Australian Collaborative Education Network (NSW/ACT) Forum

Strengthening University Business Partnerships

Nick Minto, Senior Policy Adviser – Employment, Education and Training, NSW Business Chamber
Why is it important to be part of the Alliance?

- Work ready graduates – meeting labour market and business needs
- Boosting post-study employment outcomes
- Benefits of experiential learning
- One of many approaches needed to lift productivity and drive international competitiveness
- Broader benefits associated with business university partnerships
Productivity agenda

Productivity is the key long-run driver of income growth and its role will be crucial in the coming decade.
As noted in previous Budget Papers, ‘a more highly educated workforce is likely to be more productive and better able to adapt to changing circumstances’, something which ‘requires not only increasing the number of people with higher level qualifications but also ensuring that all Australians have strong foundation skills’
Graduate employability skills

- Graduate Careers Australia survey of employers
- ‘poor or inappropriate academic qualifications or results’ consistently ranks fairly low as an issue in graduate hiring
- The biggest issues for employers are interpersonal and communication skills, attitude and work ethic, and motivation.
- In 2011, around a quarter of employers reported that they would have recruited more graduates had a larger number of better candidates been available.
Figure 25: Rates of professional and managerial employment by bachelor degree, 2011

Note: Excludes graduates not in work and graduates currently enrolled in education.
Source: Grattan calculations from 2011 Census using ABS TableBuilder
WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

Developing the workforce of the future
Employers participating in work-integrated learning programs find the benefits far exceed the investment.

Work-integrated learning will provide opportunities for many external partners to apply the theory and skills they learn at university to a workplace. Our students
see the experience is invaluable and play an important role in their preparation for the workplace.
The employers are engaged beyond the classic internships, providing them with a broad and demonstrable value to workplace in small, medium and large businesses.

Key benefits of WIL for employers

- Recruitment pathway
- Flexible access
- Partnership with Universities
- Workplace-ready graduates
- Return on investment
- Fresh ideas and approaches

Pitching in
WIL student lightens the load at Lovedale Long Lunch

The Lovedale Long Lunch has become synonymous with the celebration of food, wine and music in the Hunter Valley. In 2012, a new addition, Lovedale Decade, joined the celebrations for a weekend of food, wine and music. The Lovedale Decade was

The University of Newcastle Business School student Sarah

"Sarah's survey contributed to our knowledge and thinking around how we promote the event."

Tanya Newall, Business Development Manager

Pitching in - WIL student lightens the load at Lovedale Long Lunch

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Benefits for employers

- The ability to set up or test a new project;
- Having a dedicated person to complete specific tasks or projects;
- The opportunity to give a potential recruit a trial without obligation;
- Having a pool of potential recruits with some general awareness of workplace culture;
- An injection of new ideas;
- Developing links with higher education institutions and feeding into teaching practices and methodologies; and
- Staff development opportunities that arise from employees mentoring students.
Industry Research Collaboration Roundtable
February 2014

- Australia ranks 11th in world for innovation input but 32nd for output

- Recommendation for greater industry collaboration with universities on WIL
“School leavers and graduates need to be equipped with the right tools to adapt to the workplace”

“For too long the higher education system has focused on theoretical learning with an insufficient number of courses incorporating practical elements before a student commences work.”
Assumptions and challenges

- Need for empirical evidence base for the impact of WIL on students’ preparedness for work or professional practice across multiple disciplines – funding implications

- Universities should be aware and responsive to industries’ changing needs.

- Importance of designing WIL as an integral and integrated part of the curriculum, rather than as a ‘bolt on’ experience
Assumptions and challenges

• Chambers have committed to doing more to engage members

• Potential for greater SME participation

• Monitoring and evaluation of WIL promotional activities

• How to make it easy for employers to engage? Single points of contact. Effectively communicating the benefits

• Expanding WIL to non-traditional areas – e.g. Humanities and Social Sciences
Equity and opportunity

Figure 6: Low SES commencing domestic undergraduate students, 2001-2012

Source: DIICCSRTE (2013d)
Equity and opportunity

• Improving student work readiness through WIL, internships and industry scholarships has benefits re equity and opportunity

• Particularly important for those:
  – Least able to access study related work opportunities
  – Lacking well established family and social networks
  – With limited access to networks that provide referrals and references for jobs
Equity and opportunity

Australia has a high degree of performance inequality, higher than the OECD average.

Countries that have high educational outcomes tend to also have low levels of performance inequality.
Equity and opportunity

Destinations of Year 12 completers, NSW, 2013 by SES

[Bar chart showing the distribution of Year 12 completers across different SES groups and their destinations, including NILFET, Looking for work, P/T Work, F/T Work, Traineeship, Apprenticeship, VET Cert I-III, VET Cert IV+, Bachelor degree.]
Internships, Vocational Placements & Unpaid Work

Employers are often approached by interested people (such as students) hoping to gain industry experience to aid them in their own career path. Sometimes unpaid work arrangements are entered into.

A common issue that can arise in these arrangements is whether or not an employment relationship has actually been created.

It’s important to note that exclusion from coverage under the FW Act does not limit any obligations that may arise under other legislation, including workers compensation laws, OH&S, discrimination and other relevant laws.

Work experience & internships
Unpaid work experience placements and internships that
Next Steps

IT'S TIME TO
GET A JOB...
NOW WHAT?!

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE
FOR GRADUATES

SOME SKILLS EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR...

COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION!
Talk professionally and directly.

Correct grammar and sentence structure in your CV.

Any writing exercises you may be asked to do.

This is your weakness: get help. There are plenty of skill development programs available.

ER SKILLS

Not just Google! Brush up on Microsoft Outlook, Excel, and Word.