Empowering International Students to Prepare for their Working Life - Through an Informed Career Framework

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Abstract:

The paper draws on research of 110 international fee-paying students studying Science and Engineering courses in the Schools, Vocational Education and Training, and Higher Education sectors in nine institutions in five Australian states and territories. The research identified that 68 percent of the sample had not had career advice before coming to Australia. This has implications for students' understandings of Australian education and training, especially entry procedures into courses and the students' likely success in undertaking courses of study. When onshore in Australia 58 percent of the sample had sought careers advice. Males more than females, were more likely to seek such advice from their institution. Of those accessing careers advice 21 percent indicated that there was room for improvement of service provision. Research by the students into the recognition of their Australian course in their home country was undertaken by 53 percent of the sample.

Issues associated with existing career provision are discussed and mapped against the draft Australian Blueprint for Career Development strands of Personal Management, Learning and Work Exploration, and Career Building. There are implications for staff working in admissions, marketing, international and careers offices as well as those professional bodies that support existing career provision. The findings also have implications for students and the way they develop their career management skills to avail themselves of appropriate programs. The paper explores how students can best be empowered to take responsibility for their career planning.

Key Words:

International students, careers, career pathways, Australian Blueprint of Career Development, Australian education and training

Introduction:

The numbers of international fee-paying students studying in Australia over the last two decades of the twentieth century grew considerably so that by 2005 there were 344,815 (Australian Education International, 2006) international enrolments (Figure 1). Australia is now positioned behind the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) in terms of the number of international fee-paying (these are full fee-paying students as distinct from those that are exchange students) studying in the English speaking world. The increase of students travelling out of their own country to access education was examined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for higher education students (OECD - Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 2004) and involved a study of 37 countries (both member and non - members). Inevitably there are issues associated with comparing enrolment data between countries. When comparable data is available it usually relates only to that for higher education students.

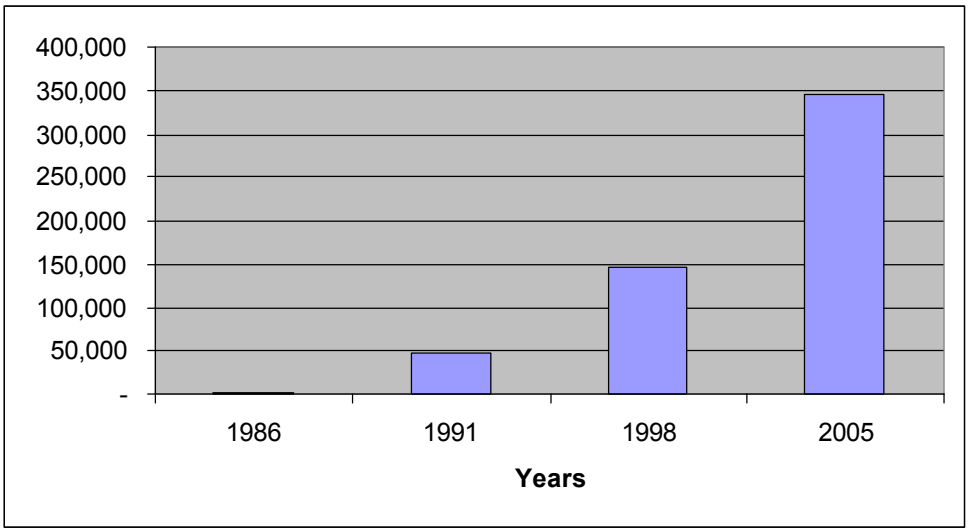

Figure 1. International Fee-Paying Enrolments Studying in Australia 1986 - 2005
Source: (Australian Education International, 2006)

International students studying in Australia can be found studying at all levels of the education and training system or sectors (Schools, Vocational Education and Training or VET, English language intensive courses for overseas students or ELICOS, Higher Education, and other courses – usually preparatory courses leading into undergraduate programs, Foundation Studies is the most common). Over time the proportion studying in the Higher Education sector has become increasingly more important (Table 1). The data has been collected by Australian Education International (AEI) and its predecessor, the Australian Education International Foundation almost since the inception of the international fee-paying program. The quality of the data has improved significantly since 2002 when a database called Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) linked to the issuing of student visas was established. Prior to this time the data was gathered from a variety of sources, including educational institutions themselves and there were both definitional and reliability issues. From 2002 an 'other' category was introduced to cover non-award courses (Table 1), prior to this some of these students would have been counted in Higher Education or ELICOS.

Table 1. International Fee-Paying Students by Sector 1994 Compared with 2005

Sector	1994 %	2005 %
School	14	7.4
VET	21	19.2
ELICOS	28	18.8
Higher Education	37	47.5
Foundation Studies/ Non Award	-	7.1

Source: (Australian Education International, 2006)

At the commencement of the study the Science and Engineering field of study as classified by Australian Education International (a division of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training or DEST), included Anatomy, Biochemistry, Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geology, Home Economics, Human Movement, Information Systems, Mathematics, Microbiology, Nautical Science, Physics, Sports Science, Statistics, and Zoology. Engineering was defined by AEI as a course of study in Aeronautical, Chemical, Civil, Electrical, Electronics, Industrial, Marine and Mechanical Engineering. The field also included Cartography, Metallurgy and Surveying. The classification of the Fields of Study changed in 2001 and gave way to Fields of Education. Information Systems and Computing became a separate field while before it was incorporated into Science.

The proportion of students studying in the Science and Engineering Fields varies considerably between Australia, the USA and the UK (Table 2). Both Engineering and Science are more prominent in the USA data and Computer Science and Information Technology are more important in the Australian international student data based on the most recent comparable data from the USA, UK and Australia in 2003 – 2004.

Table 2 reflects the trend for top international Engineering or Science students to choose the USA first and the UK or Australia second in making their destination selection, while the numbers of international students studying courses in Science and/or Engineering appears not to have quite grown at the same rate as some other fields of study in Australia. Currently "One in four (26.9%) enrolments is in the field of Business Administration, Management [with this] field [having] experienced good enrolment growth over 2004, [of] 12.0%"(Australian Education International, 2006).

Table 2. Science and Engineering Fields of Study Compared to the USA and UK by Proportion of Total Higher Education Enrolment 2003- 2004

Field of Study	Australia %	USA %	UK %
Computer Science & IT	17	12	15
Engineering	11	17	9
Science	2	8	2

Source: (Australian Education International, 2004b), (British Council, 2005), (Institute of International Education, 2004)

Increasingly over the last decade Australian education institutions have established overseas branch campuses offshore or entered into arrangements with local providers to deliver courses or parts of programs.

Purpose of the Study

The study was undertaken at a time when the OECD conducted two major studies into career education (OECD, 2004) and transnational education (OECD - Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 2004) among its members. The commencement of this study pre-dates both OECD reports. The study examines the connection between course and career intentions of international fee-paying students by examining students undertaking courses in the subject fields of Science and Engineering. The term *career pathway* is used as a metaphor to describe movement of students through various sectors of the education and training system. Such movement can be through sequential levels or by sectors. Others such as Keating (1994), Robinson (2004) and Raffe (1993) have discussed various aspects of the term and the implications for students progressing from their course to a career outcome. Only a limited amount of work has been undertaken in examining international students and pathways in Australia. Australian Education International (2005) prepared by AEI is one tentative paper in this area. Harris et al., (2005) have examined the wider student population and conclude that the flows to VET are greater than that from VET to Higher Education.

A variety of careers terminology can be used including careers counselling, career guidance, and career development. For some students careers development is linked with the process of gaining course advice. McMahon and Tatham (2002, p. 3) point to the change in the nature of our understanding of career over time as "increasingly broadened from a term that is synonymous with occupation or job, to one that represents the configuration of all facets and roles of an individual's life".

There were four objectives of the study examining: the factors impacting on the successful completion of a course, what a career pathway into Science and Engineering means for an international fee-paying student, determining if course entry level procedures are appropriate to maximise a students' chances of a successful course completion and determining how international students progress through the various sectors of the Australian education and training system.

Methods:

A participatory methodology Wadsworth (1998) for the study was adopted. To this end support from the study was obtained from the National Liaison Council for Overseas Students (NLC) and approaches were made to eight professional bodies related to the fields of study of Science and Engineering (the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers; the Institute of Engineers; the Australian Computer Society; the Australian Mathematical Society; the Australian Institute of Biology; the Australian Institute of Physics; the Australian Society of Microbiology and the Royal Australian Chemical Institute) to comment on a draft questionnaire and suggest institutions to be approached to distribute the questionnaire.

A survey instrument was also developed taking account of the intended audience, whose first language was not necessarily English. The approach adopted was one of 'tick a box' to minimise the need for extended written responses. There were 40 items but the majority of students only needed to respond to 30 of these. The instrument was trialled with students from each sector and also given to a range of professionals to comment on in terms of careers, education concepts, language and cross-cultural understandings (Table 3). The bases of these conversations were associated with what Lent and Worthington (2000) describe as "cultural validity" (p. 382) and Leong (2002) refers to as "universalist", "assimilation" and "cultural accommodation approaches" (p. 282). The international student advisors involved in the trialling were members of the International Student Advisors Network Australia – Tasmanian branch. Fourteen institutions registered to enrol international fee-paying students on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) were approached to participate. Subsequently seven responded positively. No completed questionnaires were received from one of these while one (an Education Department) had multiple sites (schools) which participated.

Table 3. Trialling of Survey Instrument

Sector	Who	Focus
Secondary	Two international student advisors from different institutions	Language Cross - cultural responses Educational concepts
	Secondary careers practitioner	Careers
VET	Five international student advisors from different institutions	Language Cross - cultural responses Educational concepts
Higher Education	Two international student advisors from different institutions	Language Cross - cultural responses Educational concepts
	Tertiary careers practitioner	Careers
General	Teacher with English as a second language teaching background	Language
Professional Bodies	Contact was made with eight institutes or associations	Subject content

One higher education institution required the questionnaire to be distributed electronically (a slight modification was made to the instrument to accommodate this request). For the other institutions involved batches of printed questionnaires and reply paid envelopes were sent to the institutions for distribution. A desirable sample profile was discussed with a contact at each institution. The instrument was completed at nine institutions (Table 4) which covered the various sectors of Australian education and training. The responses were greater from both the Schools and Higher Education sector. While the response rate was below what was expected from the VET sector, a number of the higher education respondents (20) making a total of 20 percent had also attended Australian institutions in this sector. No specific ELICOS institutions were involved in distributing the instrument but 13 students had previously attended courses at such institutions or in this sector as part of Foundation Studies programs. Part of the sample (12) had previously completed an Australian qualification offshore before attending their current institution.

Table 4. Questionnaire Responses by Institutions

Sector	Institutions	Batch	Response	Sector Response
SCHOOL				**24**
	Education Department	1		
	School 1		3	
	School 2		6	
	School 3		1	
	School 4		14	
	School 5		0	

VET				**2**
	VET 1	6	0	
	VET 2	7	2	
Higher Education				**84**
	HE 1	4	2	
	HE 2	5	29	
	HE 3	3	22	
	HE 4	2	31	
Total				**110**

Questionnaires were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the subsequent data examined using Chi-square tests. Issues arose because of the sample size and the number of responses on some questions being < 5, some aggregation of data was undertaken to resolve this. There was an analysis of data through cross tabulation by institution type and gender.

Twenty percent of the questionnaire respondents (Table 5) were contacted for a subsequent interview and to gain additional data from the students on the decisions they made with respect to their career path. Careers are not necessarily linear in nature, they usually reflect diverse patterns. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted to broaden an understanding of international students progressing along a career path in Science and Engineering. The approaches adopted also reflected what Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 238) described as "peer credibility" through presenting papers in a number of forums and through "member checks".

Table 5. Interviews by Institutions

Institutions	Male	Female	Total
HE 2	2	-	2
School 4	-	1	1
HE 3	3	3	6
VET 2	1	-	1
HE 4	8	4	12
	14	8	22

Males dominated the questionnaire sample, accounting for 57 percent. Typically courses in Science and Engineering have a distinct gender bias. The questionnaire sample included responses from 23 countries. The most important of these were the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. These four countries accounted for 62 percent of the students in the sample. The sample included students studying in five Australian states and territories (Tasmania 30%, Western Australia 26%, South Australia 22%, Victoria 20% and the Australian Capital Territory 2%). For the questionnaire sample 37 percent had studied their previous course in Australia and the remainder overseas (especially Malaysia, PRC, Singapore and Thailand). For 10 percent of students their offshore course had been part of an Australian qualification. Typically such a qualification is described as a twinning program where an Australian institution has joined together with a local provider to deliver education and training. Usually under such arrangements students gain academic credits which are recognised by another provider.

The majority of the sample were studying as undergraduates (48%), postgraduates (26%) and grade 11/ 12 (22%). The main qualifications currently being studied were Bachelor of Engineering (9%), Bachelor of Science (7%), Year 12 Certificate (6%), Bachelor of Computing (5%), Bachelor of Engineering – Civil and Construction (5%), and Masters of Engineering Management (5%). In all, 42 careers were stated by the sample. Some of these related to industry areas rather than occupations. The careers stated could be grouped relating to Engineering (28%), Science (19%) and Computing/ Information Technology (17%).

The interview sample consisted of 14 males and 8 females from five institutions. The sample was composed of students from 11 countries (Malaysia 10, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 3, and one each from Argentina, the Czech Republic, Mauritius, People's Republic of China, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, the United

Kingdom, the United States of America and Vietnam). The sample was composed of undergraduates 14 cases, postgraduates six cases, VET one case and Grade 11/ 12 one case. Three students had participated in their Australian studies as a consequence of twinning programs. The intended career destinations were Engineer (12), Scientist (4), Business (3), Computing (2) and Media (1).

The results from the questionnaires and interviews were shared with the institutions who participated in the study. This was done in order to put the findings in a context and also allowed for what Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 237) describe as "peer debriefing".

As the main source countries of students to Australia were in Asia there was a literature review relating to Asian career provision and support of students. Leong (2002) comments on the career education provision in the countries of the PRC, Japan and Taiwan. In part he describes the provision as one of: "transferring Western models to Eastern cultural contexts" (p. 277). He believes that this has occurred because of: "…Asian countries' reliance on Western institutions of higher education to train and educate their political and intellectual elites" (p. 278-9). For many students in Asian countries, career education is often related to undertaking a test and being streamed into an academic or vocational pathway. Educational reforms over the last decade in Korea, Japan and Taiwan have to varying degrees referred to the philosophy of 'lifelong education' and measures to move away from the traditional streams of vocational and academic pathways. Associated with some of these proposed changes is recognition for building a "capacity for advising students" (Municipal Education Bureau – Taipei 1998, p. 60) and the adoption of measures relating to school guidance, including establishing a system of educational counselling (Ministry of Education, 1999).

Cultural interpretation and validity should be considered when discussing international students. Lent and Worthington (2000) raise the question of whether career development theories are culturally valid. Ang (2001) draws a distinction between traditional counselling and that necessary for returning Singaporean students. She observes: "The tenet of 'individualism and autonomy' has taken little consideration of clients who are culturally different from the Western mainstream. Western societies emphases that as individuals grow and mature, they are to increasingly become separate from their families. Career counselling thus focuses on assisting individuals to trust their own decision - making ability and become less dependent on their families" (p. 131). She goes on to say that the traditional need for a student to consult an older member of their family "can be viewed by a Western - trained counsellor as being 'immature' " (p. 132).

Results:

The terminology to describe career pathway (Table 6) is inconsistent across a number of websites aimed at marketing Australia to international fee-paying students.

Table 6. Pathway Terminology

Terminology	AEI	AQF	IDP	Study in Australia
Career path			P	
Career pathway				
Learning pathway		P		P
Pathways	P			
Training pathways		P		

Source: Relevant Websites – AEI (Australian Education International, 2004a) , Australian Qualification Framework (AQF Advisory Board, 2002), IDP (IDP Education Australia, 2004), Study in Australia (Australian Education International, 2004c)

Equity targets established by the Australian Council of Deans of Science (1999) are not likely to be achieved given the size of the international fee-paying student enrolment in this field of studying and its bias towards males. Gender data by field of education or courses is not currently published by AEI. In order to monitor

whether there is any progress towards these targets consideration should be given by AEI to publish this data.

A number of Australian institutions operate offshore. In this study 10 percent of students studied offshore and undertook an Australian qualification. For these students their most common concern when transferring onshore to an Australian institution was with English language.

The sample of Science and Engineering students was drawn from across sectors of education and training. In order to measure the students' understanding about progressing by levels and through courses and gaining recognition of previous studies the questionnaire contained a question requiring students to explain 'credit-transfer'. Of the sample 52 percent claimed to know about this concept. For the higher education sector of the sample this rises to 61 percent. The most significant source of information about this was from Course Advisors (34%), Agent (19%), Australian institution (14%) and Teacher (14%).

Only 53 percent of the questionnaire sample had undertaken research in their home country about whether their current course was recognised by the appropriate professional body. Males were more likely to have researched recognition than females.

Of the questionnaire sample 68 percent claimed that they had no careers advice (career preparation or counselling) in their home country before coming to Australia. Males were more likely to have participated in career preparation. The proportion responding 'no' was higher in the school sector (81%) compared to those in higher education (70%). Despite this finding 58 percent of the sample accessed the career advice in their current institution in Australia. Onshore males more than females, were more likely to seek careers advice from their current institutions**.** Here a higher proportion of the school population were more likely to have accessed this advice. The satisfaction level with the career advice gained onshore included 21 percent of the sample who indicated that there was room for improvement with this advice.

For some students at interview, career education and preparation for studies overseas were interchangeable. Marketing officers from Australian institutions were used as a source of advice.

From the interview sample the two main reasons given for undertaking the current course related to subject interest and the influence of family and friends (Table 7). These two reasons accounted for 59 percent of the sample. The reasons are consistent with other studies undertaken with students in Australia on factors affecting course and career selection National Board of Employment Education and Training (1995), and also the conclusions of the OECD - Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (2004). The influence of parental expectations was also noted by Krause et al., (2005) in a decade long study of first year Australian university students which included 185 international fee-paying students, who conclude that "parental expectations figure more highly in the thinking of international students than they do for domestic students" (p. 77).

Table 7. Reasons for Undertaking Current Course

Reasons	Number	Percent
Interest in subject field	8	36.4
Family or friends had done the course	5	22.7
Personal preference/ interest	3	13.6
Employment prospects good	3	13.6
Double degree or two course – Keeping career options open	2	9.1
Wanted experience studying overseas	1	4.6
Total	22	

There was evidence in the interview sample highlighting that studying in Australia might be the first stage in a process to gain permanent residence. This applied to five of the students or 23 percent who were interviewed. It is possible that this could lead to other family members joining them and be part of a process of chain migration. The Australian government has assisted this process by increasing its emphasis on skilled migration as a component of the total migration program (up from 45 percent between 1997-8 to 70 percent by 2005-6). Tremblay (2005) has considered this link, especially in regard to students studying Science and Technology in a number of OECD countries.

Prerequisites no longer appear to be as significant as they once were with 29 percent of the higher education students in the sample entering Science and Engineering courses from other fields. This may in part link with the growth in Science numbers in courses of a cross discipline or elective nature. Enrolments in traditional areas such as Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics for the total population reached a peak in 1994 and have eased since. Across the same period there has been a growth in the numbers of students undertaking double undergraduate degrees in order to maximise their likelihood of success in the job market. Ang (2001) suggests for international students that they might undertake a first course to satisfy the influence of their parents but with acculturation from the dominant culture they may "feel that the career options generated by their course of study might not be suitable for them" (p. 133). This may be the context for students enrolling in a subsequent course to meet their own personal aspirations.

Current Career Provision based on Institutions by Sector participating in the Study

International students accessed careers advice at their current institution through visits from professional bodies, the careers office, faculty office or international office or online web platforms. The continuum of career counselling services and provision to international students in this study (Table 8), ranged from no specific service with students accessing the mainstream provision for all students to international student advisors having responsibility for undertaking this role, to one instance of a specialist careers service for international students (and therefore a recognition that there are differing needs for international students).

Table 8. Models of Career Delivery

Sector	Institution	Model
Higher Education		
	HE 1	Access international student advisor for careers information.
	HE 2	Devolved delivery system for the provision of student services. No specific provision made for international students.
	HE 3	Dedicated career staff provision for international students on main campuses with links to institution wide general career counselling staff.
	HE 4	Cascade model of delivery using Career Service in conjunction with the universities' schools.
VET	VET 2	International student advisors in conjunction with the relevant department when appropriate.
Schools		Career information is usually delivered through the course counselling process by the home group teacher. There is recognition that international students are mobile and might seek tertiary entrance interstate.
	School 1	Career counselling undertaken in conjunction with subject selection.
	School 2	Introduced through Work Education to the expectation of what to gain from a western education setting. Introduced to pathways into higher education and VET providers.
	School 3	Careers counselling in conjunction with subject selection. Dedicated career pathway counsellor.
	School 4	Career counselling undertaken in conjunction with subject selection.

Institution HE 4 has reshaped its provision to build on the OECD recommendation giving priority to build system capacity so that students develop career self-management skills and a capability to access career information. HE 2 and VET 2 had well developed *return home programs* which focussed on preparing resumes, interview skills and developing employability skills. The relevant staff at VET 2 identified that approximately one third of a counsellor's work load related to assisting international students who were either in the wrong course or unclear about their career intentions. Towards the end of the study at least one institution (HE 2) was proposing to assign an international counsellor to work in greater collaboration with a careers consultant from the careers office.

Access to a Range of Programs including those offered by Professional bodies

Engineers Australia (EA) accredits Engineering courses in Australia, a role it plays as a result of the Washington Accord (a program allowing for mobility of graduates and recognition of courses between signatory countries). As part of this accreditation EA requires an *approved professional exposure*. This is usually a 12 week program delivered in the third or fourth year of an engineering degree. Other professional bodies offer a range of careers and professional induction sessions with students. These were appreciated by the students in this study. Such professional bodies may wish to review the nature of their programs in line with the competencies of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development.

Innovative Programs

One institution offered a highly innovative placement program designed to develop students' employability skills. The program also had agreements with overseas employers and attempted to place international students in their home countries for a work placement.

A Possible Career Model for International Students

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development (ABCD)

The ABCD (Department of Education Science and Training, 2006a) has been developed over the last couple of years and builds on international research (in particular Canadian experiences with a similar framework) and the arguments for a more consistent public policy on career development outlined in OECD (2004). The ABCD is designed as a framework to use with both school students and adults. Phase 1 approximates grade 3-5, Phase 11 Grade 9, Phase 111 Grade 10 and Phase 1V adults. It is intended to provide a "consistent means of monitoring the career development of people across all of the transitions they may make in their lives and work, in a variety of agencies. This is because the career competencies within the *Blueprint* are competencies that reflect lifelong learning" (Department of Education Science and Training, 2006b). The framework consists of twelve competencies based on three areas; personal management, learning and work exploration, and career building.

None of the institutions involved in this study had attempted to review the provision of careers for their students as a result of the development of the ABCD. Most were of the conclusion that something had to be done to update the method of delivery of their programs. Reflecting on the current models outlined above in Table 8, Table 9 highlights possible links to the ABCD. Currently grants are being offered to trial the ABCD in a range of different contexts (Miles Morgan Australia, 2005). In conjunction with the development of the ABCD professional standards have been developed for careers practitioners and are outlined in Career Industry Council of Australia (2006).

Table 9 Elements of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development and Characteristics of Career Provision of Institutions in this Study

Elements	Schools	VET	Higher Education
Personal Management	P		
Learning & Work Education	P	P	P
Career Building		P	P

Implications of the Findings

As a consequence of the findings of this study that 68 percent of international students did not have career preparation before coming to Australia, marketing and admissions staff need to be prepared to ask appropriate questions at the time of application or admission about the students' career intention and make a judgement as to how well their intended course meets this. The (OECD - Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 2004) concludes that employment outcomes will become more important to institutions in maintaining the quality and viability of their programs. To this end institutions may benefit from participating in the trialling of the ABCD for international students.

The findings of this study with regard to credit-transfer and the limited research undertaken by students on the recognition of courses have implications for the way in which institutions describe the Australian education and training system to an international audience. Currently Australian offshore programs represent an additional 25 percent of enrolments above that given earlier in this paper. As a result of the concerns of students transferring from offshore to onshore programs, in relation to English, institutions may need to consider how such transfers can be organised in a 'seamless' way in the future.

In the light of the findings of this study indicating that males are more likely to access career information both in their home countries and onshore at their current institutions, consideration may need to be given to how programs can be designed to appeal to females. As the broad fields of Science and Engineering are dominated by greater numbers of males addressing this finding appears to have a greater urgency. Ang (2001) would argue that such programs should be culturally sensitive and consider the nature of the initial approach in order to build a relationship network rather than be a giver of information.

For students the recommendation from the report of the OECD (2004) is that they should take a greater responsibility for their own career development. The report suggests that "too often career information is

provider driven rather than user driven" p. 83. It suggests that programs should take "a broader approach that also tries to develop career self-management skills" p. 8. This is consistent with the personal management area of the ABCD.

Considerable scope exists for further research. Possible further work could be undertaken on examining the movement of students from offshore to onshore programs and cohorts of students moving through various sectors of education and training. Such research could examine the impact of international students on the cultural understandings of the wider Australian population. Further work needs to be undertaken on the impact of migration policy changes on student participation in courses. This study identified Science and Engineering students taking up studies without a previous background in the field. The role of prerequisites and there interplay on students' success warrants further attention.

Conclusion:

In addition to considering the competencies of the ABCD, administrators and counsellors involved in designing careers programs for international students may wish to consider a number of principles: how students can take responsibility for their own career planning, the nature of how the first approach is made in terms of establishing a relationship, supporting the student in making a successful transition at the entry and exit points of a course (including the recognition of employability skills), the professional qualifications and training of staff, and reviewing delivery mechanisms and organisational structures to maximise collaboration. The need to develop the capacity for an individual to take responsibility for their career planning is further underscored by the increasing likelihood of the number of differing careers and periods of retraining they might have across their lifetime.

Greater mobility by young people across international borders requires us to be more explicit in explaining the basis of our education and training system. Significant developments are already occurring in Europe in Higher Education and VET in this direction. International students participate in the Australian labour market through part time casual employment, work placements or internships, but are for the most part also acquiring employability skills to use on their return home for varying workforce requirements. As a result they play a significant role in the forces shaping an increasingly mobile international workforce.

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