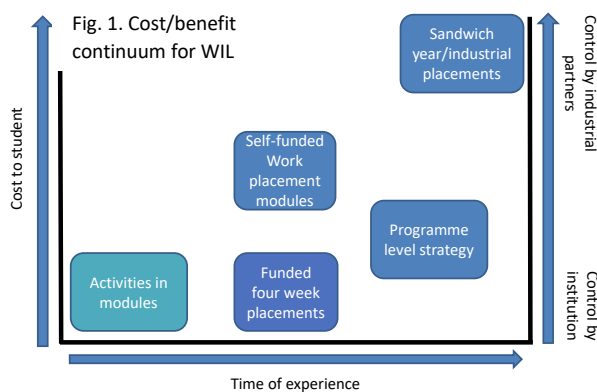


HUBS Workshop: Work-integrated learning: Enhancing graduate employability

The HUBS workshop on Work-integrated Learning (WIL) was hosted by Dr Laura Roberts and Dr Penny Neyland on 18th September 2019 at the Biosciences Department in Swansea University. The workshop focused on the three current predominant WIL strategies; module provisions and work-simulated learning, short four week credit bearing and volunteering placements opportunities and longer year-long industrial placements and we concluded with a session exploring potential mechanisms for solidifying employer-faculty relationships.



Presentations were from ecologists, zoologists, immunologists, environmental scientists, and plant biologists in addition to support from professional career developers and work-based learning providers. Guest speakers hailed from John Moore's Liverpool (Dr Hazel Nichols), Exeter (Dr Kelly Moyes) and Swansea University Biosciences (Dr Christopher Coates, Dr Penny Neyland, Dr Wendy Harris, Dr Laura Roberts) and Geography (Dr Rhian Meara) with attendees from a further two

Welsh Universities (Aberystwyth and Bangor). Throughout the day participants reflected on the value of WIL strategies and how to effectively incorporate a range of opportunities within the HE curriculum. While each strategy has clear advantages to the students, they exist on a continuum of costs and benefits in terms of time constraints, administration and resource allocations (Figure 1) and challenge academic innovations in curriculum development and faculty-employer relationships (Figure 2).

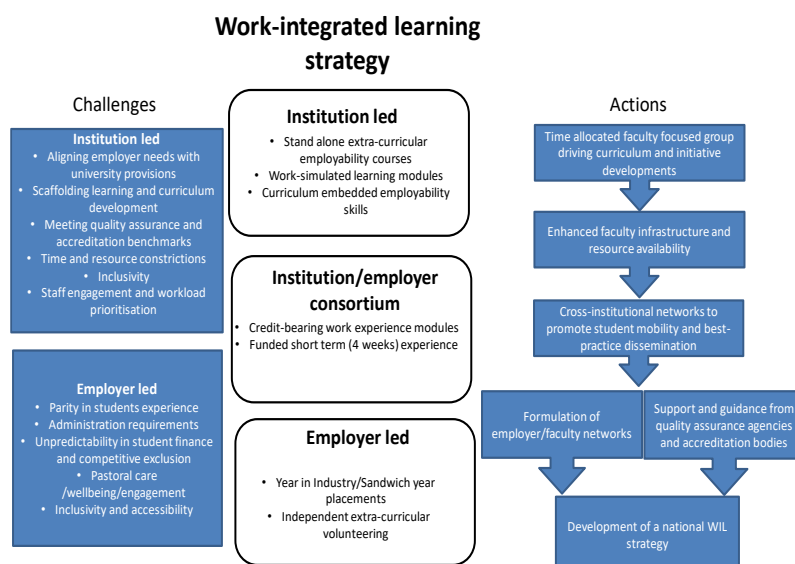


Fig. 2. Main WIL strength, current challenges and potential actions

engagement provided roadblocks to access and inclusivity. In the afternoon we analysed how changes to industrial placement funding has disadvantaged students in conservation and wildlife ecology and discussed innovative strategies such as developing Year in Research opportunities to overcome this. Finally we looked at forging long-standing bonds with employers in order to create curriculums that are employer-relevant and fit for enhancing graduate employability. The key findings of the workshop were that enhanced infrastructure on a local and national scale are essential to reduce the skills gap in Biosciences graduates and provide WIL opportunities to all students.