

EXPLORING GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY FOR MONASH SCIENCE

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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Employers have long criticised the ability of graduates to contribute effectively to the workplace. The skills cited by employers as being lacking in recent graduates (e.g., problem solving, numeracy, communication, team working and leadership skills and commercial awareness) are often referred to as generic skills. Most academics would argue that development of these skills are embedded within university degree programmes. This suggests a mismatch between what universities perceive they are providing to students and what skills graduates demonstrate to employers.

PURPOSE

This research explored the skills needed by recent graduates to meet the needs of their employers and investigate how these can best be inculcated into the Monash undergraduate science study programmes. This paper discusses these aims with a particular focus on research design along with presenting some initial analysis of the data collected so far.

PARTICIPANTS

Second and third year undergraduate students and recent graduates from the Faculty of Science at Monash University, and employers of the Monash science graduates.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was guided by social constructivist paradigm. We took a mixed-methods approach with a view that a more complete picture of human behaviour and experience can be constructed by using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods within a research study.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Both quantitative and qualitative data are being collected from three groups of participants through online questionnaires designed using Google form. Quantitative data will be analysed using SPSS while NVivo will be used to analyse qualitative data.

FINDINGS

Given that this research is ongoing, we can only discuss our anticipated results and conclusions. We anticipate possible gaps between undergraduates' views on their current skills and preparedness for work and graduates' and employers' views on the skills and knowledge used by recent graduates in the workplace.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the gaps identified, we will develop an intervention for Monash science undergraduate students with the aim of enhancing graduates' employability in science-based sectors and beyond.

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