Graduate destinations: where do our graduates go and how can we improve their journey?

New graduates need to be equipped with a broad range of knowledge and skills that enhance their opportunities for employment and enable them to practice safely.

This study aimed to determine the career and study paths that University of Wollongong (UOW) graduates take once they complete their qualifications in either nutrition, dietetics, exercise science or exercise physiology and to establish how prepared they and their employers felt they were. Three online surveys (December 2012 graduates, July 2007-July 2012 graduates and employers) were conducted via Survey Monkey® in late 2012 that asked about work and study experiences pre and post-graduation, strengths and weaknesses of programs, ideas for further curriculum development and experiences employing UOW graduates. 23 responses were received from the December graduating students, 96 from earlier graduates and 11 from employers.

Perceived strengths of the programs included the staff, interactive classes, authentic learning opportunities and the placement and practical experiences. Areas for review included the timing of some final year subjects, placement timeframes and the lesser focus on private practice compared to other practice areas. The employer comments were positive regarding the programs and the graduates. Common areas for further consideration included private practice, coaching and placement timeframes.

Further study areas included PhD and Research Masters degrees, as well as business studies and Work Health & Safety. The graduate survey will be conducted annually with the findings enhancing curriculum development and the student learning experience.