

CASE STUDY: Engineering a future together, UniSA

Description

Career Services & staff from the Division of Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment, University of South Australia.

This program aimed to assist in the development of the skills, knowledge and understanding required for International students to be competitive in the SA labour market. The project was open to international students from two postgraduate programs:

- Advanced Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering
- Electrical and Information Engineering

Two cohorts of international engineering students and 20 employers have been involved in a multifaceted project which aims to close the gap between overseas engineering graduates and the South Australian workforce.

Components

The project has three key elements:

- student skill development through a series of career development workshops,
- provision of work integrated learning opportunities with local employers and
- employer education about the ways in which international graduates can contribute to the workplace and to the South Australian labour market.

For the purposes of this case study we will focus on the key elements of student workplace cultural awareness and work integrated learning opportunities.

The program was organised as a sequential series of activities: Developmental Workshops, Work Experience and Industry visits.

Workshops	<p>Five cultural awareness and career development workshops were delivered covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Communication Spoken • Business Communication Written • Resumes and Applications • Engineering Industry in SA and • Improving your Employability. • <p>Sessions were provided by Careers services staff.</p>
Work Experience	<p>Students were placed in medium to major Australian and South Australian manufacturing and mining organisations where they were required to complete an industry initiated task and observe professionals at work.</p> <p>The object was to gain an understanding of the norms of the Australian workplace.</p>

Industry Visits	A series of industry visits to six employers was conducted. The purpose was to gain cultural awareness of the Australian workplace.
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Personnel involved and roles/positions include Career Development staff in University Career Services, Faculty staff, Topic Coordinators and Industry representatives.

Assessment

The program is not formally assessed. However, those students who undertook a work placement were required to record in a workbook their day by day observations and thoughts on the communication, networking and culture in their workplace.

Workbook questions included:

What did you learn about the culture, beliefs and attitudes of the people in your organisation which differed from your own culture?

Who have you met who may be useful to keep in contact with?

A series of nine questions related to observed verbal and body language used in the workplace.

Students were also required to deliver a five minute presentation to fellow students on their work placement highlighting the background of the organisation, activities the students undertook on placement, and their observations and thoughts about communication and culture in the Australian workplace.

Career Development Learning Elements

CDL elements are active in this program.