



EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF WORK

HR PULSE SURVEY REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings from this survey differ from most AHRI HRpulse surveys in that the questions sought the views of members not in their professional role as HR practitioners observing and reporting on their workplaces, but as individuals reporting on their own experience of work and, with respect to the student respondents, their expectations of work in the future.

The report is based on the findings of a survey of AHRI members that was conducted online during June and July 2016. A total of 437 respondents participated in the survey. Approximately three-quarters of the respondents were female.

All responses were treated anonymously.

Around a quarter of the respondent sample (23 per cent) identified as students.

Of the 77 per cent who identified as non-student respondents, around two-thirds were working in a HR role. Roughly equal proportions enjoyed a long experience in HR (20+ years), were highly experienced (11-20 years), experienced (5-10 years) or relative newcomers (1-4 years).

NON-STUDENT RESPONDENTS

Nine out of ten respondents work in large (66 per cent with 200+ employees) or medium-sized (25 per cent with 20-199 employees) organisations, and half were from the private sector. More than eight out of ten were permanent employees and the others were on contracts or worked on temporary arrangements.

More than eight out of ten were university educated, with more than two thirds having bachelor or postgraduate degrees, and another 10 per cent with graduate diplomas or certificates.

On engagement, around 85 per cent reported being very or somewhat engaged, with the other 15 per cent disengaged or neutral. That is a much stronger proportion of engagement than for the general workforce, which is estimated at around 25 per cent positively engaged in Australia. That difference might be expected on a matter so close to the heart, if not the bone, for most HR practitioners.

On the issue of career progression, 57 per cent reported being satisfied or very satisfied; however 22 per cent reported being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, with 20 per cent neutral.

Of those satisfied, 54 per cent reported the main reason for satisfaction as being in a career that suits their skills and abilities. Others reported good managers and leaders (50 per cent), availability of opportunities, 47 per cent), a degree of good luck (40 per cent) and employer provision of training and development (40 per cent).

Of the unsatisfied sample, 62 per cent reported lack of career opportunities at the places they worked, followed by a general observation about limited job opportunities (50 per cent). Poor managers and leaders were rated by 35 per cent and lack of training and development opportunities by 34 per cent. Only 10 per cent reported being in a career that didn't suit their skills and abilities.

On what would count as obstacles to taking a job, the respondents top three listed were low salary (71 per cent), unchallenging or uninteresting work (68 per cent), and inconvenient location (57 per cent).

Respondents indicated main strengths as work ethic (76 per cent), team collaboration (73 per cent), ability to work under pressure (68 per cent) and exercising initiative (67 per cent). Main weaknesses listed were entrepreneurial skills (50 per cent), technology and IT skills (34 per cent), and creativity (25 per cent).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STUDENT RESPONDENTS

Of the 23 per cent of respondents who answered questions as students, between a half and two thirds (57 per cent) were studying either a masters or a bachelor degree, with around half mixing HR studies with other commerce courses. Around three quarters were attending a university, with half expecting to complete in 2016, a quarter in 2017 and the rest by 2020.

The great majority of respondents reported being experienced in the workforce (58 per cent) or had some work experience (28 per cent). Around 10 per cent reported work experience outside their chosen field, and a very small proportion were paid or unpaid interns, or had no work experience at all (6 per cent in total).

More than half (51 per cent) expressed no interest in work experience placements or internships, while a third reported having participated in work experience or internships at some point (32 per cent).

Of the latter group, the top benefits of work experience or internships reported were building networks (46 per cent), developing skills (45 per cent), adding to resume (39 per cent), and exploring permanent career options (34 per cent).

Main obstacles to participating in work experience or internships were listed as little or no pay (63 per cent), lack of opportunities (54 per cent), cost of travel (48 per cent), juggling other commitments (36 per cent), and the realisation that often family or other connections are necessary to secure placements (36 per cent).

Respondents were asked whether they intended a career in HR. Of those who responded, 95 per cent said they were interested in a HR career.

In terms of what attracted them to an HR career, the most common answer of around one in five respondents was that they liked "working with people". That has been a customary response anecdotally for many years and is probably at the more naïve end of the spectrum of answers, being comparable to saying the attraction of being an accountant is a liking for working with cash. Many accountants would rarely or never work with cash, and many HR practitioners might work with organisational systems or line managers, but not directly with the people who report to line managers. Other answers were mixed but included applying HR expertise to meeting organisation goals, working with managers to build capability, and influencing culture.

It may have been an oversight not to have asked the non-student respondents what attracted them to HR in the first place, but that question will have to wait until another time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CONTENTS

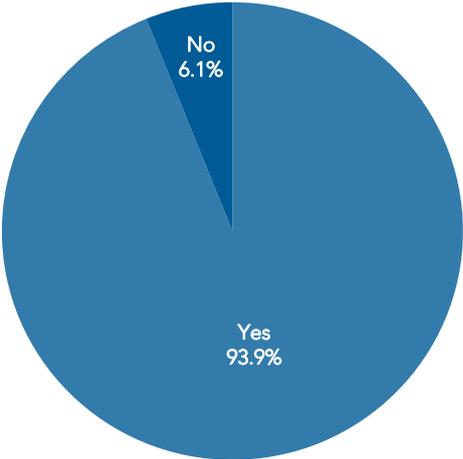
Executive Summary	2
Non-student responses	4
Student responses	13

NON-STUDENT RESPONSES

The data that follows under this heading are responses from the 77 per cent of respondents who reported not being students.

ARE YOU CURRENTLY EMPLOYED? 362 RESPONSES

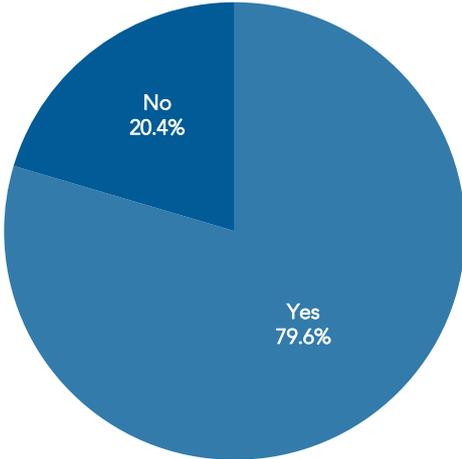
FIGURE 1



As shown in Figure 1, the great majority of the sample (94%) reported being currently employed.

ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING IN HR? 338 RESPONSES

FIGURE 2



As shown in Figure 2, of the respondents who reported being employed, 80% said they worked in a HR role.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN HR? 269 RESPONSES

TABLE 1

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Less than 12 months	5.6%	15
1 – 4 years	21.9%	59
5 – 10 years	23.8%	64
11 – 20 years	27.1%	73
20+ years	20.8%	56
Other	0.7%	2

Table 1 indicates a considerable spread of experience in HR among the sample, with the 11-20 year category reported by more than a quarter of respondents (27%), 5-10 years by a quarter (24%) and 1-4 years by a little more than one in five (22%). Another fifth (21%) reported having worked in HR roles for more than 20 years.

NON-STUDENT RESPONSES

PRIMARY OCCUPATION

330 RESPONSES

TABLE 2

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Academic	0.6%	2
Accountant/Finance	0.3%	1
Accounting/ finance/payroll	0.6%	2
Administrator	6.1%	20
Consultant	8.5%	28
Director/GM/CEO/Executive	6.7%	22
Education & training role	3.3%	11
HR Administrator	7.9%	26
HR Advisor	7.6%	25
HR Business Partner	8.2%	27
HR Coordinator	7.3%	24
HR Manager	20.6%	68
Management (non- HR specific)	2.4%	8
Senior HR Manager	8.2%	27
Other	11.8%	39

Table 2 below indicates that approximately 60% of the respondents are working in a HR role, with approximately 36% in a middle management HR role (HR advisor, HR coordinator and HR manager) and 16% in a senior or executive HR role (senior HR manager and business partner).

SECTOR

330 RESPONSES

TABLE 3

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Public	33.3%	110
Private	49.4%	163
Not-for-profit	17.3%	57

Table 3 below shows that around a half of the respondents are from the private sector, a third are from the public sector and a fifth from the not-for-profit sector.

NON-STUDENT RESPONSES

INDUSTRY 330 RESPONSES

TABLE 4

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Accommodation and Food Services	1.5%	5
Administrative and Support Services	1.5%	5
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2.4%	8
Arts and Recreation Services	0.6%	2
Construction	3.3%	11
Education and Training	12.7%	42
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	2.4%	8
Financial and Insurance Services	4.8%	16
Health Care and Social Assistance	13.9%	46
Information Media and Telecommunications	3.9%	13
Manufacturing	5.5%	18
Mining	3.3%	11
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	11.5%	38
Public Administration and Safety	7.0%	23
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	0.9%	3
Retail Trade	3.3%	11
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3.0%	10
Wholesale Trade	0.6%	2
Other	17.6%	58

Table 4 shows a wide spread of industry types represented in the respondent sample, with health care (14%), education and training (13%), and professional services (12%) being the three most strongly represented.

ORGANISATION SIZE 330 RESPONSES

TABLE 5

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Non-employing/sole proprietor	4.2%	14
Small (2-19 employees)	4.8%	16
Medium (20-199 employees)	24.5%	81
Large (200+ employees)	66.4%	219

Table 5 shows that around two-thirds of the respondents are working in organisations employing more than 200 people, and a quarter are with medium-size organisations employing between 20 and 199 people. The remainder are from small businesses or are sole proprietors.

NON-STUDENT RESPONSES

JOB TYPE

330 RESPONSES

TABLE 6

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Permanent	83.9%	277
Temporary	3.9%	13
Contract	12.1%	40

Table 6 shows that more than eight out of ten respondents (84%) are permanent employees, 4% are temporary and 12% work on contracts.

YOUR HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL

330 RESPONSES

TABLE 7

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Postgraduate Degree	33.9%	112
Graduate Diploma	4.8%	16
Graduate Certificate	5.2%	17
Bachelor Degree	35.8%	118
Advanced Diploma	5.5%	18
Diploma	7.0%	23
Certificate III/IV	5.5%	18
Year 12	2.4%	8
Year 11 or below (includes Certificate I/II/nfd)	0.0%	0

Table 7 below shows that around eight out of ten respondents are university graduates whose highest qualification is a bachelor degree (36%), a postgraduate degree (34%), a graduate diploma or a graduate certificate (10%).

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL IN YOUR CURRENT JOB?

322 RESPONSES

TABLE 8

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Very engaged	45.7%	147
Somewhat engaged	38.5%	124
Neither engaged nor disengaged	5.0%	16
Somewhat disengaged	8.7%	28
Very disengaged	2.2%	7

Table 8 shows that nearly nine out of ten respondents are either very engaged (46%) or somewhat engaged (39%) in their jobs, with 10% reporting a degree of disengagement.

NON-STUDENT RESPONSES

SATISFACTION OF CAREER PROGRESSION TO DATE

343 RESPONSES

TABLE 9

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Very unsatisfied	7.3%	25
Unsatisfied	15.2%	52
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	20.1%	69
Satisfied	40.2%	138
Very satisfied	17.2%	59

On a particular question about career progression satisfaction, Table 9 shows that 22% reported either being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, while 57% reported being satisfied or very satisfied. The remaining 20% were neutral.

REASONS FOR CAREER HAS PROGRESSED WELL

195 RESPONSES

TABLE 10

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Availability of job opportunities	46.7%	91
Training and development provided by employer(s)	40.0%	78
Career progression opportunities in the places I have worked	41.0%	80
Been able to invest money and time in professional development activities outside of work	25.1%	49
Good managers/leaders	50.3%	98
A degree of good luck	40.5%	79
Good career advice at school/university	2.1%	4
Good career advice from family/friends/other	12.3%	24
Completed the right qualifications at school/ university	33.8%	66
Participated in work experience or other employer engagement activities while in education	21.0%	41
In a career that suits my skills and abilities	53.8%	105
Have been able to balance work with parenthood or other family commitments	20.0%	39
Other	12.3%	24

Of the sample who reported on career satisfaction, table 10 shows the main reasons they believe that is so. Being in a career that suits the skills and abilities was the top reason given (by 53% of respondents), with other strong ones being good leadership and management (50%), availability of job opportunities (48%), and career progression opportunities, training and development opportunities and a degree of good luck being cited by more than 40% of respondents. Completing the right qualifications at school and university was mentioned by a third of the sample (34%), participation in work experience by 21%, and being able to balance work with parenting or other family activities by 20%. Good career advice at school or university rated very low on 2%.

NON-STUDENT RESPONSES

REASONS CAREER HAS NOT PROGRESSED WELL?

73 RESPONSES

TABLE 11

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Limited job opportunities	50.6%	39
Lack of training and development from employer(s)	33.8%	26
Lack of career opportunities in the places I worked	62.3%	48
Haven't been in a position to invest time and money in professional development outside of work	18.2%	14
Poor managers/leaders	35.1%	27
A degree of bad luck	9.1%	7
Poor career advice at school/university	6.5%	5
Poor career advice from family/friends/other	3.9%	3
Didn't complete the right qualifications at school/university	5.2%	4
In a career that doesn't suit my skills and abilities	10.4%	8
Couldn't/didn't take part in work experience or other employer engagement activities while in education	7.8%	6
Parenthood or other family commitments have prevented me from progressing further	14.3%	11
Health issues/personal circumstances	3.9%	3
Other	12.3%	9

Of the sample who reported on career dissatisfaction, table 11 shows that lack of career opportunities is reported as the stand-out reason by 62% of the sample. Next comes limited job opportunities (51%), poor management and leadership (35%), and lack of training and development opportunities offered (34%). An allied reason from 18% is that the respondents haven't been able to invest time and money in their own professional development outside of work. One in ten (10%) have suggested being in an career unsuited to their skills and abilities, and slightly more than one in ten (14%) report having being prevented by parenting or family commitments.

NON-STUDENT RESPONSES

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING OBSTACLES WOULD MOST LIKELY PREVENT YOU FROM ACCEPTING OR APPLYING FOR A JOB?

383 RESPONSES

TABLE 12

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Low salary	70.5%	270
Inconvenient location	57.2%	219
Long hours	24.5%	94
Inconvenient hours	23.0%	88
Unchallenging/uninteresting work	68.7%	263
Lack of flexible work options	30.0%	115
Lack of benefits e.g. employee discounts, gym memberships etc.	2.1%	8
Other	9.4%	36

As indicated in table 12, the top three obstacles are low salary (71%), unchallenging or uninteresting work (69%), and inconvenient location (57%). The proportion falls away dramatically after those three, with the next obstacles being no flexible work options (30%), long hours (25%), and inconvenient hours (23%). The number of references made to workplace culture under 'Other' (9%), suggests it may also be an obstacle.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR MAIN STRENGTHS?

383 RESPONSES

TABLE 13

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Written communication skills	64.8%	248
Verbal communication skills	59.3%	227
Teamwork/collaboration	73.4%	281
Confidence	42.8%	164
Time management	47.3%	181
Work ethic	76.2%	292
Critical analysis/problem solving	61.1%	234
Commercial/business awareness	36.3%	139
Entrepreneurial skills	11.2%	43
Flexibility	61.1%	234
Resilience	61.4%	235
Analytical skills	44.6%	171
Creativity	32.1%	123
Technology/IT skills	18.5%	71
Leadership skills	52.2%	200
Ability to work under pressure	67.6%	259
Initiative	66.8%	256
Other	3.9%	15

As indicated in table 13, the main four strengths nominated by respondents are work ethic (76% of sample), team collaboration (73%), ability to work under pressure (68%) and initiative (67%). Other strengths are resilience (61%), critical analysis and problem solving (61%) and flexibility (61%).

NON-STUDENT RESPONSES

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR MAIN WEAKNESSES?

383 RESPONSES

TABLE 14

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Written communication skills	10.2%	39
Verbal communication skills	13.6%	52
Teamwork/collaboration	2.6%	10
Confidence	31.6%	121
Time management	20.1%	77
Work ethic	1.0%	4
Critical analysis/ problem solving	8.6%	33
Commercial/business awareness	24.5%	94
Entrepreneurial skills	50.1%	192
Flexibility	3.9%	15
Resilience	8.6%	33
Analytical skills	13.8%	53
Creativity	25.3%	97
Technology/IT skills	33.7%	129
Leadership skills	12.8%	49
Ability to work under pressure	5.2%	20
Initiative	3.4%	13
Other (please specify)	6.5%	25

As indicated in table 14, the top weaknesses nominated are entrepreneurial skills (50%), technology/IT skills (34%), confidence (32%) and creativity (25%).

NON-STUDENT RESPONSES

SATISFACTION LEVEL WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE ORGANISATION 322 RESPONSES

TABLE 15

ANSWER	Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neither satisfied or unsatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Rating Average
Training and development opportunities	20	69	54	132	47	3.36
Opportunities for career progression	33	78	85	90	36	3.06
Career guidance/mentoring offered	46	62	78	97	39	3.07
Level of feedback/performance appraisal provided	29	55	75	119	44	3.29
Pay	17	60	61	149	35	3.39
Work/life balance	15	41	55	130	81	3.69
Benefits	19	49	100	121	33	3.31
Management/leadership	35	52	71	113	51	3.29

On satisfaction levels, table 15 indicates that opportunities for career progress and career guidance and mentoring provided the lowest satisfaction ratings. Work-life balance scored strongly.

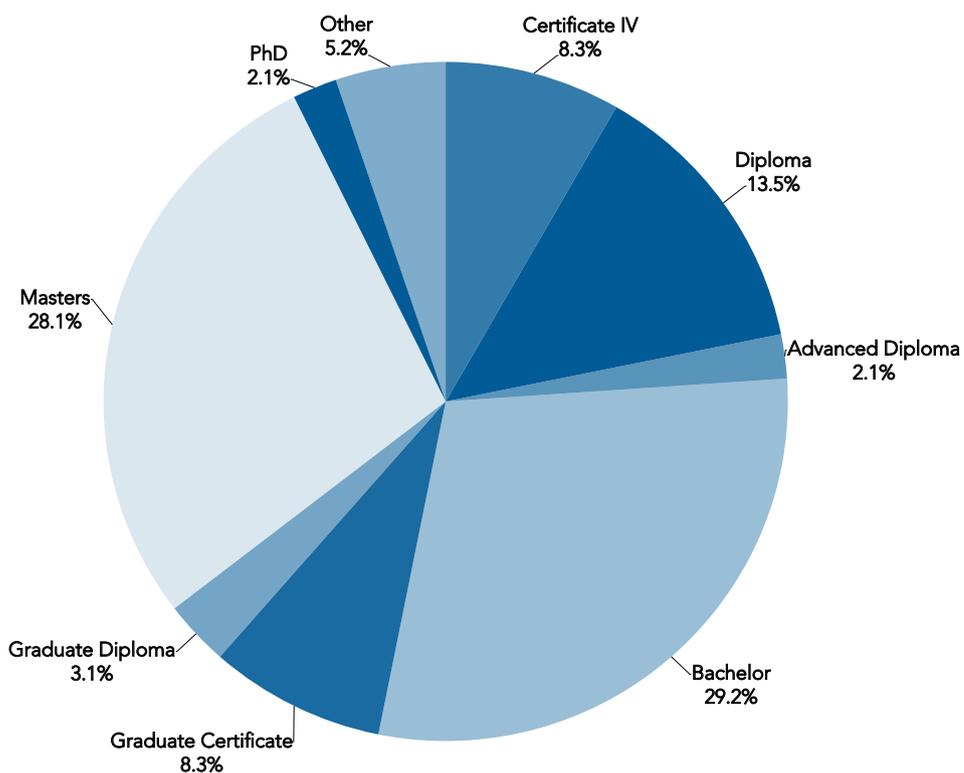
STUDENT RESPONSES

The data set out under this heading are responses from the 23 per cent of respondents who identified as students.

TYPE OF QUALIFICATION

96 RESPONSES

FIGURE 3



As shown in figure 3, considerably more than half of the respondents who answered this question (57%) are studying either a masters degree (28%) or a bachelor degree (29%).

Around a quarter are studying a certificate and diploma level qualification in HR, and about half are mixing HR studies with other commerce courses in undergraduate or postgraduate degrees.

STUDENT RESPONSES

INSTITUTION NAME

92 RESPONSES

TABLE 16

ANSWER	%	COUNT	ANSWER	%	COUNT
AHRI	9.8%	9	Murdoch University	3.3%	3
AIM	1.1%	1	Newcastle University	1.1%	1
Australian Catholic University	1.1%	1	OUA Curtin	1.1%	1
Australian Institute of Business	2.2%	2	QUT	2.2%	2
Brisbane Tafe	1.1%	1	RMIT University	2.2%	2
Careers Australia	1.1%	1	Southern Cross University	1.1%	1
Central Queensland of University	1.1%	1	Swinburne University	2.2%	2
TAFE	1.1%	1	TAFE	5.4%	5
Charles Sturt University	6.5%	6	The College of Law	1.1%	1
College of Adult Learning	1.1%	1	The University of Melbourne	1.1%	1
CQUniversity	1.1%	1	The University of New South Wales	1.1%	1
Curtin University	5.4%	5	Torrenz University	1.1%	1
De La Salle University Philippines	1.1%	1	Traxion Training	1.1%	1
Deakin University	2.2%	2	Trinity College Dublin	1.1%	1
Edith Cowan University	4.3%	4	University of Adelaide	1.1%	1
Evocca College	1.1%	1	University of Melbourne	1.1%	1
Griffith university	8.7%	8	University of New England	2.2%	2
James Cook University	1.1%	1	University of Queensland	3.3%	3
Kaplan Business School	1.1%	1	University of South Australia	3.3%	3
Macquarie Graduate School of Management	1.1%	1	University of Southern Queensland	1.1%	1
Macquarie University	1.1%	1	University of Sydney	1.1%	1
Malmo University	1.1%	1	University of the Sunshine Coast	1.1%	1
Melbourne Polytechnic	1.1%	1	University of Western Australia	2.2%	2
Monash University	1.1%	1	University of Wollongong	1.1%	1

As shown in table 16, around three quarters of respondents are attending a university, including two students attending overseas universities. Around 10% of students are studying AHRI courses, with similar proportions at registered training organisations or TAFE/polytechnics.

STUDENT RESPONSES

EXPECTED YEAR OF COMPLETION

90 RESPONSES

TABLE 17

ANSWER	%	COUNT
2016	53.3%	48
2017	24.4%	22
2018	11.1%	10
2019	6.7%	6
2020	3.3%	3

As shown in table 17, around half the respondents expect to complete their course in 2016, with a quarter completing in 2017, and the rest between 2018 and 2020.

TYPE OF WORK EXPERIENCE

93 RESPONSES

FIGURE 4

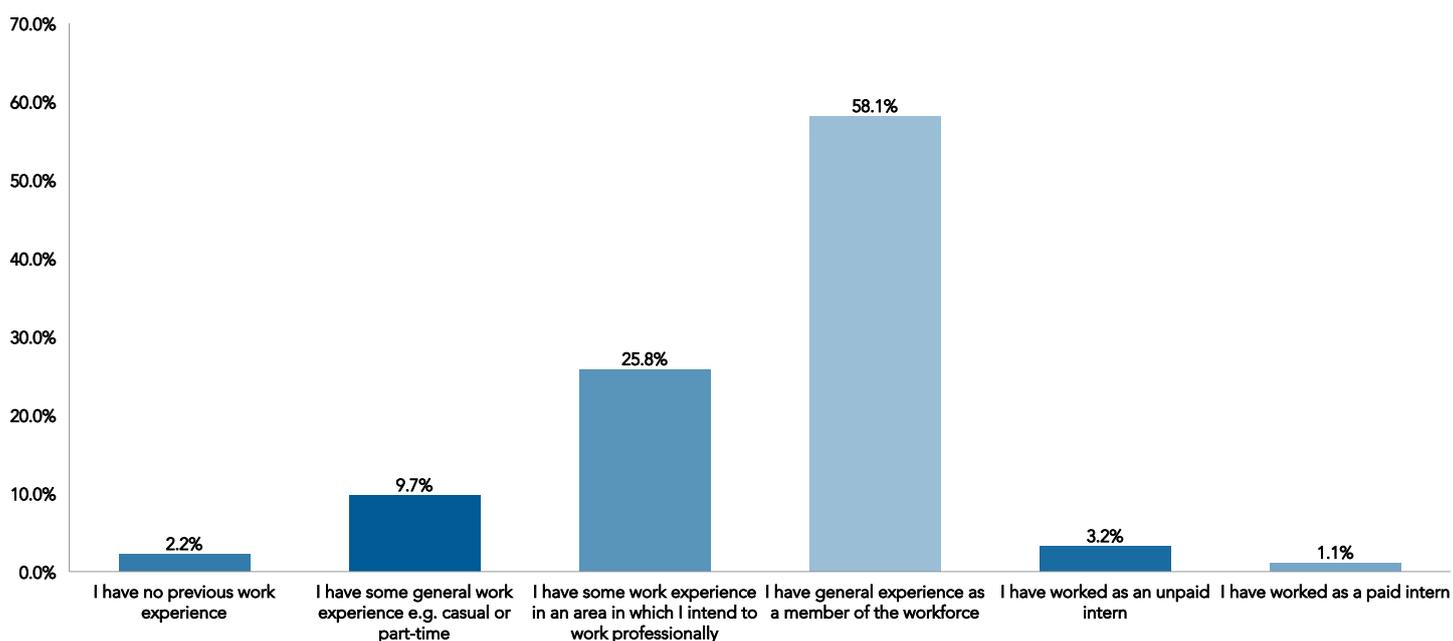


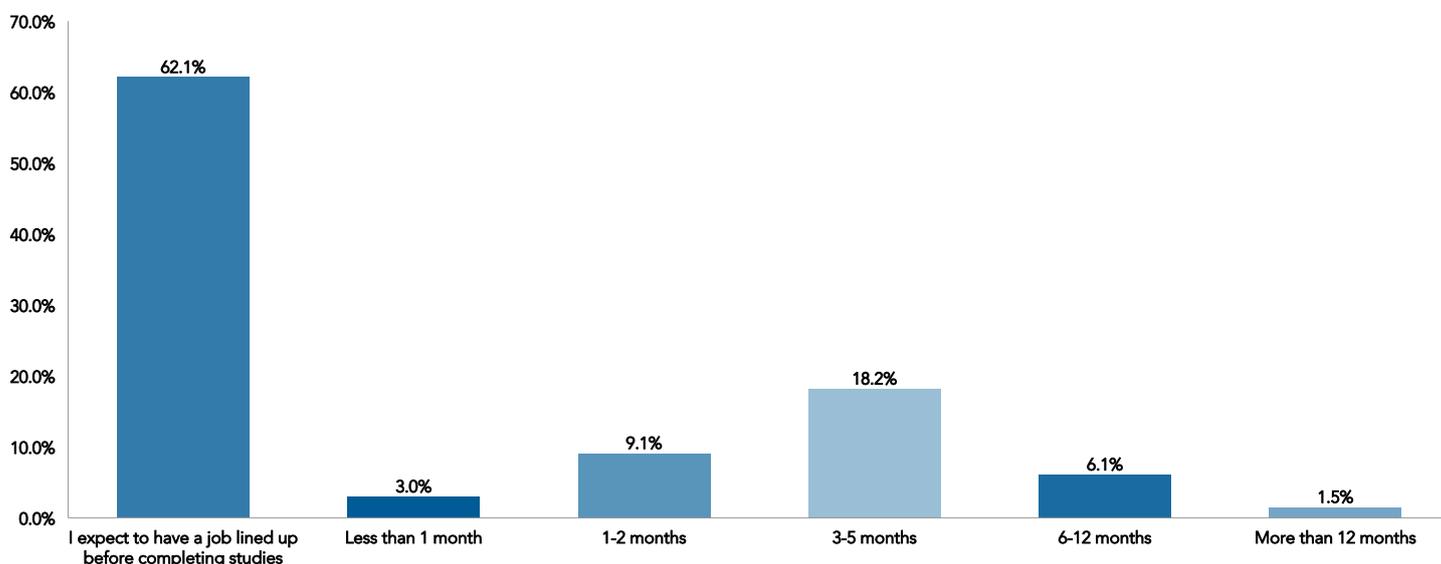
Figure 4 shows that around eight out of ten respondents who answered this question reported that they are experienced professionals in the workforce (58%) or have some work experience associated with their intended career path (26%). Around 10% reported some general casual or part-time work which is not necessarily in their intended field. A small proportion (3%) are unpaid interns, 1% paid interns, and 2% report no previous work experience.

STUDENT RESPONSES

EXPECTED TIME TO FIND A SUITABLE JOB AFTER STUDIES

66 RESPONSES

FIGURE 5



Almost two-thirds of the respondents who answered this question (62%) expect to have a job prior to the completion of their studies, as shown in figure 5, with nearly one in five (18%) expecting to take from three to five months.

LIKELY CHALLENGES WHEN ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

63 RESPONSES

TABLE 18

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Finding a job that doesn't require too much experience	17.5%	11
Finding a permanent position (not contract or temporary)	31.7%	20
Finding a job in my preferred field	34.9%	22
Finding a job with reasonable pay	31.7%	20
Demanding application processes	22.2%	14
I don't expect any challenges	14.3%	9
Other	38.1%	24

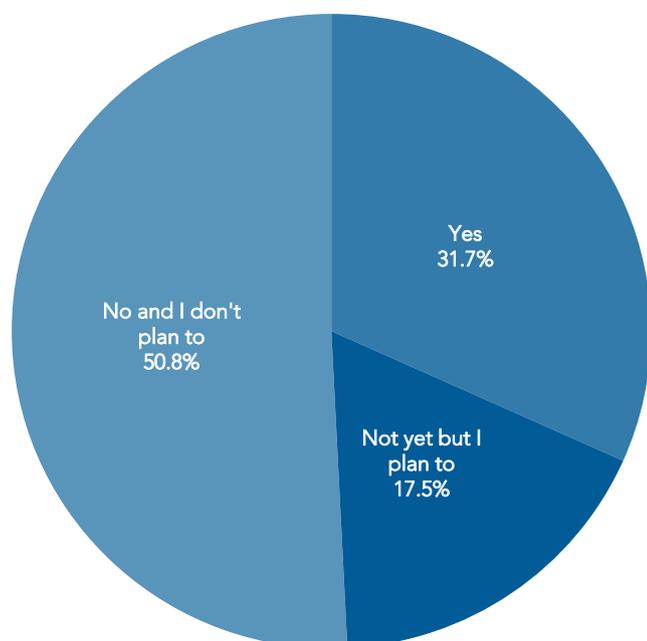
As indicated in table 18, roughly a third thought finding a job (35%) in their field would not be easy, another third thought obtaining a permanent position would be difficult (32%) and the same proportion thought getting a role with reasonable pay would not be easy. Others expected to find difficulties with the application process (22%) and finding a job that does not require too much experience (18%).

STUDENT RESPONSES

UNDERTAKEN ANY WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS/INTERNSHIPS

63 RESPONSES

FIGURE 6



Of the sample that answered this question, figure 6 shows that half (51%) replied they are not interested in work experience placements or internships. Around a third (32%) have participated in work experience placements or internships, and the remainder plan to do so in the future.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ANY WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS/INTERNSHIPS

18 RESPONSES

Respondents were invited to comment on their answer to the previous question and what follows is a sample of comments on work experience or internship placements:

"Human resource officer internship for 2 months unpaid. Completed numerous HR projects and policies"

"As part of the degree we are expected to undertake 3 placements (9 weeks in total over two years) and an internship of 11 weeks. All unpaid"

"I am to start a placement that came my way through AHRI. It is a great opportunity and seems to be a well-organised placement focusing on relevance to the education I have received and areas I am interested in"

"When doing my undergraduate degree in 2012 I did a 6 month internship in HR for a not for profit"

"Four week mentoring project"

"I did a two months internship within the People & Culture Team at Adecco through a university program. I was the HR assistant supporting the 6 members of the team"

"I have found a part-time/paid internship with a company, found through UNSW careers website. I have also discussed taking on a permanent position when I graduate"

"The role is HRM and administration, mostly taking over projects to 'globalise' the employee system and harmonise policies to align with legislation and the company templates or guidelines. Employee onboarding is also part of my duties"

"Human resource internship at the university of Wollongong"

"I have Kenyan HR experience and I have done a bit of HR here in Australia but I have worked in other fields as well e.g. project coordinator, personal and family officer, student support officer and customer service officer"

"HR intern, leadership development intern, student consultant for non-profits, consulting intern (in org capability), and people advisory services intern"

"2 X unpaid internships with two different state gov depts"

"6 weeks in length each"

"Legal internships with community legal services"

"Two internships for one NGO and the Catholic Church - mostly logistics work, event management"

STUDENT RESPONSES

BENEFITS OF DOING WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS/INTERNSHIPS

56 RESPONSES

TABLE 19

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Explore career interests	33.9%	19
Gain experience to put on resume	39.3%	22
Gain better understanding of the world of work	39.3%	22
Possibility of gaining future employment with the placement organisation	33.9%	19
Improve chances of getting a job	23.2%	13
Gain an employer reference	10.7%	6
Build professional networks	46.4%	26
Develop skills	44.6%	25
Other	5.4%	3

As indicated in table 19, the top six benefits reported in answer to this question were building professional networks (46%), developing skills (45%), gaining experience for a resume and a better understanding of work (39% each), exploring career options and possibility of gaining further employment (34% each).

DIFFICULTIES WITH WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS/INTERNSHIPS

56 RESPONSES

TABLE 20

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Often low pay/unpaid	62.5%	35
Cost money to undertake e.g. through travel expenses, loss of earnings etc.	48.2%	27
Not many opportunities available	53.6%	30
Often need family/social connections to secure one	35.7%	20
It is hard to juggle work experience/ internships with studies and other commitments e.g. part-time work	35.7%	20
The work is often uninteresting or not challenging	19.6%	11
Don't often lead to employment opportunities with the placement organisation	21.4%	12
Doesn't necessarily improve chances of getting a job	26.8%	15
It is difficult to integrate into the work culture as an intern	21.4%	12
Often not worthwhile or useful	12.5%	7
Other	5.4%	3

As indicated in table 20, the top problem mentioned with work experience placements or internships is low pay or no pay, according to 63% of respondents. Other problems are lack of opportunities (54%), cost of travel etc. (48%), juggling with other commitments (36%), the realisation that often family or connections are needed to secure a placement (36%), it often doesn't improve the chances of getting a job in general (27%) or with the particular employer (21%), and that it is often difficult in the time to integrate into the work culture (21%). One in five (20%) also said the work often lacks interest and challenge.

STUDENT RESPONSES

COMMENTS ON DIFFICULTIES WITH WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS/INTERNSHIPS

17 RESPONSES

Respondents were invited to comment on their answer to the previous question and what follows is a sample of comments on difficulties with regard to work experience or internship placements:

"In my view internships are an advantage afforded to the already advantaged. Internships are often unpaid so only those who can afford to work for free can take advantage of them. Furthermore, internships are often secured through family/social connections – again already advantaged individuals are provided with access to internships because they have connected families/friends. I consider internships set a precedence of widening the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged which I disagree with"

"It is tough that most organisations require some level of internship on your resume but having them unpaid is a huge strain to complete while studying full time and maintaining a casual job"

"As I have a young family and will be leaving a professional role in order to be able to complete the internship it places great financial hardship on my family unit. 11 weeks full time unpaid - in order to graduate is difficult. As an internal recruiter of engineers I always felt this was a big request of universities for students. Where I worked at this stage we paid our interns market rates which I feel is appropriate and fair given that they are working in a similar manner to those that have finished their degree"

"Internships should at least offer some remuneration to cover the cost of commute and if the contributions have been fruitful, should lead to some kind of rewards in terms of more opportunities for growth within the organisation or through an award etc. for example offering spot in a training/program"

"Internships make no difference, they are a channel which students hide behind, taking the easy road. It is a lot harder to work in an unrelated field while studying. Reality is, employable people do not hide behind their education, they roll their sleeves up and work in any field until a position in their current field presents. The argument about internships is not about pay or being unfairly treated - it is an attitude some students have and think they are owed something"

"Often seen as free labour"

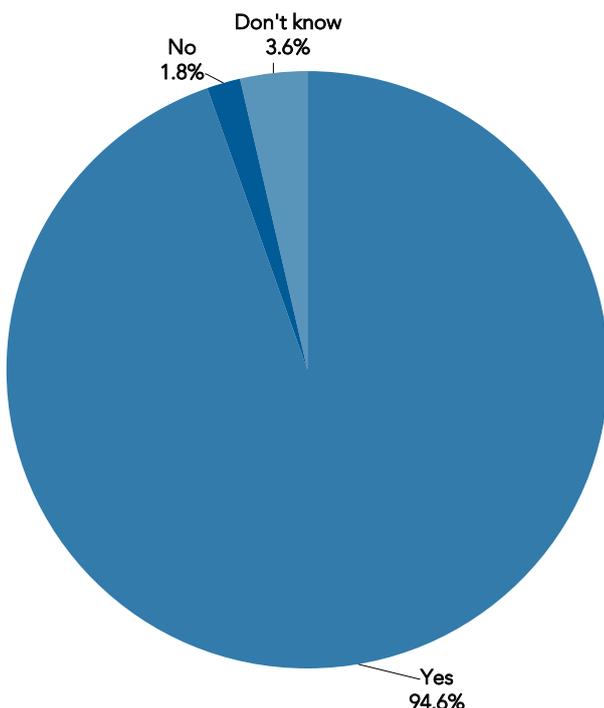
"Uninterested interns who don't care"

"Lack of opportunities in Adelaide compared to Melbourne or Sydney"

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HR?

56 RESPONSES

FIGURE 7



The majority of respondents who answered this question (95%) expressed an interest in a career in HR, as shown in figure 7.

STUDENT RESPONSES

WHAT ATTRACTS YOU TO HR?

49 RESPONSES

The most recurring answer of respondents to what is the attractions of a career in HR is the simple response of 'I like working with people', reported by 20% of the sample. Other responses were varied and included items such as applying HR expertise to the meeting of organisation goals, working with managers to build capability, and influencing culture. Mentioned in addition were organisation development, employee relations, employee engagement, performance management, training and development, and contributing to strategy. Some respondents liked the variety they saw in HR, and that it looked like a career choice that was sustainable in the long term. One preferred it to marketing.

What follows is a sample of comments on what attracts student respondents to a career in HR:

"I love dealing with people"

"Working with people, problem solving, contributing to the success of the business, knowledge"

"The success of any organisation is its most valuable asset – its people. HR expertise is critical to support a motivated and engaged workforce"

"I like working with people to build capability, and partnering with managers in an HR role allows that on a broader scope"

"The critical importance of people in achieving organisational success gained through many years as a leader - putting this into practice"

"Training and development, improving work experience and job satisfaction, retention and selection, organisational development"

"Working with people, assisting with recruitment"

"I enjoy working with and managing people and their challenges"

"The importance it has in the success of an organisation"

"Challenges within the field. Ability to branch out"

"Alternative career from marketing"

"The people aspect, having the opportunity to influence culture that aligns with the business model"

"Organisational development and capacity building"

"Contributing to organisational development and engineering roles and responsibilities to achieve outcomes for a business"

"I have been doing recruitment and HR generalist positions for over 10 years and am looking to further into a senior management role"

"Challenging, covers a wide scope of issues, having a role where HR can contribute to business strategy"

"HR is a competitive advantage to any business. Having done a major in HR & management I understand better the business strategy and the people strategy. What attracts me most in HR is that it is a challenging field as you work and manage people for which you have to face conflicts but the best part of it for me is that people can always learn more and constantly improve. It is this learning and development capacity of HR that attracts me the most"

"My main attraction to the field is that it is so diverse. I can look into OHS, recruitment, consulting etc."

"Employee engagement"

STUDENT RESPONSES

Student respondents to a career in HR continued:

"Extensive experience in various industries and excellent people management skills. My current role also involves HR responsibilities however my goal is to work in HR"

"Working with people and implementing performance management systems"

"I enjoy being apart of the recruitment process at my current part time team leader role, and feel that to have the opportunity to use an organisation's most valuable assets – its people – to effect all aspects of an organisation, would be an amazing and rewarding career"

"It is a sustainable post throughout all decades"

"A career in HR provides an opportunity to make a difference in organisations and the way in which people are managed. I firmly believe strategic HRM provides organisations with a competitive advantage through recruiting and retaining the right talent for the organisation. I am attracted to HR as a career because I want to make a difference in the organisation I work for and the people employed within that organisation to ensure the organisation achieves its goals and continues to successfully move forward into the future"

"I love helping the organisation meet its goals. I see HR as the 'mechanics' for the engine. We can fix, design, upgrade, fine tune, and service all the parts that go to make up the machine"

"I find HRM intriguing and I enjoy the challenges and problem solving of issues etc. I also find it gets you thinking outside the box on occasions (which I like)"

"My major is management and it is something that I am quite skilled at. I am a good negotiator and diplomat"

"I enjoy that human resources activities span the entire organisation and all other functions"

"Employment relations"

"I enjoy interesting challenges and for me, people provide the most interesting challenges in organisations"

"Maximising the return on investment to a business of its people"

"Diversity of queries, broad range of knowledge so good for someone who is an all rounder at school/uni, using legal knowledge without practising, connections to IR"

ABOUT AHRI

The vision of the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) is to shape the HR profession for the future.

The 20,000 members of AHRI hold the institute accountable for looking after their career interests, for creating a viable HR community, for generating intellectual capital through the power of ideas, for making use of the best and brightest to find people solutions for business, and for enabling great HR.

To support HR practitioners in becoming valued business partners and building sustainable organisations through people, AHRI has recently introduced a robust HR certification regime and established for that purpose an industry-wide National Certification Council.

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