

24.7.2024

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**Title**

The influence of Work-Integrated Learning and paid work during studies on graduate employment and underemployment / Denise Jackson ; David Collings

**Publication year**

2018

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education. - 76 (2018) 3, S. 403 - 425

**Inventory number**

47336

**Keywords**

Ausland : Australien : Studenten, Studium, Lehre ; Bedarf an Akademikern

**Abstract**

To enhance employability and improve the career prospects of graduating students, this study explores the influence of practical experience on graduate employment outcomes in an Australian setting. To develop our understanding of the relative benefit of different forms of practical experience, the study evaluates the influence of both Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and paid work in the final year of study on graduate employment and underemployment. Two samples are used, N=628 and N=237, to evaluate institutional data on practical experience combined with national data on graduate employment outcomes. Findings indicate that participating in WIL does not produce an increase in full-time employment rates. There is some evidence to suggest that it could lead to higher quality, relevant employment in both the short and long term. Paid employment during the final year of undergraduate study produced higher full-time employment rates, but had little effect on underemployment. Findings will help to inform stakeholders of the relative benefit of curricular and extra-curricular work experience and contribute to the dearth of empirical evidence on the value of

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activities designed to improve graduate employment prospects. This is particularly important given growth in the supply of graduates, concerns for credentialism, soft graduate labour markets and global economic weakening. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Jackson, Denise, E-Mail: [d.jackson@ecu.edu.au](mailto:d.jackson@ecu.edu.au)