excluded as less relevant subjects remain on the award from a greater personal or institutional influence within the school.

4.1.7. Lecturer knowledge and industry experience

The data gathered has suggested that knowledge and industry experience is widespread with only 2% suggesting they have always been a lecturer and have no hands on event management experience. Individual responses on industry experience included those who had worked in hotel management or hospitality or had come from another area of work into events management education. Whichever way the previous experience responses are viewed, all of them have a connection to events. They included the sectors Sport Business, Leisure, Sport & Recreation, Tourism & Hotel Management, Law and Engineering. Previous experience in the Engineering and Law sectors may on the surface be considered outside the boundaries of EM unless the reader is reminded of the skills required for HSW Act for Law and staging outside events, sound reinforcement, public address, acoustics and lighting for Engineering.

While on the surface the data might suggest an inferior level of education is being delivered, a more positive outcome can be deduced from the fact that 98% of the lecturer responses in Figure 4.1.8 below have practical experience of the events industry. This should to a large extent minimise the impact of the teaching with limited knowledge. However, this justification is not offered as a means of reducing the potential negative effect of the problem.

Figure 4.1.8: Lecturer experience

Lecturer experience	#	%
I have always been a lecturer and have no event management experience	1	2%
I have always been a lecturer, but I also work in events	7	13%
I worked in events before I became a lecturer	32	59%
I came from another area of work	8	15%
Other, please state	6	11%
Total	54	100%

These findings contrast with previous suggestions that discuss the background knowledge of EME lecturers (Benjamin, 2014, Ledger, 2014, ICE, 2013, People1st, 2010) where it is proposed that practical knowledge and experience in EM is absent. Therefore, the suggestion must be mere speculation on their part. The actual explanation for the negative judgment of EME lecturers may never properly be established. However, it could be grounded in a number of explanations. It may be that those in the industry are speaking from experience of EME graduates. It could be based on an opinion formed after meetings between lecturers and people in industry. Another possibility may be that EME is taught by those who are seen as education specialists (academics) with event industry experience and not considered specialist (professional) enough by the industry to warrant full respect. This phenomenon requires further research to fully understand. However, based on the findings of the

current research, the majority of EME lecturers have first-hand experience in events management.

A theme labelled ‘frustration with governance’ arose from those interviewed who had made the transition from industry to education. Industry knowledge and skills that are brought to HE by academic staff with industry experience can be stymied by the processes that are fundamental to the overall design and content of the award.

Industry knowledge and experience become superficial to the workings of HE procedure and have little effect in altering tried and tested assessment processes. This may be because of a lack of existing evidence to support contemporary assessment processes that are difficult to quantify or qualify. EL assessment is a case in point.

Academic procedure, university management and committees can simply remove modifications that industry-wise lecturers consider appropriate. For example, during one interview, a lecturer expressed his frustration with a module he had designed when his suggested method of assessment of report writing over essays was rejected at committee level. Dave (lecturer, institution B) stated:

“The whole point of my legislation module is to introduce the students to report writing which is fundamental to the industry. You never write a f***** essay. I’ve never f***** been asked for an essay by the high court..., I mean, [pointing to a pile of documents two feet high], that is a filing system, yeah, that’s a court case we’ve just looked at. So you get that and I have to write a report on it. Do I write an essay or do I have to write a report? Answers on a ... report only thank you. So why have any of our tasks [assessments] got an essay in? “

What appear to be sound observations and suggestions to improve the quality of education are being overruled at committee level. The decision to stick with an essay-based assessment may have been in good faith. However, from an industry perspective, it is the wrong decision and at worst exposes a lack a confidence in industry expertise.

The need to have industry-experienced lecturers in place is reinforced by the responses from students during the one-to-one interviews. The students believed it was good to have lecturers with experience “because it helps you learn what we’re learning in class” (Mira, institution-A, level-5 2014). When lecturers bring experiences into the classroom, Heather, (institution-B, level-4 2014) maintained that students benefit when it “can help us understand because of their experience from their work” or as Francesca, (institution-B, level-5 2014) who suggested industry-based lecturers were, “helping us to get a grip on what the real world is like out there - their experience brings it home”. Other students stated “you want to be like them (lecturers) and do what they’ve done; you take their experience as a means of respect” (Angela, institution-C, level-4 2014) and “the experience of the lecturers’ help you know what to study” (Vanessa, institution-C, level-5 2014) and it “helps me get thinking like how am I going to do that?” (Thelma, institution-A, level-4 2014).

Added to these perspectives on meeting student need, a theme of satisfaction with the skills of the lecturer came through. The knowledge and experience lecturers portrayed in the classroom were something students thought contributed to the quality of their education. The students’ comments signal at the very least a connection with the learning process and an identification of satisfaction during the learning process. Academically, these comments relate directly to what Kolb (1984) termed concrete experiences in the learning process which stress the involvement in experiences, feelings and emphasises the singularity of specific situations. From a teaching perspective, lecturers who discuss their individual experiences are heightening the learning experience of the students by conveying reality in a theoretical environment. The act of employing lecturers with an events industry background appears to be widespread in HE. In fact, my research of EME vacancies during this study suggests it has become a consistent requirement in person specifications. However, the

experience and perspective that is part of what makes these individuals successful in industry is not always conducive to the ways of academia. Some lecturers suggested they found the transition in professional styles (from industry to academia) challenging.

While the activities involved in teaching were what may have instigated the change in profession, dealing with politics and processes were much tougher to get used to. The impression taken from the lecturer's comments was that when an industry way of thinking clashed with academic methods, the response from academe was in certain situations not as receptive as the lecturer expected. Jonathan, (lecturer, institution C) remarked:

“If I’m honest, I found the change very difficult to get used to and would even go so far to suggest some of the established members of staff don’t accept me. The problem is that I have to adapt to the institution. This makes my [industry] experience a waste of time outside the classroom. I’d even go so far to suggest that the more academic or institutionalised members of staff don’t want us people from industry in here at all.”

Amanda, (lecturer, institution B) highlighted how difficult she found the pace of things having made the transition to academic life. While discussing changes to module assessments, Amanda made comparisons to her work in industry and stated that:

“The work is just as hard, but if I responded at the same pace [as education] I’d be out [of a job] in a flash. You have to get things done in much less time in industry and you’re respected for your contributions; it comes with the responsibility for the job you do. I can’t understand why I have to repeatedly qualify my views. I find it counter-productive because it makes me much less inclined to suggest changes anymore. The back-and-forth tinkering is just too exasperating.”

It should be clarified that in both these instances, the lecturers were relating their experiences of attending meetings. A great deal of satisfaction was expressed when discussing the delivery of lectures and other individual aspects of the job. In particular, lecturers with industry experience agreed their knowledge contributed to the

learning process drawing questions from students and establishing a two-way learning experience. Oscar (lecturer, institution D) maintained that:

“One of the joys I get in class is bringing my experiences into the lecture. I’ve noticed students are compelled to ask questions that are not academic but situational like “what was it like working with so and so?” and I get the chance to discuss being professional. So I don’t mind the star-struck question because I can turn it into a learning experience.”

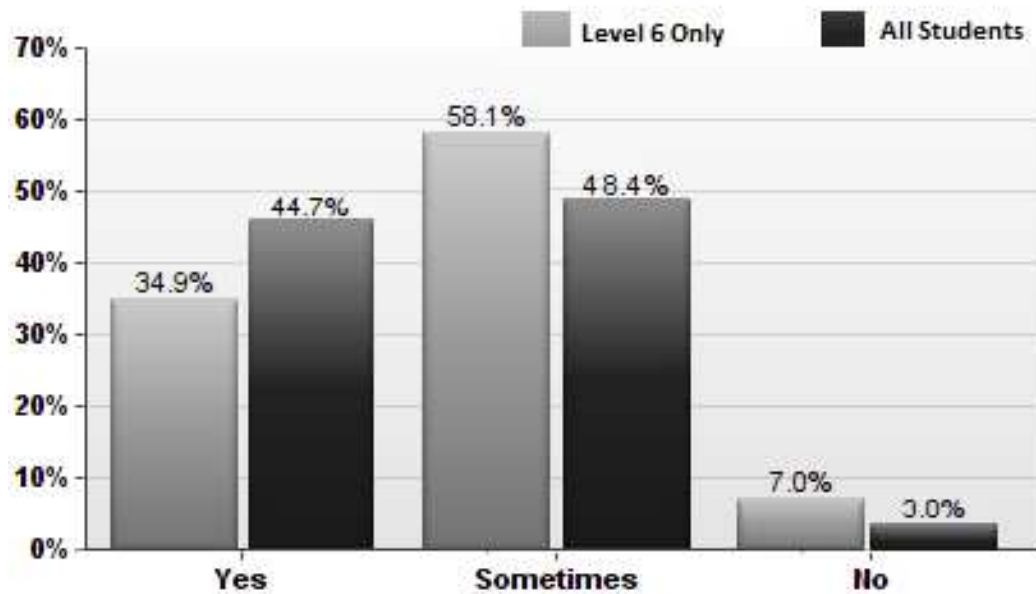
Oscar is expressing an example of an industry skill that is difficult to deliver in a classroom environment. It is not included in a PowerPoint presentation or part of the preparation process and is likely not to be in the lecture objectives. But it is providing students with examples of professionalism through experience which is an invaluable asset to bring into the classroom. It also serves as a means of engaging students in the class itself.

Section: 2.

4.2.1. HE EME awards and the expectations of students and employers

The research sought to understand if students believed their individual needs were being met by the EME award and if the subjects covered in the award focused on those most important to their own career path. All universities today conduct surveys on student satisfaction every year. However, the response to these surveys is mixed with criticism for not managing to fulfil student expectations (Searle, 2005), unnecessarily higher ratings as students expect higher grades in the course (Maceli et al., 2011) or gender bias and influences created by relationships with staff (Parayitam et al., 2007). By including the question on student satisfaction in this research, a more consistent and specific response was achieved. Furthermore, a great deal of importance from event management employers is placed on the performance standards of students which are expected in certain skill areas (Junek et al., 2009). Students will expect that their award is capable of providing these performance standards and thereby meet with their individual learning requirements. Moreover, the award needs to facilitate this learning and to recognise the needs of all learners at each phase of the process (Clifford, 1999). This makes the students perspective on meeting these requirements all the more important.

Figure 4.2.1: Award meets individual learning requirements



The responses shown in Figure 4.2.1 suggest mixed perspectives when it comes to their satisfaction levels with the content of the award. This perspective is corroborated by graduates who suggested they felt the same when they were at the same level of study. However, the graduate perspective changed after a period of time in the workplace. With 3% of all students responses claiming the award did not cover what they required with this figure rising to 7% at level 6, the responses suggest a negative trend in satisfaction levels as the students progressed through their award. The topic is evidently worthy of considerably more research as although a small response appears in the No column, none on these responses were from level 4 students. Therefore, a small but downward satisfaction trend is evident as EM students' progress through their studies.

As suggested, these findings are in contrast to the graduate perspective as while some dissatisfaction was included in the overall student perspective, graduates who would have had the same negative perspective of their award during their studies presented a much more positive view of their award. For example, when asked if the skills

learned at university have met the employer needs, Rosie (institution-B, graduate 2012) stated:

“At the time I thought that there was less event-specific content and more of the general content that crosses a range of functions and maybe those have actually been more useful than I thought they’d be since to employers.”

Similarly, Elma (institution-C, graduate 2013) maintained,

“When I was at uni, I often complained about the relevance of some of the things [modules] we did. But now I’m working, I tend to remember a lot of the things I loathed more than the things I really enjoyed. That stuff I thought shouldn’t be in the course has proven to be really useful.”

This suggests graduates are realising that modules considered inappropriate to their needs prove to be applicable to their future needs. However, if the inclusion of the supposed irrelevant modules was intentional, it is fair to assume that clarification to the students for their inclusion would also have occurred. If students like Rosie find reason to complain, then it is fair to assume that clarification for their inclusion had not taken place and awards have been designed to fit in with existing programmes rather than being built around the current needs of the events industry.

Students also made a number of suggestions as to what subjects an EME award should cover outside of what was included in their award. Responses included “Public Relations and Promotions” (questionnaire contributor, institution-A, level-4 2014) and “more on Operations & Logistics” (questionnaire contributor, institution-A, level-5 2014). One student argued that “it should be more specific to different event types; ours is very general to all events for the first two years” (questionnaire contributor, institution-C, level-6 2014). Another student argued for “more cultural and international events” (questionnaire contributor, institution-A, level-6 2014). Comments such as these resonate with the perspectives of events management stakeholders who have suggested EME lacks specific detail. Concerns are that the

curriculum mostly covers logistics and includes education more relevant to Hospitality with very little about event delivery, measurement and event technology (Arrigo, 2014). Getting the right balance for an events award may always be complicated, but relying on existing modules to build an award without justification is detrimental to the student experience. Adopting the view of McEwan (2015) that lecturers should place greater emphasis into understanding the student learning experience as soon as they arrive at university would reverse such practices.

These comments expose another potential irregularity with EME that is either inconsistencies in marketing information that is provided by institutions on what the award delivers or that students are not fully attentive to the content of the award prior to enrolling with the institution. Considerable information is provided by institutions about the award and the institutions involved in this research go so far as to define the content of each level of the award. Alongside this, from data gathered at Open Days during the research at two of the institutions in the study, it was evident that students today are often guided by their parents and peers in choosing their HE institution.

Guidance is often based on the institution's geographical location as much as on their awards. Instead of discussing what is included in the award or how it is taught, parents often seek opportunities to discuss with lecturers the financial features of the institution, the living costs and any other outlays that may exist. The actual content of the award was often overlooked.

Conversely and possibly just as detrimental to a student's decision is when prospective students prioritise the graduate employability prospects of different universities and different courses (Arcodia and Barker, 2003) ahead of their individual needs. The potential student's real area of interest for future work is abandoned because an offer has come from an institution better placed in the rankings. From a current student

perspective, it is also possible that once students reach level 6 the preconceived view of the award and the reality turn out to be somewhat different.

Student and graduate perceptions do provide a good indication of how their needs are being met. However, considering their ultimate goal is to achieve employment, their needs must therefore include the perceptions of the employer. This question is tackled by understanding what the employers seek in graduates who apply for positions and their views on the candidates who are being interviewed for the vacant positions.

Employers suggest that while there is some satisfaction with EME graduates, a number of questions remain. In particular, Don (employer-A), an executive director employing over 230 full-time staff for a support organisation to the events industry commented:

“I employ across a broad range of disciplines and seek specialist knowledge in specialist areas. Personally, I’m yet to employ someone with a degree in events, but I wouldn’t expect to find a stage technician or even a tour manager coming straight from an events course. I find them after 10 years’ experience and usually with a maths or engineering degree.”

While Don’s perspective may represent many in the events industry, the points he raises define two immediate misunderstandings of EME. EME does train technicians and the discipline does have graduates with 10 years’ experience in the field.

Simon (employer-B) who runs a sound and lighting company suggests:

“I don’t have a degree myself I just had a passion for sound and went straight into work on my own. So a degree doesn’t mean that much to me; but an IVQ certificate in electronics does.”

However, while Simon’s comment is persuasive to employers in his particular field, employers are in general agreement that while they seek capable and work-ready candidates, they are also expecting new recruits to learn the individual processes that exist in their own industry. One event company’s head of sales and marketing suggested the skill sets of an events management student have been at the correct level

required for entry level roles in their organisation and any skill gaps were provided through internal training programmes with relative ease (Ledger, 2014). Tommy (employer-C), a worker for the council states:

“I’ve been happy so far with the performance of all students at interview and have had no horror stories from those who are still with us. I can’t say the same for those without a degree of any kind as it seems the work ethic is not at the same level. Of the three people I have employed straight from uni, two of them have progressed well by fitting into how we work here. The council’s ways can be quite difficult and it’s easy to just remain in your job; as many of them do. But these two girls have done well and have taken on added responsibility.”

Employers also maintained that along with a degree, they were also interested in what previous work experience the student had in the industry and if they had any other technical or specialist qualifications. This links to Don’s approach to seeking new employees, while others have been less complimentary. Peter (employer-D) suggested that:

“It’s managing their expectation. So far, I haven’t felt comfortable enough to give a managerial role to a graduate. I’m sure I will but at the minute there’s too much at stake. I need to have confidence in my managers. Graduates?, it’s a difficult decision but at the minute they don’t come in at the bottom and they are not given managerial roles.”

Other events companies, particularly those who have either been established for some time or are an SME with an older workforce, do not have an events graduate in the team. When an opportunity arose at an events seminar to discuss the issue with Richard (employer-E), an event-supply company director based in Lincolnshire about the background of his team and if any of them were events graduates, he said:

“We don’t have any graduate events students in our organisation and of those I know, we have a Geography graduate, a Marketing graduate and a History graduate and I think the youngest member of staff with a degree left university ten years ago.”

Other organisations set the importance of seeking graduates by considering awards in related fields. The need for a specific degree in events management does not appear to be necessary. Although taking advantage of the widespread placement opportunities universities provide is becoming more prevalent. While it can lead to full employment, placements are not always good experiences for employers because the system currently requires students return to university. Jeannie (employer F) explained:

We were lucky to have had Sue as a placement [2nd yr. events management] student and wanted to keep her on. But when she graduated, she wanted to go travelling. We replaced her with someone else, but the graduate experience was not a good one for us. Since then we've employed direct from industry but preferably with a degree in a related field as an essential criteria.

Eight of the ten employers interviewed said they had received spontaneous enquiries outside of their usual employment processes from EME students. All of these suggested that enquiries from students was welcome and considered them to be beneficial to their needs. Two of these eight employers suggested that employment had been organised on a number of occasions from such spontaneous enquiries but only on a temporary basis. This is not to suggest the employment was short-lived but rather it worked around the more busy periods and short-term contracts were arranged around specific events. It is likely that other more secure employment had been found elsewhere on the strength of having gained experience from industry.

Another theme from enquiries with employers was that while employers considered a HE award of value in some vacancies, they did not consider it to be the most important factor at either the application or interview stages. The individual was considered the most important factor closely followed by experience and technical skills. Employers explained that because the work was multi-faceted they sought employees with experience in the more valuable areas to them depending on their own sector. These

specialist areas included, people skills, health & safety, legislation and risk management, electronics, basic mathematics and marketing. Furthermore, when asked, all of the employers interviewed suggested they would always choose experience over a HE award.

A number of other remarkable observations were made. All but one of the employers interviewed said they did not focus their attention on employing university graduates nor did they have a graduate programme for new employees. Seven of the employers said they did not have any EME graduates in their organisation but did have a number of other graduates from other disciplines. However, as the employer also pointed out, these employees were much older and had been with the company for some time.

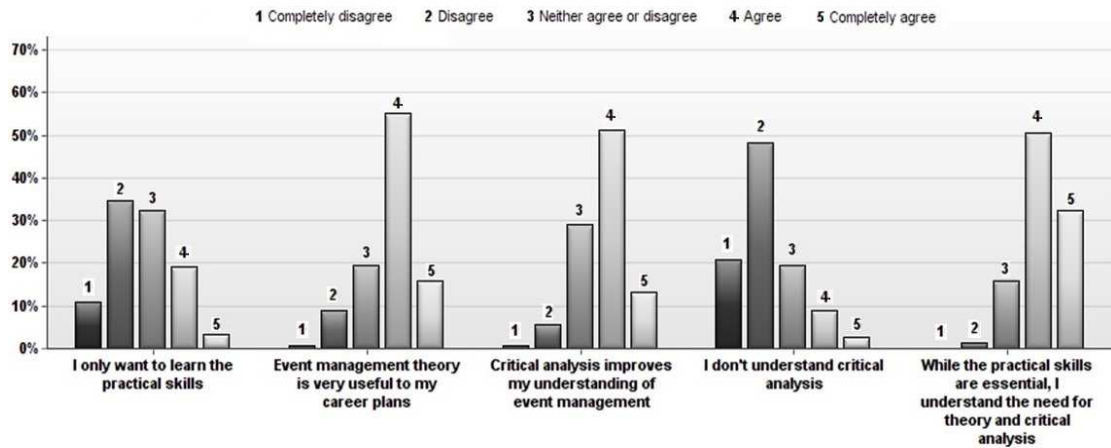
It was suggested that the idea of a candidate applying with an events degree would make little if any difference to the employer once they had been employed. This view is supported by (Kashef, 2015) who suggests holding an event management qualification was unlikely to secure job interviews and that recruiters for the events industry place little value on candidates having industry qualifications. However, these perspectives are in contrast to the Beaven and St George (2009) research that suggests 75 % of employers consider an arts or events management qualification essential or desirable for those seeking employment in the cultural events sector. The reputation of the awarding university was said to have no significant effect on the decision making process when choosing new members of staff.

4.2.2. The role of academic study in developing requisite skills necessary for work in the events sector

It has been suggested that outside of a Russell Group education, the effort an individual will go through is a waste of time and money (Kaplan, 2015) and on the surface, the necessary skills required to be a good academic can be seen to be quite dissimilar to those required to be a good events manager. However, universities today have a preference for all students to become autonomous learners. By doing so, the teaching is structured to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and take the skills required for academic research and development to be transformed into whatever the learner chooses. Naturally, this is much easier said than done as it requires considerable effort from the individual learner; particularly when the practice can at times be seen to be irrelevant. With these points in mind, students were asked for their perspective on the value of academic study and critical analysis. These can be considered the processes of learning that are central to HE.

Figure 4.2.2 takes the comments from Figure 4.1.2 (p93) a step further and considers the students' approach towards the value of research and critical analysis. Academic research and critical analysis have been suggested as unnecessary to the workplace as 'hunger and passion' and 'creativity, passion and stamina' are far more important when it comes to meeting stakeholder need (Ledger, 2014). While the responses are mixed, the predominant outcome is that students do value academic research and critical analysis and consider them to be of considerable value personally and for the workplace.

Figure 4.2.2: Student attitude towards learning events management theory



These results highlight the complicated balance between the requirements of industry and how HE produces work-ready students. Industry need may be a constantly changing environment that education must be continually observant of, but at the same time, it is important not to overlook the centuries of evidence education has in preparing students for the workplace. In reality, the case above presented by employers is in effect increasing non-academic teaching demands on institutions.

Employer engagement is an area of increasing importance to the strategic development of HEIs (QAA, 2010). Bringing the two sectors together to design and deliver awards would seem to be the obvious answer (EIF/BVEP, 2011). However, attempts to develop the involvement of industry in the design and delivery of awards continue to struggle to gain pace. The QAA has encouraged institutions to become more flexible in the range of learning opportunities they make available and the modes of study they offer. At the same time, the QAA also acknowledges the challenges such an approach presents when institutions are trapped in the more traditional provision they have abided by for decades.

When skills are split into hard and soft skills, the demands from industry become overwhelming. On top of the institutions task of teaching hard skills, the capacity to develop and assess soft skills means less effort in another area. This raises questions

whether EME should focus the majority of education on hard skills while also developing the soft skills that industry demands in the process. It is an area worthy of further study to understand how much the hard and soft skills are taught in EME awards and to see if the pressure from industry is affects the overall quality of education being provided.

4.2.3 Learning the requisite EM skills in HE

As suggested above, standards of vocational education methods have been established throughout the world and this research is interested in the nuances of EME. Many of the cognitive and non-cognitive skills required for events management and academic competence can be considered as being very much the same. The term ‘non-cognitive skills’ is used to contrast a variety of behaviours, personality characteristics, and attitudes with academic skills (cognitive), aptitudes, and attainment (Gutman and Schoon, 2013). Bloom (1956) discussed this by considering training for technicians that covers knowledge, comprehension and application, but not concerning itself with analysis. However, full academic or professional training may be expected to include analysis, synthesis and evaluation. From an events management perspective, non-cognitive skills include the ability to complete individual tasks, the attention to remain focused under pressure and/or distraction, remembering to do things to meet certain deadlines and to do them in the right order in an attempt to maximise capacity out of the effort.






The variances between events management and classroom education become more apparent when the actual physical effort and rational skills involved in completing a task are compared. Their diametric characteristics become much more apparent. The skills required in writing about a particular activity, such as a report on how an event

was delivered are entirely different from the skills required in delivering the event itself. Assessing each activity appropriately is a separate challenge.

Academic writing skills are particular and relate to cognitive reflection, being in a static place to complete and the ability to maintain a consistent style through guidance. For the most part, events management is more about movement, multi-tasking, dealing with change and continued activity. These are two different kinds of awareness and even personality with each specialism attracting different personalities. The inclusion of EL provides lecturers opportunities to test these other skills.

While students can learn as individuals in the learning environment, interaction with others can enhance learning outcomes considerably (Jones, 2009). It was therefore considered necessary to understand how much experiential activity was included in the curriculum and at what stage. Given that EL in EME is conveyed through students producing events for real, students were asked to provide data on how much they produced events for real as part of the written curriculum.

Figure 4.2.3: The use of EL through real events

Phases of EL		#	%
Yes, in all 3 years of study		43	27%
Yes, but only after the first year		78	49%
Yes, but only in the final year		26	16%
Yes, but only as part of a placement		8	5%
We do not put live events on at all		3	2%
Total responses		158	100%

It becomes apparent that some institutions are bypassing the use of live events in the first year. This may be considered to be a sensible approach as lecturers are not aware of the abilities of the students and using the first year to upskill new students to a level of competency can serve to avoid basic mistakes. Confidence in the students own

ability can be built up during the first year with fewer mistakes made once EL and live events are introduced. The responses that suggest no live events at all is against the views of other students in the same institution and the responses can only be put down to a misunderstanding of the question.

Jolene (institution-B, 2014 graduate) brought the value of EL into focus and suggested,

“...in terms of having the practical skills I think it would have been useful to have more hands on experience. We only had the [practical] event in the final year that we organised and in the first 2 years there wasn't anything unless you took up something voluntarily yourself. So maybe even if it's not necessarily planning a full event but just getting practical experience from different sections of event planning..... you can sit in a classroom and learn many skills but unless you're actually out doing something, I think it's very different.”

Similarly, Angela (institution-A, level-6 2015) praised the use of EL and explained how the EL programme worked in her institution and how lecturers introduced incentives for students to engage even more with events outside the classroom.

“What I like about my university is the balance between theory and practice and they really encourage us to get involved with the industry. We've got a passport points scheme where we get points if we volunteer for events or work in the industry. With my points I got free membership to The International Special Events Society (ISES) worth £300; it's a great incentive.”

Likewise, Brenda, (institution-C, level-6 2015) explained how a PDP scheme at her institution runs through every year of study and has helped her engage with work and thereby meet her expectations for the award.

“I've had experience at every level [of study] working directly with companies and have built up a portfolio of hours through my PDP. I have to do this as part of my course and even though you're not assessed for it, it has really met the expectations I had of the course and given me a great experience of working in industry as well.”

It appears that the adoption of EL in EME is to assess a number of skills in education that were previously unachievable. EME awards now provide students with both classroom and EL activities ensuring the comprehensive EM skills and abilities are

tested. Those more suited to the hands-on approach receive both the training and experience they would have anticipated at the point of choosing events as their vocational path. In a related study that used EL as a means of creating university-industry partnerships (Rawlinson and Dewhurst, 2013) it was concluded that such approaches develop the skills for a smarter workforce. The value of practically delivering events or EL as part of an EME award appears vital to the quality of EME. Swaray (2012) argues that students should not be passive recipients of knowledge from the lectern is supported by both student and lecturer responses.

One of the most notable themes from this research is the juxtaposition of perspectives from individuals who were students and are now graduates in employment. There is a general theme of approval about use of EL combined with the overall balance and quality of education received. This is in contrast to their perceptions whilst at UG level. Many of the graduates said their education had numerous problems while they were studying, including issues with the relevance of subjects covered and the emphasis on GW. However, on reflection after being in the workplace for a reasonable period of time having reflected on their time at university, graduates from more recent years have come to appreciate how valuable the areas of learning they considered insignificant at the time of learning have proven to be in the workplace. Jolene's (institution-B, 2014 graduate) point below whilst making this finding explicit also highlights a communication problem between the student and the lecturer/institution that is observed by graduates after having attended modules that did not appear relevant at the time. Jolene suggests the lecturers' need to be clear about the value of these modules in context to EM. Jolene stated:

“[if lecturers could provide] more explanation, maybe [we] would have managed our expectations a bit better. Since I've left I've realised the reason for it and that actually everything that we learned was really valuable. So maybe just something a bit more in the induction about why a

lot of the content is general would have just helped for people to understand why we were doing the modules we were doing.”

It is fair to suggest that lecturers could present something rather more informative and with a long-term interpretation as well as short-term clarifications during the induction period. Lecturers could be more explicit in course documentation and during course delivery by assisting students’ understanding and awareness of the general learning they will go through and the skills they are acquiring and their relevance to the workplace (Shah et al., 2004). In contrast, while this clarification could avoid dissatisfaction amongst students as they progress, data discussed later on the perceptions of lecturers suggests that a number of EME lecturers appear to prefer a fully event focused curriculum, rather than the inclusion of a more general curriculum. The module feedback that is completed by the student each semester could be highlighting dissatisfaction with these general business modules as Jolene purports to above.

There is evidence to suggest that graduates have also been shown to misunderstand the needs of the employer. Much can be put down to a lack of experience as Fink et al. (2010 p45) argue that:

“Graduate students want it all. Graduate students say that their training program should, to a great extent, provide opportunities for the development of each and every skill asked about. However, employers don’t expect it all. Most employers have clear priorities among the skills it expects new graduates to express “

Antony (institution-A graduated-2009) who has since left the events industry complained that opportunities to progress in industry were far too limited. This aligns with Robinson (2008) who argues that graduates have an unrealistic vision of what their career path would be upon graduation. Blomme et al. (2009) maintain that employees evaluate many of their experiences in relation to what they expected a particular job would be like and what they thought the job should provide them when

they started. Antony said he had left the industry for the Banking Industry because the likelihood of earning a decent wage meant spending far too much time on a low income:

“It just wasn’t worth the effort. I was really keen to work in the industry right up until I looked at the long-term career prospects and compared it to another. After two jobs and two years in the industry, I spoke to a friend who was earning twice as much as me after six months in his job. My decision to move on was instant.”

While the ability for EME to create high quality and work-ready students is evident, the industry itself is not always meeting all of their aspirations. From the bottom up, the challenge can appear to be a daunting and a time consuming undertaking that some graduate starters are not prepared to see through. The lure of the salary for graduates in a position to choose in today’s demanding lifestyles will probably always win. The reason for studying events in the first place, which is a lifestyle decision, becomes lost in the process.

4.2.4. The growing case for attention to gender

In the student questionnaire, 91% of student respondents said they were female with the remaining 9% male. Not only does this information provide data as to the profile of the respondents, it should serve as an important factor for the future design of the EME curriculum and the industry as it has been repeatedly proposed that student gender has considerable influence on individual learning style. It should also be considered for recruiting purposes (Mohr et al., 2012, Carfagna, 1993, Beaulieu and Love, 2004). Little evidence exists to suggest these trends are being addressed and while there remains limited research on the gender of students involved in EME, the

data gathered does align with a continuing area of research in the workforce (People1st, 2013a).

A recent report based on a survey that considered the gender of employees and their level of seniority. The survey found that across the whole industry, the gender split was 34% male and 66% female (ExhibitionNews, 2016). Figure 4.2.4 provides further details of this section of the survey where the drift towards a female-dominated industry is visible up to, but not including board level.

Figure 4.2.4: Gender & level of seniority in events employment. Exhibition News (2016)

	Total	Administrator	Co-ordinator	Executive	Manager	Director	Board	CEO
Male	34%	14%	14%	22%	31%	51%	75%	74%
Female	66%	86%	86%	78%	69%	49%	25%	26%

Studies that were not gender based but included gender observations noted rates of up to 95% female participation in events studies (Jepson and Clarke, 2014b). The data would also support the well documented view that many parts of the events industry are dominated by a female workforce (McCabe, 2012, Robson, 2011, Beaulieu and Love, 2004, Larson and Wikstrom, 2001). Additionally, Goldblatt (2000) anticipated the gender balance in the event industry and suggested even the boardroom gender balance is shifting and by 2025 women will dominate events management at executive level. Previous studies in the UK found that 55% of event managers in the UK then were female (People1st, 2010 p37) emphasising the shift in recent years.

The overall interpretation would concur that women are foremost across the whole of the events workforce, but less so in positions of senior management. These findings are aligned with data from an analysis of the labour force for the UK hospitality and tourism industries for male and female representation across a broad set of occupational groups (People1st, 2013a p35).

The gender of EME lecturers does not initially appear to contribute to the design of an award. However, research suggests this is of considerably more importance than one would generally expect (Ajasa and Salako, 2015, Edgar, 2015, Crilly, 2013) to all curriculum design and is certainly nothing new (Carfagna, 1993). Of the 54 lecturers who completed the lecturer questionnaire, 57% were male and 43% were female. Even if the gender of lecturers was not considered to be of particular importance for this study, it does provide some data profiling and was therefore considered a worthwhile question to include particularly as a benchmark for future research.

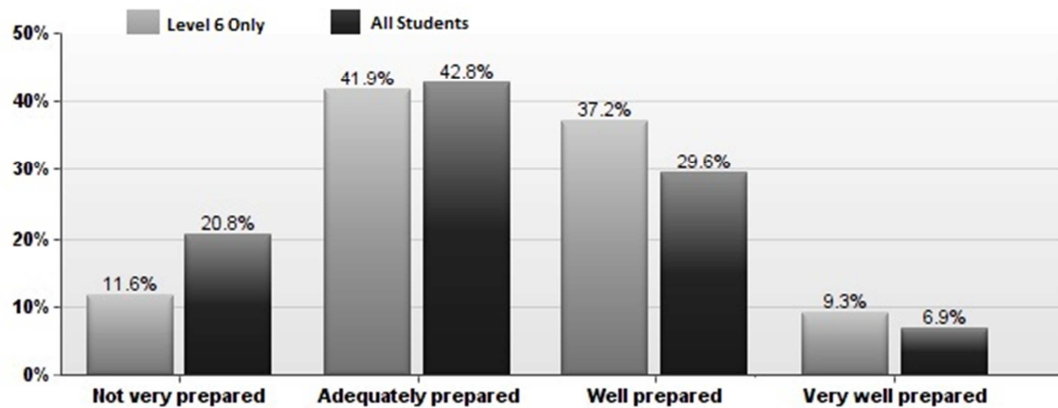
When compared to findings of the HESA (2015), the percentage of female lecturers in this research is slightly less but in keeping with the UK average of 45% female lecturers. Considering the organic drive towards a largely female industry, it would currently appear not to be spilling over into education. Bob et al. (2005 p113) discovered that upon studying the demographic profile of events, the prevalence of male spectators and participants is similar to trends throughout the world, suggesting that males compete in, watch and attend events while females deliver them.

4.2.5. Student preferences and preparation for work

It was expected that the data collected from students in the survey about their preferences and preparation for work would be inconclusive considering it was answered by all three levels of UG students. It can be reasonably predicted that students at levels 4 and 5 may feel they are yet to reach a level of preparedness for the workplace and this does appear to be reflected in the students' response. However, Figure 4.2.4a suggests as level 6 students begin the final stages of UG study, individual confidence is evident and the 'not very prepared' results decrease from

20.8% to 11.6% with a shift towards the ‘well prepared’ and ‘very well prepared’ columns.

Figure 4.2.5.a: Preparation for work Level 6 compared to responses from all.



Additional fears from outside university that exist begin to trouble students as they approach graduation. This was summed up by Donna (University-A, Level-6 student) a student who was interviewed, just before submitting her final assignment. While she considers her award to have prepared her well for employment, Donna raises two other issues with regards to seeking employment after graduation. These include competition and going back home to work. In her explanation, she emphasised her confusion and feelings of being lost when she explained:

“I think I’m prepared it’s just the industry is so competitive and I don’t know where I’m going to go. In [my home town] Aberdeen there’s not many event venues so there’s just no option. So if go back to Aberdeen, I’m going to be an admin assistant or something in an oil company and probably get paid better but I want to work in events so I’m looking at Glasgow where there are more venues.”

While this statement suggests uncertainty as graduation beckons, it also reflects a sound representation of how students have become more cognisant of the employment situation. What students are actually preparing for is unclear due to growing employment uncertainties and students expected to be responsive to ‘fuzzy demands’ in the labour market (Schomburg and Teichler, 2006 p4). However, in contrast to

Donna's point of view, Nikki (University C graduate 2001) suggested that the majority of her award provided her with no preparation for the industry at all. She expressed her frustration with her UG experience by stating:

“We were being taught silver service which was of no interest to me and I remember doing a session on risk management. All this lecturer was going on about was, “so you're in a farmer's field and you've got this marquee for a wedding”, that's all it was. There was no teaching. But then I did a placement after my second year and I remember talking to the company owner and told him it's absolute s**t what I'm studying right now, I'm not gaining from it and he was like, “I totally understand and I can see what you're learning is bo***cks.”

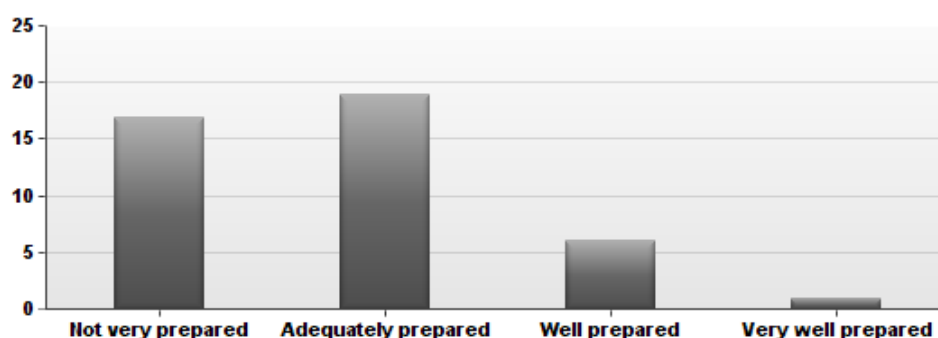
William, a mature student (University-C, 2000 Graduate) suggested that while the award maintained a focus on the subject and he graduated with a good degree, he expressed indifference and felt it necessary to immediately apply for a Masters as he commented:

“My first degree made no difference to me as a person, I didn't feel I'd actually improved or learned anything I didn't already know, so it was like well what was the point of that? But just one month into my Masters I knew it was what I needed.”

William may have felt the UG award served little purpose. However, without it, he would never have been accepted at the Russell Group University he attended for his level 7 studies.

To give an indication of how students felt towards their preparation for the workplace, the data was further filtered to see the perspective of Level 4 students.

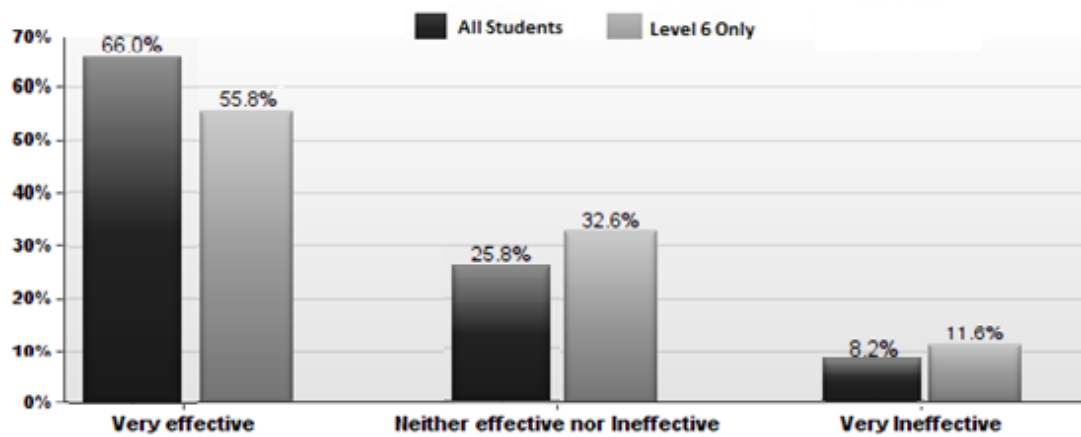
Figure 4.2.5.b: Preparation for work – Level 4 only (from 43 responses)



While it can be accepted that students at Level 4 would naturally feel less prepared than students at Levels 5 or 6, opportunities to motivate new students for the challenges ahead and engage with their programme of study that would improve their learning should not be overlooked. Adapting to the HE environment can be difficult and lecturers should place greater emphasis on understanding the level 4 student learning experience. Research in this area suggests level 4 students have much lower confidence even at the end of the first academic year than those at levels 5 and 6 (Jepson and Clarke, 2014b).

To support the data gathered on the students' views and the perspective presented above, Figure 4.2.5 below shows how effective the students considered the award was in preparing them for work; particularly in the events sector. The overall results here suggest a good level of consistency with the students' chosen vocation. However, the responses from level 6 students, while mostly positive do include a number of less encouraging responses on their award.

Figure 4.2.6: Effectiveness of EME award in preparing for work in events



66% of all EME students consider their award very effective in preparing them for work in events but the very ineffective responses rises from 8.2% for all students to 11.6% of level 6 students. Further qualitative research in this area is required as the responses may be due to a number of factors. These could include the timing of the survey, the quality of the award itself or even the existence of anxiety among students who are about to graduate. It is also possible that as students prepare for gainful employment, they are aware that there is a continued lack of employment opportunities for graduates (Millward, 2003) and competition for vacancies is on average of sixty eight to one (BJAM, 2010). This is said to be due to an exceedingly large number of graduates from all fields of education seeking permanent jobs in their chosen occupational area (Heath, 2013). Added to this is the reported high rate of unemployment in the hospitality sector (People1st, 2013a) that is producing an intimidating set of circumstances for graduating students.

Another reason for the change in mood as students' progress to level 6 could relate to the effects of the recent GED lingering in the minds of students about to graduate (Mercer, 2014). Preparation for the workplace could be somewhat overlooked as education in HLST focuses on developing professional expertise (Yorke, 2010). If a

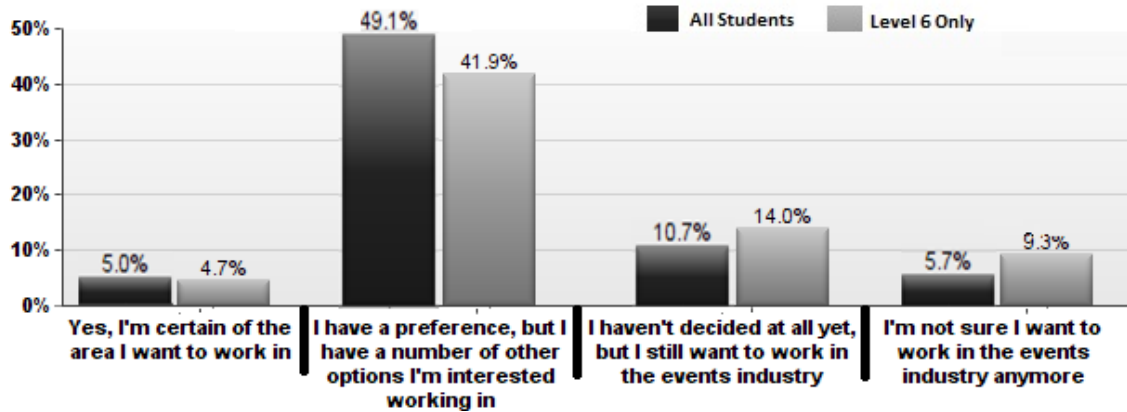
sense of professional expertise is achieved at academic level, then a sense of confidence towards seeking and obtaining gainful employment towards the end of their studies should naturally follow. However, the suggestion concurs with the Bourner and Rospigliosi (2008) view about the lack of support higher education provides in preparing students for graduation. The institutions involved in this research all have considerable post-qualification support in seeking employment, but how much actual engagement events students have with these offices is potentially another area worthy of further research.

4.2.6 The significance of First Destination Employment (FDE)

Questioning the value of HE is a relatively recent phenomenon and one of the key performance indicators of an award or institution is FDE. The destination of graduates from degree courses are closely monitored by each institution. What is less monitored is the students' perspective on where they see themselves actually working before they graduate.

Considering the data provided through the questionnaire on the effectiveness of the award for FDE, Figure 4.2.6 shows the students perspective on their objective to work in the events industry, or indeed if they had decided to seek FDE in another sector.

Figure 4.2.7: Planning to work in a particular area of events management



Overall the responses are positive and the majority (around 90-95% of students) suggest they will go on to seek employment in a sector of the events industry.

However, as in Figure 4.2.5.a (p135), Figure 4.2.6 suggests some deviation by level 6 students as there is less certainty that the events industry will be their actual FDE. The increase from a 5.7% response from all students to 9.3% response from level 6 students is significant. Approximately 30% of students (30.2% level 6 and 28.9% for all) have indicated a specific sector of the events industry which they would choose as FDE with the corporate sector being the most popular.

The responses that suggest uncertainty over FDE could be related to wider discussions around graduate employment (Tran, 2015, Culkin and Mallick, 2011). While research that has examined the specific destination of particular groups of graduates is limited to a few industries, the information on FDE for events management graduates remains largely under researched outside of the student's own institution.

Students were also asked to rank six specific sectors of events to illustrate the preferred sector of work within events. Students were requested to complete the question even if they had not fully decided their first destination. This prevented the students from opting out of the question. Figure 4.2.7. below details the student response. Considering the breadth of possibilities within the events industry alone, this remains a difficult question to answer for many students; particularly when

making such a choice is part of the much wider process of personal growth and development (Oreopoulos et al., 2012, White, 1968)

Figure 4.2.8: Preferred FDE sector of work when ranked 1-7

#	Preferred FDE Choice →	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
1	Conferences & exhibitions	44	35	26	27	13	8	4
2	Festivals and outdoor live events	55	38	18	19	7	14	6
3	Incentive travel	7	21	23	34	37	28	7
4	Self-employed support business	13	20	32	22	38	29	3
5	Theatre	0	11	23	15	40	57	11
6	Venue management	15	30	32	39	22	16	3
7	Other, please state	23	2	3	1	0	5	123

There is a marked preference in first and second choice options namely, 1:

Conferences & Exhibitions, and 2: Festivals and outdoor live events. The popularity of these sectors may relate to the content of the award the students are undertaking or the fact that students give less consideration to the less dominant sectors. There may also be the possibility that students are not categorising the industry this way in their own minds. Their own responses in the option ‘other’ provided examples of more specific areas within events including, Weddings (13), Sports Events (6), Corporate (5), Marketing (3), Entertainment (1), Not for Profit Events (1), Educational Events (1), and Fashion (1). Remarkably, ‘other’ was ranked last by 80% of students. Not a single student response considered theatre as a first choice. Again, this could be due to the content of their award.

The broad range of student choices in this study emphasise how diverse EM is while at the same time how comprehensive EME remains. The considerable inclusion of weddings as a sector of FDE by students and graduates is contrary to the perspectives of lecturers who have suggested they would prefer not to cover weddings at all in the curriculum. For further information see Ryan (2016). Therefore, either the lecturers

are out of touch with student expectations of the award, the attraction the award presented to the student is misrepresented in the programme or, students arrive believing any EME award will satisfy their desire to be a wedding planner.

To try and reveal even more specific data, a supplementary section to the question allowed students to include the area of the events industry they planned to work in. In Figure 4.2.8., the limited range of suggestions students have made for themselves is notable. Apart from Wedding Planning and Charity Event Fundraising, the suggestions are limited to just a few broad sectors of events. This could be a reflection on a number of situations including a lack of knowledge or understanding of what jobs are currently available in the industry, students sticking to the broader aspects of what is covered in their award, a shortage of guidance provided by lecturers and/or the institution, or a narrow-minded viewpoint from both students and the lecturers.

Figure 4.2.9: Individual student suggestions for FDE

Area of Events Industry	Total choices	Area of Events Industry	Total of choices
Corporate Events	11	Charity Event Fundraising	2
Wedding Planning	8	Venue Management	2
Festivals	8	Live Music Production	1
Sports Events Management	3	Cultural Events	1
Conference And Exhibition	3	Entertainment	1
Marketing	3	Music	1
		Operations	1

It is considered important to mention that other in-depth research into the destination of students at 39 institutions delivering the JACS Principal Subject N8 (which includes the N820 Events Management awards) was conducted by institution C. Their data suggests 91% of all graduate students at the 39 institutions are either in work or still in education 6 months after graduation with 49.7% in associated professional or management jobs (C Institution, 2014). Other FDE research considers the success rate of graduates becoming employed and suggests graduates from the top two universities

in the UK have a 1-in-8 chance of success compared to a 1-in-235 for post-1992 graduates (Redmond, 2006). As events management is not taught in the top 21 universities in the UK (CUG, 2015b) these statistics add to the previously discussed employment issues for graduates of EME. However, there is no evidence of research to establish the amount of events management positions filled by graduates from the top two universities or how engaged these institutions are with events employers. Conversely, there is evidence of improved alliances between post-1992 institutions delivering EME awards and the events industry trade associations to create cross-industry internships and training programmes (Rogers, 2014). These new relationships should improve the employment chances of EME graduates from post-1992 universities across the events industry.

4.3. Summary

This chapter has analysed the data gathered from one-to-one interviews and student/lecturer questionnaires. The responses provided during the interview process and the questionnaires have resulted in many perspectives being presented on the current state of EME. As well as individual perspectives, substantial and significant levels of satisfaction with EME are evident from both lecturers and students ranging from the subject knowledge of lecturers, the method of teaching and learning and the levels of support provided to students.

The widespread use of NOS has proven to be slow in uptake across EME institutions although the presence of an events accreditation would provide a much needed boost, not only in installing standards of education but also in recognition for the profession and the professionalisation debate. Along with this is the need for institutions to

support academic staff in creating an award that aligns with the needs of industry as this will prove crucial in professionalisation becoming a reality.

This research highlights the case that some but not all students have their own ideas about prospective employers and these are wide-ranging in their character and necessitate a broad range of needs specific to their chosen area of events management. This research suggests that a considerable percentage of students remain undecided about who their prospective employers might be throughout their studies. The pressure on EME being responsible for teaching both hard and soft skills will continue as more is understood about the principles of success in job interviews and the type of graduate employers in the industry require. EME has made significant changes to the curriculum in order to address this issue.

The continuing shift from a male-dominated to a female-dominated industry is as good as complete. Only the boardroom remains resistant to this organic (albeit seismic) slide towards female dominance in the workforce. It will be fascinating to see how the industry develops in the coming years as this is a first in any business environment.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

5.1: Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine EME through the experiences of LEGS in order to understand how events awards are designed and how EME meets the demands of students and the events industry in order to enhance the quality of this vocational award. It is accepted that EME is available worldwide and the conclusions in this study are not considered generalisable to a larger population. However, EME in post-1992 institutions in England can reasonably be accepted as being at the vanguard of education in this field. Furthermore, this relatively small-scale study has provided significant insights into the delivery methods, content and quality of EME.

Those who teach EME may consider the findings encouraging and be re-assured that much of the criticism from the press and a small number of stakeholders (Benjamin, 2014, Fisher, 2013) is unjustified. This includes the breadth of industry experience that lecturers have and understanding the importance of the skills required to work in the sector. Industry may also be re-assured that the research shows a considerable amount of satisfaction and relevance with the EME awards from graduates in employment. Furthermore, the continuing discussions between education and events industry trade associations (People1st, 2013a) should develop more opportunities for collaborations. Something that is long overdue.

5.2: From gaps between education and industry to managing expectation

The supposed gap between education and industry which has caused considerable debate for the past decade would appear to still be present. During this study, considerable developments have been witnessed, but as this research suggests, much of the criticism that includes the lack of industry knowledge of lecturers and the poor quality of education in today's EME is largely without substance. Responding to the criticism as a collective has had much less of an impact. Institutions develop awards independently making each award unique to the institution. This may be a factor in explaining the reason why EME is actually not in a position to collectively defend such issues. There is no advantage to be gained by an individual institution in defending the case for education as a whole.

This research has presented an opportunity for EME to drop the 'gap' debate and move on to the more relevant problems raised in this research. The whole concept of a gap between education and industry is illogical. It is right to discuss gaps in education, because education and industry are separate entities. This research has however evidenced a considerable amount of collaboration between industry and education. The source of these continued suggestions of gaps can largely be put down to event conferences where topical subjects for debate are sought to fill the panels. Instead of researching the subject and observing the developments made between industry and education, it appears that conferences continue to bring panel members together who are unaware of developments in EME and industry. A small amount of

preparation on the part of the organisers would reveal this to be the case and provide an opportunity for better informed topics of discussion.

The reality therefore has been a continuous ten-year debate on the same issues using the slogan 'gaps between industry and education' as the attraction. The practice is not unique to EME and the events industry. Marketing, Engineering and other vocational awards have been accused of the same problem. Individually, EME institutions have developed their award according to highly scrutinised standards. While this research suggests gaps between education and industry is an unnecessary topic that needs to be moved forward, the ability to move at all is hindered by the education sector's failure to provide leadership with a collaborative sense of direction.

Representation for the sector that actually reaches back to individual lecturers creating a sense of leadership is scarce and the organisations who claim to be representative of the sector, such as AEME and IEM need to be much more active when issues are raised. To a large extent, AEME is representative of the education sector and holds annual forums while IEM is yet to prove its existence beyond a website. IEM may have gained a number of influential supporters, such as government representatives and chartered institutions, but it is yet to effectively reach the organisations it seeks to represent. Without influential leadership, little variation is anticipated from the existing state of affairs.

The issue of managing the expectation of LEGS is arguably the greatest challenge ahead for EME. Leadership in driving every issue for EME forward is ultimately the responsibility of its representative body. Moreover, the challenge of collectively delivering education that meets the expectations of the key stakeholders can only really be achieved by uniformly adopting an events accreditation. It is suggested here that whichever representative organisation takes on this challenge, will ultimately become the lead representative organisation.

During this research project graduate observations suggest that general business awards that include limited event management-based modules are being passed off as an education in events. While many transferable skills are taught, this approach ultimately contradicts the original student expectation through a marketing process and in the long run creates dissatisfied students. It is accepted that many of the critical observations come from long-term graduates, but to fully understand and actually address this, academics must begin to understand where the student will eventually work beyond the simple explanation of within the events industry.

Chevalier and Lindley (2009) suggest there are three levels of graduate seeking employment. These are 'matched' (to the occupation), 'apparently overeducated' and 'genuinely overeducated'. Some events stakeholders suggest EME is not capable of generating any of these. In contrast to this stance and in planning for the future development of EME, a recent Event Management NOS steering group meeting (AEME, 2014a) revised the key purpose for event management to 'create and deliver opportunities for people to participate in an event to meet audience and stakeholder needs to achieve economic, professional or social objectives'. Part of the process in achieving this key purpose is for EME to ensure a number of skills, knowledge, and abilities are transferred to current students who will deliver these objectives. What EME may perhaps be producing if it is not designed with industry in mind, is another and all-round less desirable level of graduate of 'unsuitably educated' both for the student's employment objective and the industry. By essentially placing one or two event management themed modules inside a general business award timetable, the unsuspecting student is in effect being cheated out of a vocational education. The suitability of the qualification can only be reduced and the preferred employment objective of the student is compromised.

5.3. Meeting industry need

From a teaching perspective a great deal of determination is evident that keeps EME moving forward. However, there is also evidence of a lack of lecturer confidence in their institution's capacity to develop and accept new teaching approaches that would address the ongoing developments within industry. The complication education has in addressing this is made even more difficult by the way in which the events industry works. However, recent developments in EME awards coupled with the student and graduate perspective suggests EME has already covered considerable ground in meeting the needs of industry.

It is evident from the interviews conducted with employers that the events industry works largely in silos. Those who work in the conference sector or those who work in the festival sector generally maintain their income within their specific sector by building relationships with others in their sector. There is some cross-over, but this is limited to a small section of suppliers. The N820 EME award is an all-inclusive approach that covers all of the events sectors in a single programme of education. On the surface this has appeared to some as a shallow approach receiving criticism for its lack of suitability to industry need. However, the evidence provided by students and graduates in this research suggests that the comprehensive approach is more than adequate in creating work-ready graduates. Students and graduates have expressed considerable satisfaction with the quality and content of awards. Current students with a preferred area of employment have also revealed that enough opportunities exist for them to concentrate on this within the programme of study.

The research has also identified that the current sense of student and graduate satisfaction with EME awards is a recent phenomenon. EME graduates with more

than five years in the workplace are not as complimentary as to the quality or indeed significance of older awards. Based on the required skills, knowledge and abilities required for industry, the EME curriculum of today is much unlike EME in previous years. During the course of this study, EME has made significant progress in addressing the needs of the industry through activities such as the broader inclusion of NOS in award design and the widespread inclusion of EL and other live and group activities. The pace of this progress may not be as fast as some in both education and industry circles would prefer to see. However, progress is evident and it would appear to be happening in a much more transparent way. Since the requirement on lecturers to satisfy what Keep (2012) considers to be the competing, sometimes incompatible demands of industry, this is a significant development. It would appear that EME has come some way from trying to engineer an uneasy balance between divergent industry demands and academic necessities.

EME awards have developed from an existence that began as a glorified extension of related subjects to comprehensive industry-facing education. The widespread use of teaching methods that allow for the testing of the required skills through EL and other practical tests is testament to this. However, as this research has discovered, the prospect of introducing more contemporary approaches to EME in some institutions remains a challenging prospect. While this may in fact be an unachievable demand for some, the desire from lecturers to advance the design and delivery of the curriculum is widely evident and very much desired.

This study suggests that much of the criticism aimed at EME can be put down to a lack of appropriate communication. Even though EME is significantly represented as a collective, those who claim to represent the sector lack both the visibility and unity to effectively deal with any criticism. At best, communication in EME is largely

focused on sector developments. At worst, representation for students, graduates and EME itself is limited to a minority of active participants.

5 4. ‘Event’ Events’ and ‘Management’

When considering excellence, professionalisation and the expectations of the student, the title of the award itself must come under scrutiny. The choice of name for an award should naturally be representative of the subject. Strangely, EME appears to have three different word failings in a two-word title. Some use the word ‘event’ before management and others use ‘events’. AEME (events management), IEM (event management) QAA (events management) HESA (event management) all have different opinions on which is the correct term. Similarly, academic journals have the same conflicting title issue. This may seem trivial but it should be one or the other. From a personal perspective and considering it is a collective phrase, it is the events industry and therefore should always be referred to as ‘events’ when referring to it as a means of academic study; unless of course it is specifically expressed in the singular mode.

The use of Management in the title of the award is to some extent misleading and can lead to misperception with grander expectations from students and graduates. The over-selling of awards discovered in this study with grand prospects for graduates is completely misleading and only adds to the misunderstandings. EME awards through name alone are suggestive of ‘management’ positions being the consequence of successful graduation. It is therefore perhaps deliberately vague. Literature supplied by institutions could be clear that the award is about the management of events and that graduation will not guarantee a managerial post. The expectation of obtaining a

managerial position may take a number of years working in an entry-level position.

The working environment experienced may be good, but the remuneration and promotion prospects are often not.

It is possible that an award entitled 'Event Operations', 'Events Studies' or any other specific aspect such as 'Event Marketing' or 'Event Legislation' could serve to accommodate expectation more satisfactorily. This approach would also allow for a more dedicated approach to the curriculum by reducing the potential breadth of subjects that are covered under 'Management'. Besides, an award entitled 'Events' in the same way that awards are provided in 'Marketing' or 'Law' should be no less appreciated. However, the opinions of the institution's management and the potential reduction in student numbers would most probably eliminate the possibility of such a change. This issue may also be a contributor to the perceived gaps between industry and education. As suggested above, more specific labelling could bring certain sectors closer to education and improve relations through more appropriate links with industry support organisations.

5.5. Meeting the employer's skills, knowledge and ability expectations

A central aspect of the research was to understand how EME realises the expectations of students by developing the necessary skills required for work in the events sector.

Using the award as a means to improve employment opportunities is arguably the primary reason for attending university. To get a job in the events sector, an individual's skills, knowledge and ability will have to be tested. This research has discovered that EME awards today apply a great deal of emphasis on both the hard

and soft skills required to work in events. The increase in the teaching and testing of soft skills demonstrates EME's continued development in preparing students for the workplace.

Considering the events industry is dynamic and constantly developing, responding to the changing industry need is another ongoing challenge for education. This research has discovered that today, employers are placing just as much, if not more emphasis on an individual's ability and experience when choosing new recruits. These two attributes are much less academic and tend to be proven through industry and personal engagement. If this is to be the future of EME, how this is achieved will require even more contemporary thinking in how EME is taught.

The study illustrates that experience gained from working in the events industry was preferred by employers to a HE award. Even when a university graduate was employed, an EME award did not prove to be the most important factor to the employer's decision. This could appear to be a criticism of EME awards but the same could be said for any award or certificate. Employers are making employment decisions based on how an individual responds to the application process. The prospective employee who has gained a number of years' experience in events is more likely to succeed because previous experience is more commonly requested in person specifications. They may also be known to the prospective employer because of their involvement in activities within industry.

The type of award itself that the graduate has studied could be a deciding factor to an employer as it is not in an employer's interest to restrict candidates to certain subjects. A graduate applying for an event position with a more specific award, such as marketing, finance or law could be seen to be of more value to an employer based on the position to be undertaken. This would be in line with Arcodia and Barker (2003) who reviewed 105 job advertisements that revealed the range of industries that seek

specific event management specialisms or skills. These ranged from marketing to budget and financial skills. If the employer is focused on specific skills, then an award that covers a broad spectrum of events skills could be considered inferior to a dedicated award in a specialist area.

For students to achieve through HE the level of experience and ability suggested by these employers, it is likely that HE would have to undertake a root and branch review of its delivery practices for EME awards. With this in mind, education and industry could use this as an opportunity to create closer collaborations. It has been shown in this thesis that EL is widespread in EME. The difference between the learning experience gained ‘on-the-job’ whilst in the largely safe environment of HE and the learning experience gained ‘on-the-job’ in the actual workplace is largely under researched. Placements can be very useful and offer a balance between the two extremes, but there is not enough research available to be certain whether an EME placement achieves the same level of respect as full-time employment from employers.

Based on the available evidence in this research and the Beaven and St George (2009) conclusion of the relatively poor consideration of the value of experience gained through student projects, it is believed that an employer would favour an applicant with a year’s experience in industry after graduation as opposed to a graduate who has a year’s placement experience. The solution points towards a number of developments in the delivery and design of EME awards. One opportunity to consider would be considering placements for students after graduation. They could then be seen as both an incentive to students to do well by guaranteeing employment opportunities and the motivation for employers to connect with local institutions. Most placements are paid at similar rates to FDE so the value to both the graduate and employer is conveyed

through more knowledgeable students and genuine rewards. This requires considerable further research as knowledge of such practices is not known.

Another opportunity to consider would be to openly embed the expectations of the employer in the design of an award and include direct industry involvement with the award. This would be a particular benefit on a regional basis where specific events industry knowledge is in demand. There is no doubt from the research that employer expectations are considered when designing an award, but this is not always a clear expression in the institutions award information. By making this information clear, considerable progress would be made in removing any misunderstanding between the two disciplines. The misunderstandings that have been debated in this study have been explained as a lack of communication between industry and education. Without these collaborations, it can appear to be a case of education second guessing industry requirements and employers assuming education will provide them with the kind of graduate they need.

Alongside these observations for improving access to EME, the study was approached with some pre-conceived beliefs based on previous industry experience. It was maintained that lecturers were often ill-equipped to teach the required skills in a classroom environment. This assumption was based on the classroom environment itself, academic provision and accessibility of equipment in the classroom or the fact that they are in a classroom in the first place teaching events management. My experiences and observations mostly as an events professional suggest that the industry has historically attracted people who are less academic and more practically minded. This, along with the limited period EME has been available, is why so few events employees can be found with a degree in events management.

In contrast to this perspective on the amount of events employees with an events award, ExhibitionNews (2016) research into events management employees recently

found that 59% of respondents hold an award of some sort with 21% of respondents having a degree in events management. This is a convincing case if an unusually large percentage. However, when the study's method is reviewed, the large percentage is due to the survey being aided by members of AEME to EME graduates.

Therefore, with these things in mind, my perspective was that the relationship between the student, the subject and the HE environment was not fully amenable to fashioning employment-ready graduates. Many of the technical and hands-on skills required are at best challenging to impart in a classroom environment. However, this view has changed somewhat during my time as an academic and more notably during this research. It remains a challenge to address the expectations of all employers through the N820 award, but recent developments have contributed to the creation of an award that largely does deliver employment-ready graduates.

In considering the industry, the need for soft skill abilities is universal. The personality of the potential employee will have to include these skills. Therefore the events graduate needs to be proficient in both hard and soft skills. While some believe EME is not capable of teaching these skills, the reality of the event manager's 'hunch' or 'tacit knowledge' are skills that are derived from the many years of experience obtained from working in the industry. That is in itself a learning process and something that therefore must have the capacity to be taught. The difficulty in achieving this is not with the individual, it is within the method of testing the individual.

In the UK today, there is considerable emphasis placed on obtaining a degree by attending university full-time. Other, arguably more suitable methods (particularly for the events industry) such as apprenticeships have largely been ignored (Martin, 2011). The inclusion of apprenticeships and work-based learning on UG EME awards has increased since the beginning of this study but still lacks widespread availability. The

institutions in this study provide a variety of engagement options for students. Only one offers its N820 UG award to people with a full-time job. UG EME awards currently place an emphasis on written assignments and fixed daytime attendance above practical skills and remote/flexible attendance. The former is unsuitable to most people employed in events. This suggests that the likelihood of increasing the use of apprenticeships and work-based learning at UG level is doubtful; unless the system is reviewed.

UG education could be more appealing to industry by reviewing the customary practices of delivery; not just as a means of providing new employees, but to develop the current workforce's hard and soft skills. The demand for UG study from people in full-time employment is not covered in this research and could be an opportunity for both further research and education and industry to build closer links. Location may be a factor as the business and institution would to some extent have to be in proximity to each other. The only other consideration would be for institutions to tailor the award to actually suit specific occupations. The added benefit of these approaches would allow for long-serving employees who had possibly given up on the idea of achieving a HE award to top up on their knowledge or even complete an award.

Models implemented by the Open University for example allow individuals to complete modules in a much more flexible manner. This includes paying for each module separately and not for a whole semester or academic year. Students structure full-time study to fit in with work by studying from home, in the workplace and on the move with the use of mobile devices (OU, 2015).

Ultimately, the reality for students who are attracted to attend certain universities through marketing material suggesting employment at a high level is that these positions are really only possible to achieve after many years' experience and success in the industry. Furthermore, while it is possible, it is highly unlikely that students

will secure a lucrative management position upon graduation simply because of the competition for places even at entry level. The knowledge and skills required to undertake such important roles is built up over many years of experience. University A who suggest students will be capable of gaining management positions for Mega events is wildly misleading. It was discovered through personal involvement with the 2012 Olympics that the majority of managerial positions were sourced through head-hunting campaigns and the organisers of the previous Olympics. It is highly unlikely that any responsible position at this level will be sourced by sifting through the many thousands of graduates.

5.6: Improving education through industry alignment and support organisations

Opportunities exist for institutions to create closer alignments with industry and by doing so provide an indication of the focus of the award. The more advanced EME institutions have done this by ensuring that they have connections with the leading events representative organisations. The number of senior academics engaged at board level with event organisations is growing. Some have connections created for research purposes while others have built up a relationship by providing training opportunities to its members. The extent of these links is largely unknown outside of the institution itself and therefore an area worthy of further research to understand how much engagement exists and the potential for more institutions to follow suit.

Towards the end of this study, data that shared information on research in tourism, hospitality and events was being gathered by two leading events academics with the aim of producing a comprehensive, searchable register of all events research (BVEP,

2015). This will eventually inform how much information is feeding its way from industry to education and vice versa. The next stage is to ensure these developments actually feed back into the curriculum and affect the content and design of awards.

It is also important that initiatives such as these continue to identify new ways of improving the relationship between education and industry from lecturers and their research efforts. Finding ways of linking research to professional practice to advance the relationship between education and industry has been a topic of conversation at conferences but these now need to become widespread to all aspects of the events industry from all institutions. Constant co-operative activities between education and industry are important and a breadth of expertise and interest could create meaningful research partnerships with the professional associations that will not only extend the level of communication but make criticism of the distance between education and industry difficult.

By aligning EME awards with industry representative organisations the institutions can provide more transparent awards. NOEA (National Outdoor Events Association), MPI (Meeting Professionals International), ABPCO (Association of British professional Conference Organisers) to name just a few, all have specific responsibility for their members that specialise in areas such as management, outdoor events, conference organisation, marketing and so on. These representative organisations represent event staff who wear everything from suits & ties to hard-hats & high visibility jackets. All are event managers, but their skills and knowledge base is entirely different. As discussed, not all students are intending to take on a practical role and take no interest in jobs where getting their hands dirty is part of the job description. While EL has been proven to be a good fit for EME, lecturers need to recognise that the role students undertake during the experience gives them the

opportunity to engage with whatever aspect of employment is suitable to them and their preferred area of FDE.

From the many representative organisations, (See Appendix I) a picture that provides an indication of the type of events manager a student may aspire to be can be created. This is most simply explained as following a business or leisure path. The business aspect would include areas such as marketing, legislation, conferences, wedding planning and meetings while the leisure aspect would include festivals, live & outdoor events, health & safety and events support service providers. Another way to consider this is public or private sector or audience. If institutions were to concentrate their award on one or the other, a better fit can be made by providing graduates that are either leisure-ready or business-ready. This would also provide a better indication of what the award is focused on.

EME has evidenced its desire to move away from traditional forms of assessment and utilises EL and other more contemporary forms of assessment. Conversely, industry maintains a strong value on the use of exams for its employees. This observation initially seems damning. However, when it is considered that industry is testing the skills of people who exercise their skills on a daily basis in employment, the use of exams would seem to be the best means of assessment. If EME awards focused much of their EL in the early years of education, then test students through exams in the later years, this would align more with the methods of the industry and could provide a more knowledgeable and fitting graduate.

Another process that could be adopted from industry is the manner in which the professional organisations present their training material. Module descriptors are often cumbersome in their reading making them difficult to understand and or follow. By presenting a simple snapshot of the skills, knowledge and abilities that the module is expected to deliver, students can be better informed on how they are to be tested and

what can be gained from the module. Links to the NOS that are tested should also form part of the module information.

While having suggested that institutions join forces with representative organisations, it is accepted that a number of complications are created in doing so. First and foremost, lecturers, who would most likely be responsible for the management of the relationship, are already tasked with full teaching and research loads. Added to the management of the relationship is the decision the institution will make on which organisations to align with. An institution may have to decide what implications such alignment brings to the award. It may also mean deciding if the award has a business or leisure focus or whether it should be one focus or the other. To focus on both could be expensive as membership of these organisations comes at a cost. There may be the decision of dropping existing relationships and the complication of offering student membership as part of the tuition fee.

5.7: NOS and Professionalisation

There will be many difficult decisions for EME moving forward, but the widespread increase of education/industry relations should be a positive one. It would also improve the prospect of professionalisation. Whether it is a body that represents education first, such as AEME or one that has an industry focus, such as IEM is of little importance. Such alignment would create a virtuous circle between education and industry and work towards further development and closer ties. Any relationship of this kind would convey the closer alignment of taught skills with those expected by industry. There is also the added potential for informed development through collaborative research. A framework for all EME to be guided by and follow can be

created through such accreditation. Considering events is an industry where those responsible for the event have to prove their innocence if a disaster occurs, the need for professionalisation becomes acute. This single observation should form the basis for the case. Achieving this should be built on EME's alignment to NOS alongside an events accreditation.

The development of the NOSs in EME offers an opportunity for all institutions to openly advance the quality of their EME award. The widespread integration is something that all institutions need to approve through self-governance. The adoption of NOS should only be the starting point for the improvement of awards as there is the potential for EME to offer much more than a modest alignment to a basic standard. Considering the CMP model that details the journey from learning to abilities could be much more appropriate to consider adopting. However, by adopting some, a minimum level of excellence in award design, either through the accreditation of EME awards or by aligning to a performance standard, the quality of awards can be visibly improved.

It is these basic principles that EME appears to have overlooked that would go some way to the realisation of professionalisation within the sector. Without a professionalised occupation, anyone will be able to organise an event and EME students will continue to compete with graduates from all subjects and will, for the foreseeable future continue to come up against the issue of being in receipt of an award from outside the top twenty institutions. It is hoped that this research and similar research will encourage the higher-ranked institutions to offer EME as an award. The continued rise in student numbers may also contribute to such developments in the near future.

The importance of representative organisation support in achieving a state of professionalisation is both paramount and complicated. Without this support,

professionalisation is unachievable. However, the number of representative organisations that exist to represent the events industry is exhaustive. While their priority is to support their individual member's needs, the existence of so many could be a problem. Not only in some sectors where there are several representative bodies, but in the formation of a single umbrella organisation that represents the interests of the industry and education.

The Institute for Event Management (IEM) is still in its infancy and AEME might be considered too academic to take on such a position. The possibility of IEM assuming this role might appear to be close. However, it admittedly remains largely unfunded and therefore broadly inactive. The most recent information suggests the cost to set up and run it in the first year is in excess of £200,000 (IEM, 2015). To achieve this level of support, the whole industry will need to be given good reason to do so. This is yet to be proven. From an event management perspective, the lack of such an organisation is akin to the circus going on tour but forgetting to bring the tent. The long-term effect has been all the participants have gone off and set up their own mini circuses. To bring everyone back together as one after so many years of development and success in their own specialist area may prove to be out of reach.

The fact of the matter is that EME is much younger than these specialist and established representative organisations. The potential benefit these specialist representative organisations would gain from uniting the industry is uncertain. It is more likely to be a question of how much power they will lose if they agree to come into the fold. It can be assumed that education would benefit considerably from such a union but the high number of representative organisations is evidence of the complications that exist on the side of industry. This in itself may ultimately prove to be the downfall of a single representative body for the events sector.

To improve the possibility of a professionalised occupation, the numerous representative organisations who have limited membership might need to re-consider their influence as individuals and contemplate amalgamating with other similar support organisations. This would reduce the fragmented view of the industry. Amendments such as this increase the possibility of gaining access to a profession rather than studying for an occupation. Without these changes, the growth of EME can only be a short-term gain for education. Without professionalisation EME will maintain an element of deficiency that in the long term might be seen as lacking any real purpose to the prospective student.

Johnson (1972 p9) considers the recognition of a profession to be one of the major, if not the defining characteristic, of industrial societies. EME should encourage and strive for the same status. This is an enormous task. Currently, the EME curriculum may be able to teach the student how to behave professionally, but to be recognised as a professional area of study will require a massive amount of mutual gate-keeping that would exclude those who do not have the required credentials to practice. Where and how to position the gates to keep is in itself complicated as public events can attract few while private events can attract hundreds and even thousands. It should not be expected that private events require a certificated events manager in order for the event to go ahead. However, it is reasonable to suggest that public events regardless of the potential audience should. To put this into perspective, individuals will always be encouraged to decorate their own home, but recognised professionals are required as soon as the effects go beyond any personal level.

5.8: Considering FDE

EME covers a comprehensive range of subjects, topics and themes and will always have to meet the demands of a broad range of occupations. Taking into account the destination of the prospective student in designing the content of EME may well be beneficial to the award and industry alike; although in reality it is largely unworkable without clear direction provided by the institution for students to consider before enrolling. Aside from the uncertainty of FDE itself, it is not always in the interest of an institution to risk developing an award based on the requirements of a single events profession because apart from the complications this would bring in delivery and the ongoing necessity for highly specialist knowledge, it would have a direct effect on the potential intake.

In an ideal situation, FDE considerations should be part of the process before HE and contribute towards the final choice of institution. However, being aware at such an early stage of the decision making process is complicated for a number of reasons. The availability of information on an institution as a whole, employability prospects, the influence of peers and league tables and the concerns of parents have all become contributing factors that cloud the decision making process. The relevance of these concerns is an area for further research.

Arcodia and Barker (2003) suggest the HE environment has become increasingly competitive with prospective students comparing the graduate employability prospects of different universities. This is in contrast to data gathered from parents' whose views can have a major influence on the prospective student's decision. The questions asked at open days had little to do with graduate employability. Parental priorities were also unlike the priorities of their children when selecting a university. Rather

than being questioned on the content and focus of the award, graduate employment figures, or where graduates went on to work, parents repeatedly asked me about the added costs the award might incur on top of the proposed tuition fee, the living quarters, safety and the local environment. Contrary to the guidance provided by the Complete University Guide (CUG), these priorities are not considered important when choosing a university (CUG, 2015a). Such influence could be pivotal factors in choosing an institution. Considerably more research in this area would benefit an informed response as the effects on a good match between the individual and the award may not be in the best interest of either.

FDE will remain a discussion point for some and continue to provide valuable data for institutions, industry and academics. However, the need to consider it in the design of an award is of little value in the early stages. It becomes a much more useful tool as students head towards graduation. However, for it to work, the honest and informed perspectives of UG students are needed. The number of level 6 students who are fully aware of their FDE is limited. Furthermore, choosing FDE can also be considered unhelpful as it reduces potential employment options.

5.9: Attention to detail

While further research needs to be undertaken to fully understand the student perspective on EME, the responses from students are largely positive and reflect a considerable amount of satisfaction in their award, their individual preparations for the workplace and a great deal of confidence in those who teach it. This research suggests that more attention needs to be applied before and during the influx of new students. Lecturers could place greater emphasis on understanding student learning styles and

experiences as soon as they come to university in order to improve academic achievement. For example, a review of early engagement would allow for more freedom in the first year of study to adjust to the HE world. Give new students time to focus on their own future, how to study and gaining industry experience seems better than submitting assessed work that does not contribute to their final mark. By doing so, the process of autonomous learning can begin with a distinct route applied, rather than expecting a whole new cohort to fall in line with an institution-wide process.

This thesis has discovered that EME students are not merely interested in the practical skills but that the academic skills are just as important. Allowing students to become autonomous learners from the outset will improve the learning experience and the individuals perceived capability to perform. By doing so, institutions can go some way to managing their students expectations. This approach is endorsed by Jepson and Clarke (2014b) who looked at group dynamics in the learning experience at an early stage. They argue that lecturers responsible for academic delivery at level 4 should seek to establish group efficacy and a positive exchange of views with students to ensure students have the best possible chance of becoming autonomous learners. This can be achieved by identifying and responding to lower confidence levels that are communicated by students in the initial weeks of education. Creating or implementing less-curricular activities to address new recruit self-efficacy and confidence levels should go some way in reducing these barriers.

From a lecturer's perspective, line management demands of performance indicators such as student retention figures have been experienced. This is not simply a drop out or non-continuation issue as many students either change awards or institutions during the course of their studies. If the institution focused its concerns more on the personal issues raised by students in this study, it is possible that retention figures would improve.

Institutions pay considerable attention to detail on so many levels within the processes of education. However, it is aspects of attention to detail that affect the student experience that will make considerable improvements to the quality of EME. The bigger picture and potential of an EME award is evidently attractive to students. However, the recognition of individual needs and concerns are often lost in the education process and only realised when it is too late to effectively respond.

5.10: Fixing the holes

Much of the criticism that has been evidenced from the events industry and EME graduates appears to refer to a time when EME was in its infancy. The effects of a poor award appeared to have some lasting memories on those who either graduated from these poor awards or created the wrong impression in the workplace. During the course of this study, EME has developed considerably and has become much more relevant to industry. The comments of Nikki (University C graduate 2001) and William (University-C, Graduate 2000) when added to industry criticism are evidence of the state of EME awards in the early stages. The more recent comments such as Donna (University-A, Level-6 student), Elma (institution-C, graduate 2013) and others agree that EME awards are meeting their needs.

Problems still exist in the design of the EME curriculum and academics agree that the challenging and unique set of circumstances events management apportions to HE because of its breadth and continued development, a number of difficulties still need to be addressed. These problems are highlighted by lecturers in the study in how institutions remain insistent on stretching their specialist knowledge taking them out of their comfort zone, asking them to share modules with non-EME specialist and their

lack of autonomy when designing awards. Ultimately, these are factors that if maintained will always affect the ongoing quality of EME awards.

The way in which EME is delivered is an area that this research suggests, would benefit from a re-evaluation. Subjects such as Technology, Health & Safety, Design and Logistics advance our industry and event professionals embrace every possibility to simplify, upgrade and improve the delivery of events. Without a comprehensive review of the approach to the delivery of EME, some awards may struggle to keep up with what industry requires in a graduate. A continued belief in long-standing education delivery practices that suit general business management awards do not appear to be fully conducive to adequately teaching or testing the necessary skills for event management. This state of affairs cannot be put down simply to the lecturers who teach on EME awards as this research suggests progression is sought by those who teach it. The comments of some lecturers in this research who have come from industry serve to amplify the frustrations industry has with the education system at some institutions.

As the end of the study nears, a number of contemplations were considered including why the thesis did not ask if the events industry would survive without EME. The answer to this is that the question is too industry focused. On reflection however, my thoughts are that it would of course survive. The question that must then therefore be asked is, is the events industry healthier because of EME? This is more education focused and I believe I have managed to answer this question in the study. While a number of critics will always remain, the events industry is without doubt healthier because of EME and this will continue to improve. The increase in student numbers alone will increase the amount of research undertaken which will in turn go on to inform the industry and the way in which it operates.

By reviewing these considerations, the question on gaps between education and industry is in effect answered. It is not about gaps at all, it is about the difference between the two sectors and how one feeds the other. Differences can be critically viewed as gaps, but knowledgeable observers will recognise collaborative opportunities. This research has discovered that a key to improving every aspect of EME and the industry it serves is through increasing these collaborative opportunities. There are numerous academic opportunities that EME could exploit as there are industry needs that would bring education and industry closer together. However, much of these require considerable investment and a deviation from the regular day-to-day teaching and learning processes. These include the widespread availability of HE apprenticeships and work-based learning at UG level, direct research links with industry, a review of placements and industry actively contributing to the curriculum. This study is not suggesting that the long-standing practices of institutions are the entire cause of the differences between industry and education, but it is suggesting that institutions can learn a lot more from how the events industry works. Greater consideration for the nuances of EME from the host institution is the first step forward. This may be a major challenge for some award leaders; particularly if they do not obtain the backing of their school to implement change. But without a comprehensive review or the adoption of measured incremental adjustments, it is difficult to understand how EME can consistently produce graduates that meet the needs of the industry. Moreover, without a consistently dedicated programme of teaching that is evaluated by a representative body that can accredit EME, the awards will never gain professional recognition. Without this, anyone can still organise an event.

Data from the study has unearthed a number of less apparent realities and therefore provides a vision to inform the future development of the EME curriculum beyond its

current natural path. The events industry as well as its supporting and closely related organisations should also benefit from the data as a clearer understanding of current practices and content of EME awards is presented. I have demonstrated that the issues raised are often complex and to some extent deeply rooted in the differences between how education and industry interconnect. From a musical perspective, they can be summed up as existing in different rhythms. The sometimes measured and cautious pace of education is not always conducive to the vitality of the industry. For a contrapuntal existence to work, it is necessary for each to maintain respect for the other. When this is achieved the results are stimulating; when it is not, it is a cacophony.

The breadth of the events industry coupled with the individual specialisms of lecturers can lead to problems for EME award content and delivery. Then the actual design of EME awards has to ensure skills, knowledge, ability and experience are integrated through classroom-based learning and EL activities. This study should inform employers while assisting lecturers and particularly award leaders tasked with meeting the complicated demands of designing EME awards that meet the considerable expectations of events employers, students and employers.

5.11 Strengths and limitations of the study

A number of limitations have already been discussed in the design section of the study which includes limitations from insider-research (p61), the limitation in the use of questionnaires (p74), and the decision to adopt a case study approach to collect primary data. Case studies are generally perceived to have a number of limitations, including the subjectivity that underpins the approach and the confidence level of

research users to generalise the results. As a considerable amount of this research is qualitative research, it is accepted that this approach is also criticised (Anfara et al., 2002). It is not the intention of this study to claim that the results and findings are applicable to all types of management awards or even to other EME awards not covered by the N820 JACS code. However, if taken as an intended representation of a phenomenon at a particular time, the findings should serve to contribute to further research in variety of contexts. There may also be awarding institutions outside of the post-1992 group that this study is focused upon that have different approaches to EME.

Throughout this research I have been constantly aware that it has been undertaken with a limited number of participants. However, while the breadth of the research is made all the more representative with the inclusion of LEGS, I appreciate that it still leaves the research open to a claim that it may lack generalisability. It is not claimed here that all awards will have the same issues but rather that similar situations might also exist on other awards. Possibly one of the limitations in the early stages of the study was the lack of research in EME. This posed an added problem of new research continually being released during the study that for me were new findings. Another researcher might want to look for factors emerging here to see if they help explain trends in their own area of research. Moreover, the design of the study is robust and if used in another study, a set of reliable and valid findings should again be the outcome.

The key to the strength of this study lies in my experience and understanding of the events sector and EME activities. This has enabled me to simplify and present complicated situations while maintaining the exceptional qualities of data collected from the contributing stakeholders. The breadth of stakeholders also made a considerable contribution alongside the method of data collection. The two questionnaires, qualitative and quantitative data, triangulation, one-to-one interviews

supported with desk research has made for valid findings that can be considered to be reliable and credible. Furthermore, while also a limitation, the capacity of the case study approach to investigate EME in such close relation to its setting is undoubtedly part of the strength of this study.

5.12: Contributions

Because of the lack of EME research that exists, the impact of this study is all the more significant. Prior to this research, far too little was understood about the nuances of EME. This study makes an original contribution to knowledge in this field and provides a solid foundation for others to undertake further research; both focused and longitudinal that will provide even further understanding of this broad area of education. Further longitudinal suggestions are made later in this section while every topic covered in this thesis provides opportunities for more focused research. In view of the fact that this is the first in-depth study into EME, this thesis claims five major and three minor contributions to knowledge as follows:

Major contributions

1. Collectively communicates the inside/outside perspectives of the four main stakeholders
2. Provides evidence of widespread satisfaction in EME awards
3. Highlights how future development of the subject should be obtained
4. The LEGS framework
5. Application (or not) of lecturer specialist knowledge

Minor contributions

1. Provides guidance towards professionalising the occupation
2. Revises the discussion between education and industry
3. Demonstrates contemporary perspectives on EME

In order to provide a clearer account of these contributions, both what and to whom, this section has been separated into two distinct sections, namely:

1. Contributions to knowledge and,
2. Contributions to policy and practice

5.12.1 Contributions to knowledge

This thesis makes an important contribution to the specific study, delivery and understanding of EME through the extensive data it provides on the state of EME. Unlike other studies related to EME, I have identified the perspectives of the four main stakeholders and reviewed the differences that exist between them. This detailed approach conveys added transparency to EME through the perceptions of the stakeholders. This has in turn produced informed data on the expectations of each participant and how these can be managed. For example, the thesis demonstrates the contributing factors in the design of EME awards over time and articulates how these have developed (p90-113). The thesis demonstrates how aware institutions are of the complicated assessment of both hard and soft skills that industry requires in a graduate and how these are addressed all through the curriculum with EL and classroom-based teaching (p125-126). Throughout the thesis the gap debate between education and industry is tackled and the thesis demonstrates that the evaluation is flawed and instead provides more beneficial ‘managing expectation’ (section 5.2) area for discussion.

Throughout the thesis, data is provided for the development of the subject that is beneficial to both lectures and students. Chapters 2.7 and 5.7 provide guidance on professionalising the occupation highlights the importance of widespread co-creativity and collective communication in the design of awards which also contributes to the

debate between education and industry. While much of these contributions will be beneficial to LEGS, employers and graduates are the key beneficiaries. Each of these three major elements contribute to improving the quality of education, the experience of students, and the value of the award.

The thesis contributes directly to the progress and direction of future EME awards by determining uncertainties such as the challenges that exist in providing a consistent curriculum and the sometimes vague levels of support EME receives from host institutions (p142). As well as determining uncertainties, this thesis is demonstrating new and contemporary perspectives on EME delivery and makes available a pathway to improve the quality of EME itself which in consequence leads to more fitting and able graduates ready for the workplace.

EME has now been delivered in the UK for 20 years with student numbers and courses in EME increasing faster than all of its immediate competition. EME has managed this organically simply through demand rather than through evidence of widespread satisfaction from within the teaching environment. Events management is not an area of study that guarantees employment, high earnings or an exceptional working environment. This makes EME's growth and development difficult to both understand and maintain. This is a particular area of research that would benefit from a longitudinal study. However, without this study, EME was unable to demonstrate the widespread satisfaction (p91/92) that exists. Without this data, any future development would be defective. This study not only provides evidence of widespread satisfaction to move forward from, it provides an opportunity to build upon and move from satisfaction towards excellence in teaching and learning.

Furthermore, in contrast to the well-documented and perceived gaps between education and industry, this thesis has provided evidence of established collaborations (P129, 157). Not only have these collaborations existed for some time, strategies to

develop such arrangements are advanced between a number of institutions and events associations and businesses.

Because of the contribution of EME graduates, my thesis has been able to contrast the perspective of longer-served EME graduates with those of the present day. This has demonstrated the ongoing development of EME awards into a more focused education that is capable of preparing students for the workplace (p125, 137, 151). The graduates' perspectives on the relevance of modules emphasised that while improvements can still be made in communicating the need for certain topics (p119), the importance and value of their inclusion is experienced once the graduate enters the workplace.

5.12.2 Contributions to policy & practice

Through this research, I have measured the perspectives of stakeholders on the 'inside education' and 'outside education' viewpoints. This unique approach brings much needed clarity to the future practice and policy of EME. It offers new insights and will contribute considerably to future curriculum design. For example, my research demonstrates the importance students place on research and academic skills and how industry places non-academic demands on education. I have established the institutions responsibility to ensure that industry, or any other external or internal demands do not affect the quality of education being provided. It is also considered a significant contribution and to highlight the LEGS framework that has underpinned the research. Not only has it provided rich data for this thesis, it is a valuable collective framework that can be used for further inclusive programme development and review for a broad range of study.

The presence of a lack of co-creativity within teams and the absence of collective communication through EME as a whole suggests considerably more effort needs to be made in ensuring information is shared within and throughout EME. This is achieved through an active lead organisation and a better effort within teams to share information with colleagues.

As EME moves forward, it is likely that demands from industry will continue to be made. Institutions are focusing on maintaining a research-based award designed for a practical occupation. The widespread adoption of EL is progressive and meets many of the employers' demands, while the more academic content not only meets the student's desire, but also provides other skills that contribute to providing more productive employees. It will remain important to ensure the values in each of these are well communicated to students at the earliest opportunity.

What is also a significant contribution to knowledge are the results of lecturer specialist knowledge (p99/100). This data would not have been extracted without the contribution of this study. How institutions utilise lecturer specialisms is central to the quality of the award. I have emphasised the importance of communication here and suggest that more effort needs to be reflected in the allocation of modules. Moreover, the significance of a desired learning approach gives rise to a more root and branch review of EME strategy beyond the individual delivery processes.

The distinctive review of FDE provides reliable data on the plans of EME students and benefits the design and content of future EME awards. Alongside this is the consideration of when placements should be positioned within the award. By offering placement opportunities after graduation, the institution can provide incentives for students to do better. It is expected that industry would engage if places are obtained through merit. This would naturally increase education's engagement with industry while at the same time improve figures on FDE.

As my thesis developed, opportunities to implement some of the research findings have emerged. For example, after being appointed to the executive of AEME, I have been in a position to highlight issues of EME at executive meetings. This has led to direct action including increasing the activities of the association as a representative body, contributing to the QAA benchmark statement for HLST to include events, reviewing the predominant presence of EMBOK ahead of other respected industry models and bringing the question of accreditation for EME awards into an open debate. The QAA benchmark statement is due to be published with a revised name of events, hospitality, leisure & tourism (EHLST) with the removal of an EMBOK focus. Accreditation will form the basis of a workshop at the forthcoming AEME Annual Forum 2016. This will give EME stakeholders the opportunity to consider the best way forward to make this a reality.

5.13. Future research & recommendations

While the findings of this research are valid and justifiable, it is nevertheless accepted that EME still requires considerably more research. While it can be frustrating in some respects to research an area where relatively little data exists, it has been rewarding to anticipate the range of different areas of research which are still to be conducted. Suggestions on further research have been made throughout the thesis including; EME itself, the adoption of available frameworks of study for EME, the effects of minority groups and individuals in group work and EL, the extensiveness of NOS in EME award design, discrimination or cliques within teaching groups, the effect of desired teaching approaches, the impact of increasing reflective assessment and decreasing examinations, events accreditation, the consequence of institutional quality systems and their effect on specialist knowledge contributions, the effect of

students losing faith as they progress through their studies, the volume and split of hard and soft skills taught in EME, post-qualification support for graduates, the impact of work experience opportunities in comparison to EL opportunities and placements, the demand for UG study from people in full-time employment and the value of academics taking up positions on industry boards.

While a review of UCAS and university websites was conducted to supplement the data in this study, a more detailed approach that considers how awards are promoted is an area worthy of considerably more research. I suggest this because the influence these activities have on choosing an institution is not regulated and claims can be misleading. If this occurs and tuition fees are taken into consideration, these decisions can prove to be expensive and become problematic to change.

Taking the suggestions above for further research into consideration, I would also make recommendations based on the resulting findings. First, in order to extend the scope of this study, it is recommended that further research on this topic should consider a much more inclusive data set. One approach would be to take account of the whole of the UK and consider the different approaches to EME across each nation. Taking this a step further, a review of international institutions may also provide fascinating data. EME has come a long way during the life of this study and the availability of awards is much more international.

The most apparent recommendation based on the research would be to capitalise on further collaboration between LEGS both inside and outside the sphere of the academic world. Not only would this improve communication and understanding, but would establish an opportunity to develop the less academic aspects of EME such as EL and placement opportunities. Adopting such a collaborative approach to teaching and learning will, for some, require a review of current award design practices. However, the advantages would create opportunities for involvement with local

business while broadening the learning experience. Once such activities become established, further opportunities to develop graduate engagement are produced to advance and inform the curriculum. In doing so, the expectation of each stakeholder is better understood and can therefore be better managed.

Finally, it is also recommended that communication inside EME should be improved. Greater recognition for a lead organisation needs to develop from within. To achieve this, communications between lecturers and institutions need to increase. However, this is only achieved through noticeable active engagement; something that EME is lacking. With an active lead organisation, EME would provide itself with genuine opportunities to influence the sector and discuss issues of common interest in a way that ranges far beyond its current reach. For example, the acknowledgment of NOS, or any other standard, in designing awards would notably be more widespread and the reality of a professionalised industry can be more willingly addressed. An active lead organisation increases the likelihood of strategic long term planning which is essential to ensuring that the quality of EME continues to advance and a sound academic experience is upheld for the events students yet to come.

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APPENDIX 1: A SELECTION OF NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL EVENTS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS

Association of British Professional Conference Organisers
Association for Wedding Professionals International
Association for Events Management Education
Association for Conference and Events
Association of Conference and Events Directors
Association of Destination Management Executives
Association of Event Organisers
Association of Event Venues
Association of Festival Organisers
Association of Independent Festivals
Connected International Meeting Professionals Association
Entertainment Services and Technology Association
Eventia
Event Hire Association
Event Industry Alliance
Event Services Association
Event Supplier and Services Association
Event and Visual Communication Association
Event Supplier and Services Association
Exhibit Designers & Producers Association
Hotel and Catering International Management Association
Institute of Events Management
Institute of Hospitality Management
International Congress and Convention Association (UK Chapter)
International Association for Exposition Management
International Association of Conference Centres
International Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus
International Association of Culinary Professionals
International Association of Fairs and Expositions
International Association of Hispanic Meeting Professionals
International Caterers Association
International Festival and Events Association
International Food Service Executives Association
International Institute of Convention Management
International Society of Meeting Planners
International Special Events Society
Meeting Industry Association
Meeting Professionals International (UK&I)
National Arenas Association
National Outdoor Events Association
National Speakers Association
Professional Speakers Association
Professional Publishers Association
Society for Incentive Travel Excellence
Scottish Events & Festivals Association
The Association of Event Organisers Ltd
The Association of Event Venues
The International Institute of Weddings

The Nationwide Caterers Association
United Kingdom Crowd Management Association

Others

Alliance of Meeting Management Companies
Association for Convention Operations Management
Association of Female Exhibit & Trade Show Managers
Exposition Service Contractors Association
Mobile Industrial Caterers Association
National Association of Casino and Theme Party Operators
National Association of Mobile Entertainers
National Limousine Association
Professional Convention Management Association
Trade Show Exhibitors Association

Appendix II:

EVENTS MANAGEMENT DOMAINS OF KNOWLEDGE

A. EMBOK

Administration	Design	Marketing	Operations	Risk
Financial Budgets Costing & Pricing Cash Flow - Management Accounting	Catering Menu Selection Service Style Alcohol - Management Catering - Operations	Marketing Plan Planning & Development Target Markets Messages - Mediums Customer/Guest Relations	Attendees Registration & Ticketing Admittance - Controls Movement & Traffic Flow Crowd - Management	Compliance Statutes & Regulations Accessibility Property Rights Compliance - Instruments
Human Resources Organizational - Structure Workforce - Relations Volunteers Employment - Legalities	Content Communication - Objectives Educational - Obligations Topic & Format Selection Speaker - Selection	Materials Promotional Materials Collateral - Materials Design & Production & Delivery	Communication Internal/External Modes Equipment & Protocols Briefing & Debriefing Production Book	Decision Management. Decision Framing Resources & Criteria Deliberation & Collaboration Authority & Empowerment
Information Information - Acquisition Distribution & Control Documentation Record Keeping	Entertainment Sourcing & Selection Entertainer - Requirements Entertainer - Controls Ancillary - Programs	Merchandise Product - Development Brand - Management Manufacture Distribution	Infrastructure Transportation & Parking Utilities Waste - Management Sanitation - Services	Emergency Mgmt. Medical Services Evacuations Crisis - Management Disaster - Management
Procurement Solicitation - Documents Source Selection Change Controls Contract & Administration	Environment Décor & Furnishings Site Layout Way finding Learning - Environments	Promotions Advertising Promotional Events Cross Promotions Contests & Giveaways	Logistics Task Sequencing Contractor Coordination Equipment & Material Move-In/Out Maintenance	Health & Safety Fire Safety Occupational Safety Health & Welfare Crowd Behaviour & Control
Stakeholders Client Management Constituency - Management Participants & Providers Communications	Production Lighting Sound Visual Presentations Special Effects	Public Relations Image Management Media Relations Publicity Crisis Management	Participants Speakers & Performers Celebrities & Dignitaries Athletes/Coaches/Referees Officials/Experts	Insurance Loss Prevention Liability Coverage - Requirements Policy - Management
Systems Database Systems Knowledge - Management Accountability Systems Technology	Programme Agenda - Choreography Activities & Attractions Ceremonial - Requirements Amenities & Hospitality	Sales Ticketing - Operations Sales Platforms Concessions Cash Handling	Site Management Site Sourcing & Inspection Site Selection & Contracting Site Planning Site Development	Legal Contracts & Negotiation Licenses & Authority Policies & Procedures Ethics
Time Management Activity Architecture Timelines Production - Schedules Schedule Controls	Theme Purpose & Message Cultural - Iconography Image & Branding Theme Integration	Sponsorship Sponsors & Donors Benefits Packaging Solicitation Servicing Sponsors	Technical Production Staging & Equipment Installation Operation Technicians	Security Personnel Equipment Deployment Command & Control

B. CMP-IS

DOMAIN A. STRATEGIC PLANNING

16%
OF EXAM

Skill 1: Manage Strategic Plan for Meeting or Event

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

- Basic business management skills
- Trend Analysis and forecasting methods
- Methods to analyze and interpret data

Exam Questions in Domain A 24
Questions in Skill 1 6-8

SUB SKILL 1.01 – DEVELOP MISSION STATEMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF MEETING OR EVENT

KNOWLEDGE

- purpose and objectives for meeting or event
- mission statement, goals and objectives of organization and stakeholders
- target market(s)
- type of geographic location and local culture envisaged by organization
- type of meeting or event envisaged by organization, e.g., spectator, participatory
- sustainability objectives, e.g., financial, environmental, social
- financial resources that may be available
- target date(s)
- cross-cultural issues, e.g., holidays
- special conditions

ABILITY (KNOW HOW TO)

- work with, communicate and understand stakeholder goals
- develop mission statement to specify purpose, philosophy and target markets
- create goal statements to specify how meeting or event will achieve its mission
- establish objectives to specify actions, time frames and performance measurements needed to achieve goals
- align mission statement, goals and objectives of meeting or event and organization/stakeholders
- manage cross-cultural issues

C. CIC

MBECS Curriculum Levels

MBECS Categories, Skills and Subskills	Curriculum Levels		
	1. Coordinate	2. Manage	3. Direct (post-grad)
A. STRATEGIC PLANNING			
1. Manage Strategic Plan for Meeting or Event			
1.01 Develop mission goals & objectives			
1.02 Determine feasibility of meeting or event			
1.03 Determine requirements to carry out meeting/event			
1.04 Develop financial summary			
1.05 Monitor strategic plan			
2. Develop Sustainability Plan for Meeting or Event			
2.01 Implement sustainability management plan			
2.02 Demonstrate environmental responsibility			
3. Measure Value of Meetings and Business Events			
3.01 Develop evaluation plan			
3.02 Measure return on investment			
3.03 Evaluate/audit meeting or event			
3.04 Evaluate effectiveness of risk management plan			

Appendix III:

STUDENT SURVEY 2013/4 STATEMENT OF INVITATION

Dear student,

I am a level 8 research student completing an Ed. D. at Staffordshire University. The focus of my research is event management education with the main area of secondary research well under way.

However, in order to complete the front end of my primary research, I need to gather the views of current UG students in a selection of universities to complete a short questionnaire about their event management award. I will then conduct semi-structured interviews with academic staff, employers and a number of graduates to complete the primary research.

Please take a moment to complete my short UG event management education survey. It would be appreciated if you could answer each question as accurately as possible. This survey is completely anonymous and your confidentiality is treated with the utmost respect. The survey will only take a few minutes to complete and is accessed via the following link.

http://staffordshire.eu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ahI9IQ4GjYjotcp

Your contribution is very much appreciated.

W. Gerard Ryan BA (Hons) MBA FHEA

About the survey

The survey covers seven universities in England. These have been chosen in order to maximise the response and to maintain a focus in one geographical area. The universities have been carefully chosen because of their high popularity for event management education in England.

For data purposes, once the data has been gathered, each university will be called A, B, or C etc. Therefore if one university is mentioned in the text, the reader will only see 'institution A', 'institution B' or 'institution C' etc. No further detail will be disclosed in order to maintain complete anonymity.

Ethical considerations

This questionnaire is conducted with the following ethical considerations,

- Participation is voluntary
- Participants have the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer
- All data will be treated with full confidentiality and, if published, it will not be identifiable to any individual
- All participants will have the opportunity if so desired to be debriefed i.e. to find out more about the study and its results. Please email w.ryan@derby.ac.uk for further details and information

This research project will not deliberately mislead participants in any way and does not contain any realistic risk of any participant experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort. The nature of the research is considered neither contentious or sensitive.

I consider this project to have no significant ethical implications requiring a full ethics submission to the Staffordshire University Faculty Ethics Committee.

The questionnaire has been checked and approved by Staffordshire University. A full ethics form has been completed and logged with Staffordshire University. A copy of which can be provided if required.

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED USING AGREED STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES AND WAS APPROVED.

Student Survey September 2014

Title of Course on which enrolled: Doctor of Education

Name of student researcher: W Gerard Ryan

Name of supervisor: Prof. Tehmina Basit

Appendix IV:

CONSENT FORM

“How Do You Do Event Management Education”

A study into event management education (EME) with consideration for the design and delivery processes in higher education.

I have opted in to the one-to-one interviews via the original EME online questionnaire (Please select)	Yes / No
I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	Yes / No
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my business or legal rights being affected.	Yes / No
I give permission for the interview to be voice recorded for future evaluation.	Yes / No
I certify that the information shared with the researcher can be revealed in the study	Yes / No
I certify that my personal details will not be revealed for the study and made anonymous to protect my identity.	Yes / No

Researcher: Gerard Ryan

(Ed.D. Staffordshire University)

I hereby confirm the information and consent, given above, and therefore agree to participate in the above titled research study.

Name:

Organisation:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix V:

EMPLOYER SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Did the employer have any knowledge of EME?
2. What were the specific skills the employer wished each new employee to bring?
3. Do you employ EME graduates direct from university?
4. Do you get many enquiries from EME graduates and if so, how are these handled?
5. Do you have any graduates of EME in your employment?
6. Do you have any HE graduates in your employment?
7. Does the reputation of the university affect your decision when choosing new member of staff?
8. Once employed, did the fact that the new employee had a degree make any difference to the workforce?
9. Where applicable, would you say that you are satisfied with the quality of graduates you have employed?
10. Do all your new employees stay with the company for more than three years, or is there a distinction between EME, other graduate and non-graduate employees?

Appendix VI:

HOURS OF DATA COLLECTION BY INTERVIEW AND DATA CODES

CODES BY SECTOR	Breakdown of interview	
Lecturers	Lecturers	
Bad Old Days	14 one-to-one interviews	25
Class?	Employers	
Discrimination/Cliques Within Team	10 one-to-one interviews	15
Experience	Graduates	
Frustrated With Teaching	10 one-to-one interviews	14
Frustration With Governance	Students	
Lecturer Needs	25 one-to-one interviews	18
Lessons Learned	Combined Total	72
Managing Expectation (Institution)		
Managing Expectation (Lecturer)		
Negative View Of EME		
Positive View Of EME		
Regulatory Requirement		
Skills		
Stress		
Teaching Methods (Current)		
Teaching Methods (Future)		
Teaching Methods (Past)		
University Perspective		
Employers		
Benefits From Students/Graduates		
Employed Graduates		
Events Degrees		
Experience		
FDE		
Industry Needs		
Knowledge of EME		
Managing Expectation (Employer)		
Negative View Of EME		
Neutral View Of EME		
Positive View Of EME		
Quality of Graduates		
Reputation		
Skills		
Graduates		
Learning Related To Student Needs		
Experience		
FDE		
Learning Unrelated To Student Needs		
Managing Expectation (Graduate)		
Negative View Of EME		
Points Of 'Value' In Education		
Positive View Of EME		
Skills		
Stress		

Students

Complaining

FDE

Frustrated

Group Work

Learning Related To Student Needs

Learning Unrelated To Student Needs

Managing Expectation (Student)

Negative View Of EME

Points Of 'Value' In Education

Positive View Of EME

Stress

Student Needs

APPENDIX VII:

QUESTIONNAIRES

i. Staff Questionnaire

1. I am...	
1	Male
2	Female
2. Your background	
1	I am and have always been a lecturer and have no hands on event management experience
2	I have always been a lecturer, but I also work in events
3	I worked in events before I became a lecturer
4	I came from another area of work outside of events into event management education. Please state.
5	Other, please state
3. Click to write Column 1	Festivals
Specialist and teaching	Conferences
Specialist and NOT teaching	Exhibitions
Teaching but with limited knowledge	Conventions
Do not teach	Incentive travel
Total Responses	Theatre & live arts
	Venue management
	Marketing
	Law
	Health & Safety
	Sustainability
	Fund raising
	Sponsorship
	Corporate events
	Cultural events
	Logistics
	Operations
	Public relations
	Promotions
	Business start-up
	Community events
	Other
	Private events

4. Of these specific areas above, which 3 do you consider to be the most important to your event management award?	
1	event management subject 1
2	event management subject 2
3	event management subject 3
5. Are there any areas of event management you DO NOT teach that you think should be included in the award?	
1	Yes, these include,
2	No
6. If you would be prepared to take part in a 10 minute telephone interview on this topic, please include your details below.	
Name	email
7. Please rank the following to describe the focus of your event management award. Top (1) being most important	
1	Managing the creative and commercial aspects of an event
2	Managing event operations
3	Managing event marketing and sales
4	Event evaluation
5	Other, of your choice
8. Are there any areas of event management you DO teach that you think should be excluded from the award?	
1	Yes, these include,
2	No
9. Please rank the following to best describe the ACTUAL learning approach of your event management award	
1	Focus on learning through experiential activities
2	Focus on learning from classroom delivered lectures
3	Focus on learning from industry experts and visits

4	Focus on learning through academic sources
10. Please rank the following to best describe the DESIRED learning approach of your event course	
1	Focus on learning through experiential activities
2	Focus on learning from classroom delivered lectures
3	Focus on learning from industry experts and visits
4	Focus on learning through academic sources
11. Do you consider your event management award to have a particular focus area of event management? For example, festivals, conferences, marketing, live events, incentive travel etc.	
#	Answer
1	Yes, please state
2	No
3	I don't think so
12. Is your event management award designed with consideration for the event National Occupational Standards?	
1	Definitely yes
2	Probably yes, but I'm not sure
3	Probably not, I wasn't aware they existed
4	Definitely not
13. Do any of the other level 6 event management modules include any group-assessed work?	
1	Yes
2	No
3	I don't know
14. Is the level 6 event management final year project (FYP) group-assessed work?	
4	Yes
5	We do not have an event management FYP
6	No

15. Where is your institution?	
1	UK
2	Mainland Europe
3	Other, please state

ii. STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your current level of study?	
1	UG level 4
2	UG level 5
3	UG level 6
	Total
2. How prepared for the events job market do you feel at your current level of study?	
1	Not very prepared
2	Adequately prepared
3	Well prepared
4	Very well prepared
	Total
3. How effective is your Event Management course in preparing you for work in the industry?	
1	Very effective
2	Neither effective nor Ineffective
3	Very Ineffective
4. Are you planning to work in a particular area of event management?	
1	Yes, I'm certain of the area I want to work in
2	I have a preference, but I have a number of other options I'm interested working in
3	I haven't decided at all yet, but I still want to work in the events industry
4	I'm not sure I want to work in the events industry anymore
5	No
6	If so, which area of the events industry do you want to work in?
If so, which area of the events industry do you want to work in?	

5. Even if you have not decided what job you want to do, rank in order of preference the area of event management you would most want to work.	
1	Conferences & exhibitions
2	Festivals and outdoor live events
3	Incentive travel
4	self employed support business
5	Theatre
6	Venue management
7	Other, please state
6. Do you get to deliver real events as part of your events management course?	
1	Yes, in all 3 years of study
2	Yes, but only after the first year
3	Yes, but only in the final year
4	Yes, but only as part of a placement
5	We do not put live events on at all
7. Does your event management course cover the event management areas of most importance to you?	
1	Yes
2	Sometimes
3	No
4	If no, what should it cover?
If no, what should it cover?	
8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your HE education and tuition?	
Completely disagree	Question
Disagree	My tutors have the skills and subject knowledge to support my career intentions
Neither agree or disagree	I have regular contact with my tutors and it is appropriate for my personal needs
Agree	My tutors provide feedback that helps me improve my events management knowledge
Completely agree	My tutors help me identify my training and development needs
9. Have you at least one tutor who has worked in the Event Management industry?	

1	Yes
2	No
3	I don't know
10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about skills development?	
Completely disagree	Question
Disagree	My event management research skills have developed during my studies
Neither agree or disagree	My critical analysis skills have developed during my studies
Agree	My confidence to be creative has developed during my studies
Completely agree	My understanding of 'research integrity' (e.g. rigour, ethics, plagiarism) has developed during my studies
11. In relation to the previous question, which of the following statements best describes your views on the type of skills you have to learn in HE?	
Completely disagree	Question
Disagree	I only want to learn the practical skills
Neither agree or disagree	Event management theory is very useful to my career plans
Agree	Critical analysis improves my understanding of event management
Completely agree	I don't understand critical analysis
	While the practical skills are essential, I understand the need for theory and critical analysis
12. Which of the following statements best describes where your event management education and tuition will take you?	
1	After graduation I will seek work in the events industry
2	I had planned a career in events, but I will also consider other options
3	After graduation I intend to remain in education
4	I'm still not sure what I want to do after graduation
5	After graduation I do not intend to follow a career in events
6	Other

13. Please confirm the university your are attending	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
14. I am...	
1	Female
2	Male
3	Prefer not to say
15. Have industry specialists delivered guest lectures during your course of study?	
1	Yes, regularly
2	Yes, occasionally
3	They are in the course handbook, but I haven't received any
4	Not at all
16. Would you consider guest lectures to be important to your studies? (Whether or not you have them)	
1	Yes very
2	They make little difference
3	Not at all
17. I am...	
1	Under 25
2	25 34
3	35 and over

APPENDIX VIII:

LIST OF TEACHING SUBJECTS PROVIDED BY AUTHOR IN QUESTIONNAIRE

Festivals
Conferences
Exhibitions
Conventions
Incentive travel
Theatre & live arts
Venue management
Marketing
Law
Health & Safety
Sustainability
Fund raising
Sponsorship
Corporate events
Cultural events
Logistics
Operations
Public relations
Promotions
Business start-up
Community events
Private events
Other

Appendix IX

SPECIALIST AREAS OF TEACHING

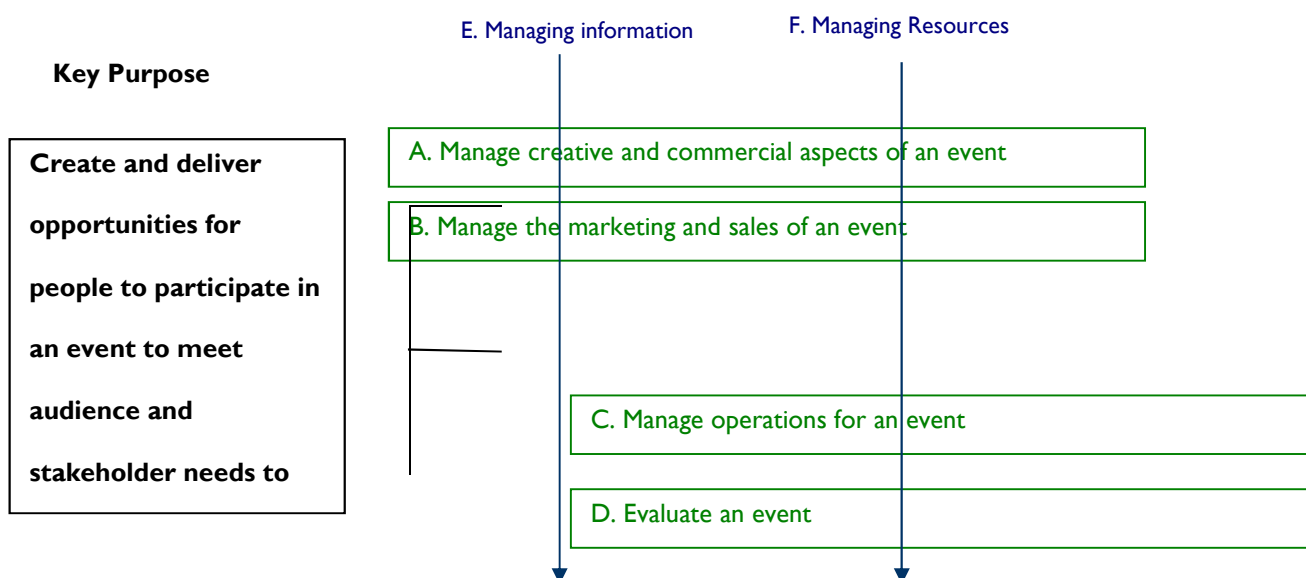
#	Question	Specialist and teaching	Specialist and NOT teaching	Teaching but with limited knowledge	Do not teach
1	Festivals	17	2	7	6
2	Conferences	14	1	5	10
3	Exhibitions	11	2	9	9
4	Conventions	8	0	10	11
5	Incentive travel	4	0	6	19
6	Theatre & live arts	10	2	4	15
7	Venue management	17	5	4	5
8	Marketing	14	5	6	7
9	Law	5	1	7	18
10	Health & Safety	13	1	9	9
11	Sustainability	10	2	12	8
12	Fund raising	7	2	10	11
13	Sponsorship	9	1	10	10
14	Corporate events	12	3	4	10
15	Cultural events	17	4	6	5
16	Logistics	11	4	5	11
17	Operations	17	5	2	8
18	Public relations	7	1	7	15
19	Promotions	6	1	6	17
20	Business start-up	3	3	3	22
21	Community events	13	3	8	8
22	Other	11	0	2	3
23	Private events	9	4	3	14
	Other				
	Production and staging				
	Sport events and Project Management				
	Celebratory events				
	Event Design				
	financial planning				
	Project Management				
	Creativity				
	Texhnology				
	Project Management				
	Legacy and policy				
	People Management				
	Finance and strategy, small business, consumer behaviour				
	Entrepneurship				

Appendix X

FUNCTIONAL MAP 2013

Key Purpose revised 2013: “Create and deliver opportunities for people to participate in an event to meet audience and stakeholder needs to achieve economic, professional or social objectives.”

What needs to happen to achieve the Key Purpose?



Key Role A: Manage creative and commercial aspects of an event

National Occupational Standards 2013	Source NOS
A1. Develop and agree the concept for an event	Events Management specific
A2. Research and agree the scope of an event	Events Management specific
A3. Manage risks to your organisation	CFAM&LBB1 – Manage risks to your organisation, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
A4. Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, ethical and social requirements	CFAM&LBB4 – Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, ethical and social requirements, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
A5. Identify, negotiate and secure a venue for an event	Events Management specific
A6. Identify and negotiate contracts for an	Events Management specific

National Occupational Standards 2013	Source NOS
event	
A7. Develop and extend critical and creative thinking skills	CCSDE19 Develop and extend critical and creative thinking skills, from the Creative and Cultural Skills suite of design NOS.
A8. Collaborate in a creative process	CCSDE22 Collaborate in a creative process, from the Creative and Cultural suite of design NOS.
A9. Clarify creative and production requirements	CCSTP24 Clarify creative and production requirements, from the Creative and Cultural suite of technical theatre and live performance NOS.

Key Role B: Manage the marketing and sales of an event

National Occupational Standards 2013	Source NOS
B1. Develop understanding of your markets and customers	CFAM&LFB1 – Develop understanding of your markets and customers from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
B2. Develop a strategy and plan for marketing campaigns or activities	CFAMAR23 – Develop a strategy and plan for marketing campaigns or activities, from the Skills CFA suite of marketing NOS.
B3. Use digital media in events	New NOS developed for Events Management
B4. Manage the product or service portfolio	CFAMAR22 – Manage the product or service portfolio , from the Skills CFA suite of marketing NOS.
B5. Obtain sponsorship/other sources of funding for an event	Events Management specific
B6. Plan your selling activities	CFAS5 – Plan your selling activities, from the Skills CFA suite of marketing and sales for non-specialists NOS.
B7. Plan and monitor the work of sales teams	CFAS9 – Plan and monitor the work of sales teams, from the Skills CFA suite of marketing and sales for non-specialists NOS.
B8. Sell products/services to customers	CFAS16 – Sell products and/or services to customers, from the Skills CFA suite of marketing and sales for non-specialists NOS.
B9. Negotiate sales of products/services	CFAS17 – Negotiate sales of products and/or services, from the Skills CFA suite of marketing and sales for non-specialists NOS.

Key Role C: Manage operations for an event

National Occupational Standards 2013	Source NOS
C1. Plan and implement a critical path for an event	Events Management specific
C2. Develop and implement policies and procedures for an event	Events Management specific

National Occupational Standards 2013	Source NOS
C3. Develop detailed plans for an event	Events Management specific
C4. Implement operational plans	CFAM&LFA2 – Implement operational plans, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
C5. Manage contracts for an event	Events Management specific
C6. Plan for the safety of people attending a spectator event	SKAC216 in the SkillsActive suite of Spectator Safety NOS.
C7. Manage physical resources	CFAM&LEB3 – Manage physical resources, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
C8. Oversee health, safety and security at events' sites	Events Management specific
C9. Manage the setup and breakdown of an event	Events Management specific
C10. Manage the running of an event	Events Management specific
C11. Ensure the safety of people attending a spectator event	SKAC217 in the Skills Active suite of Spectator Safety NOS.
C12. Use technology in events	New NOS developed for Events Management

Key Role D: Evaluate an event

National occupational standards 2013	Source NOS
D1. Evaluate and report on the impact of an event	Events Management Specific

Key Role E: Managing information

National occupational standards 2013	Source NOS
E1. Communicate information and knowledge	CFAM&LEC4 – Communicate information and knowledge, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
E2. Research information	CFABAD323 – Research information, from the Skills CFA suite of business and administration NOS.
E3. Collect and organise data	CFABAD321 – Collect and organise data, from the Skills CFA suite of business and administration NOS.
E4. Analyse and report data	CFABAD322 – Analyse and report data, from the Skills CFA suite of business and administration NOS.
E5. Manage and evaluate information	CFABAD122 – Manage and evaluate information

National occupational standards 2013	Source NOS
systems	systems, from the Skills CFA suite of business and administration NOS.
E6. Lead meetings to achieve objectives	CFAM&LDD6 – Lead meetings to achieve objectives, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.

Key Role F: Managing resources

National Occupational Standards 2013	Source NOS
F1. Develop and sustain productive working relationships with colleagues	CFAM&LDD1 – Develop and sustain productive working relationships with colleagues, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F2. Develop and sustain productive working relationships with stakeholders	CFAM&LDD2 – Develop and sustain productive working relationships with stakeholders, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F3. Manage customer service	CFAM&LFD3 – Manage customer service, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F4. Recruit, select and retain people	CFAM&LDA2 – Recruit, select and retain people, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F5. Manage people in non-standard contracts	New NOS developed for Events Management
F6. Provide leadership in your area of responsibility	CFAM&LBA2 – Provide leadership in your area of responsibility, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F7. Build teams	CFAM&LDB1 – Build teams, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F8. Manage peoples performance at work	CFAM&LDB4 – Manage peoples performance at work, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F9. Support individuals' learning and development	CFAM&LDC2 – Support individuals' learning and development, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F10. Allocate work to team members	CFAM&LDB2 – Allocate work to team members, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F11. Quality assure work in your team	CFAM&LDB3 – Quality assure work in your team, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.
F12. Monitor and solve customer service problems	CFACSC5 – Monitor and solve customer service problems, from the Skills CFA suite of customer service NOS.
F13. Develop and agree a business plan for an event	Events Management specific
F14. Manage budgets	CFAM&LEA4 – Manage budgets, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.

National Occupational Standards 2013	Source NOS
F15. Manage the use of financial resources	CFAM&LEA3 – Manage the use of financial resources, from the Skills CFA suite of Management and Leadership NOS.