


AIMS



COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS
Undertake a comprehensive analysis of the broad experiences of Australian postgraduate coursework students.



EVIDENCE-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS
Establish evidence-based recommendations that can be used to impact and enhance Australia's postgraduate students' broad experiences.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- Facilitated seven engagement breakfasts across Australia hosting 223 postgraduate students;
- Conducted interviews and focus groups with 96 postgraduate students across each state and territory in Australia;
- Conducted interviews and focus groups with 47 higher education personnel across each state and territory in Australia;
- Presented at 6 conferences and meetings, including the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations Annual General Meeting.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Breakfasts	29			69	28	32	31	34	223
Interviews	5	9	5	4	6	5	6	4	44
Focus Groups	5	5	6	2	5	5	5	5	38
				3		2		2	3
		9	15	30					58
Total	5	9	5	7	6	5	6	4	47
	34	14	21	101	33	39	36	41	319

n = number of staff
n = number of students

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

- WEBSITE**
Development of a website incorporating project findings.
- NETWORKING EVENTS**
Highlighting the overall project and recommendations for good practice.
- FINAL REPORT**
Highlighting the overall project and recommendations for good practice.
- SYMPOSIUM**
A national postgraduate student experience symposium attended by 100 delegates.
- GOOD PRACTICE GUIDES**
To assist universities and academics to enhance the flexibility and suitability of the postgraduate student experience.
- CASE STUDIES**
As evidence-based examples of how universities can meet the demands of a diverse postgraduate student population.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

DIVERSITY & PROFILING FINDING
Data suggests that there are six profiles of postgraduate coursework students, these include: those who progressed immediately from undergraduate studies; those who are employed and see their coursework degree as contributing to a clear perceived career trajectory; those who undertake coursework studies to change their career path; those who are unable to obtain employment within their field and are still deciding what to do; those where coursework is required in order to reach professional goals and; those who complete the studies purely out of interest.

TIERING & BELONGING
The sheer diversity of the postgraduate cohort leads to a difference in perceptions of 'belonging'. Postgraduate students referred to such key activities as 'networking', and 'community' as integral to their student experience.

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE
Postgraduate students appear to have similar needs to undergraduate students with respect to first year experience. Both staff and students believe that first-year supports require improvement.

ALL DIFFERENCES
Results suggest that postgraduate needs differ depending upon student demographics. Factors such as international/domestic, metropolitan/regional, coursework/research, online/face-to-face appear to impact the student experience and services required from universities.

STUDENT SERVICES
Due to the sheer diversity of the postgraduate cohort, universities are still grappling with the student support and learning services that this cohort requires.

EMPLOYABILITY
Only 14 per cent (7 people) who expressed an opinion (51 people) among interviewed postgraduate students and university staff (82 people across Australia) are optimistic that postgraduates will secure related careers upon graduation. 51 per cent are pessimistic and the others neutral. Furthermore, 61 per cent (of the 71 people who expressed an opinion) believe that Australian universities need to improve postgraduate employability supports. The majority of recommendations to enhance employability (37 per cent) related to the provision of work opportunities whilst studying (embedded in curriculum and/or supported work experience and internships).

www.PostGraduateStudentExperience.com



Supported by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.