

## Using a course wide professional development program to enhance undergraduate career development and employability

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We have found that for the Bachelor of Biomedical science (BMS) at Monash there is a critical need to develop career management skills; focus group feedback from final year students indicated that they were unaware of their non-medical/research careers options and they felt they had developed limited employability skills during their course. This was reflected in a survey of first year students, with 51% uncertain of their post-BMS career path (although a course entry survey indicated that 80% would like to get into graduate medicine), 49% unsure about how to develop career experiences and skills and 46% lacking confidence in their ability to communicate their skills, knowledge and abilities to potential employers. Thus, a team of academics and careers staff has developed a course-wide professional development program that aims to build students career development skills, careers knowledge and their ability to communicate their skills to employers. Previous studies have found that embedding a program into the curriculum will be more successful if it involves the whole degree program, not just a single subject, and it is assessed (Ferns *et al.*, 2010; Bridgstock, 2009). Important characteristics of the program include i) embedding a small assessment component to ensure student engagement and completions, ii) integrating components of the program in each semester of the degree program through the inclusion of an employability lecture and a careers development activity (assessment) and iii) the development of an electronic portfolio through the assessment activities. On completion of the program we believe that students will have developed life-long career management skills and produced a transferrable profile that reflects their experiences, skills, knowledge and capabilities, curating evidence of their achievements.

Bridgstock RS. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research and Development* **28**, 31-44.

Ferns S, Howell J, Taylor L, Kosovich A. (2010). Quality curriculum and career development: using an evidence-based approach to embed career development learning in the curriculum. Proceedings of the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) National Conference 2010, pp. 139-155. Perth, WA: Australian Collaborative Educational Network (ACEN) Inc.