Embedding employability in the Curriculum – Strategies to improve outcomes for university graduates

Sarah Richardson, ACER

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/sarah_richardson1/35/
http://graduateemployability.curtin.edu.au/

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Improving Learning

Australian Council for Educational Research
Embedding employability in the Curriculum – Strategies to improve outcomes for university graduates

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Ms Rose Knight (Australian Council for Educational Research)

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While all six drivers are important in shaping the landscape in which each skill emerges, the color-coding and placement here indicate which drivers have particular relevance to the development of each of the skills.

KEY
- Drivers—disruptive shifts that will reshape the workforce landscape
- Key skill needed in the future workforce

extreme longevity
Increasing global lifespans change the nature of careers and learning

Trans-disciplinarity

computational world
Massive increase in sensors and processing power make the world a programmable system

Design Mindset

superstructed organizations
Social technologies drive new forms of production and value creation

Virtual Collaboration

Sense-Making

Computational Thinking

rise of smart machines and systems
Workplace robotics nudge human workers out of role-repetitive tasks

New Media Literacy

New and Adaptive Thinking

Social Intelligence

Cross Cultural Competency

Cognitive Load Management

globally-connected world
Increased global interconnectivity puts diversity and adaptability at the center of organizational operations

new media ecology
New communication tools require new media literacies beyond text

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http://www.iftf.org/futureworkskills/
Who is responsible for employability?

Students

Employers

Institutions
"The great bulk of university academics, outside of ... fields with very clear intended career outcomes, know nothing at all about what graduate jobs exist in their fields of study ... nor about how to find those jobs.

Most have never worked outside of academia, and many have limited contacts with industry, and nor do they want to have any. They do not see it as part of their job to help students with their careers ... they do not want to "sacrifice" classroom time to talk about careers ...

The basic problem is that they don't have anything to say, and don't particularly want to have anything to say"
4 to 6 months after graduation

- Life Sciences: 20.2%
- Visual and performing arts: 20.8%
- Social Sciences: 24.1%
- Natural and Physical Sciences: 24.3%
- Languages: 25.6%
- Humanities: 30.0%
- Geology: 41.6%
- Computer Science: 43.7%
- Business Studies: 43.8%
- Nursing: 52.4%
- Electro/Comp Eng: 55.5%
- Mechanical Eng: 59.8%
- Civil Engineering: 64.8%
- Medicine: 75.0%

Percentage of Graduates 2013

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Percentage of Graduates 2013

- Life Sciences: 20.2% Full time, 46.6% Part time
- Visual and performing arts: 20.8% Full time, 50.3% Part time
- Social Sciences: 24.1% Full time, 47.3% Part time
- Natural and Physical Sciences: 24.3% Full time, 40.2% Part time
- Languages: 25.6% Full time, 42.9% Part time
- Humanities: 30.0% Full time, 42.9% Part time
- Geology: 41.6% Full time, 30.9% Part time
- Computer Science: 43.7% Full time, 24.5% Part time
- Business Studies: 43.8% Full time, 28.1% Part time
- Nursing: 52.4% Full time, 36.8% Part time
- Electro/Comp Eng: 55.5% Full time, 16.4% Part time
- Mechanical Eng: 59.8% Full time, 16.0% Part time
- Civil Engineering: 64.8% Full time, 13.6% Part time
- Medicine: 75.0% Full time, 10.4% Part time

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“Jobs are scarce and digital disruption is causing confusion.

Employability is not employment.

Employability is the collection of evidence - learning outcomes, experiences and knowledge - that enable a student to be fit for the purpose of employment”.
Data collection

Case studies - 23 graduates, 22 students, 13 academic leaders, 2 careers advisors

Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of education</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bio-science and medical science</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information technology / computer science</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual and performing arts</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications (professional and creative writing)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational therapy and other health disciplines</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Social Sciences</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other fields (less than 10 responses per field)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>415</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Council for Educational Research
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Graduate employability</th>
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- **Develop skills and knowledge**: Identify and develop discipline-specific and generic skills and knowledge.
- **Develop self**: Develop self awareness and self efficacy, and explore possible futures.
- **Develop career awareness**: Develop an informed awareness of possible careers and then find or create opportunities to gain experience in these/other contexts.
- **Interact with others**: Work with other people in multiple contexts, within and outside of study, to develop generic skills such as those in teamwork and communication.
- **Navigate the world of work**: Apply information relating to work and/or further study and establish goals to achieve these.
How well are institutions doing?

Percentage of students who referred to the employability categories (survey)

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<th>Employability categories (%)</th>
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</tr>
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<td>40</td>
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</tr>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>46</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating the world of work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Student strategies

- Advance knowledge through study: 27.0%
- Practice skills: 17.4%
- Undertake work experience: 10.7%
- Make contact with professionals: 4.3%
- Participate in professional development: 2.4%
- Engage in personal reflection: 2.0%
- Utilise university resources: 0.3%

Mentioned by students (per cent, rounded to one decimal point)
“While nearly at the end of my degree I still have very little confidence in techniques and skills that would be required for future work. I think more opportunities to practise what we learn is hugely important”

“Though the degree is providing the most basic requirements of this profession, it is lacking a teaching style that imitates one for the real world, thus it is not maximising the preparation required to work in the real world”

“It would be helpful to bring into the mix the ability to talk about career options and pathways. Like a coach who knows the options and knows how to navigate and who to connect with according to the pathway”
Graduate comments

“What is missing is enough time to empower individuals with generating a plan or seriously looking at options in a supportive environment”

“Where my degree ... failed, has been, sort of, relevance to the real world, in that people don’t draw the parallels for you so you don’t necessarily start drawing them yourself”

“You need, even personal skills, communication skills ... it’s more your networks and how you communicate and how you market yourself and use social media and all of that, as a package, to get work ... My university didn’t really offer any of those”
“We are not making [degrees] sufficiently pedagogically broad so that students have that range of attributes when they graduate”

“Moving from corporate life to entrepreneurship or even switching industry sectors requires particular skills, and the transferability of skills should be explored during degree programs”

“Universities have to work with two lenses at the same time ... to focus on the first job and make sure that students land in a job of graduate level when they leave ... and they also have to wear a second lens which says, “but we have to prepare you intellectually, and conceptually, and creatively for a career and a lifetime of different sorts of jobs”

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"Universities (and we’re not unique in this) have got themselves into this bind ... and I think we have an attendant responsibility to make sure ... the “talk we talk” can be met by students “walking the walk” in terms of jobs. And I think we can do that better ... unless we can do that, unless we can provide the training, they’re going to stop paying the fees”

“Universities are a critically important part of a strong innovation system. This is a consequence of our research capability and achievements as well as the quality of our graduates. For this reason, we must, as a sector, do all that we can to ensure the employability of our graduates in order to provide the skills base that will underpin our future economic and social prosperity”
http://graduateemployability.curtin.edu.au/

DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY

Enhancing student employability

This website brings together resources for the development of employability in higher education. These can help prepare your students for their future work and career.

The site is a living document and we welcome your input, resources and comments.

DISCOVER THE TOOLKIT

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Free tools and resources

Develop skills and knowledge

- Career action plan [PDF 130KB]
- Employability skills [PDF 140KB]
- Entrepreneurial skills [PDF 127KB]
- Interview preparation [PDF 135KB]
- Tile Tool: Speed dating [PDF 173KB]

Develop self

- Maintain Balanced Work and Life Roles [PDF 137KB]
- Positive self talk [PDF 155KB]
- Constructing careers [PDF 156KB]
- Tile Tool: 3 Personas [PDF 156KB]
- Tile Tool: 4 Finding your mission [PDF 267KB]
Institutions need to

- embed and resource employability as a key institutional strategy
- engage expertise of careers advisors and professionals at program and course level
- ensure that program delivery reflects professional practice
- enable support for educators to become industry-aware
- students explore and apply knowledge relating to self and career
- authentic learning experiences incorporate critical reflection
- ensure that emerging capabilities are evidenced
- develop post-graduation support

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Thank you

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