



NZACE International Conference 2017 Queenstown New Zealand

Co-operative Education Project - Employers: Are they Happy?

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The placement programme

- Applicable for students for the Bachelor of Applied Management & Graduate Diploma
- Last semester of study
- Work placements throughout the Waikato
- A relevant research project
- Students meet their academic supervisor weekly



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What

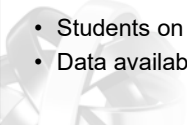
- Obtain feedback from employers hosting students for the Cooperative Education Project

Why


- Important to understand in employers' eyes how our students were doing

When

- Students on placement for Semester 2, 2015
- Data available in 2016



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What we asked

- **Organisational Skills**
 - Planning/Problem Solving/Creative Thinking/
Critical Thinking/Time Management
- **Technical Skills**
 - Knowledge of practice/Accuracy/
Speed of performance/Adherence to directions provided
- **Interpersonal Skills**
 - Communication/Co-operation/
Initiative/Assertiveness/Motivation/Reliability/Punctuality

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How

- Questionnaires to 56 employers who hosted our students in their final year of the two programmes
 - *Bachelor of Applied Management*(14)
 - *Graduate Diploma in Business*(42)
 - *Primarily English as a second language*

– closed and open-ended questions

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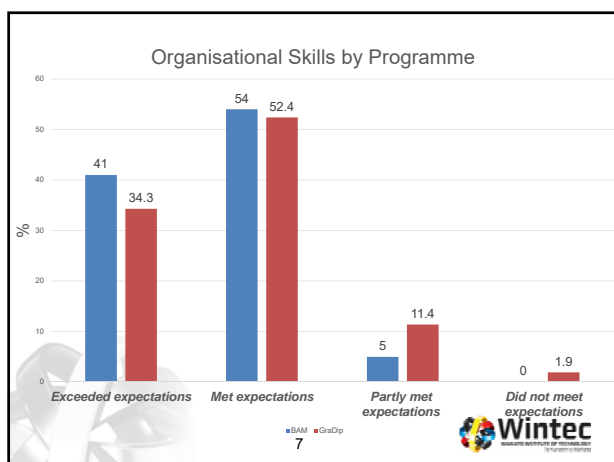


Limitations of the survey

- No chance to further clarify with employers on their feed back
- Not all employers filled in all the sections and in particular the qualitative sections
- Possible confusion with the wording and interpretation of the questions
- The survey is looking at perceptions from an employers viewpoint.
 - “Are they happy” is not an absolute science

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Organisational Skills by Programme

- *“Employers: Are they happy?”*

- **Planning**

- Overall the students met or exceeded expectations, but the Graduate Diploma Students rated less favourably (14% Partly met expectations)

- **Problem Solving**

- Surprisingly the employers were very happy with the problem solving skills with the better result given to the Graduate Diploma students

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Organisational Skills by Programme

- *“Employers: Are they happy?”*

- **Creative thinking**

- Again surprisingly the employers were very happy with the creative thinking of the students apart from two Grad Dip students who did not meet expectations.

- **Critical thinking**

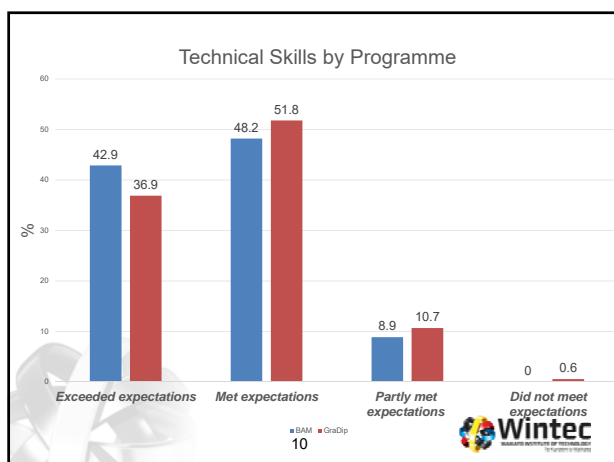
- Similar results as above with most results shown as exceeded or met expectations.

- **Time management**

- The BAM students scored very well, but 26% of the Grad Dip students only partly met expectations.

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Technical Skills by Programme

- *“Employers: Are they happy?”*
- **Knowledge of practices**
 - This is referring to the students knowledge of the business or industry with 14% of both cohorts only partly meeting expectations
- **Accuracy**
 - Good positive results for both cohorts with reasonably even ratings

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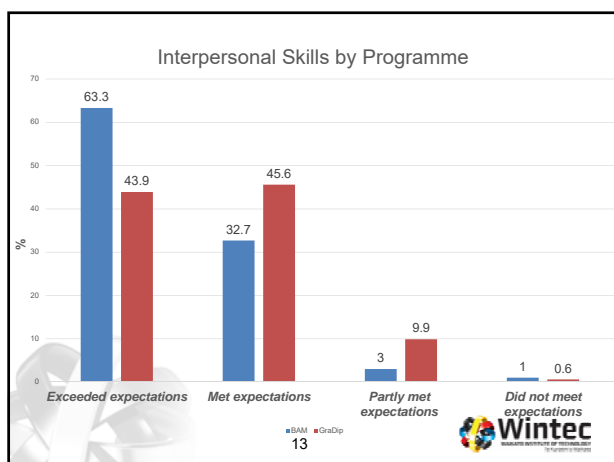
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Technical Skills by Programme

- *“Employers: Are they happy?”*
- **Speed of performance**
 - Perhaps a different view of this question from employers, but the Graduate Diploma students were less efficient with 14% partly meeting expectations
- **Adherence to directions provided**
 - Although 57% and 45% (respectively) of the BAM and Graduate Diploma students exceeded expectations it was concerning to note that 14% and 10% only partly meet expectations

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Interpersonal Skills by Programme

- *“Employers: Are they happy?”*
- **Communication**
 - This was a BIG issue for especially for the Graduate Diploma students where English is (mostly) a second language.
- **Co-operation**
 - Positive results for both cohorts
- **Initiative**
 - Mostly positive but 7% of the BAM students did not meet expectations.

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Interpersonal Skills by Programme

- *“Employers: Are they happy?”*
- **Assertiveness**
 - Mostly positive, but again the Grad Dip less so with 24% only partly meeting expectations.
- **Motivation**
 - Great result for BAM students and reasonable results for the Graduate Diploma students
- **Reliability & Punctuality**
 - Although there are some positive results and many students exceeding expectations, it would seem that many students are not yet “work ready”.

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Qualitative feedback The students

	Bachelor of Applied Management	Graduate Diploma programmes (Primarily English as a second language)
The students	Personal skills positive feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiative / Motivation / Enthusiastic / Commitment Effort / Time management Organisational skills Teamwork / Communication Improvements needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More work ready / Product knowledge Communication / Motivation / Initiative (In particular students with English as a second language)	Personal skills positive feedback: <p>In general, not rated as good as the BAM cohort in most areas.</p> Improvements needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as BAM students but STRONGER Not understand requirement Not always communicating Confusion

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Qualitative feedback The Programme

	Bachelor of Applied Management	Graduate Diploma programmes (Primarily English as a second language)
The programme	Improvements needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align academic requirements and benefit for the business (Needs of business / student / Wintec) More communication between Business and Wintec Visit from academic supervisor 	Improvements needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as the BAM Need to vet suitability
Host again?	58% Yes (not all employers replied)	44% Yes (35% not answer)

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Recommendations

General

- A need for better matching of students to business
- Clear expectations of role of the business and of the student in the placement
- At least one visit from an academic supervisor to the business
- Attempt to match academic requirements and the needs of business
- Introduce online interaction with employers

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Recommendations

Graduate Diploma

- Students need to be better prepared (in the semester) before placement
- English language testing/coaching?
- Alternative work placement for C grade students?
 - (As long we meet the graduate profile)

A new survey

- Survey 2017 placement employers (online?)
- Face-to-face in-depth interview with employers

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