

## CARRICK INSTITUTE : DISCIPLINE BASED INITIATIVES

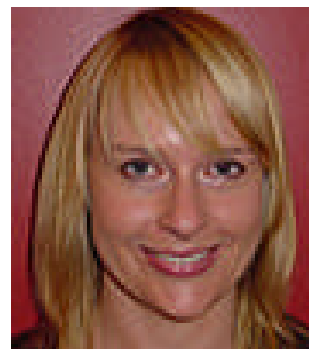
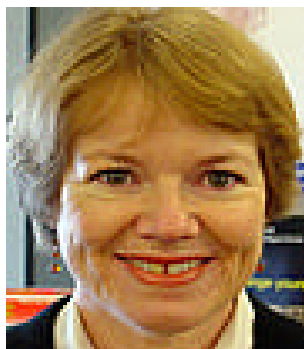


Work Integrated Learning : A national framework for initiatives to support best practice

### Swinburne University of Technology

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<b>Vignette title and details</b>	Careers in the Curriculum 1 Semester subject for all students, compulsory from 2007 Cross university
<b>Discipline</b>	Multiple Disciplines
<b>Employment sector</b>	Multi - sector
<b>Student numbers</b>	2008 - 1,058 students
<b>Optional/compulsory</b>	Compulsory
<b>Credit bearing</b>	Non credit bearing subject
<b>Assessment</b>	Yes. Swinburne undergraduate degree students are required to submit an application letter plus résumé in response to an advertisement they select, and receive written feedback from the Career Consultants.
<b>Payment</b>	None
<b>Number of staff involved</b>	Careers and Employment staff 4 Higher Education Careers Consultants
<b>Weblink</b>	<a href="http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/careers/">http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/careers/</a> <a href="http://www.swinburne.edu.au/hed/professionallearning/careers.html">http://www.swinburne.edu.au/hed/professionallearning/careers.html</a>
<b>Key Words</b>	Careers; Employment; Lifelong Skills; Multi-discipline; Assessment; Curriculum

## Overview

Careers in the Curriculum (CIC) is part of the Professional Learning Model that has been developed at Swinburne University of Technology to provide students with more real world learning opportunities leading to better professional outcomes (employment). It is a holistic approach that offers students:

- more electives in a new winter term, some of which can be taken overseas, for example, Sarawak
- final year projects
- Industry Based Learning and. of course.
- Careers in the Curriculum.

CIC is undertaken by undergraduate students in second year or their penultimate year. Students can complete the program in their final year but with the synergy of the Professional Learning Model it is preferable to undertake Careers in the Curriculum in second year.

CIC had been offered as an elective since 2003 but became compulsory from 2007. The aim of the course is to help students with their career development skills. The major emphasis of the program is to teach students how to identify and articulate their generic and employability skills which leads to improved employment outcomes.

## Structure of Program

There is a natural order to the Professional Learning Model; namely in 2<sup>nd</sup> year students complete CIC, then many apply for Industry Based Learning (IBL), Industry Placement (IP), internships, vacation employment etc, and then return to university in their final year and complete their final year projects, which become more relevant after some time in the workforce.

*'Was a great help especially regarding IBL preparation'* Student.

Students are advised to undertake CIC first because the careers consultants essentially teach students applied communication skills. Students are alerted to career opportunities and taught how to apply for a wide range of opportunities and positions.

There is an art to writing effective resumes, cover letters, addressing selection criteria and completing online applications. After writing lengthy academic essays and reports, learning the new skill of writing succinctly, is quite a challenge for many students. Generally, students' applications are poor as they do not match themselves to the specific criteria sought by employers and do not target applications to particular companies and positions. In addition, students often undervalue the range of skills being developed in their part time paid positions (retail, hospitality, call centre roles etc), voluntary roles and extra curricula activities. Students need to be taught to communicate their transferable skills in order to market themselves to employers in both written applications and through interviews.

*'It is a great program that will definitely benefit all graduates at university'* Student

## Special Features

The Careers and Employment Department has been developing Careers in the Curriculum over a number of years. CIC began as an elective in 2003, but now has been incorporated into the curriculum as a compulsory unit. We believe that we teach it really well, and boast that Swinburne is the only university in Australia to have such a program.

CIC is a 10 week program delivered in lecture mode, supported by the Blackboard site. A huge amount of time has been spent developing resources to support the program. It is tailored to each faculty, and yet is generic enough for students in one faculty to attend classes in another faculty's timeslot. It is also a very practical course with many hands on activities (supported by interactive programs on our website) and opportunities to practice career development techniques such as interpreting job ads, undergoing interviews and assessment centre activities.

*'The course was very worthwhile and everyone should do it, there's so much people don't know'*

*'Just keep running the course. It's really good. Makes me think more about the future and be prepared'*

*'I value this course highly and appreciate the knowledge gained especially in resume preparation and interview techniques'*

*'The class size should remain as small as possible as this is a subject that I felt was very hands on, lots of discussion and that can't be achieved if classes are too large'* Student comments

Additionally, we have used information from the Swinburne Graduate Destination Survey to develop another resource, *'What can I do with my degree?'* to support CIC. This resource details where past students have gained employment, lists job titles, company names, and salary levels. It also gives statistical employment outcomes.

The final aspect that contributes to the success of CIC is that the program provides a conduit between students and employers. Members of the CIC team belong to such professional associations as NAGCAS [National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services], CDAA [Career Development Association of Australia] and the AAGE [Australian Association of Graduate Employers]. This allows us to translate critical information, trends, and recruitment practices from employers and make it accessible to students.

Consequently we receive feedback such as:

*'Great experience. You will definitely learn something to have an advantage over the others when you are seeking a job'* Student

*'The employer (one of the hospitals) said that the preparation students had done who came to the interview was rather poor and somewhat sloppy. The reason they picked the successful student was because she was the best prepared and had done some homework on the hospital'* IBL Manager

## Future Work

A program such as CIC needs to be responsive to the changing demands of students and employers. So, as 'fashion' in the recruitment practices changes, so will the content. We are continually updating our resources, handouts and presentations in response to industry and student feedback. The greatest challenge faced in 2008, is to manage the increase in class sizes as CIC has become compulsory. We are currently in the process of implementing new creative ways to ensure the interactive, practical element of the CIC unit is not lost, therefore ensuring continued student engagement.

## Additional Insights

We are now receiving feedback from students who have heard about the course from past students and the realisation is dawning on many that it is not a 'lightweight' subject, that student really need to put some effort into the assessment tasks and that many believe that the program helps them secure highly prestigious graduate positions.

*'I think this program is very good. It is unique as other uni's do not do this'*

*'Helpful!'*

*'It was a great class. Thank-you! I learnt a lot'*

*'Excellent!'*

*'Great information and well structured'*

*'I found this a well presented and worthwhile presentation'*

*'Great subject'*

*'It was good that the subject provides real example of resumes and cover letter'*

*'Motivated tutor. Well done'*

*'It's good as it shows the importance of being prepared. It's helped me to feel less anxious about future job seeking and interviews'*

*'I have never been comfortable about going to class, except this class! Best!'*

*'Would like to thank the tutor for giving her time'*

Students comments from 2007.

