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Australian PhD graduates ill equipped in current job market: Study

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Findings of this study has overarching implications for policymakers as well as teaching and learning programme developers



Australia's Monash University study into the employability of PhD graduates has found that a PhD qualification alone does not guarantee long-term employment outcomes.

In the current labour market there is increasing pressure on graduates to develop and leverage their own networks in order to obtain employment.

Employment outcomes are determined by many contributing factors, such as the personal and professional networks students have formed, the discipline area and institution, graduating from a Group of Eight University, and graduating from a non-medical and health-science based PhD degree.

These many contributing factors highlight that employability outcomes result from the development and utilisation of a range of resources, not just a qualification alone.

According to the study, a three year PhD course is too short a time for graduates to develop their expertise. As a result, graduates have to rely on their previous degrees in order to obtain employment outcomes and kick-start their careers. Graduates who succeed in obtaining employment not only expand but also leverage their social networks.

Non-technical skills, such as communication, planning and project management, problem-solving, and analytical skills play an important role in the employment outcomes of PhD graduates.