

UNDERSTANDING HOW INDUSTRY CONCEPTUALISES A VALUABLE SCIENCE GRADUATE

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BACKGROUND

The Australian Government consistently incentivises increasing the STEM capabilities of our workforce, with the recent Job-Ready Graduates Package illustrating this (Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2021). However, science graduates struggle to find employment post-graduation, while industry struggles to recruit sufficiently skilled science graduates (Deloitte Access Economics, 2014). It appears universities may be insufficiently preparing science graduates for the workforce.

AIMS

In this study, we explore the idea that miscommunication between universities and industry may contribute to the “problem” of science graduate “job-readiness”. Does industry truly understand what they want from science graduates? Can they clearly articulate it?

DESIGN AND METHODS

This study asks science industry employers about their conceptions of graduates who thrive in their workplace. We ask them to describe this graduate’s qualities and capabilities and explain how they demonstrate value to employers.

RESULTS

The results reveal surprising conceptions of “job-ready” and “industry-valuable” graduates, across a range of science industry contexts. The results also suggest ways universities can better prepare graduates to demonstrate their value to employers.

CONCLUSIONS

In this interactive session, we will examine how our conceptions compare with the results from industry perceptions. We will discuss the current terminology of “job-readiness” and consider ways we can improve industry-university collaboration around “industry-valuable” graduates.

REFERENCES

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