



NZACE International Conference 2017 Queenstown New Zealand

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

Brent Wood / Deniss Yeung




1




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



2



What

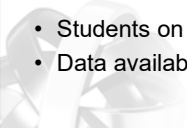
- Obtain feedback from employers hosting students for the Cooperative Education Project

Why


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

When

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



3



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

4



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

5

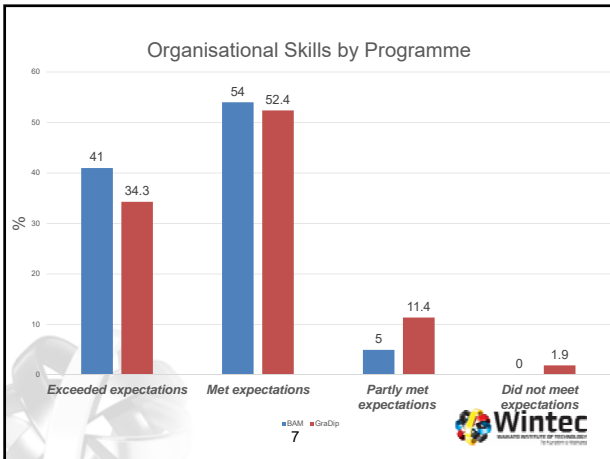


Limitations of the survey

- 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

6





Organisational Skills by Programme

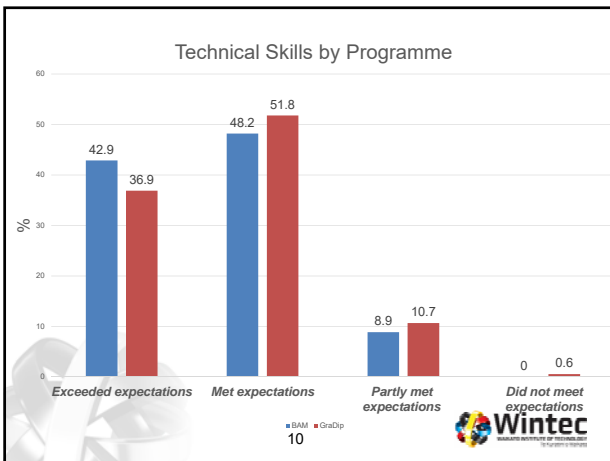
- “Employers: Are they happy?”
- **Planning**
 - Overall the students met or exceeded expectations, but the Graduate Diploma Students rated less favourably (14% Partly met expectations)
- **Problem Solving**
 - Surprisingly the employers were very happy with the problem solving skills with the better result given to the Graduate Diploma students

Wintec logo and page number 8.

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.

Wintec logo and page number 9.

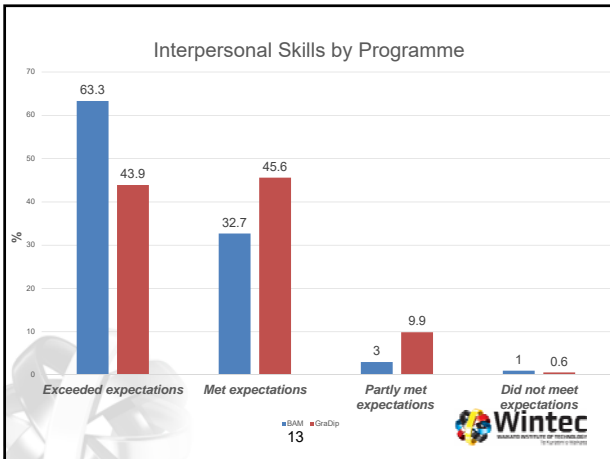


Technical Skills by Programme

- *“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

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



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.

14


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”.

15


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

16 

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)

17 

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

18 

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
