INVENTORY RESULT – RESPONSES FROM 34 UNIVERSITIES

Professional Practice in Australian ICT Degrees
Inventory for The Australian Council of Deans of ICT (ACDICT)
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Purpose

To counter the negative perception that ICT awards do not prepare students to be professionally ready, ACDICT would like to gather information on the various experiences that students receive throughout the degree that prepare them for professional practice. We believe that this total exposure by ICT students is likely to equal or exceed that of other degrees which have a strong professional reputation, such as engineering, nursing, law and psychology.

The intention is make visible the significant professional practice components in Australian ICT degrees in order to improve the professional readiness reputation of the awards in the community, including prospective students, parents, teachers and industry in general.

Background

All Australian universities teaching ICT provide some form of preparation for profession practice for their students.   Universities will have different desired outcomes in relation to professional practice and will adopt different approaches that best suit the local context. However this exposure to professional practice in ICT degrees is apparently not well known. It is observed that the disciplines with the strongest professional reputations in the community are those that have a professional practice requirement (of some form) for graduation or registration.

It is commonly acknowledged that some form of professional practice experience brings significant benefits to all stakeholders including students, universities, industry and the community in general. Furthermore, a strong and visible professional practice culture in a degree can influence the general community's perception of the discipline's status as a profession.

Professional practice experiences are attributed with the development of a range of skills including important 'softer' skills greatly valued by employers, such as team work, self-management and initiative which prepare students for a professional working environment.

Inventory

The professional practice statements below encompass those used for recognised engineering professional practice experiences (Engineers Australia, 2008*).

Compiled results on the two Tables over the page

*Engineers Australia (2008). Accreditation Management System; Educational Programs at the Level of Professional Engineer. Document G02: Accreditation Criteria Guidelines. http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uuid=0B19D0FF-0BC5-BAC1-DB36-6FB8599DDE67&siteName=ieaust

Professional Practice Inventory Response (280512)

44 responses (some universities listed several degrees) from 34 universities

Experiences	
Structured learning experience to facilitate a smooth transition to professional practice	42
Optional work placements and internships	30
Compulsory work placement period	13
Use of case studies	38
Industry-linked projects	41
Learning of applied skills and knowledge in any context	40
Capstone Unit	39
Authentic learning experiences in relation to the award's intended professional outcomes	39
Team based project	42
Use of staff with industry experience	41
Practical experience in a professional ICT environment outside the teaching establishment	25
Practical experience in a professional ICT environment within the teaching establishment	30
Mandatory exposure to lectures on professional ethics and conduct	40
Use of guest presenters from industry	38
Industry visits and inspections	14
An industry based final year project	31
Industry research for feasibility studies	10
Study of industry policies, processes, practices and benchmarks	36
Interviewing ICT professionals	11
Industry based investigatory assignments	22
Direct industry input of data and advice to problem solving, projects and evaluation tasks	22
Electronic links with practicing professionals	15

Less than 3 weeks	0
3 – 6 weeks	5
6 – 9 weeks	3
9 – 12 weeks	9
More than 12 weeks	28

Total 45 because one university gave both 9–12 and >12 for 3 degrees on one form