Purpose: Within the context of health services management, do recent graduates and senior managers differ in terms of: 1) Their perceptions of the skills most important to the field; and 2) Graduates’ self-ratings of their skills levels versus ratings of their skills levels by senior managers?

Methodology: An electronic survey was completed by 38 senior managers in the field of health services management, as well as 42 recent graduates from an Australian university.

Key Findings: There was strong agreement in terms of which skills are important in the field of health services management. However, a number of significant differences in terms of graduates’ self-ratings of their skills levels versus the ratings by senior managers suggests a potential skills gap.

Practitioner’s Thoughts by Dana Church (Research Coordinator, WatCACE)

Q: What insights did you gain from reading this article that were useful to you?

A: One of my current projects is to develop a skills and competencies framework, so this article is very relevant to me. I am intrigued by the finding that graduates and senior managers mostly agreed on the importance of the skills in the authors’ list. Also, their seven top-rated skills are so-called “soft skills” or transferable skills, such as communication and teamwork.

Q: Does this study raise questions for you that require further research/investigation?

A: It would be interesting to extend this research beyond the health services sector and with a larger sample size. For example, do University of Waterloo co-op students place the same level of importance on particular employability skills compared to employers? I am also intrigued by the finding that graduates tended to rate themselves more highly on most skills compared to the senior managers. Does this potential “skills gap” exist in other sectors? If so, what factors might be driving it? How can we attempt to close this “gap”?
Purpose: To examine the influence of human capital, careers advice and career ownership on self-perceived employability.

Methodology: A cross-sectional, two-wave research design was used to test the hypotheses among 387 undergraduate students across an array of disciplines at a UK university.

Key Findings: The results point to the importance of human capital, careers advice and career ownership in positively influencing students’ self-perception of their employability. 37.9% of the variance in employability is attributed to these three elements.

Practitioner’s Thoughts by Janet Boekhorst (Career Advisor, CCA)

Q: What insights did you gain from reading this article that were useful to you?

A: While a multitude of facets contribute to self-perceived employability, I find this article reinforces the importance of students taking ownership of their career path. Stated differently, students must take an active role in shaping their career by strategically acquiring knowledge, skills, and work and volunteer experiences to ease the transition from their undergraduate studies to the workforce.

These results also highlight the importance of career advisors in supporting student perceptions of employability. Career advisors not only support students with strategic guidance on traditional career topics (e.g., résumés, cover letters, and interviews), but they also have an instrumental role in helping students to craft their experiences in order to take ownership of their career trajectory during their university studies.

News and Updates

CEWIL Canada Research Grant
Sponsored by WatCACE

The Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL, formerly CAFCE) Research Grant was created to foster research activity, connect colleagues, and enhance practices in work-integrated learning and co-operative education across the country. CEWIL welcomes all co-op and WIL researchers and practitioners to submit their proposals to elevate ideas and contribute to Canada’s leadership in experiential learning.

Submission deadline:
Friday, March 30, 2018

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