

# get ahead

supplying high level skills to smaller companies

Scoping the development of services  
for the region's smaller companies



Jeanne Booth  
For the East Midlands Universities Careers Task Group



# The HE Careers Services in the region

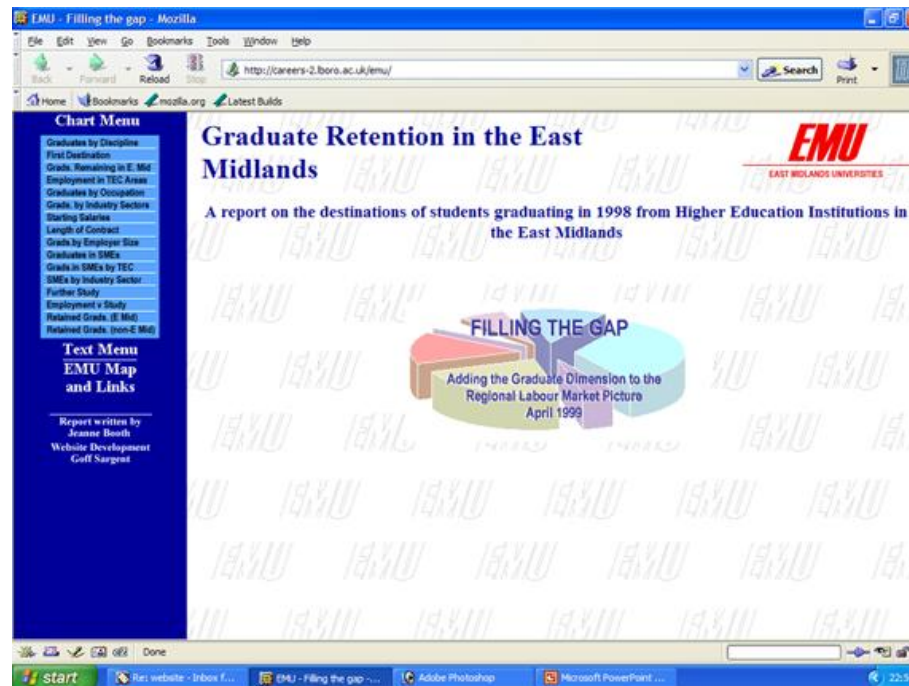
174,000 undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates

Handle multiple graduate vacancies from over 10,000 employer contacts annually



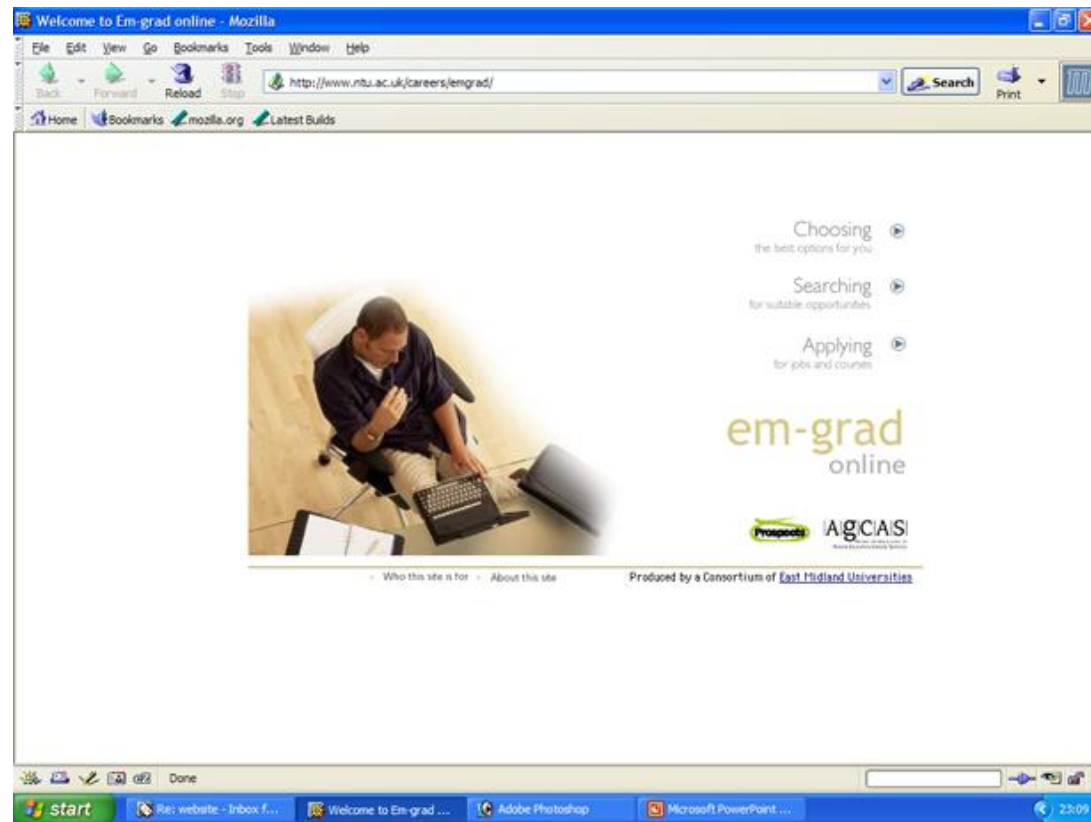
# EMU Report

<http://careers-2.lboro.ac.uk/emu>



# EM-grad online

[www.ntu.ac.uk/careers/emgrad](http://www.ntu.ac.uk/careers/emgrad)



## Reasons for Get Ahead Research

- § Value of collaborative action
- § Dominance of larger companies in graduate careers guidance
- § Involvement in widening participation
- § Lambert Review
- § Contributing to other regional research



## 98% of East Midlands Co.s are SMEs

Over two thirds are owner-managed with no employees

22% have 1 – 4 employees

Only 12% have more than 5 employees

SMEs account for 56.8% of employees and 54.2% of turnover



## *Do they need graduates?*

---

Approx 420,000 jobs require level 4 qualifications or above

450,000 individuals in the region have them

East Midlands has below average proportion of employees with high level skills

100,000 'graduate gap'



## *Catch 22*

---

Not enough graduate level vacancies mean people leave

Not enough graduates working in the region constrains ability of small companies to increase competitiveness and grow





## *SMEs in emda cluster programme*

---

- § Clothing & Textiles
- § High Performance Engineering
- § Health Care
- § Food and Drink
- § Creative Industries
- § Environmental Industries
- § Tourism and Cultural Sector
- § Community and Voluntary Sector



## Small companies and emda clusters

- § High level skills shortages asserted in all clusters
- § Need to change perceptions of industries
- § Some graduate engagement programmes in place
- § Concern about lack of recruitment skills
- § Practical employment issues, rules and regulations
- § Importance of work experience
- § Need to equip graduates to operate as suppliers rather than job-seekers

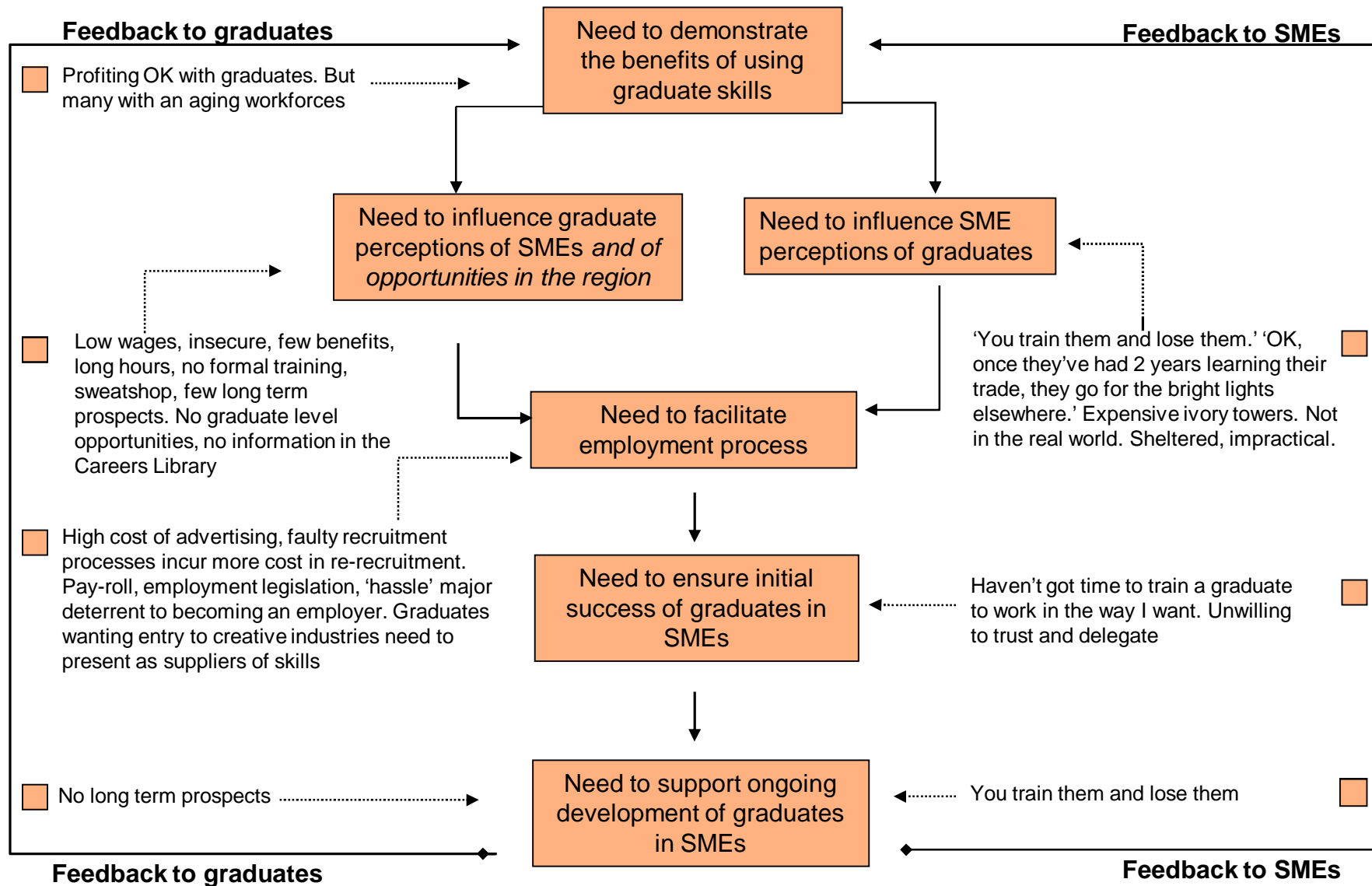


## Supplying skills at 'critical moments'

- § Most small companies want to grow but employment issues seen as significant obstacle
- § Most tended to recruit in response to demand – either new orders or high workload
- § 10% of companies with skills shortages don't do anything about them – just muddle through
- § Two in five employers in the region said they responded to recruitment difficulties by taking on less qualified, unskilled or less experienced staff



## Model on page 9 of report





Profiting OK with graduates. But many with aging workforce



Low wages, insecure, few benefits, long hours, no formal training, sweatshop, few long term prospects. No graduate level opportunities, no information in the Careers Library.



High cost of advertising, faulty recruitment processes incur more cost in re-recruitment. Pay-roll, employment legislation, 'hassle' major deterrent to becoming an employer. Graduates wanting entry to creative industries need to present as suppliers of skills.



No long term prospects





‘You train them and lose them.’ ‘OK, once they’ve had 2 years learning their trade, they go for the bright lights elsewhere.’ Expensive ivory towers. Not in the real world. Sheltered, impractical.



Haven't got time to train a graduate to work in the way I want. Unwilling to trust and delegate



You train them and lose them

## *Regional graduate services*

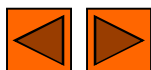
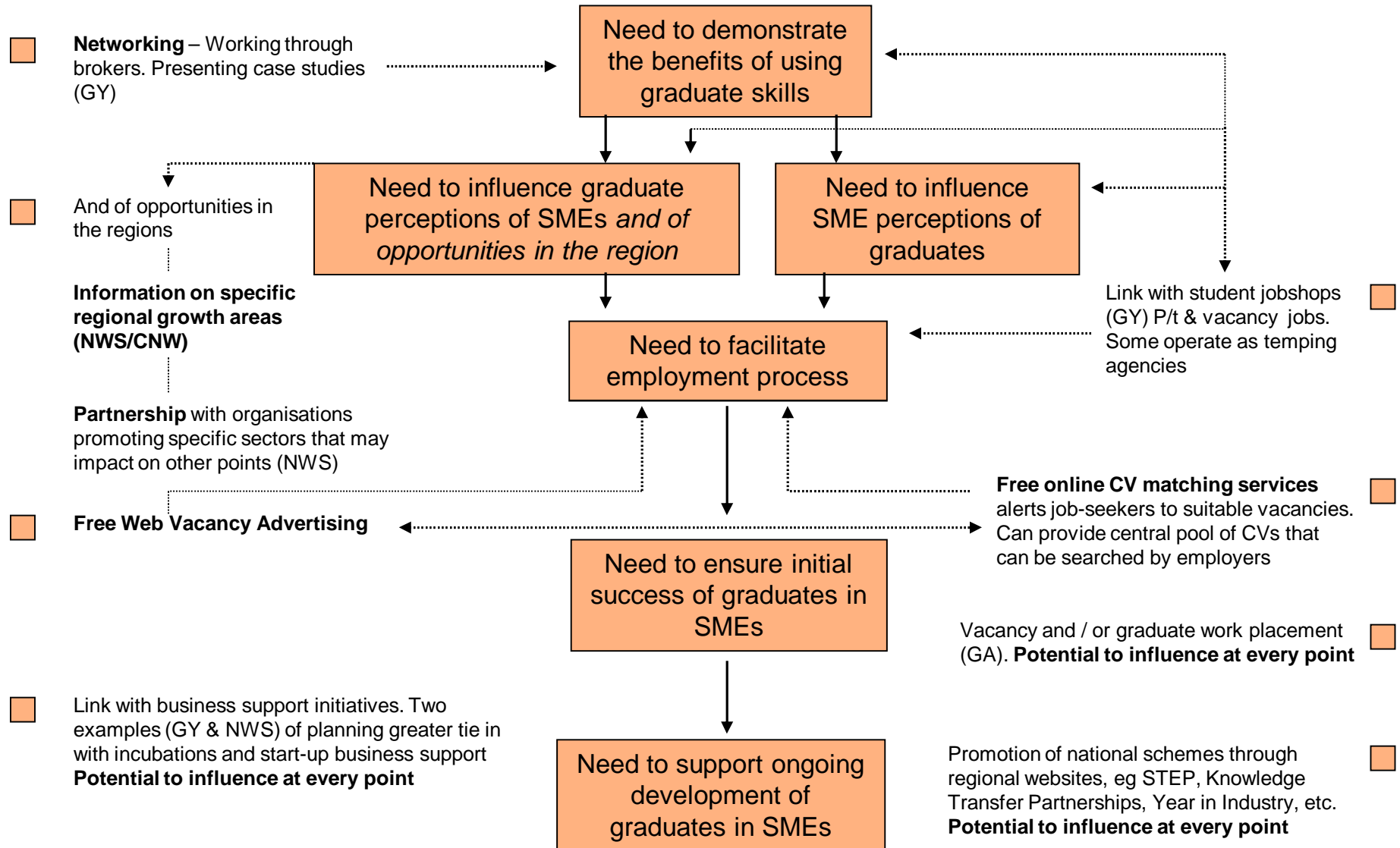
---

- § Graduate Vacancy Partnership
- § Graduates Yorkshire
- § Graduate Advantage
- § North-West Student and Graduate Online
- § Careers North-West

Outlines on pages 10-14 of report with costings, partners volume of activity and lessons



# Interventions at key points





**Networking** – Working through brokers.  
Presenting case studies (GY)



Link with student jobshops (GY) P/t & vacancy jobs. Some operate as temping agencies.



And of opportunities in the regions

**Information on specific regional growth areas (NWS/CNW)**

**Partnership** with organisations promoting specific sectors that may impact on other points (NWS)





# Free Web Vacancy Advertising



**Free online CV matching services** alerts job-seekers to suitable vacancies. Can provide central pool of CVs that can be searched by employers



Vacancy and / or graduate work placement  
(GA). **Potential to influence at every point**



Promotion of national schemes through regional websites, eg STEP, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, Year in Industry, etc.  
**Potential to influence at every point**



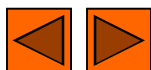
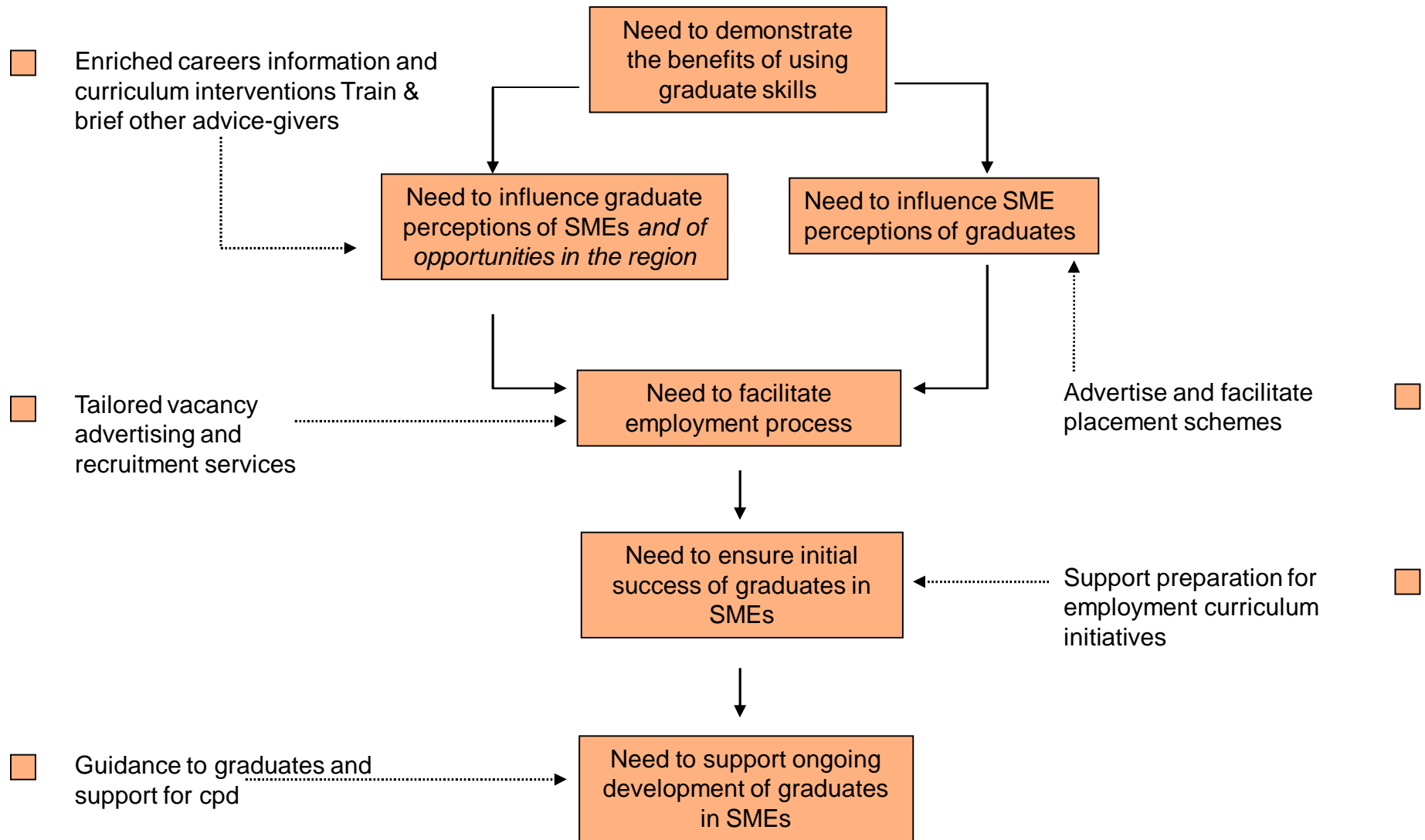
Link with business support initiatives. Two examples (GY & NWS) of planning greater tie in with incubations and start-up business support **Potential to influence at every point**

## Careers service resources

- § **Physical** – premises in every higher education institution
- § **Technical** – websites, vacancy handling systems & employer databases, systems to collect destination information
- § **Skills & knowledge** – guidance; collation & presentation of careers information; teaching & supporting teaching of careers education – generic & subject-based; preparation of candidates for recruitment & selection; know how to contact students & graduates; know where graduates go
- § **Infrastructure** – each service networked internally with students & tutors in different disciplines; strong regional & national network



# Career Service contribution to regional services





Enriched careers information and curriculum  
interventions Train & brief other advice-givers





Advertise and facilitate placement schemes



## Tailored vacancy advertising and recruitment services



## Support preparation for employment curriculum initiatives



## Guidance to graduates and support for cpd

## *Options for regional services*

---

1. Website to advertise regional vacancies online
2. Temping and recruitment services
3. Graduate labour market information
4. Professional development services for graduates in smaller companies
5. Providing 2-4 above under a strong single regional brand with multiple access points

(pages 23-25 in report)



## *Website for regional vacancies*

---

- § Free advertisement of immediate East Midlands vacancies
- § Vacancy alert
- § Marketing to generate vacancies additional to those already alerted to Careers services
- § Cost around £60K set-up and £60K annually to maintain and market



## *Regional temping & recruitment agency*

---

- § Gateway to access placement schemes, facilities of individual careers services & student jobshops
- § Commercial style temping agency providing cheap recruitment, immediate placement & pay-roll services
- § Costs £150K set-up, £3-400K annual running and aim to achieve self-sustaining income from range of sources within five years



## Graduate labour market information

- § Longitudinal studies of graduate career development in smaller companies
- § Cluster and sector information including opportunities arising out of regional initiatives
- § Website/briefings for young people, adults, graduates and advice-givers
- § Costs - £50K set-up, £100K annually





## Regional cpd services for graduates

- § Generic and sector based professional development programme – ‘East Midlands Graduate Development Programme’
- § Career coaching and guidance to graduates
- § Costs - £100K annually but potential to generate income from range of partners and private sector



## *Combination under strong single regional brand-multiple access points*

---

- § Regional gateway to placement schemes, facilities of individual careers services and student jobshops
- § Commercial style temping agency
- § Collection and dissemination of graduate labour market and careers information
- § Framework for East Midlands Graduate Development Programme including support for graduate entrepreneurs
- § Costs – 5 years pump-priming with stepped reduction in funding from £450K in year 1 to £100K in year 5



## Critical success factors

---

- § Up to date regional careers information and guidance
- § Practical, flexible, graduate recruitment mechanisms
- § Ongoing development of graduates in smaller companies
- § Greater collaboration of those working with business in different ways



*Get Ahead*

[jeanne@jeannebooth.co.uk](mailto:jeanne@jeannebooth.co.uk)

*Get Ahead – Supplying high level skills to smaller companies*

12/12/2009

