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Demand for Future Skills

“Analytical thinking, resilience, and self-awareness are among the top 10 skills for 2027.” – **World Economic Forum (2023)**

“85% of job success comes from soft skills, not technical knowledge.”
– **McKinsey & Company (2021)**

“Education must move beyond knowledge to empower students with agency and empathy.” – **UNESCO (2021)**

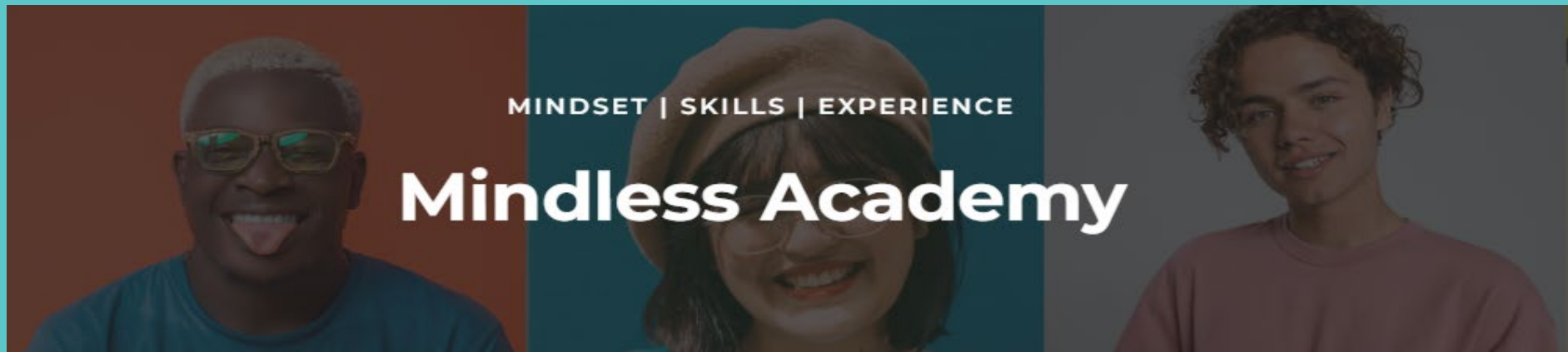
Mindless Academy Pilot 2024

Enhancing Employability and Personal Growth through Work-based learning

Bethany McGrath | Project lead and participant

Careers & Employability Adviser | Careers & Employability Service

Learning & Teaching Conference June 2025





Session Overview



Overview of the project



Highlight alignment with
Graduate Attributes



Share participant impact
and feedback



Lessons learned

History

2023-2024: “Virtual Internship”

4/8 students completed – many withdrawing due to demand of the programme. Feedback showed digital skill and confidence increase.

2024-2025: “Mindless Academy”

23/25 students and graduates completed – provided high level of feedback demonstrating significant increase in **digital skills, emotional intelligence, self-awareness and confidence.**

Partnering with Mindless Academy



Mindset

Learners develop resilience, self-awareness, and a growth-oriented mindset to navigate challenges and unlock their full potential.



Skills

Learners gain practical, future-focused skills that employers value, from leadership and communication to digital proficiency.



Experience

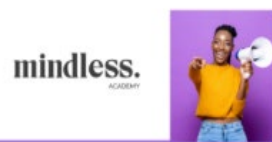
Learners build confidence and real-world expertise through immersive, hands-on projects linked to the United Nations SDGs.



Digital
Marketing



Social Media
Strategy



Business
Strategy



Generative
AI



Content
Writing



E-Commerce



Data
Analytics



Start-Ups

GROWTH MINDSET

MISTAKES
HELP ME LEARN

I IMPROVE
WITH PRACTICE

FEEDBACK
IS VALUABLE

IS THIS MY BEST
WORK?

I WON'T
GIVE UP



FIXED MINDSET

I KNOW
BEST

I'LL NEVER BE
THAT SMART

I WANT TO
AVOID MAKING
MISTAKES

THIS IS GOOD
ENOUGH

I GIVE UP





Graduate Attributes in Action

Attribute	Programme Link
Agile & Adaptable	Growth Mindset coaching
Collaborative & Networked	Group coaching, Forums + LinkedIn community
Critically Curious	Activities on self-awareness and wellbeing
Digitally Fluent	Courses in AI, Social Media, Data Analytics, etc.
Innovative & Creative	UN SDG-linked challenge briefs

Feedback & Impact

“The sessions and workbooks helped me **unlock my mindset**, boosting my confidence. I've learned to take time out for myself, **develop good habits, build resilience and feel proud of my achievements**. It has improved my data analytics skills and shown me career opportunities. Thank you Mindless Academy for **helping me become my best self.**”

Feedback & Impact

“This experience helped develop my **digital** marketing skills, **preparing me for post-graduation**. It has developed my **mindset** and **given me confidence** in my degree. The work experience **fitted in nicely with my studies** and didn't overwhelm me. I would greatly recommend Mindless Academy to anybody looking to improve their **professional skills and mindset.**”



28h • Edited •

+ Follow

I am an educator and have completed my PGCE from the University of Cumbria this July. I am very excited that I am exploring the virtual work experience in "Content writing" at Mindless Academy and I have already started paying much attention to the art of writing on social media. The "Content Writing" course begins with an introduction to this topic followed by mindset coaching, which highlights the significance of growth mindset and is fundamental to success. The mindless map introduces a very effective self-reflective tool which is called "The Wheel Of Wisdom". I am finding it very practical to use this tool, because it actually helps us to identify and maintain focus on our goals and aspirations. The technique of having a vision board and journaling the visual prompts also help to monitor time. The skills content has encouraged me to explore creative writing and I am totally amazed at the job opportunities "Content Writing" offers. I am very grateful to [Georgia Knell](#) and [Imogen Hawkes](#) for their continuous support, [Laurie Stewart](#) the founder of this unique academy and [Dekan Apajee](#) for the mindset coaching. You all are motivating us in our journey towards achievement of our goals. I am glad I got a spot in this course and am looking forward to do more creative writing.



HAPESAY Wildlife Media Student at the University of Cumbria

13m •

+ Follow

Hi, I'm Deem, I'm in my second year of the BA(Hons) Wildlife Media Course. I'm excited about my future career as a potential wildlife filmmaker of the future.

From joining Mindless Academy I hope to gain work experience so I can hopefully gain an insight into starting my own business. Through this, I wish to help nature and people reconnect and repair this broken world. Achieving this will bring happiness not just for myself but I know for many others as well.



24h • Edited •

Media Student

I'm Beth Dicken-Jones. I really want to immerse myself in the space of Wildlife Journalism. I'm studying at the University of Cumbria and I'm currently in Year 2. Brand positioning is more than just a logo, slogan or advertisement- it's about how a brand differentiates itself from competitors and remains top-of-mind for customers.

Mindless Academy



24h • Edited •

Media Student

Whoop whoop! I'm Beth Dicken-Jones and I'm being kicked off into the Mindless Academy's sphere of social media education! My favourite part of the mindset lesson was learning to develop a 'growth mindset' and being in the present moment. I need to practise making time just for myself sometimes.

University of Cumbria



24h • Edited •

Media Student

I strongly believe that any change that we are looking for needs to come from within and only willingly, because only then it survives. Lao Tzu, the great Chinese philosopher has highlighted the significance of watching our thoughts because they become our words which become our actions and these actions become our habits and only habits develop our character which eventually designs our destiny. Therefore watching our thoughts demands deep self-introspection! The technique of Watching our thoughts, Catching them and then engaging with content writing being my favourite aspect.

- Overcoming my linked beliefs
- Limiting belief: Writing on social media is a difficult task and I cannot do it
- Changed belief: I can start writing by first responding to a post and then posting a small paragraph and then try to write a blog
- Limiting belief: With my skills, it will be challenging to get a job as a content writer
- Changed belief: Nothing is impossible. My smaller steps will pave my way and materialize into a job opportunity.
- Limiting belief: It takes a lot of effort to exercise daily
- Changed belief: I can start at least with 10 minutes of "Surya Namaskars"

I believe this is a continuous journey and does not matter if it takes time to attain our goals, as long as we are sure we are heading in the right direction. I invite you to join me. If you feel inclined to share, post your own version of your own limiting beliefs and rewritten narratives. Heartfelt thanks to Mindless Academy, Imogen Hawkes, Georgia Knell, Laurie Stewart and Dekan Apajee for motivating me to identify and revise my limiting beliefs!



65 • Edited •


I am Faith Doris Bangura, a graduate from the University of Cumbria, United Kingdom, and Class of 2024. Completed my Masters, LL.M in International Business Law. It has been an amazing experience all through out. Reflecting on Mindless Academy's latest mindset coaching series as a part of the graduate series, had been about changing one's mindset and beliefs. One of my favorite parts was understanding what the wheel of wisdom typifies and how should it be navigated around in order to developing a self-mastery tool.

Life changes every day, even every minutes and seconds, therefore, it is important to develop a healthy lifestyle and routine.

Another favorite part of the skills content was understanding the essence of building and upholding people and culture, dynamics and strategies in fostering a healthy business productivity and the importance of the psychometric testing which plays a pivotal role in ensuring and determining cultural add and fit. Overcoming limiting beliefs and reframing one's mind is an ongoing journey, and one, I invite you to join me on! If you feel inclined to share, post your own version of your limiting beliefs and rewritten narratives.

For instance, thinking of not being capable and feeling incompetent for a particular task or position? change your mindset to believing that you are capable and you are a winner, no matter the outcome. Concluding with a take away from a famous Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu "Watch your thoughts, they become your words, watch your words, they become your actions, watch your actions, they become your habits, watch your habits, they become your character, watch your character, it becomes your destiny"

Mindless Academy University of Cumbria Laurie Stewart Georgia Knell Imogen Hawkes Dekan Apajee



15h • Edited •

Security Intelligence and Investigative Practice

Hi, I'm Connor, I'm a 2nd year studying BSc (Hons) in Security, Intelligence and Investigative Practice at the University of Cumbria. I am excited to start my experience at Mindless Academy, where I'll gain new skills, experience, and insights. I'm eager to make connections that will help me transition into the professional world and foster personal growth.

Looking forward to this journey! Laurie Stewart Georgia Knell Imogen Hawkes Dekan Apajee



12h • Edited •

Media Student

I'm an aspiring nature journalist from the University of Cumbria, my name is Beth Dicken-Jones. I am studying Wildlife Media at Brampton Road. Year 2 to be exact!

I have decided to venture onto the Mindless Academy's virtual work experience because of the opportunities into the industry I can create! I am excited to make connections with other people/businesses! Laurie Stewart Georgia Knell Imogen Hawkes Dekan Apajee I hope for a resilient sense of direction. I want this experience to take me into the world of journalism/social media. I hope to feel fully accomplished by the end!



25 • Edited •

Mathematics at University of Cumbria

I am currently pursuing a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in Secondary Mathematics at the University of Cumbria. I have found the sessions engaging, with content writing being my favourite aspect.

I am excited about the potential of utilizing AI for content writing, especially in mind mapping and collaborating on ideas. I look forward to learning and developing my skills further.

Laurie Stewart Georgia Knell Imogen Hawkes Dekan Apajee



14 • Edited •

Biomedical Sciences graduate with hospital experience looking to break...

Hi everyone! I am very excited to be joining as part of the Data Analytics course. My name is Olivia Bradley and I graduated from University of Cumbria in July 2024 with a BSc (Hons) in Biomedical Sciences. I am always looking for new ways to gain work experience and opportunities to learn, so this seems like the perfect opportunity for me!

I'm very excited to learn something new and to develop my current skillset - I particularly enjoyed the data analysis work I did as part of my degree, so I'm looking forward to delving into more of it as part of this experience. I'm looking forward to working with the team over the next month! Laurie Stewart Georgia Knell Imogen Hawkes Dekan Apajee



Director of Wild Les, Wildlife Media Student

13h • Edited •

Overcoming my Limiting Beliefs

After reflecting on's latest Mindset Coaching Session as a part of The Graduate Mindset series, I've been thinking about what limiting beliefs I often tell myself and how I can reframe the narrative

- I don't deserve to be here?
- I was given this opportunity and I'm going to make the best I can out of it and keep on making connections!
- Is there any point in trying? They don't care.
- People do care if they're trying to show it or not.
- Teamwork issues will plague me.
- One frustrating person on one project doesn't mean teamwork is never going to work.
- This isn't fair.
- I will advocate for myself.

Overcoming these limiting beliefs and reframing my mind is an ongoing journey, and one I invite you to join me on! If you feel inclined to share, post your own version of your limiting beliefs and rewritten narratives!



Undergraduate BSc (Hons) Security Intelligence and L

24m • Edited •

I'm absolutely loving my course with Mindless Academy! I'm diving into Data Analytics and learning how to unlock my potential. So far, I've explored the four key topics of data analytics and the diverse career opportunities in this field. I'm also developing a growth mindset and learning to stay present, which will benefit me during my time at the University of Cumbria and in my personal life. I'm excited about what comes next on this journey! Laurie Stewart Georgia Knell Imogen Hawkes Dekan Apajee



24h • Edited •

Media Student

I'm an aspiring wildlife journalist, my name is Beth Dicken-Jones. I am studying Wildlife Media at the University of Cumbria.

My favourite part of the Mindset content was learning hacks, such as habit stacking, to seamlessly meld one task into another and make it easy. My favourite part of the skills content was learning about the different calendar tools people use for scheduling posts. What is the key takeaway that you've learned

A key takeaway I've learned is that consistency is key to change anything!



23h • Edited •

"Optimism is essential to achievement and it is also the foundation of courage and true progress". - Nicholas M. Butler

Last weekend my husband and I hosted our son's 10th birthday party here in Germany and it was so wonderful to see the highly energetic group of boys and girls having so much fun together and never wanting to go back home. We were emotional because this is our last month in Germany as we are relocating to India for good. While we were winding up the party I got some time to engage in an interesting conversation with our son about how he was feeling while bidding goodbye to this beautiful community of people here. I was very impressed to know that he was very grateful towards his friends, teachers and the school for accepting him the way he is, for making him feel good about himself and for helping him be a curious learner. He said "I will be actually representing my learnings from this school through my approaches towards everything in my new school and in this way I will still be connected to my present school. Yes, I will miss my friends, but I hope to meet them again when I move abroad from India for higher studies". His optimistic approach and unique method of treasuring the beautiful memories changed my perception about bidding goodbyes.

By gracefully accepting our situation and being hopeful, we can enhance optimism which can actually help us make conscious choices towards achievement of our goals! Thanking Imogen Hawkes, Georgia Knell, Laurie Stewart and Dekan Apajee for inspiring me to post on LinkedIn

Engagement

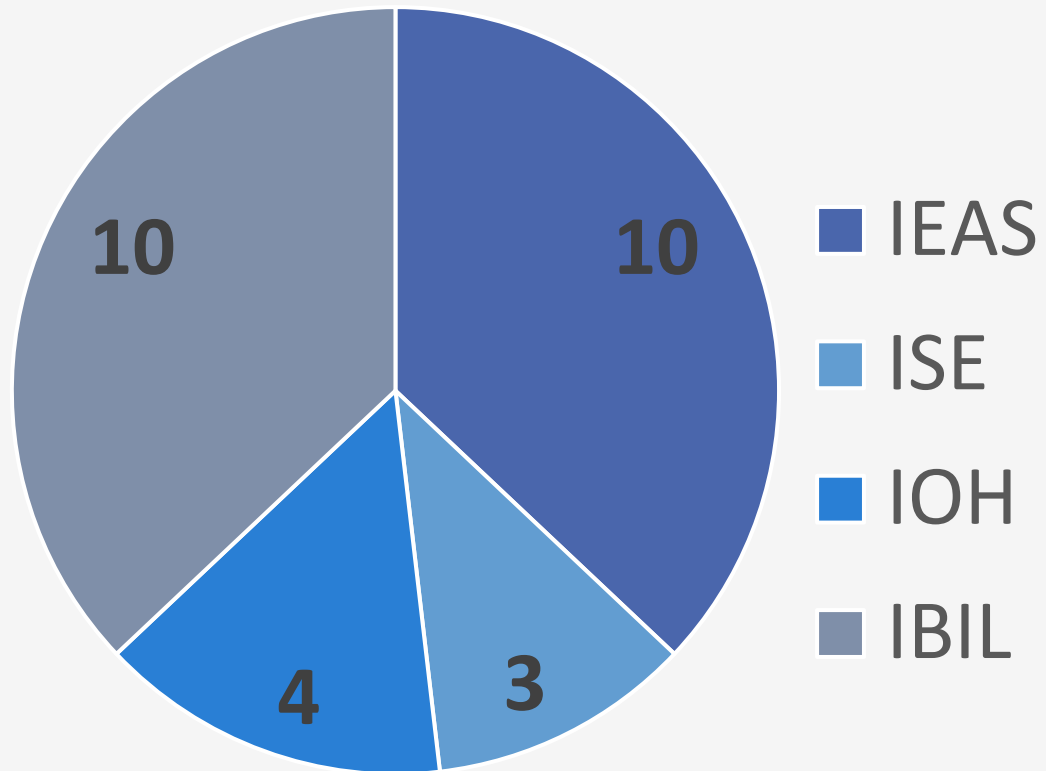
100% of students saw a **confidence** increase across each of our 3 core pillars; Mindset, Skills + Experience

96% of students said they would **recommend** the programme to a friend and/or peer

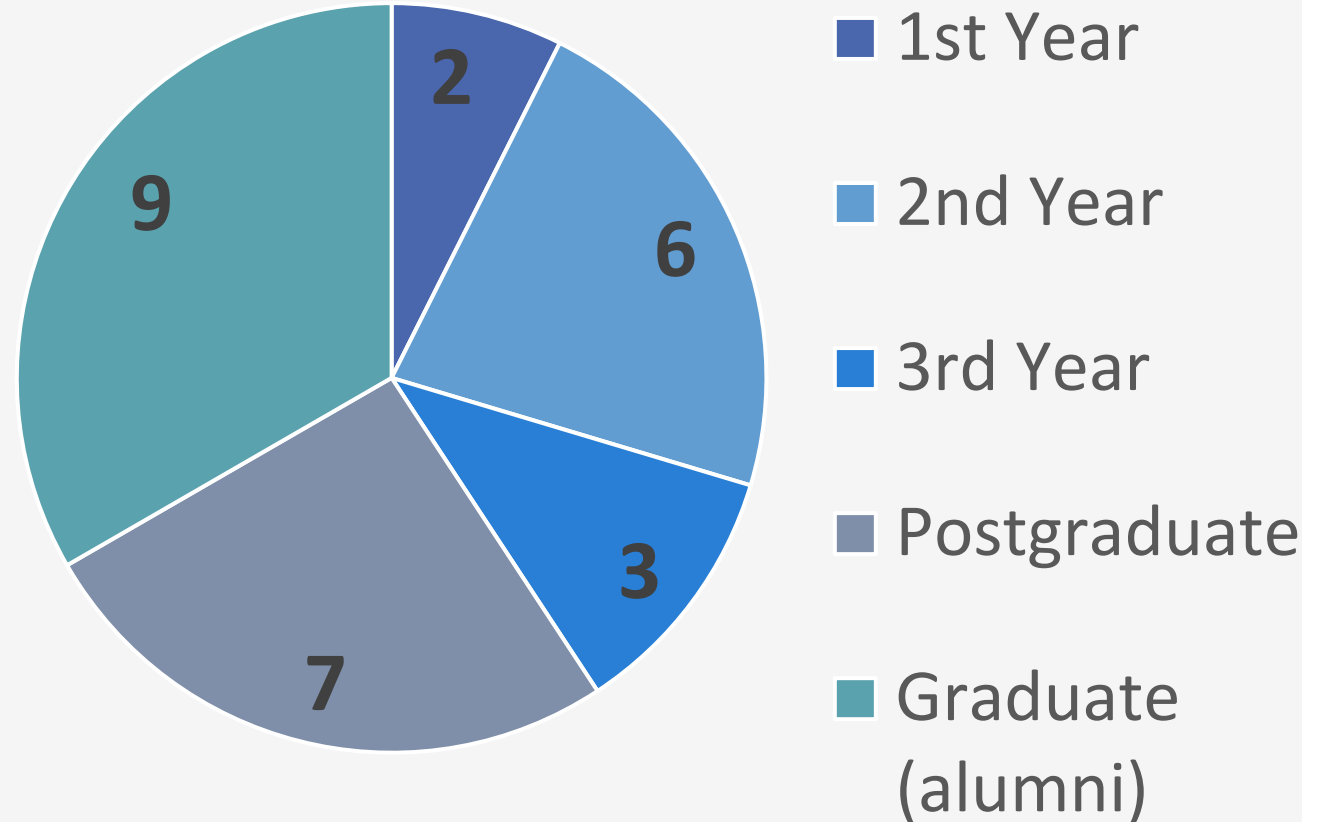
With all places filled within just over 2 weeks, a 96% completion rate and 5 participants enrolling in multiple programmes, engagement on this cohort was exceptional.

Demographics

Applicant by Institute



Applicant by level of study



EDI Demographics

45% Black and Asian Demographics

23% Declared a known disability

My Reflections as Project Lead

- High student engagement and ownership
- Positive external provider partnership
- Areas that worked well: accessibility, platform/content quality, timing
- Challenges:
 - Recruitment – not when not embedded into curriculum
 - Group feedback limitations
 - Limited “Work Experience”

Looking Ahead

Expansion goals:

Offer again with broader reach
Embed in curriculum or co-curricular activities
Build into value proposition

What we're looking for:

Academic partners
Student Service Advocates
Ideas for integration
Student Support via Linked-In





References

Core Influences of Mindless Academy:

Carol Dweck – *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2006)

Daniel Goleman – *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (1995)

Sir Ken Robinson – *Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education* (2015)

David Kolb – *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (1984)

World Economic Forum – *The Future of Jobs Report* (2023-2025)

https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_Report_2025.pdf

Additional References:

UNESCO – *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education* (2021)

McKinsey & Company – *Defining the skills citizens will need in the future world of work* (2021)

OECD – *The Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030* (2018)

Why “Mindless”?

The wording “Mindless” actually is intended to help students to become less Mindless and more Mindful – increasing awareness of students internal and external environments.

Programme Overview

Application – Simple “Why” Statement



4 weeks access to virtual platform (max 10 hours per week)



All students accessed Mindset materials + weekly group coaching



Choice of 8 Skill Pathways – Data Analytics, Gen AI etc



Finished with an “Experience” live brief for charity “Wilderness Project” related to their Skill



Whole programme was wrapped in community forums and Linked-In support

Why Statements

1. Career Advancement and Employability (17)
2. Skill Development and Learning (9)
3. Confidence and Personal Development (8)
4. Social Impact and Community (3)
5. Overcoming Personal Challenges (2)