

ASSESSMENT OF POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN SELECTED AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES: INPUT FOR POLICY MAKING

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the author has aimed to assess the postgraduate programs offered for international students in selected Australian universities particularly the program, instructions and research. The study adopted the exploratory sequential mixed methods. It involves international postgraduate students studying for their master's through coursework, research and PhD. The following were findings of the study: This study evaluated the satisfaction levels of 173 international postgraduate students, predominantly enrolled in master's programs across three Australian universities: USyd, UTS, and UNSW. The author has shown that the findings underscore that Australian universities provide well-structured programs with strong academic support and career services. However, employment-related assistance for international students needs to be improved. The author has concluded with recommendations that include expanding work opportunities, offering more support for students balancing employment, and redefining program requirements for full-time employees. Overall, the study suggests that Australian universities effectively meet international postgraduate students' academic and professional needs, though room for improvement remains in career support.

KEYWORDS

Assessment, Postgraduate Programs, International Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Australia is a popular destination for international students, offering a high-quality education system with world-class universities and diverse cities. Further academics, the country's vigorous culture, remarkable landscapes, and welcoming ambience enhance the student experience. Australian universities provide comprehensive career support for international postgraduate students, including job listings, career development programs, advising, and workshops, aimed at improving employability and helping students secure rewarding careers. These institutions focus on practical learning, industry connections, and specialized postgraduate programs, which prepare graduates for the global job market. International postgraduate students face unique challenges in employment, including navigating job markets, cultural nuances, and visa restrictions, but universities and professional platforms provide crucial support to enhance their career prospects. Based on the related literature and studies, the researcher observed that there are insufficient studies when it comes to assessment of international postgraduate programs. It is very evident that previous studies were more focused in general student population (e.g., entire

population of the program and PhD students only). Also, the current survey questions of the selected Australian universities only focused on the course unit and not the program, instruction, and research. Lastly, the current student survey from The Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) only focuses undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students and those who are currently on their course's first or final year. With that, there is a research gap or lack of knowledge when it comes to assessment of postgraduate programs for international students who are studying master's by research and PhD in Australian universities, and that is what this study aims to explore.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

This study intends to assess the postgraduate programs offered to international students in selected Australian universities which will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the program and how much the program satisfies and meets the needs of the postgraduate international students.

Specifically, this study will seek to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of the following:
 - 1.1 Postgraduate program enrolled in
 - 1.2 Specialization
 - 1.3 Stage of Progress (year level)
 - 1.4 University enrolled in
2. What is the assessment of the respondents on the postgraduate programs for international students in selected Australian universities when it comes to perceived academic fulfillment in terms of the following:
 - 2.1 Program
 - 2.2 Instruction
 - 2.3 Graduate Research
3. Is there a significant difference in the evaluation of the respondents when the profile is taken as test factors?
4. What specific policy may be proposed based on the results of the study?

2. METHODOLOGY

The chapter presents the research design and techniques used by the measure in conducting the study. It includes study's respondents, research instrument used for data processing, and the statistical tools utilized in the data analysis and interpretation.

2.1. Research Design

The study employed the mixed method, specifically the multi-level model of triangulation. Using this model involves the following level: the **quantitative phase** – international students taking up master's degrees; international students doctorate degrees; and the **qualitative phase** – the deans of the Postgraduate School or program heads. The quantitative phase involved the international postgraduate students taking up master's degrees by coursework and research, and doctorate degrees in evaluating the postgraduate program offered by their respective universities. The qualitative phase involved the deans or program heads in an interview about the evaluation of the university postgraduate programs based on the distinct results of the quantitative phase.

2.2. Research Locale

This study was conducted in three selected Australian universities. The selected Australian universities—The University of Sydney, University of New South Wales and University of Technology Sydney—were chosen for their diverse international student populations and varying levels of technological integration.

2.3. Research Instruments

2.3.1. Quantitative Phase

The self-assessment tool was drawn from carefully selected literature on Postgraduate Program Evaluation. The researcher was guided by the Graduate Student Assessment Survey 2011 of the University at Albany's [1], the University of California Graduate Student Experience Survey 2021 [2], and the national standards of Australia. It was developed to meet the objectives of the study, meet the Australian standards and tailor fit the intended respondents with the guidance of the three international experts from selected Australian Universities (UNSW, Usyd, and UTS).

2.3.2. Qualitative Phase

The researcher created a semi-structured questionnaire about the assessment of postgraduate programs only after the distinct results of the quantitative phase were obtained. The questions were based on the distinct results only of the quantitative phase. This instrument was used for the interview with the deans or program heads.

2.4. Validation of Instrument

The self-assessment tool and the semi-structured questionnaire was validated by 3 experts: the Dean of the Postgraduate Studies, Program Heads, and Field Experts. The evaluation tool was pilot tested with the international students at Adamson University. The tool used a 5 – point Likert scale to ascertain the valid evaluation of the international student – respondents: 1 – not satisfactory; 2 – slightly satisfactory; 3 – satisfactory; 4 – very satisfactory; 5 – excellent.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

2.5.1. Quantitative Phase

A letter of request to the University Officer to conduct the study was processed after the defense proposal. The distribution of the questionnaire was done digitally by the researcher to postgraduate international students at selected Australian universities. The researcher sought help and support from the staff of the selected departments to ensure 100% retrieval. Retrieval was done 2 weeks after the distribution of the questionnaires.

2.5.2. Qualitative Phase

The researcher conducted an interview with the deans or program heads using a semi-structured questionnaire about the postgraduate programs offered to international students after the distinct results of the quantitative phase have been obtained. The interview questions were based on the distinct results only of the quantitative phase.

2.6. Data Analysis Procedure

2.6.1. Quantitative Phase

Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used in treating the gathered data in this study. Frequency counts and percentages was used to describe the profile of the respondents. The weighted mean was used to describe the assessment of postgraduate programs of the respondents as international students, and the following Likert Scale will be used:

Mean Range	Verbal Description
4.20 – 5.00	Excellent
3.40 – 4.19	Very Satisfactory
2.60 – 3.39	Satisfactory
1.80 – 2.59	Slightly Satisfactory
1.00 – 1.79	Not Satisfactory

2.6.2. Qualitative Phase

The researcher conducted the following steps by Creswell and Poth, 2018[3] in analyzing the data obtained from the interview: Manage and organize the qualitative data obtained from interview protocols. Read and memo emergent ideas from the interview protocols. Memos are short phrases, ideas, or concepts that occur to the researcher; and are synthesized into higher-level analytic meanings. Memoing captured emerging thematic ideas. Describe and analyse the codes into themes. Coding involves aggregating the text into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code, then assigning a label to the code. Themes or dimensions of information consist of several codes aggregated to form common ideas. Develop and assess the interpretations to establish the follow-up and explanation of the quantitative findings. Represent and visualize the qualitative data into a tabular format.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data gathered, the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and interpretation of the findings. The sequence of the presentation is patterned after the statement of the problem through tabular presentations.

3.1. Quantitative Phase

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Program		
Masters	117	67.6%
Doctorate	56	32.4%
Specialization		
Business and Management	63	36.4%
Social Science	42	24.3%
Science, Health, Engineering, Computing	67	38.7%
Did not identify	1	0.6%
Progress		
Masters – coursework	109	63.0%
Masters- research	8	4.6%
Doctorate-research	56	32.4%
University		
University of Sydney	72	41.6%
University of Technology Sydney	52	30.1%
University of New South Wales	49	28.3%

The study analysed 173 international students, mostly in master's programs (67.6%), with specializations in Science, Business, and Social Sciences. Participants were from three universities: Sydney, UTS, and UNSW.

Table 2. Assessment of the respondents on the postgraduate programs for international students – Among Coursework

Table 2.1 Program

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Rank
Adequacy of facilities	4.26	0.66	Very Satisfactory	1
Quality of IT support	3.9	0.84	Very Satisfactory	4
Expectations to access library facilities or how easy to access library online	3.76	0.85	Very Satisfactory	10.5
My assessment of overall quality of library holdings in my program	3.88	0.75	Very Satisfactory	5
Required courses are offered regularly and as scheduled	4.25	0.65	Very Satisfactory	2
Elective courses are offered regularly and as scheduled	4.06	0.74	Very Satisfactory	3
Degree of faculty involvement in program activities and events	3.1	0.98	Satisfactory	16
My program's requirements are appropriate and well-defined	3.83	0.68	Very Satisfactory	7.5
My program's curriculum provides the knowledge and training for postgraduate competency in my area of specialization	3.72	0.73	Very Satisfactory	12

Conditions for understanding of the program's standards and expectations for student work	3.61	0.76	Very Satisfactory	14
Quality of the department/discipline/program advice and guidance	3.85	0.77	Very Satisfactory	6
The opportunity to interact intellectually across disciplines	3.45	0.79	Satisfactory	15
Assistance in finding employment from my department/program/instructors	1.98	1.05	Slightly Satisfactory	17
Literature advised by supervisor/s is/are relevant to program content	3.83	0.77	Very Satisfactory	7.5
Literature advised by supervisor/s includes the latest developments in the discipline	3.77	0.79	Very Satisfactory	9
Rate the variety of courses available in your postgraduate program	3.76	0.83	Very Satisfactory	10.5
My assessment of overall quality of my program.	3.63	0.66	Very Satisfactory	13
Overall	3.69	0.46	Very Satisfactory	

The overall mean rating of 3.69 reflects a satisfactory assessment of the program. Among 17 positive attributes, 14 were rated as very satisfactory, 2 as satisfactory, and 1 as slightly satisfactory. The highest mean (4.26) denotes very satisfactory feedback on the adequacy of facilities, aligning with Kumar's (2023) observation of Australia's top-tier universities investing heavily in exceptional facilities [4]. Required and elective courses were also rated very satisfactory, with means of 4.25 and 4.06, respectively. However, the lowest mean (1.98) indicated slight satisfaction with employment assistance. This suggests Australian universities provide extensive and well-regarded facilities for international students but may need to enhance career support services.

Table 2.2 Instruction

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Rank
Courses provide preparation for post-graduation careers	3.61	0.77	Very Satisfactory	6
Core courses provide a theoretical foundation in my field or discipline	3.7	0.75	Very Satisfactory	3
The course workload is manageable	4.04	0.71	Very Satisfactory	1
Instructor expectations for student work are reasonable	3.69	0.74	Very Satisfactory	4
Instructor expectations for student work are challenging enough	3.14	1.05	Satisfactory	7
Availability of my instructors/professors for consultation	3.98	0.85	Very Satisfactory	2
My assessment of overall quality of graduate level teaching in my area of discipline	3.65	0.7	Very Satisfactory	5
Overall	3.69	0.46	Satisfactory	

The overall mean of 3.69 indicates satisfactory ratings for instruction, with six attributes rated very satisfactory and one satisfactory. The highest mean (4.04) reflects the course workload's manageability, a key factor for postgraduate students balancing commitments, while the lowest mean (3.14) suggests instructor expectations could be more challenging. Australian universities prioritize manageable workloads and offer flexible programs and support to aid international students' success.

Table 2.3 Overall Academic Fulfilment

Domains	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Rank
Program	3.69	0.46	Very Satisfactory	1.5
Instruction	3.69	0.46	Very Satisfactory	1.5
Overall	3.69	0.42	Very Satisfactory	

The postgraduate programs for international students received a very satisfactory overall rating (3.69) across program, instruction, and learning experience, reflecting a holistic sense of academic fulfilment as described by Hwa (2020) [5].

Table 3. Assessment of the respondents on the postgraduate programs for international students – Among those in Research

Table 3.1 Program

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Rank
Adequacy of facilities	4.14	0.88	Very Satisfactory	1
Quality of IT support	3.85	0.77	Very Satisfactory	4
Expectations to access library facilities or how easy to access library online	3.76	0.8	Very Satisfactory	8
My assessment of overall quality of library holdings in my program	3.84	0.73	Very Satisfactory	5.5
Required courses are offered regularly and as scheduled	4.04	0.88	Very Satisfactory	2
Elective courses are offered regularly and as scheduled	3.93	0.89	Very Satisfactory	3
Degree of faculty involvement in program activities and events	3.19	0.89	Satisfactory	16
My program's requirements are appropriate and well-defined	3.67	0.93	Very Satisfactory	10
My program's curriculum provides the knowledge and training for postgraduate competency in my area of specialization	3.65	1.01	Very Satisfactory	12
Conditions for understanding of the program's standards and expectations for student work	3.57	0.85	Very Satisfactory	14

Quality of the department/discipline/program advice and guidance	3.78	0.87	Very Satisfactory	7
The opportunity to interact intellectually across disciplines	3.54	0.86	Very Satisfactory	15
Assistance in finding employment from my department/program/instructors	2.31	1.14	Slightly Satisfactory	17
Literature advised by supervisor/s is/are relevant to program content	3.84	1.01	Very Satisfactory	5.5
Literature advised by supervisor/s includes the latest developments in the discipline	3.74	1	Very Satisfactory	9
Rate the variety of courses available in your postgraduate program	3.65	0.98	Very Satisfactory	12
My assessment of overall quality of my program.	3.65	0.63	Very Satisfactory	12
Overall	3.66	0.63	Very Satisfactory	

The overall mean of 3.66 indicates a satisfactory rating of the program, with most attributes rated as very satisfactory, particularly the adequacy of facilities (4.14). The lowest rating (2.31) reflects slight satisfaction with employment assistance. This suggests Australian universities provide generally adequate facilities for international postgraduate research students, though individual needs may vary.

Table 3.2 Instructions

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Rank
Courses provide preparation for post-graduation careers	3.58	0.81	Very Satisfactory	6
Core courses provide a theoretical foundation in my field or discipline	3.61	0.94	Very Satisfactory	4.5
The course workload is manageable	3.91	0.81	Very Satisfactory	1.5
Instructor expectations for student work are reasonable	3.81	0.73	Very Satisfactory	3
Instructor expectations for student work are challenging enough	2.98	1.06	Satisfactory	7
Availability of my instructors/professors for consultation	3.91	0.99	Very Satisfactory	1.5
My assessment of overall quality of graduate level teaching in my area of discipline	3.61	0.9	Very Satisfactory	4.5
Overall	3.63	0.52	Very Satisfactory	

The overall mean of 3.63 indicates a satisfactory rating for instruction, with manageable workloads and accessible instructors rated very satisfactory (3.91), while instructor expectations

for student work are rated satisfactory (2.98). This reflects Australian universities' strong support for international postgraduate research students.

Table 4. Assessment on Graduate Research

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Rank
Diversity of school's discipline research interests	3.84	0.93	Very Satisfactory	3
My research supervisor helps me develop my ideas into a workable proposal or prospectus	3.95	0.84	Very Satisfactory	2
My research supervisor helps me design and implement my research plan	3.78	0.95	Very Satisfactory	4
My research supervisor reads my drafts and provides feedback promptly	3.73	0.96	Very Satisfactory	6
My research supervisor helps me with transitioning into a role as a professional or academic in my field	3.08	1.25	Satisfactory	19
My research supervisor encourages me to present my work at conferences	3.16	1.12	Satisfactory	17
My research supervisor collaborates with me on research for presentation or publication	3.19	1.22	Satisfactory	16
My department/discipline/program has provided me with opportunities to obtain faculty mentoring in developing research skills	3.45	1.14	Satisfactory	9
My department/discipline/program has provided me with opportunities to pursue my own research interests	3.77	0.97	Very Satisfactory	5
My department/discipline/program has provided me with opportunities to learn about other research conducted at my university	3.48	0.93	Satisfactory	8
My department/discipline/program has provided me with opportunities to conduct independent research	3.97	0.98	Very Satisfactory	1
My department/discipline/program has provided me with opportunities to learn about research conducted outside my university	2.77	1.26	Satisfactory	21
My department/discipline/program has provided me with opportunities to collaborate with peers	3.22	1.05	Satisfactory	13.5
My department/discipline/program has provided me with opportunities to collaborate with faculty or students from other departments	3.22	1.11	Satisfactory	13.5
My department/discipline/program has provided me with opportunities to work collaboratively with faculty on research	3.2	1.06	Satisfactory	15
My department/discipline/program has provided me with opportunities to work with faculty whose research interests match my own	3.42	1.07	Satisfactory	10

Opportunities to establish research/academic mentorship relationships with faculty members in my program	3.39	1.21	Satisfactory	11.5
My pre-requisite courses prepared me to conduct research in my field or discipline	2.98	1.03	Satisfactory	20
The research program prepared me to publish in the discipline	3.39	1.03	Satisfactory	11.5
My university has provided me adequate training in research methods	3.13	1.15	Satisfactory	18
My overall rating of my research supervisor	3.72	0.86	Very Satisfactory	7
Overall	3.42	0.76	Satisfactory	

The overall mean of 3.42 indicates a satisfactory rating for graduate research, with most attributes rated satisfactory or very satisfactory, particularly opportunities for independent research and supervisor support. However, opportunities for learning about external research are rated lower.

Table 5. Summary of Results among Research Group Only

Domains	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Rank
Program	3.66	0.63	Very Satisfactory	1
Instruction	3.63	0.52	Very Satisfactory	2
Research	3.42	0.76	Satisfactory	3
Overall	3.57	0.58	Very Satisfactory	

The overall satisfaction rating for the postgraduate program was 3.57, with high ratings for program (3.66) and instruction (3.63), indicating a positive perception, though research received a slightly lower rating (3.42). This reflects the effectiveness and excellence of Australian universities' educational experience for international students.

Table 6. Results of Test of Significance on their Program Assessment when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile	Mean	t	F	Sig	Interpretation
Program					
Masters	3.70	0.559		.446	Not Significant
Doctorate	3.65				
Specialization					
Business and Management	3.65		0.022	.978	Not Significant
Social Science	3.67				
Science, Health, Engineering, Computing	3.65				
Progress					
Masters – coursework	3.92		0.895	.445	Not Significant
Masters- research	3.67				
Doctorate-research	3.52				
University					

University of Sydney	3.69	2.988	.053	Not Significant
University of Technology Sydney	3.52			
University of New South Wales	3.78			

*Data is normally distributed with p value of 0.060 (Wilk Shapiro)

The p-values (0.446, 0.978, 0.445, 0.053) indicate no significant differences in mean program assessments across various factors (degree level, specialization, progress, and university).

Table 7. Results of Test of Significance on their Instruction Assessment when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile	Mean	T	F	Sig	Interpretation
Program					
Masters	3.67	.072		.943	Not Significant
Doctorate	3.67				
Specialization					
Business and Management	3.58		4.296	.015	Significant
Social Science	3.87				
Science, Health, Engineering, Computing	3.61				
Progress					
Masters – coursework	3.69		2.888	.058	Not Significant
Masters- research	3.21				
Doctorate-research	3.69				
University					
University of Sydney	3.66		1.996	.139	Not Significant
University of Technology Sydney	3.56				
University of New South Wales	3.78				

The p-value results indicate no significant difference in instruction assessments between Masters and Doctorate programs, progress groups, or universities, but a significant difference exists among the three specializations.

Post Hoc Analysis – Comparison of Instruction Assessments

Profile	Sig	Interpretation
Specialization		
Business and Management – Social Science	.018	Significant
Social Science – Science, Health, Engineering, Computing	.040	Significant

Post hoc test results show that social science is significant as compared to Business and management, specifically rating of Social Science is significantly higher than Business and Management. Likewise, Social Science has significantly higher rating than those from Science, Health, Engineering, Computing.

Table 8. Results of Test of Significance on their Research Assessment when Grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile	Mean	t	F	Sig	Interpretation
Program					
Masters	3.06	1.465		.148	Not Significant
Doctorate	3.47				
Specialization					
Business and Management	3.58		1.144	.325	Not Significant
Social Science	3.54				
Science, Health, Engineering, Computing	3.27				
University					
University of Sydney	3.55		2.317	.107	Not Significant
University of Technology Sydney	3.14				
University of New South Wales	3.58				

The p-values of 0.148, 0.325, and 0.107 indicate no significant differences in research assessment between Masters and Doctorate students, among the three specializations, and across universities, respectively.

3.2. Qualitative Phase

Based on the quantitative survey result from the international postgraduate coursework students, the lowest mean is 1.98 which suggest that their rating is only slightly satisfactory about assistance in finding employment from their department/program/instructors. While for research students, the lowest mean is 2.31 which suggest that their rating is only slightly satisfactory about assistance in finding employment from their department/program/instructors as well. The researcher created a semi-structured questionnaire about the assessment of postgraduate programs which will be asked with the deans or program heads.

3.2.1. Qualitative Analysis

Question 1: Is there any existing assistance for international postgraduate students in finding employment?

Table 9. Existing Assistance for International Postgraduate Students in Finding Employment

Significant Statements, Phrases or Words	Code	Theme
<i>“Yes! there is an existing assistance for international postgraduate students in finding employment which they can access like professional development programs, career seminars and expos, the careers portal for job listings, and career advisors”</i>	Career Development Programs	Positive Support for international postgraduate students in finding employment.
Existing assistance for international postgraduate students through CareerHub, Career Development Workshops and Events, the Professional Mentoring Programs, Personalized Career Advice, Alumni Network.	Network	
<i>“Yes. There is a support. Their employability services provided a range of skills training and assistance for us as research students to find employment after we complete our degree. There is also an expectation that individual supervisors will help train us as candidates to prepare us for life beyond our PhD”</i>	Preparation	
<i>Yes. They have a centralized unit that helps all students (undergrad, postgrad coursework, and postgrad research).</i>	Appointed In-Charge in providing assistance	

Australia is a popular destination for international students, attracting a diverse and vibrant student population from across the globe. The country’s renowned education system, with its world-class universities and research institutions, offers a high-quality learning experience. Beyond academics, Australia’s welcoming culture, stunning natural beauty, and diverse cities provide a rich and enriching experience for international students. This union of academic prowess and a vigorous lifestyle makes Australia a highly sought-after destination for students seeking a global education. Australian universities offer a range of services to assist international postgraduate students in finding employment. These services include job listings, career/professional development programs, career advising, career seminars, and workshops. These resources are designed to support students in their job search efforts and help them develop the necessary skills and knowledge to pursue their desired career paths successfully. Australian universities recommend a wide range of postgraduate programs across various fields, attracting students from around the globe. These programs cater to various career aspirations and academic interests, providing students with specialized knowledge, advanced skills, and research opportunities. The country’s renowned education system, with its prominence on practical learning and industry ties, ensures that graduates are well-prepared to enter the global job market. The diverse and welcoming culture of Australia further enhances the postgraduate experience, providing international students with a rich and enriching environment for academic and personal growth. By taking advantage of these opportunities, international postgraduate students can enhance their employability and increase their chances of securing rewarding employment opportunities upon graduation.

Question 2: Given that international students are new to Australia and have no connections yet, do you believe international postgraduate students need assistance in finding employment? Why?

Table 10: The necessity for international postgraduate students' assistance in finding employment?

Significant Statements, Phrases or Words	Code	Theme
<i>"I agree and believe that international postgraduate students need assistance in finding employment. International students need additional support for a range of activities to ensure that they can settle into Australia effectively and get the most out of their international study experience which includes support in finding casual or part time work. The University provides support to all students to be able to find work, to write effective CVs and cover letters as well as internship opportunities with local employers"</i>	Settlement Assurance in the Foreign Land	The Necessity of Employment Assistance
<i>"I believe that international postgraduate students need assistance in finding employment. The service of UTS Careers, per above, are available to postgraduate students. Visa restrictions will apply, notably for HDR candidates, on the hours of paid employment possible alongside study. This is a national policy as much as an institutional issue"</i>	National Policy of Australia	
<i>"There should be an assistance for international postgraduate students finding employment. There are certainly cultural expectations on how to find jobs in Australia that international students will appreciate. Also, regardless of INTL or Domestic students, this need is common to most students everyone needs help understanding how their degree is helping to build skills and how to translate this into employment"</i>	Equal Benefits between International Postgraduate students and Australia	
<i>"Yes and No. if the international students have come to study, then that should be their focus. Part-time jobs to support a small income then those are easy enough to find and source without uni help. However, if the assistance is referring to help finding required study internships, then yes, it would be helpful. While, if the assistance was referring to work post uni, then the same help that all students receive is equally applicable"</i>	Focus	

International postgraduate students often face unique challenges when seeking employment after graduation. Navigating a new job market, understanding cultural nuances, and overcoming potential visa restrictions can be daunting. Many Australian universities provide career services specifically customized to international students, providing guidance on resume writing, interview skills, and networking opportunities. Additionally, professional organizations and online platforms dedicated to connecting international graduates with employers can be valuable resources. By leveraging these resources and actively engaging with potential employers,

international postgraduate students can increase their chances of finding fulfilling career opportunities.

Question 3: Given that international student provided proof of funds when applying for student visa, do you believe international postgraduate students should be allowed to work full-time while studying for a master’s or PhD? Why?

Table 11: The ability of the international postgraduate students to work fulltime while studying Master’s or PhD.

Significant Statements, Phrases or Words	Code	Theme
<i>I am hesitant in allowing postgraduate students to work full time while studying since it is difficult to study while working. Many international students have to work part time to supplement their living expenses. Working full time and studying full time is not possible for students, especially those studying research degrees as it will lead to poor outcomes and a poor experience for the students.</i>	Difficulties in working while studying simultaneously	
I didn’t agree in allowing postgraduate students to work full time while studying for a master’s or PhD. The achievement of a strong HDR outcome is the key to success, recognizing that baseline support/opportunity must be accessible to achieve this. Full-time work would fundamentally undermine the work of research, noting that full-time candidature is equivalent to a full-time job.	Difficulties in working while studying simultaneously	
<i>Yes. It should be left to students to manage. They always advise their students that they need to keep their working arrangements in line with the expectations of the degree and the degree should come first. But the participant understands the financial pressures that students are up against, and the need to work.</i>	Freedom to choose	Focus on Studying
<i>I did not agree, and the participant emphasized that doing a PhD is a full-time endeavour. There is not enough time in a day to hold another full-time position. An outside job is often a distraction and leads to poor progress in the PhD.</i>	Difficulties in working while studying simultaneously	

Balancing full-time work and study in Australia can be a challenging endeavour. The demands of a demanding job often leave little time or energy for academic pursuits. Juggling work schedules, deadlines, and study commitments can lead to feelings of overwhelm and exhaustion. Additionally, according to Taft (2024), the high cost of living in Australia can add financial strain, making it difficult to prioritize both work and study [6]. Balancing full-time work and study is a demanding endeavour that requires exceptional time management, discipline, and resilience. The persistent pressure to function well in both domains can lead to feelings of exhaustion, stress, and anxiety. Finding the time and energy to dedicate to both work and study commitments can be a significant challenge, often leading to sacrifices in personal life and leisure activities. Moreover, the mental and physical strain of juggling demanding schedules can impact academic performance and job productivity, creating a vicious cycle of pressure and fatigue. While it’s possible to succeed in this balancing act, it requires careful planning, effective prioritization, and a strong support system to navigate the inherent difficulties.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Most international postgraduate students in Australia are enrolled in master's programs, with high satisfaction levels regarding facilities, workload, and program design, which includes well-equipped resources and clear academic support.

Australian universities prioritize fostering independent research skills through hands-on experience, with structured programs that combine coursework, research opportunities, and career development support for students' academic and professional growth.

Universities provide extensive career services tailored to postgraduate students, including counselling, job placement, and networking, although balancing work and studies remains a significant challenge.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Provision for additional hours for the HDR students to work as instructors/tutors in the undergraduate program of their field for those who are struggling with their expenses. Offering of part-time jobs for international students like administration, teaching, maintenance etc., who are struggling with their expenses and can't find jobs.

Redefine the requirements of the program during orientation for full-time employees.

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