VicWISE: Leadership across the Victorian tertiary education sector to address employability challenges faced by international students

Presenters: Mano Guy (ISANA VicTas President) and Sharon Smith (VicWise Chair)
Imagine you are an international student
Job hunting leads to...

‘AUSTRALIAN CITIZEN / PR ONLY’
How do students feel?

Have you or do you know someone who’s been in the same situation?

How are you rating the value of your degree? Has coming to Australia been worth it?
Challenges students face

- Fewer employers open to recruiting candidates on temporary visas
- Increased competition from a growing number of qualified international and local students
- Lack of local networks/contacts
- Lack of understanding of Australian work culture and recruitment processes
- Lack of local experience
- High expectations (preference for large organisations and well known companies)
- Difficulty articulating their value to an organisation
- Vulnerable to exploitation (e.g. 7-Eleven)
Student led initiatives

- Melbourne International Student Conference (MISC)
  - Job trends, job readiness tools, networking, inspiring speakers
- Meld: Industry ‘Talk & Tours’
- AFIS created for and by students in 2002
- Job apps like Zeynt – specifically connecting employers with international students
- Indian Employability Leadership Program
- Peer to Peer Camp
- Outcome Life (Employment program/Hub)
- Study Melbourne LIVE programs

Many more...
Employer Challenges
Imagine you are an employer

You advertise for a graduate

........ and the response is overwhelming
Challenges for Employers

- Large #s of applications resulting in screening based on visa status and language competency

- Concerns about work rights
  - long term employment potential
  - return on investment: recruitment & training investment costs
  - uncertainty (eg, can the student work beyond 2 years? Will the graduate want to return home?)
  - concerns about proposed government visa changes
  - understanding of post study work visa entitlements
Challenges for Employers

‘It’s not just doing calculations and drawings anymore – graduates need to be able to communicate with colleagues, clients and managers both in person, in writing and on the phone. Can international students do this and relate to our clients?’

Engineering Employer

‘Can they hit the ground running?’

HR Manager
Challenges for Employers

Employers want a combination of **technical or professional** knowledge and skills

AND

graduates who have **the interpersonal skills and values** that match those of the organisation
Employers

• Increasing number of employers hosting international student interns

• Major breakthrough about to be announced with one of Australia’s biggest employers agreeing to employ international students in part-time roles

• International grads transitioning into the workforce at comparable rates to domestic students Australian Universities International Directors’ Forum (AUlDF)
Challenges for Educational Institutions

- Connecting and communicating effectively with employers
- Identifying spokesperson and/or highly visible authority on international student employability issues
- Lack of documented evidence about impact and outcomes
- Being in a highly contestable market - trying to win students
Established May 2016 as a result of a Victorian Government Student Welfare Grant awarded to ISANA.

VicWise participants include:

ISANA, Deakin, RMIT, Monash University, Monash College, ACPET, VTA, IEAA, CISA, AFIS, MELD, Navitas, Holmesglen, Peer Camp, AIVBC, La Trobe University, Swinburne University, University of Melbourne, City of Melbourne, Victorian Government – Study Melbourne, Insider Guide, Victoria University, Job Watch and more!
• **Cross-sector leadership**, advocacy and communication on benefits of employing Victorian international students

• **Collaboration on joint projects** that focus on sharing best practice and improving employability outcomes

• **Promoting a focus on global employment** conditions and impacts on Victoria international students

• **Building awareness and recognition with employers** on conditions of employment for international students, post-study work rights and benefits of a diverse workforce.
VicWISE Outcomes

- Stakeholder Database
- Employer Fact Sheet
- International Student Fact Sheets x 2
- Collaboration and resource/information sharing
- Hosted 3 international student interns
- Support for Meld and other initiatives

Employer Fact Sheet
Recruiting International students and graduates

**Source talent and diversity**
- **Approx. 175,000 students** from over 160 countries studied in Victoria in 2018
- **50.4%** of international students indicate Victoria has been a top reason for choosing Australia

**Economic value**
- International education (monetary) generated:
  - **$6.5 billion** in 2015-16, largest services export industry in the state of Victoria
  - **$21.8 billion** in 2015-16, third largest export industry in Australia

**Benefits to employers**
- International students and graduates:
  - Add diversity to the workforce
  - Help identify and access new markets
  - Offer new skills

**VicWISE.Victorian@gmail.com**
Why Collaborate?

• Old challenges need new solutions
• We are committed to delivering on our promise as education providers – education as pathway to successful careers
• We need to work together to advocate for the value that international students bring to Victoria
Join us!

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https://www.linkedin.com/groups/7072996