MEANINGFUL JOBS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY FROM LUCK TO BUSINESS AS USUAL

EQUITY FELLOWSHIP REPORT

DAVID ECKSTEIN
2020 Equity Fellow
Swinburne University of Technology
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David Eckstein

2020 Equity Fellow

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Abbreviations

AACH	Swinburne University AccessAbility Careers Hub
AAGE	Australian Association of Graduate Employers
ADCET	Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training
AND	Australian Network on Disability
ATEND	Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability
CDL	Career development learning
CICA	Career Industry Council of Australia
DES provider	Disability Employment Service provider. Private organisations that receive government funding in return for placing people with disability in work
DESE	Department of Education, Skills and Employment
FG#1	Focus group participant number 1
GOS	Graduate Outcomes Survey
GradWISE	WISE Employment's university partnership program
GwD	Graduates with disability
NAGCAS	National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
NDCO	National Disability Coordination Officer program
PwD	People with disability
QILT	Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching
RRR#1	Regional, Rural or Remote Head of Service email participant number 1
RUCs	Regional University Centres
SCS#1	Swinburne case study staff interview participant number 1
SwD	Students with disability
USEP	University Specialist Employment Partnership program
WIL	Work-integrated learning

Acknowledgements

This project had its genesis in my own journey with career development learning (CDL) in relation to disability. This began ten years ago when I drew on innovative work by NSW colleagues to create a CDL event for all university students with disability (SwD) in Victoria, with the support of Monash University colleagues and the National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Program. It has continued more recently through my leadership of the AccessAbility Careers Hub (AACH or "the Hub"), Swinburne University's dedicated SwD careers service. Both projects feature university SwD, careers practitioners and employers working together to challenge socially-constructed notions of disability. The results have been inspiring, as participating SwD recognise and use evidence of their own ability when engaging with employers, underpinned by their experiencing inclusion instead of just discussing it. The Hub's effort incorporates collaboration with the Disability Employment Services (DES) provider WISE Employment's GradWISE Program which facilitates SwD's access to a network of disability-confident employers.

These kinds of projects are possible because of sustained support from important government programs and many years' work by successive careers and equity professionals. With this continued, combined effort we are on the cusp of better integrating resources to create systemic change for the benefit of SwD and the world of work that needs them.

Executive summary

All people have the right to work and free choice of employment, but some Australians continue to face employment barriers because they live with disability. University students with disability (SwD) are disadvantaged in the job market. While universities have limited influence on the job market, there are opportunities for them to better prepare SwD to compete in it. This Fellowship sheds light on such opportunities, as well as the barriers which hamper university efforts to provide targeted careers support and the factors that create added complexity for universities in regional Australia.

The project used a mixed methods approach to gather data from SwD as well as staff working in disability, careers, other professional roles and academic/teaching roles. Data was gathered using the following mechanisms: a desk review of current university offerings; national surveys of university staff and SwD; staff focus groups; Regional Heads of Service email interviews; and a case study.

The objectives were to suggest ways of improving universities' provision of careers services for SwD by identifying factors that drive targeted service provision as well as barriers to it.

Constructivist notions underpin the theoretical framework used for data analysis and discussion. While the importance of nurturing individual career management ability is emphasised, the centrality of SwD's deep engagement with their academic discipline as well as systemic operational realities are also acknowledged.

The research indicates that despite recent progress, on-campus targeted careers support for SwD is available at just 24 of Australia's 43 universities (55.8 per cent of all institutions). This growth is mostly due to the welcome arrival of university partnerships with Disability Employment Service (DES) providers. However, these partnerships present unique issues for the university careers or disability services that partner with them. Support from early adopter universities helps prospective university partners navigate potential issues, but others, in particular regional universities, face specific challenges. While some of these institutions have managed to initiate DES collaborations, other models of engagement are needed, particularly given the demand that the DES funding model places on providers.

A further complicating matter is that SwD's experience of discrimination can lead them to concentrate on avoiding the inaccurate assumptions of others about their disability and inherent abilities. This can compromise their engagement with employability activities that develop their sense of themselves as emerging professionals. In turn this can also compromise the deeper engagement with their academic discipline that the career development literature indicates such activities nurture (Watts, 2006).

The key finding of this report is that overall, universities do not appear to understand how SwD think about their careers. Combined with the mixed understanding of employability among university staff that was also confirmed by research, the university system inadvertently conspires to perpetuate SwD avoidance strategies. The difficult truth is that instead of equipping SwD to better manage their own careers, they are being denied the means of doing so.

The encouraging news is that some disability and careers professionals are beginning to break through. A case study of Swinburne University's AccessAbility Careers Hub (AACH or "the Hub") identified the initiative as an emerging model of good practice. The case study identifies drivers of success, but professional staff training and support are required if the drivers of success are to be rigorously harnessed.

While employers' disability confidence has been developing in recent years, they need support too. Their willingness to participate in disability–inclusive careers events contributes

to shared understandings of disability inclusion among all stakeholders. If the university sector can take advantage of these kinds of opportunities, it will contribute to positive developments in the national recruitment landscape for SwD.

Recommendations

The following recommendations arise from the research to facilitate universities' ability to provide careers support that targets the needs of SwD:

Recommendation 1: That the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) considers the practicality of:

a) applying the disability variable to additional questions in the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS), and

b) further interrogating "long-term health condition or disability" responses to GOS questions

Recommendation 2: That the education sector, in collaboration with ADCET, the NDCO and the National Careers Institute (NCI) investigates the provision of a national SwD careers strategy to guide specialist services in the context of broader service delivery.

Recommendation 3: That the funded bodies: the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET), the National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Program and the NCI promote shared understandings about employability and the employability challenges SwD face through the development and rollout of a university version of its Vocational Education and Training (VET) Sector (Staff and Educators) Disability Awareness Training that includes information about employability and Disability CDL.

Recommendation 4: That universities use their connections with national practitioner associations the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND) and the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS), to develop national collaborative partnerships with employers to develop disability confidence and mutual understandings for the benefit of SwD.

Recommendation 5: That universities, NDCOs, Disability Employment Service (DES) providers, employers and Regional University Centres (RUCs) collaborate to investigate ways of providing cooperative career development support and identifying disability-confident organisations for the benefit of SwD.

Recommendation 6: That universities with DES provider partnerships contribute to the development of DES partnership guidelines for the benefit of the university sector. These guidelines should include DES provider perspectives.

Recommendation 7: That government review the current funding model for DES providers to investigate the provision of more timely compensation for their investment in supporting university SwD and enable their engagement with SwD from the first year of their studies.

Recommendation 8: That the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS), the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND), the NDCO, Australian Network on Disability (AND) support the development of specialist Disability CDL qualifications to develop the capacity of experienced practitioners to service the needs of SwD. It is recommended that this be done in consultation with SwD and GwD (graduates with disability).

Recommendation 9: That careers and disability professional associations such as ATEND and NAGCAS consider hosting a national Disability CDL Community of Practice to provide a place for interested practitioners to learn from each other about Disability CDL and related matters.

Recommendation 10: That the DESE considers supporting universities to add a collaborative metric to their institutional KPIs.

Recommendation 11: That university careers and disability offices collaborate on the creation of careers services that support SwD.

Recommendation 12: That universities investigate Universal Design Learning principles for in-curriculum Disability CDL to ensure that the presence of SwD is assumed during curriculum design.

1. Introduction

The right to work and the free choice of employment are basic human rights (United Nations, 2015, p. 48). However, Australians living with disability continue to face employment barriers (AND, 2020a).

University students with disability (SwD) face inequitable labour market outcomes compared with other students. Nationally, SwD make up 7.7 per cent of the total student population and numbers of SwD in higher education have grown dramatically in recent years (NCSEHE, 2020). Yet, compared to students without disability, they are 7.1 per cent more likely to be out of work and 3.4 per cent more likely to be in work that does not use their skills or education (QILT, 2020). They also make up only 2.0 per cent of students taking part in employers' graduate programs (AAGE, 2020a) which provide important employment pathways. The persistence of this disparity is the basis of a current call for remediating policy action (Li & Carroll, 2019).

Current data indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this inequity. Table 1 shows overall employment rates for graduates both with and without disability, between 2018-2020. While employment outcomes have deteriorated for both groups since the onset of the pandemic, they did so at almost twice the rate among graduates with disability (GwD) (2.9 per cent) compared to graduates without disability (1.6 per cent). This resulted in a widening gap between the two groups to 7.1 per centage points, eliminating gains that were made in 2019.

Table 1. Undergraduate overall employment share, by demographic group, %, 2018 – 2020

	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %	2019-2020 +/- %
Reported disability	80.4	81.4	78.5	-2.9
No disability	87.4	87.2	85.6	-1.6
Gap	7.0	5.8	7.1	1.3

Source: QILT (2019, 2020)

The research undertaken as part of this Fellowship explores what universities can do to reduce the employment gap for SwD, while acknowledging that graduate outcomes are subject to a host of factors beyond their control. Current research indicates that while disability and inclusion policies are commonplace in Australian universities, SwD do not routinely get the same benefit from university as their mainstream counterparts (Pitman, Roberts, Bennett & Richardson, 2019). It is also documented that while university inclusion initiatives do make a difference to student retention and completion, the benefits of this support often do not extend beyond graduation (Richardson, Bennett & Roberts, 2016). While targeted efforts are required to improve employment outcomes for SwD (Kilpatrick et al., 2017), recent research suggests that more than half of Australia's universities do not appear to offer them (Harvey, Andrewartha, Edwards, Clarke & Reyes, 2017). Also, existing examples of targeted support vary greatly – from the provision of a suite of programs at one end of the spectrum, to reliance on ad hoc support from external service providers at the other. While careers service managers recognise the value in providing tailored careers services for equity groups (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017), a lack of resources and the persistent siloing of employability and equity efforts are cited as operational barriers (Harvey et al., 2017).

2. Background

2.1 The policy background

National policy information articulates the aspiration "that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability" (DESE, 2021a). To date, enforcing such inclusion remains an issue. For example, the federal government performance-based funding scheme (DESE, 2020; Wellings, Black, Craven, Freshwater, & Harding, 2019;) does not include SwD in specified equity targets. Also, Universities Australia information mentions disability and government policy but focuses on widening SwD participation in higher education (Universities Australia, 2020a; 2020b). It is encouraging that the 2020 review of the Disability Standards for Education documented the need to embed them in university policies (DESE, 2021a). The question now appears to be how the Standards can be enhanced to include employability development for SwD at university.

2.2 University needs

Universities have a vested interest in providing career development learning (CDL) that targets the needs of SwD.

Firstly, career education initiatives enable students' "effective participation in working life" (CICA, 2019, p. 28) but also help students make informed decisions about their studies through the development of a "self-reflective stance to academic work" (Watts, 2006, p. 10).

Secondly, universities are expected to produce career-ready graduates (Universities Australia, 2017; 2019) equipped with the skills and knowledge that are needed now and in the future (Senate Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers, 2018).

Finally, some employers are acting to improve the disability confidence of their organisations and hence, their ability to ensure disability-inclusive recruitment. This is evidenced by the growing membership of the Australian Network on Disability (AND) employer group, which has 324 member organisations including government departments and large corporations (AND, 2021). As a result of this trend, a recent study showed that about one-third of universities were approached by employers, mostly government departments and large corporations wanting to recruit SwD (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017). Universities who are not able to provide career-ready SwD will miss a key opportunity to be part of a "competitive university system that underpins Australia's social and economic prosperity and creates individual opportunity" (Universities Australia, 2017, p. 2).

This trend represents a challenge to the university system. As noted above, SwD have lower employment outcomes post-graduation than their mainstream counterparts. While universities have attempted to improve their SwD post-graduation employment outcomes through targeted careers services, information about effective approaches and barriers to SwD obtaining meaningful employment post-graduation is needed.

This Fellowship's objectives were to improve universities' provision of careers services for SwD by:

- identifying drivers of and barriers to targeted service provision by considering:
  - how SwD think about their careers and how universities respond to that thinking
  - the availability, organisation and use of existing resources
- generating evidence-informed responses that take into account diverse institutional contexts by considering:

- o the role of collaboration between service areas in the provision of targeted support
- o the influence of regional location on the ability to provide targeted services
- identifying effective strategies to equip SwD with the employability skills and career adaptability perspectives so that they can get meaningful work
- making recommendations for universities and government to facilitate the higher education sector's ability to better provide careers support for SwD.

This report contains results from a mixed methods study that combines results from different data sources: Details are provided in the methodology chapter.

It is organised into the following themes:

- universities' response to date
- SwD careers thinking
- achieving employment outcomes
- awareness of careers support
- enabling support for SwD
- evidence on an alternative response: Swinburne University's AccessAbility Careers Hub
- conclusions and recommendations.

2.3 Theoretical framework for this project: Constructivist theory and Disability Career Development Learning

Careers support for people with disability (PwD) is regarded in the literature as a professional specialisation (Patton & McMahon, 2014). It is acknowledged that disability may profoundly impact people's careers, yet the issue has received little research attention in the theoretical career development literature (McMahon & Arthur, 2019; McMahon & Patton, 2019).

Constructivist careers theory is used to frame the data analysis for this project and to help prepare the ground for further research. Constructivist career development work acknowledges people's subjective experience of reality (Patton, 2019), practitioners' imperfect knowledge of their clients, and clients' expertise in their own circumstances. Consequently, constructivist career development literature suggests practitioners collaborate with clients instead of directing them (Patton & McMahon, 2006). This aligns neatly with the position in the disability literature that practitioners acknowledge people's insight about living with their own condition, thereby working with them as partners rather than passive recipients of pre-determined wisdom about their issues and circumstances (Shakespeare, 2017).

Constructivist approaches foreground the active role of the individual in CDL activities. It is used to create opportunities for people to "reflect on, revise and reorient their life-career relationship" and facilitates people being more self-directed about managing their careers. This includes their determining the meaning work has in their lives (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 157).

This quality of a person being more self-directed, or self-managing is also referred to in the theoretical literature as "self helpfulness" or individual "agency". Constructivist initiatives nurture individual agency by drawing on people's "holistic understandings of career and the inseparability of career and life", making them tailored to the needs of individual clients (McMahon & Patton, 2016, p. 270).

Employability

The overarching term "employability" encompasses more than a list of skills. It focuses on the "ability to find, create and sustain meaningful work across the career lifespan" in a changing world (Bennett, 2018, p. 33). It includes "career adaptability (dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations) for the … individual-work interface" (McIlveen, 2018, pp. 1-2). SwD's sense of their own professional value can be diminished by the negative assumptions of others (PwC, 2011). This makes the concept of employability particularly important for working with SwD. Research indicates that employability is not a fixed characteristic but can be developed through cyclical learning (Bennett, Richardson & MacKinnon, 2016), and that "the core of developing employability is developing self" (Bennett et al., 2016, p. 18).

Career Development Learning (CDL)

Constructivist careers theory is applied to client engagement through CDL. CDL consists of continuous programs of activities that provide organised learning about the world of work and importantly, learning about one's self (Bridgstock, 2009; CICA, 2019). A foundation aim of CDL is to help people acquire the "skills necessary to navigate a satisfying life/career" (McMahon, Patton, & Tatham, 2003, p. 6). The most recent Australian university careers service benchmarking survey (NAGCAS, 2017) indicates university career services provide CDL activities in different modes including:

- one-to-one offerings: careers counselling
- one-to-some offerings: seminars, workshops, structured programs – topics include mentoring and leadership
- one-to-many offerings: CDL embedded in academic curricula, careers fairs, online resources.

The survey also indicates that employer engagement is included in one-to-some and one-to-many offerings. The theoretical literature also notes that CDL helps people personalise their academic learning by making connections between their studies and how they would like to use them to make professional contributions in the workplace (Watts, 2006).

CDL programs designed for SwD (Disability CDL)
Strength-based vs deficit-based approaches

This research acknowledges that people bring a range of intrapersonal influences to their careers thinking. These include: beliefs, values, health, age, and importantly experience of disability (McMahon & Patton, 2019). The significance of these influences for people's careers thinking is highly individual and is determined "through the individual's own thinking and processing" or "from the inside out". (Patton, 2019, p. 75). As noted in the theoretical literature, this deeply personal and dynamic process involves interaction between intrapersonal influences and the individual's broader environmental/societal system (Patton, 2019; Patton & McMahon, 2006) and takes place repeatedly over time (Bennett et al., 2016). SwD need access to cyclical learning that acknowledges their lived experience of disability if they are to challenge the impacts of stigma and negative assumptions that the literature indicates many of them have to deal with (Browne, Munro & Cass, 2017; Castillo, 2016; Kendall, 2016; Urbis, 2011). This would help activate SwD's careers thinking by supporting them to bring their "life-career relationship" (Patton & McMahon, 2006 p. 157) into better alignment with their individual intrinsic motivation and professional aspirations.

A key Disability CDL issue is that SwD face specific challenges which their mainstream counterparts do not. For example, SwD feel they may experience discrimination if employers know they live with disability (Browne, Munro & Cass, 2017; Morgan, 2012). Consequently, they need to decide if, when, and how to share disability information with employers. SwD may have mistaken assumptions about their own ability (Morgan, 2012) and are at risk of

internalising the "horizon-limiting views and experiences" of others, thereby diminishing their ability to recognise possibilities (PwC, 2011, p. 33).

SwD face issues that affect their sense of self, sense of possibility, and what they have to do to transition to the world of work. Disability CDL needs to target such issues, allowing for the individual responses SwD bring to them, to help SwD consider the role disability issues play in their careers thinking and how they might strategically respond to them. This helps SwD focus on their developing abilities alongside their sense of themselves as emerging professionals. Disability CDL also helps students analyse their engagement with their studies and identify professional interests and niches in the world of work that align with them. In the process, Disability CDL also helps SwD identify and strengthen elements of their own emerging employability value.

Research by Morgan (2012) and Glascodine (2011) contains broad guidelines and recommendations for targeted services for SwD. Consistent with constructivist understandings of CDL, these researchers recommended that support be tailored to each client. Significantly, it was also noted that while some knowledge of functional impairments could be useful for careers practitioners, it should not form the basis of Disability CDL (Morgan, 2012). This is because such a basis is an example of what the disability literature specifies as a "deficit" model of engagement. Such approaches characterise disability as an individual deficit or shortcoming that the person is defined by and needs to compensate for (Shakespeare, 2017, p. 15). From a constructivist Disability CDL point of view, a deficit approach would diminish instead of emphasise the importance of student agency and aspiration. It would also risk imposing issues that may be inaccurate and irrelevant to the student's career aspirations. It is noted in the equity literature that disability labels do not predetermine students' individual learning needs (Coyle et al, 2018). They do not predetermine students' CDL needs either.

This approach, consistent with recognition in the literature that the client be regarded as expert in their own circumstances, culminated in the following examples of guidelines for good practice:

- Be responsive to the unique aspirations and developmental needs of each young person.
- Encourage and equip young people to be self-managing and self-determining individuals.
- Assist clients to locate and arrange suitable work experience activities.
- Actively create, expand and engage the support networks of young people.
- Make career information available in a format that is easily accessible to young people with disability.
- Develop strong working relationships with other relevant agencies and service providers.
- Provide organisational support for the delivery of effective career development programs and services.

(Morgan, 2012, pp. 29-35).

Morgan's investigation also detailed feedback from university careers staff, indicating the requirement of increased funding to address the CDL needs of SwD. This was linked to the need to: employ extra staff and have them spend more time with clients; provide staff training; develop new products, programs and services; and expand existing services (Morgan, 2012, pp. 17-18). Since then university careers services have experienced progressive budget reductions (NAGCAS, 2017) which appear to have curtailed their ability to respond to these recommendations.

Job-matching compared to CDL

A difficulty in the current environment is that university careers services have been in decline since Morgan's guidelines were developed (NAGCAS, 2017), often to make way for recruitment agency models of career services. These favour more transactional approaches to careers issues at the expense of cyclical and reflective CDL (Brown, Healy, McCredie, & McIlveen, 2019). Such approaches were developed for a time in the past when a comparatively static world of work was deemed able to provide people with a job for life. The overriding careers problem then was choosing a career. This was regarded as an objective issue which a career practitioner was expected to solve by using what the literature refers to as the Trait and Factor approach. This approach involved the practitioner using psychometric tests to match their clients' personal attributes to specific career choices. The practitioner was positioned as an expert that used test results to tell their clients what to do (McMahon & Patton, 2016; Patton, 2019; Patton & McMahon, 2014).

The Trait and Factor approach was efficient, but it is now recognised that it excluded the role that intrapersonal influences play in careers thinking, including experience of disability. Traditional Trait and Factor method denies students, and SwD in particular, the opportunity to develop skills and perspectives that enable their ability to manage their own careers, including what is noted as the ability to adapt "to different contexts and develop new skillsets as required" (Bennett et al., 2017 p. 59). Disability CDL needs to take account of the complexities that SwD face when learning about and preparing to transition to the world of work.

Swinburne University's response

One example of developing good practice is Swinburne University's AccessAbility Careers Hub. It first engaged with SwD in June 2018 and has helped them locate and secure paid work that is relevant to their studies. The underlying principle of the Hub is the application of a constructivist model of careers education (e.g. Patton & McMahon, 2016; Savickas, 2015). This enables students' individual development of evidence-based professional identity that helps them construct employability and get meaningful work. The Hub is the result of collaboration between the University's careers and disability services, and a partnership with the tailor-made GradWISE program by disability employment services provider WISE Employment. Further detail about the Hub will be presented in the short case study.

Two key issues make the provision of targeted careers services for SwD harder for universities. The first is Disability CDL training for careers practitioners. The need for this was noted by Glascodine (2011) and Morgan (2012), but it remains absent (Brown et al., 2019). A second issue is the separation of careers and disability offices. This is identified as a key barrier to the provision of targeted careers support (Harvey et al., 2017). The persistence of these factors underscores the importance of this project's purpose to formulate recommendations that will enable universities to identify and engage with barriers to service provision as well as factors that enable targeted support.

Employer attitudes

Graduate outcomes are largely beyond the control of universities, therefore, employer attitudes to employing PwD matter to any attempt by universities to improve them. Research by employer groups shows developing employer disability confidence during the last decade. In 2011 it was reported that reasons for organisations being reluctant to recruit PwD included the beliefs that management would not be supportive, that PwD would not perform as well as people without disability, and that employing PwD would be expensive (AHRI, 2011). In 2015, reasons given were that PwD pose a risk to the organisation and that employing them could be costly (AHRI, 2015). By 2017, research commissioned by the Department of Social Services (DSS) reported that "an overwhelming majority of employers indicate openness to hiring people with disability" but only one-third of organisations deliberately did so. Major

barriers identified in that research relate less to overt prejudice than to low levels of confidence about the process of employing PwD (Kantar Public, 2017, p. 4). It was also reported that while employers from large and medium sized businesses were appreciative of the skills that PwD offer, lack of awareness of available government subsidies and what they cover was a barrier. It was noted that this was more likely to affect medium-sized organisations rather than larger ones (Kantar Public, 2017). This report considers the impact of these factors on the ability of universities to provide targeted careers support for SwD.

3. Method

This report contains results from a mixed methods study that combines findings from:

1. a desk review of existing service provision
2. a national survey of SwD
3. a national survey of university staff
4. a case study of Swinburne University's AccessAbility Careers Hub – that organisation's response to the needs of SwD
5. online focus groups held with staff in each state and territory
6. email interviews with staff from regional universities.

3.1 Desktop review

An initial desk review gathered publicly available information on university websites to map the current provision of targeted careers service for SwD in Australian universities.

3.2 National staff and student surveys

Two national surveys, one of Australian university staff (careers practitioners, disability advisors, and other professional and academic/teaching staff) and one of SwD were run between the end of May and the end of July 2020.

Both surveys were developed and administered in conjunction with Associate Professor Tim Pitman's research into the impact of the social and physical environment on SwD's experience of university. The careers surveys had common questions for students and staff to document elements of SwD careers thinking, and to see if or how well staff understand the careers thinking of SwD. These questions sought to gather evidence on the nature and number of targeted careers services for SwD, document factors affecting organisational ability to provide targeted careers support that engages students and provide much-needed data about the lived experience of SwD.

The surveys were advertised through the following professional associations: including the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability, Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia, the Career Development Association of Australia, the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, and the National Union of Students and the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations. The surveys were administered using Qualtrics and results were analysed in SPSS. Student comments were tabulated and reviewed in Excel.

Staff and student questions for the survey instruments are provided in Appendix 2.

To acknowledge some of the disruption caused by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, both student and staff survey participants were asked to use a Likert scale to rate their university's support of their disability-related educational and careers needs both before and since the arrival of the pandemic. Students rated their universities' support lower since the arrival of COVID-19. A paired sample t-test found the difference of .0138 to be statistically significant. A paired sample t-test found no significant difference in staff rating of their universities' support before or since the pandemic.

3.3 The staff survey

The Staff Survey received 150 usable staff responses (n= 150).

In terms of university groupings, around 21.7 per cent were employed in a university from the Regional University Network (RUN), 20.0 per cent were employed at a Group of 8 (Go8) university, 15.3 per cent at an Innovative Research University (IRU), and 8.0 per cent

employed in an Australian Technology Network (ATN) institutions, with 36.0 per cent of respondents at an unaligned (Other) institution, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Staff participants by university group

		n	%
University group	ATN	12	8.0
	Go8	30	20.0
	IRU	23	15.3
	Other	54	36.0
	RUN	31	20.7
	Total	150	100.0

The majority of respondents were from institutions in Victoria (28.7 per cent), New South Wales (24.7 per cent) or Western Australia (15.3 per cent), with commensurately lower levels of representation from staff at institutions in the Northern Territory (0.7 per cent) and Tasmania (2.7 per cent), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Staff participants by state/territory

		n	%
State	Victoria	43	28.7
	New South Wales	37	24.7
	Western Australia	23	15.3
	Queensland	18	12
	Australian Capital Territory	8	5.3
	South Australia	9	6.0
	OUA and unknown	7	4.7
	Tasmania	4	2.7
	Northern Territory	1	0.7
	Total	150	100.0

Exactly 40.0 per cent of respondents worked in universities that operated in regional areas (which included an institution whose main campus is not regional, but the participant worked in one of its regional campuses).

One third of respondents (33.3 per cent) were employed in areas outside careers, academia or disability support (Other professional staff), with Careers staff (24.7 per cent), Disability staff (18 per cent), and Academic/teaching staff (24.7 per cent) representing the majority of respondents as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Grouped staff

		n	%
Primary role	Other professional staff	50	33.3
	Careers staff	37	24.7
	Academic/teaching staff	36	24.0
	Disability staff	27	18.0
	Total	150	100.0

DES universities are universities that have brought Disability Employment Service (DES) providers on campus to give SwD direct access to their disability-confident employer networks. These partnerships currently exist through the University Specialist Employment Partnership (USEP) program – formed under the NDCO Program – and WISE Employment's GradWISE program. Most respondents (65.3 per cent) in this study were from non-DES universities, while 30.0 per cent were employed in DES universities. DES/Non-DES status is

unknown, and therefore unassigned, for seven participants who preferred not to share which university they worked for, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Staff participants by university DES classification

		n	%
DES/Non-DES University	DES	45	30.0
	Non-DES	98	65.3
	Unknown	7	4.7
	Total	150	100.0

Most universities (67.4 per cent) did not have a DES provider on campus. Among the universities that did use DES providers, the majority (20.9 per cent) used USEP, and 11.6 per cent used GradWISE.

3.4 The student survey

A total of 1604 usable responses were obtained from the student survey (n=1604).

Around 52.0 per cent of student participants recorded having a single disability, 47.0 per cent had multiple disabilities and only 1 per cent did not share information. Most students (58.4 per cent) reported having a mental health condition as their disability. The least reported disabilities among students were acquired brain injury (2.6 per cent), and low vision (4.0 per cent), as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Student disability type

TYPE OF DISABILITY	n	%
Mental health condition	935	58.4
Medical condition	500	31.2
Neurological condition	367	22.9
Physical disability	313	19.5
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	215	13.4
Hard of Hearing/deaf/Deaf	90	5.6
Intellectual disability	78	4.9
Low Vision/Blind	64	4.0
Acquired brain injury (ABI)	42	2.6
I prefer not to say	30	1.9
Total	2634	

Of the student respondents, 44.5% of student respondents grew up in regional Australia and 55.5% grew up in metropolitan Australia. Also, 35.6% of respondents were living in regional Australia and 55.5% of students were living in metropolitan Australia. Before COVID, around 64.3% student respondents were studying on-campus, 18.2% were studying off-campus or online, and 17.3% were studying both on-campus and online.

In line with ethics advice, unless written consent to quote students was received, student comments in the report are paraphrased rather than being quoted directly to ensure students' anonymity.

3.5 Staff focus groups

Staff focus group discussions were held via video conference with staff from different areas as indicated below. Five staff provided individual feedback by phone, Zoom or email. A total of 75 participants were involved in the focus groups (n=75) as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Staff focus group participant profile:

STAFF FOCUS	n
Careers	24
Disability	20
NDCO	9
Other professional	8
Academic/teaching	4
DES	4
Internships/WIL	2
No affiliation shared	4
Total	75

A semi-structured approach was used in the focus groups to help participants table and discuss the provision of targeted careers support for SwD, barriers to the provision of targeted servicers as well as factors that would enable service provision. The discussion outline is provided in Appendix 3. Discussions were recorded, transcribed and checked for accuracy. Results were coded in NVIVO.

3.6 Email interviews with heads of service in regional universities

To provide added insight, regional heads of service were invited to take part in short email interviews about their experience of providing careers support for SwD and to forward the invitation to interested colleagues. Responses were received from n=12 staff across n=8 universities. Responses were coded in NVIVO. The email interview questionnaire is included in Appendix 4.

Table 8. Heads of service email interviews participant profile

ROLE	n
Careers service managers	5
Disability service managers	5
Health and wellbeing director	1
Student success director	1

3.7 The AccessAbility Careers Hub case study

Permission was obtained from the Vice-President (Students) for Swinburne University's AccessAbility Careers Hub to be participate as a case study university for this project.

The following sources of data were used for the case study:

University documents: These related to policy, strategy, stakeholder correspondence, and Hub CDL program details and statistics. As this case study involved detailing elements of the researcher's own work, scope for researcher bias was reduced by using documents created before the Fellowship was awarded for accounts of the Hub's purpose and characteristics.

Staff interviews: Semi-structured interviews were held with staff from different areas of the university that have been engaged with the Hub (n=13). Staff were interviewed from the following areas: Careers and Employability – including GradWISE – AccessAbility Services, Senior Management, and Work-integrated Learning. Participant details are not shared to protect anonymity. The staff interview outline is in Appendix 5.

Student interviews: Students registered with AccessAbility Services were invited through AccessAbility Services to contact the researcher to take part in short Zoom interviews about the AccessAbility Careers Hub. Nine students were interviewed (n=9). Seven of the students were aware of the Hub and four of those students had not used it. Reasons given for not using the Hub were that they were in the early stages of their study and wanted to focus on careers later (n=3) and a lack of time (n=2). Another student was self-employed (n=1). Most student interviews were conducted using Zoom (n=8) and one interview was conducted by email at the student's request. Interviews were transcribed in real time using prepared pro formas. Interview questions are detailed in Appendix 6.

4. Findings and discussion

This section presents findings from the research's different data streams, and provides discussion and analyses based on these findings. Current offerings are discussed in relation to findings from this research's review of the targeted careers support for SwD provided by Australian universities.

Subsequent chapters are organised by themes to present and discuss findings from this research's national surveys, focus groups, and Regional Heads of Service email interviews. The themes are:

- SwD careers thinking
- achieving employment outcomes
- awareness of careers support
- enhancing careers support for SwD.

Chi-square tests were conducted on these grouped survey results to check the statistical significance of any apparent trends. A summary of chi-square test results is provided in Appendix 7.

4.1 Current offerings

This section outlines findings from a review of targeted careers support for SwD provided by careers services in Australian universities. Details were sourced, via the desktop study, from university websites and supplemented by careers staff responses to the national survey regarding the provision of targeted careers support for SwD, and email interviews with careers and disability service managers from regional universities. The reliance on publicly available information may mean some services are not identified and figures presented are indicative.

As Table 9 indicates, a total of 24 of Australia's 43 universities (55.8 per cent of Table A, B and C Providers – Australia's largest universities) offered targeted services on campus at the time of the review. Five of these are regional universities, 19 are metropolitan. This represents significant expansion since Harvey et al.'s (2017) survey which found that less than half of Australia's largest universities offered targeted services on campus. This expansion appears to be mostly due to new partnerships with DES providers. These partnerships provide SwD with individualised assistance but focus group feedback indicates DES partnerships operate according to individual university agreements and may or may not be closely linked with university careers services.

A total of 14 universities (32.6 per cent) were running on-campus DES partnerships. There were 10 universities (23.3 per cent) offering specialist appointments and/or careers seminars and events for SwD, nine universities (20.9 per cent) with both a DES provider on campus and one or more of specialist appointments, careers seminars or events for SwD, and five universities (11.6 per cent) with only a DES provider on campus without complementary targeted supports.

Table 9. Australian universities offering targeted careers support for SwD

SUPPORT TYPE	n	%	UNIVERSITY TYPE	
			REGIONAL (n)	METROPOLITAN (n)
Specialist appointments and/or seminars and events for SwD	10	23.3	0	10
DES provider on campus	5	11.6	3	2
DES provider on campus and one or more of specialist appointments, and careers seminars for SwD	9	20.9	2	7
Total	24	55.8	5	19

At a further six universities (13.9 per cent), careers support for SwD appeared to be restricted to generic online information and links to external sources of support. Three of these universities are regional, three were metropolitan. No targeted career support was evident at 13 universities (30.2 per cent), of which six are regional and seven are metropolitan.

DES partnerships give SwD direct access to competitive opportunities in their disability-confident employer networks. These partnerships currently exist through the University Specialist Employment Partnership (USEP) program and WISE Employment's GradWISE program. The partnerships require significant in-kind investment from DES providers which can be problematic, as DES providers receive government payments for the support they provide only after the student graduates (USEP, 2021). For many, this restricts DES provider engagement with the SwD group to students' final year of study, which focus group participants noted is often too late to provide support for work-integrated learning (WIL) and internships.

DES partnerships have been established in mostly metropolitan contexts. Existing studies (e.g. Devlin & McKay, 2017; Nelson et al., 2017) show that regional universities face specific issues in managing service provision. It was noted in this research's focus group discussion and regional staff email interviews that a number of factors create barriers to partnership between regional universities and DES providers.

The regional context itself introduces challenges as regional economies may be relatively specialised and restrict the number and kind of jobs available. It was suggested this resulted in fewer graduate job opportunities and fewer still targeting SwD. Regional Heads of Service pointed out in email interviews that it also means prospective DES partners have no scope for developing local networks relevant to graduate employment. It was also suggested that regional employer attitudes towards disability recruitment vary. One focus group reported significant reluctance on the part of one region's major employer to recruit people with disability, but other feedback suggests that there are increasing numbers of employers in the regions who want to recruit people with disability and "recognise that all staff have strengths and weaknesses" (Rural, Regional and Remote Heads of Service email interview participant 11 – RRR#11). The Australian Network on Disability (AND) employer group has been implementing plans to extend their disability-inclusive programs to regional Victoria, but they are only available on an ad hoc basis in other regional areas (AND, 2020b).

There are further issues for regional universities wishing to engage in partnerships with DES providers. It was reported through email interviews with heads of service in regional universities that staff prefer to manage a relationship with a single DES provider, but it is uncommon for a single DES provider to be able to service the needs of multiple campuses in far-flung locations. This requires the management of relationships with multiple DES providers to provide equitable services between campuses. A further issue is that compared to metropolitan universities, regional universities cater to a larger proportion of SwD enrolled

in online courses (DESE, 2020), many of whom live in different areas of the country. This means the location of job opportunities arising from local provider networks will not be where those SwD live, which was also cited as a barrier in focus groups.

DES partnerships remain attractive to regional universities and those that have them report having to spend time training DES staff in graduate employment. Their DES providers were also able to develop appropriate employer networks which has benefited students.

4.2 How students with disability think about careers

National staff and student surveys were used to document elements of SwD's careers thinking and staff perception of it. The survey results in this Fellowship indicated that as a whole, staff misunderstand SwD's careers thinking.

The career aspirations of SwD provides a striking example. In response to the question 'Do you know what work you would like to do after university?', 68.7 per cent of SwD reported they did. In contrast, only 28.7 per cent of staff believed this of them. It may be that SwD who lack such confidence are more prominent from the perspective of staff, providing a false impression of the cohort's aspirational state. However, where this is true, it also reflects the extent to which many SwD with clear goals are not sharing their disability information with staff.

The perception of challenges SwD face in securing work is critical, be they SwD or staff perceptions. Around 88.5 per cent of SwD indicated they expect to face challenges when seeking employment. SwD and staff were asked to use a list of factors to nominate which ones they thought SwD would face when securing desired work after university. As detailed in Figure 1, the most prominent challenges SwD expected to face included inaccurate assumptions about their abilities (55.9 per cent), employers asking them to share their disability information (49.4 per cent), unconscious bias (46.6 per cent), and a lack of work experience (46.4 per cent). The challenge least cited by SwD related to inequitable recruitment processes (29.4 per cent). The additional challenges raised in the 'Other' responses were mainly concerns relating to the need for equitable accommodations (n=43), personal barriers, including a lack of career management skills (n=35) and concern about being able to fulfill the inherent requirements of the role (n=13). There were also a small number of SwD (n=11) indicating that they either had work already or did not anticipate any issues getting their preferred work.

Staff indicated that their perceptions of the most significant challenges SwD face in obtaining work were inaccurate assumptions about their abilities, and unconscious bias (both 71.3 per cent). The perceived least important challenge was SwD being asked to share their disability information with employers (41.3 per cent). This is the case regardless of whether the staff respondent worked in the careers or disability areas, or as a member of professional or academic/teaching staff. A chi-square analysis of staff responses did not reveal significant differences in responses across different staff groups. As a group therefore, staff underestimated the challenge that students faced in having to share, or rather, not share, disability information with employers.
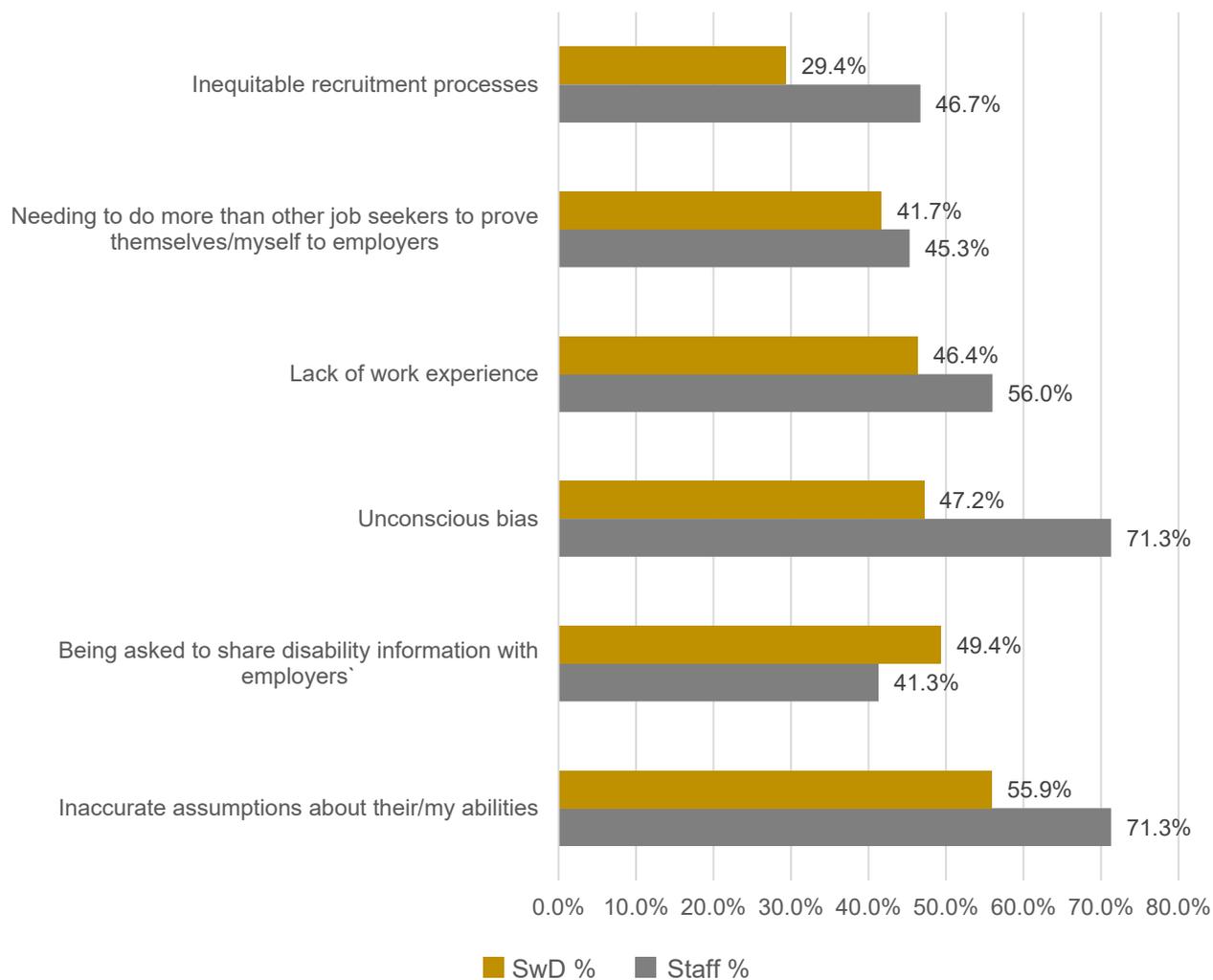
Figure 1. Career challenges for SwD: Student and staff perceptions

Further interrogation of the issue of sharing disability information with employers revealed another surprising difference between SwD and staff perceptions. While Figure 1, above, indicates that 49.4 per cent of SwD expected employers to ask them to share their disability information, the data in Table 10 below, shows that when asked 'Do you feel able to share your disability information with employers?', only 32.5 per cent of SwD said they felt able to do so. This strongly suggests that most students did not feel they could address their second most-important career challenge. Surprisingly, the staff response was lower still. Around 41.3% of staff nominated 'Being asked to share disability information with employers' as a career challenge for SwD, but only 11.5 per cent of staff said that SwD would feel able to do so. This suggests that while staff may be aware of this fundamental student challenge, they nonetheless underestimate students' willingness to engage with it.

Students' free-text comments indicated their reluctance to share was due to concerns about social stigma and associated disadvantages in entering the job market. As the below select paraphrasing of student comments shows, fear of not being understood is a powerful career challenge for many SwD. Worryingly, this even extends to student anxiety about having to take time off to deal with medical issues, which may be covered by sick leave entitlements.

> *I am worried people will misconstrue my need for time off for medical appointments as a lack of commitment.*

> *Personally, I'm concerned that people will not understand my need for adjustments.*

> *People do not understand mental health issues so I won't share my information*

This aligns with literature indicating that in addition to Australian university students having these concerns (Kendall, 2016; Urbis, 2011) they are shared by SwD and GwD in the United States (Castillo, 2016; Jain-Link & Kennedy, 2019) and the United Kingdom (Browne et al., 2017; Shinkwin & Relph, 2019).

The issue is compounded by the fact that many employers either do not feel confident about providing accommodations for PwD or do not believe that PwD can perform at the same level as people without disability (Kantar Public, 2017). On the other hand, feedback from focus group deliberations and the Swinburne case study's staff interviews indicated a growing awareness of the role that sharing disability information plays in SwD careers thinking and employer recruitment strategies. Staff emphasised the importance of helping students make informed decisions about sharing disability information with employers as doing so helps employers provide enabling environments for students to operate in. At a sector-wide level however, the issue does not appear to have garnered the attention it deserves. Students' reluctance to share their disability information with employers creates difficulties for students on WIL placements that compromise their CDL because they are focused on hiding their disability instead of engaging with the learning opportunities the placements provide. It also creates difficulty if they need to ask for accommodations after commencing placements instead of before.

Chi-square analysis indicated no significant difference in responses by students with single and multiple disabilities, indicating the number of disabilities does not impact on students' feelings about sharing disability information with employers (p=.742).

However, as shown in Table 10, there was a significant difference in students feeling able to share disability information with employers based on the type of disability they manage. A significant chi-square coefficient (p=.000) confirmed these differences. Students with low vision/blind (51.6 per cent) were the only majority group that felt able to share disability information with employers. On the other hand, students with a mental health condition (23.4 per cent), neurological conditions (33.2 per cent), and a medical condition (33.6 per cent) were the least likely to feel able to share their disability information with employers. This suggests a relationship between the relative visibility of a student's condition and their willingness to share disability information with employers.

**Table 10. Sharing disability information with employers:
Student responses by disability type**

DO YOU FEEL ABLE TO SHARE YOUR DISABILITY INFORMATION WITH EMPLOYERS?	YES	NO
DISABILITY TYPE	%	%
Low Vision/Blind	51.6	48.4
Hard of Hearing/deaf/Deaf	47.8	52.2
Physical disability	45.4	54.6
Acquired brain injury (ABI)	42.9	57.1
Intellectual disability	35.9	64.1
Specific Learning Disability	34.4	65.6
Medical condition	33.6	66.4
Neurological condition	33.2	66.8
Mental health condition	23.4	76.5
I prefer not to say	16.7	83.3
Total	32.5	67.5

This gap in perceptions, detailed by the national surveys, risks distorting the careers thinking of SwD. Two main factors are at play.

As noted above, sharing disability information with employers is a fraught issue for SwD. Student comments indicated that sharing disability information is not something that people choose to do as it could negatively impact their job prospects. The below paraphrased remarks speak directly to this concern.

> *If I don't hide my disability I won't get work.*

> *It's not safe to share.*

The second factor is the broader issue of staff being out of touch with SwD's careers thinking in general. It is acknowledged in the literature that people's sense of professional self is grounded in individual experience of a range of formative influences, including living with disability (Patton & McMahon, 2014; 2006). This includes dealing with others' negative assumptions of SwD's inherent ability. Such negative assumptions may be irrelevant to their ability to succeed in the kind of work they would like to do, but unless these assumptions are addressed they remain obstacles to careers thinking. SwD may internalise negative assumptions of others about their ability (PwC, 2011) or spend time and energy seeking to evade them. In tertiary environments where SwD have to opt-in to services, a natural inclination is to avoid judgement by not sharing their aspirations and concerns, in turn creating an ongoing source of anxiety. This is attested to by SwD opinion collected in the survey. The below paraphrased remark is representative of the SwD perspective that they are better off not sharing disability information with employers because employers are unlikely to understand their disability issues.

> *People don't understand my condition so I can't disclose to an employer, even though holding back is going to make it harder at work.*

Universities are missing an opportunity to validate this legitimate student concern and enable SwD to re-contextualise the role it plays in their careers thinking. Focus group deliberations noted that managing disability can provide evidence of ability in relation to critical work-related skills. On the other hand, and given the right support, students may decide that disability need not dominate their careers thinking. The university sector does not appear to systematically provide opportunities for SwD to discuss their experience of disability and to interrogate their understanding of its impact on their careers thinking. This runs the risk of separating SwD's careers thinking from their sense of who they are, while current career

development literature suggests that the two are "inseparable" (McMahon & Patton, 2016, p.270).

The overarching issue is that not being attuned to SwD's careers thinking risks imposing non-agentic and career-limiting mindsets on SwD. Alarmingly, therefore, instead of validating SwD concerns and giving them the experience of inclusion the current system may entrench disability as a powerful career-disabler. As one focus group participant opined, the current systems risks inadvertently suggesting that if SwD do not fit in they are at fault and should "fix" themselves [focus group participant (FG)#4].

As a result, instead of unleashing students from career-limiting thinking, universities risk framing disability as a powerful career-disabler. This resonates with deficit approaches that Morgan's (2012) guidelines recommend avoiding. It also aligns with the survey finding that staff may predict a careers challenge, such as being asked to share disability information with employers, but not sufficiently rate it as being of concern to SwD. This likely accounts for much of the low levels of SwD engagement with support services that is noted in the literature (Harvey et al., 2017) and identified in focus group discussions. The lack of understanding of SwD careers thinking undermines attempts to provide targeted careers support because they are unlikely to adequately address issues that concern students.

The inability of the sector as a whole to understand the careers thinking of SwD does a double disservice. It compromises SwD careers thinking while also undermining attempts to provide SwD with support. More information about the experience of university students and graduates with disability is needed.

At the sector-wide level, the overarching issue for the provision of disability CDL in Australian universities is that the system does not appear to understand SwD careers thinking and therefore is not well positioned to provide CDL interventions that meet their needs. The substantial misunderstanding about SwD career aspirations is a sobering point and emphasises the need for action.

Two recommendations would provide a foundation for addressing these issues. Currently, the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) provides important high-level detail about employment for GwD. Using the disability variable in additional GOS questions, such as those that deal with preparation for the job market and employment type, would provide further insight about the university and labour market experiences of students and graduates with disability. Also, further interrogating "long-term health condition or disability" responses could shed light on how and why disability experience is the main reason for those responses. The resulting data could contribute to sector-wide service delivery as part of a national SwD careers strategy.

Recommendation 1: That the Department of Education, Skills and Employability (DESE) considers the practicality of:

a) applying the disability variable to additional questions in the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS), and

b) further interrogating "long-term health condition or disability" responses to GOS questions.

Recommendation 2: That the education sector, in collaboration with ADCET, the NDCO and the National Careers Institute (NCI) investigates the provision of a national SwD careers strategy to guide specialist services in the context of broader service delivery.

4.3 Achieving employment outcomes

The development of people's ability to manage their own careers is central to constructivist career development theory's acknowledgement of the role they have in authoring their own lives (Patton, 2019). Fellowship survey data, however, indicates SwD's attitudes towards their career management agency can be distorted by their experience of disability.

The data presented in Chapter 4.2. *How students with disability think about careers* suggested that people making inaccurate assumptions about their abilities was the challenge SwD most expected to face securing the work they want. In addition to this concern, student responses to subsequent survey questions indicate that they do not feel confident addressing this issue directly by providing employers with information and evidence about the usefulness of their abilities.

In the national surveys SwD and staff were asked questions about achieving employment outcomes in relation to the:

- most important factor when it comes to getting the work they want after university
- best sources of support for SwD getting the work they want after university.

SwD were asked to respond to the question: 'Which of the following [listed factors] is most important when it comes to getting the work you want after university? Select one only'. As the data in Figure 2 shows, most SwD (39.2 per cent) chose 'Communicating a sense of fit with employers based on how and why I want to use my skills', followed by 'Having better marks, skills, and knowledge than other job seekers' (25.4 per cent). The least perceived important factor was 'Getting an advantage by offering to do more than other applicants' (4.3 per cent).

SwD mostly chose factors that do not necessarily require them to explain the benefits of their abilities to employers. Even 'Having better marks, skills and knowledge than other candidates' falls into this category of responses because as a stand-alone success factor it amounts to a student not having to provide an account of their abilities and aspirations that targets a specific role in a specific organisation. Other response options similarly do not involve students engaging authentically with employers. At best, even being recommended by an 'Industry contact' (13.0 per cent) might get the SwD in front of an employer but they would then still have to explain their sense of fit when they get there. Taken together, this group of factors – 'Having better marks and skills than other applicants', 'Being recommended by an industry contact', 'Not sharing disability information with employers', 'Getting an advantage by offering to do more than other applicants', and the 5.3 per cent who were 'not sure' – amounted to 56.7 per cent of SwD displaying non-agentic careers thinking.

SwD appear to have misinformed ideas about what graduate employers look for in candidates. Instead of relying on simplistic accounts of marks and skills, students need to be able to communicate what the literature refers to as the "qualities, conduct, culture, and ideology of a student's intended profession" (Jackson, 2016, p. 926). This is supported by data from the Australian Association of Graduate Employers (AAGE) which indicates graduate employers specifically rate things such as candidates' "understanding of our organisation", and communication and interpersonal skills substantially ahead of university grades (AAGE, 2020b, p. 34).

Compared to SwD, staff expressed more uncertainty about what was most important in SwD getting the work they want after university. Only 5.3 per cent of SwD were not sure compared to 22.7 per cent staff members. The less-agentic options were selected by a substantial proportion of staff (41.4 per cent). Nevertheless, when it comes to SwD getting the work they want after university, 'Communicating a sense of fit with employers based on

how and why I/they want to use their skills' was the most popular response for both SwD (39.2 per cent) and staff (53.3 per cent).

Evaluation of cross-tabulations and Pearson's chi-square revealed no statistically significant effect associated with different types of staff members (p=.427), regional/non-regional university staff (p=.045), DES/non-DES university staff (p=.759). This indicates these responses were commonly held views across the university landscape.
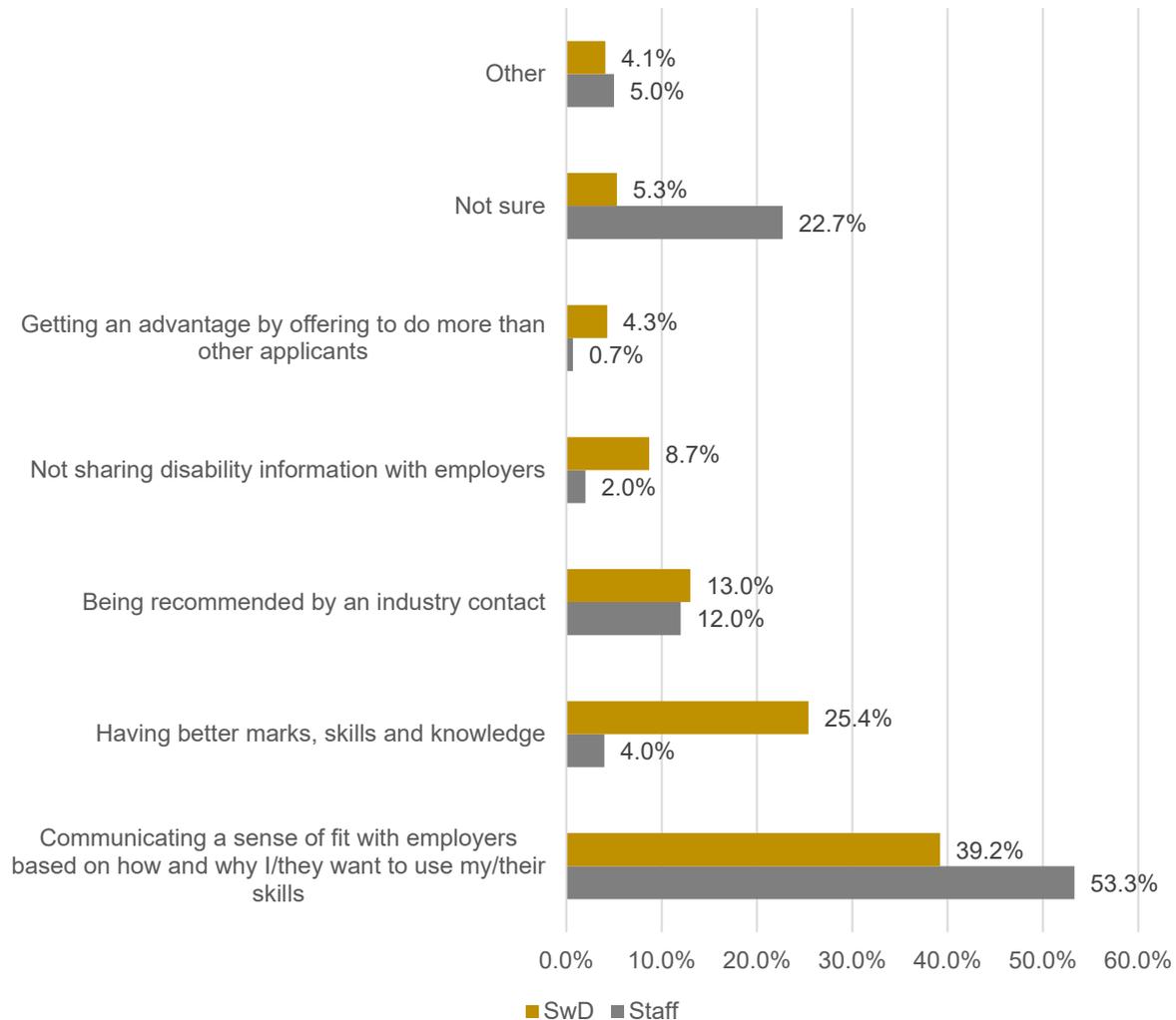
Figure 2. Most important factor for SwD getting the work they want after university: Student and staff responses

To better understand SwD's attitudes to achieving desired employment, they were asked "What are the best sources of support for getting the work you want after university? Select all that apply". As Figure 3 shows, the top choices were an 'Industry contact' (43.3 per cent) followed by 'Academic/teaching staff' (36.0 per cent) and 'University placement or internship offices' (35.2 per cent). Interestingly, almost one-third of students (32.7 per cent) were unsure about the best source of support for getting the work they want. Students ranked 'friends/peers' fifth (32.4 per cent) and 'University careers office' sixth overall (31.4 per cent). They considered 'University disability support office' (29.4 per cent) and 'Family' (21.4 per cent) as least important.

In chi-square tests, no statistically significant effects were observed in relation to differences in perceptions for students with single or multiple disabilities (p=.023), or for students with different types of disabilities (p=.009).

In contrast to student perceptions, 68.0 per cent of staff respondents regarded the 'University careers office' as the best source of support for SwD to obtain work they want after university. The second-best source, as nominated by staff, was an 'Industry contact' (56.0 per cent), followed by the 'University disability support office' (53.3 per cent). The lowest rated source of support for SwD are academic/teaching staff (36.0 per cent).

The emphasis given to industry contacts aligns with SwD's lack of faith in university careers services as expressed by many SwD in free text comments. It is also indicative of a non-agentic attitude to employability that assumes that having an industry contact onside will secure them a job and relieve them of the burden of having to explain how they would fulfill the inherent requirements of a desired role. The following paraphrased student comments in the survey support this contention.

> The careers office is hopeless. For everyone, not just for someone with disability.

> The help isn't enough. People need to convince employers I'm as good as someone without disability.

> It's all about who you know. What you know doesn't count.

The sentiment that contacts count more than ability carries an additional concern. While networking is an important career management tool, the literature indicates its efficacy depends on how it is done. Productive networking involves reciprocity, based partly on the networker using their ability and interest to provide benefit for the other person. Networking relationships that are based on "self-interested 'taking' networking behaviour" have been shown to actually reduce networks over time (in Bridgstock, Jackson, Lloyd & Tofa, 2019b, p. 70).

There were some highly-agentic SwD who were confident representing their ability to employers without support. There were also SwD whose comments suggested that the benefit of their abilities would be outweighed by employer bias and that recommendations or having university staff negotiate with employers on their behalf would be necessary for them to secure work.

SwD selection of non-agentic responses may also reflect the fact that even before they reach university, students may have experienced their ability being downplayed (Urbis, 2011). Once they do reach university, some are also confronted with the staff perception that equitable education adjustments for SwD amount to unfair academic advantage (Martin, 2020) instead of attempts to mitigate students' inadvertent exclusion from the curriculum. This was also noted by staff members in focus group discussions who observed that there are still "pervasive attitudes that if we provide reasonable adjustment it's providing an unfair advantage to the person living with a disability" [FG#39]. This was supported by SwD who reported difficulty negotiating equitable education adjustments with universities. In light of this, SwD's apparently timid attitude to employability emerges as a response to persistent systematic invalidation and is consequently a key issue that universities need to address.
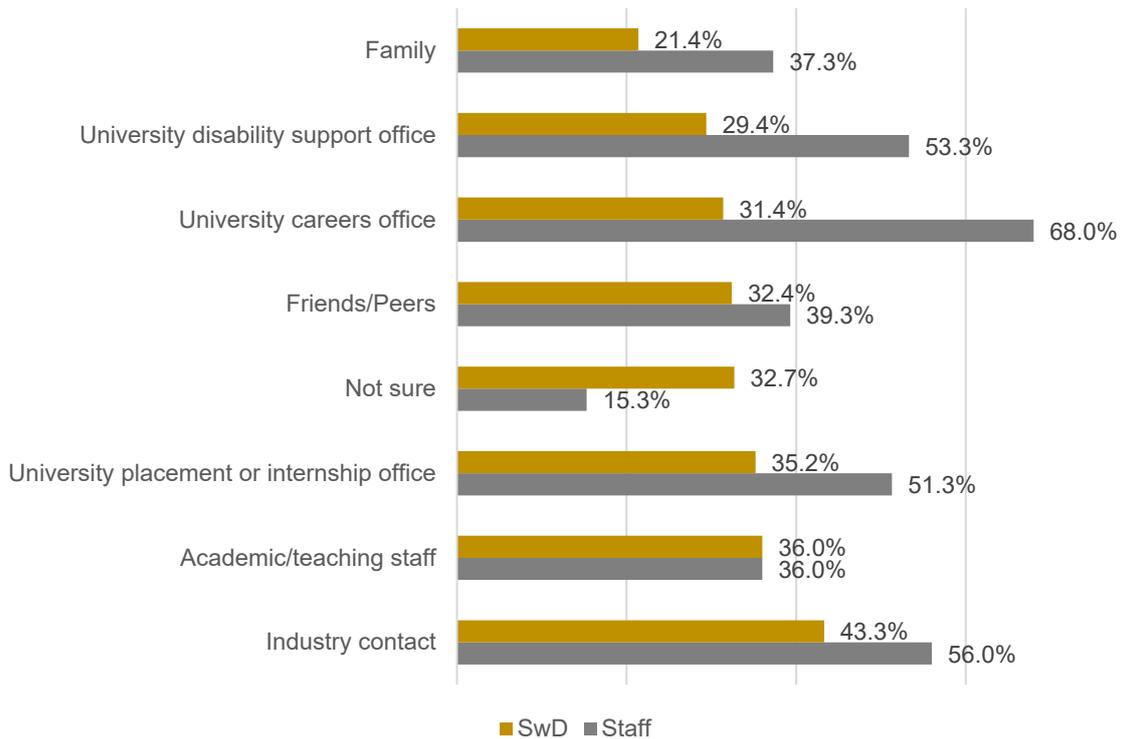
Figure 3. Best sources of careers support for SwD: Student and staff responses

Further details were observed in different staff responses to the question of 'Best sources of careers support for SwD' among different types of staff (see Figure 4). A chi-square test indicated these differences were statistically significant (p=.000).

'University careers offices' were nominated as the best source of support for SwD by 92.1 per cent of Careers staff, 77.8 per cent of Disability staff (who ranked 'University careers office' equally with the 'Placement/internship office') and 68.0 per cent of Other professional staff. In contrast, only 36.1 per cent of academic/teaching staff nominated the 'University careers office', ranking it below an 'Industry contact' (50.0 per cent), the 'University disability support office' (44.4 per cent) and 'Academic/teaching staff' themselves (38.9 per cent) as a source of support.

An 'Industry contact' was the first choice for academic/teaching staff (50.0 per cent), This is significant because an 'Industry contact' was also the clear first choice for SwD, followed by 'Academic/teaching staff'. The literature indicates teaching staff are the staff group students in general most go to for career guidance (Smith et al., 2018). This was also reflected in student free-text comments as the below paraphrased quote suggests.

> *Careers staff can't help. Teaching staff can.*

This is significant because as the survey results indicate, SwD are most likely to be directed to industry by academic/teaching staff.

Also, the university disability support office is the group with the highest proportion of staff that selected an 'Industry contact' as the most important source of careers support for SwD (66.7 per cent). It is ranked second by the non-disability staff group's responses, who also rank the 'University placement or internship office' equal first with the 'University careers office' as the most important source of careers support for SwD.

While mixed understandings of careers helpfulness are noted in the literature, (Bridgstock, Grant-Iramu, & McAlpine, 2019a), the ramifications for SwD do not appear to have been explored.

The different understandings identified in this Fellowship include:

- constructivist CDL at one end of the spectrum, focussing on SwD agency and enabling CDL, and
- job-matching approaches at the other, involving reduced student agency and more reliance on others taking career management responsibility for them.

The survey results showed that SwD may not find their way to support that engages them with enabling CDL because academic staff, the most sought out university group for careers support by students, rate the importance of industry contacts above other options.
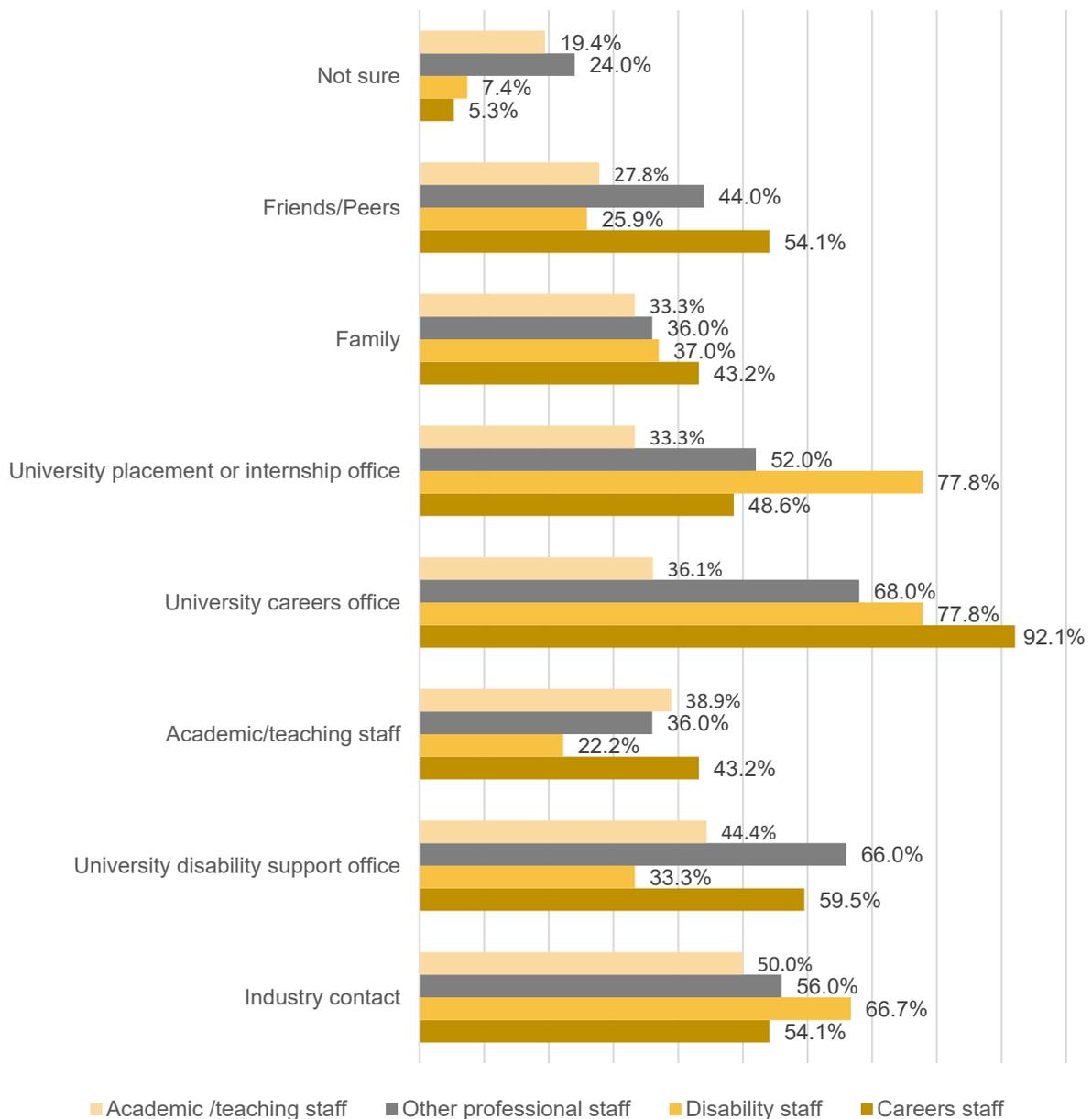
Figure 4. Best sources of careers support for SwD: Staff responses by role

Altogether, as shown in Figure 5 below, this suggests an underlying trend of SwD being referred outside the university either directly or indirectly. As a result, SwD have confirmation of their view that an industry contact is the best source of careers support. It also suggests a likely cycle of referrals between services. This was the subject of focus group discussion in which participants suggested that staff in general do not feel confident supporting SwD, and consequently SwD are frequently regarded as someone else's responsibility. This confirms conclusions in the literature that equity needs to be better embedded in university employability strategies (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017).

It should therefore be of little surprise that negative student comments about university support services express frustration and a sense of not being understood by people whose job it is to help them. The student impression that staff do not understand disability speaks directly to the mismatch between student needs and staff not feeling equipped to support them.
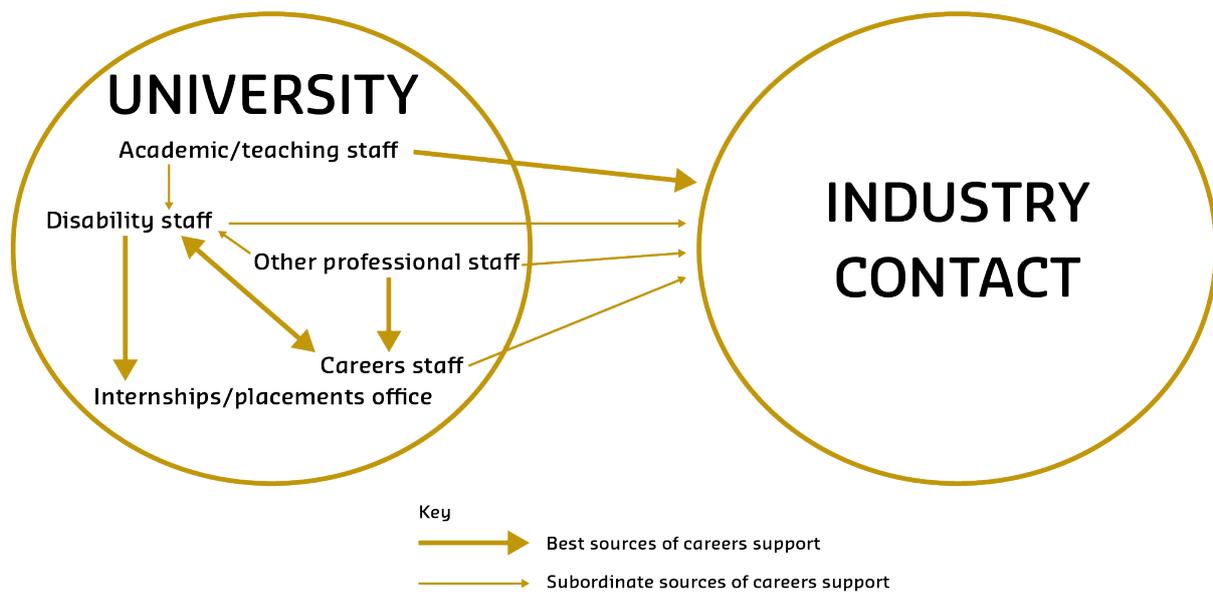
Figure 5. Inadvertent outsourcing of careers support for SwD
Best sources of careers support - staff perceptions by staff role

Non-agentic ideas about employability may also account for some academic/teaching staff responses. The literature indicates the academic/teaching staff concern that integrating CDL in programs dumbs them down (Bridgstock et al., 2019a), based on the idea that CDL is limited to things such as showing students "how to develop an effective CV" (Bridgstock et al., 2019a, p. 60). It also may be linked to the opinion, which is outdated in current career development literature, that CDL is something students do once they start work, and which happens naturally "through exposure to work and professional contexts" (Bridgstock et al., 2019a, p. 58). In this scheme of things, the organised acquisition of metacognitive skills that enhance students' engagement with academic disciplines, which are central to current understandings of CDL (Bridgstock et al., 2019a; Watts, 2006), go unrecognised. A mechanism for developing shared understandings among different staff groups about the employability and CDL challenges that SwD face is sorely needed. The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) and the National Disability Coordination Officer Program (NDCO) provide excellent disability awareness training for educators and staff in the Vocational Education and Training sector. This material enables professional disability confidence in teaching and professional staff by explaining how disability awareness can be used to benefit students. It is available at: https://disabilityawareness.com.au. Strategic use of this material could provide a tailored

product for the tertiary sector that also informs staff about the nature of employability and Disability CDL in particular.

Recommendation 3: That the funded bodies: the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET), the National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Program and the NCI promote shared understandings about employability and the employability challenges SwD face through the development and rollout of a university version of its VET Sector (Staff and Educators) Disability Awareness Training that includes information about employability and Disability CDL.

4.4 Awareness of careers support

In the national surveys, staff and SwD were asked about their awareness of careers support designed specifically for SwD at their university. The majority of SwD (61.2 per cent) said they were aware their university provided tailored careers support for SwD. Interestingly though, when those students were asked 'What kinds of support are you aware of (select all that apply)', 67.6 per cent of them did not identify a single source of support. Students who did, mostly nominated 'Online resources' (21.3 per cent), 'Extended individual careers consultations' (12.6 per cent), and 'On-campus Disability Employment Services Provider e.g. USEP/GradWISE' (11.5 per cent). The results are reported in Figure 6.

A similar pattern of responses was observed for staff responses. Around 47.3 per cent of staff respondents said they were aware of targeted career supports for SwD at their respective universities, but 54.7 per cent of them did not identify a single source of support. The specific programs staff were most aware of were 'Extended individual careers consultations' (32 per cent), 'Online resources' (30.0 per cent) and 'On-campus Disability Employment Services Provider e.g. USEP/GradWISE' (27.3 per cent). Interestingly, there were no statistically-significant findings by staff role. Please see Appendix 7 for details.
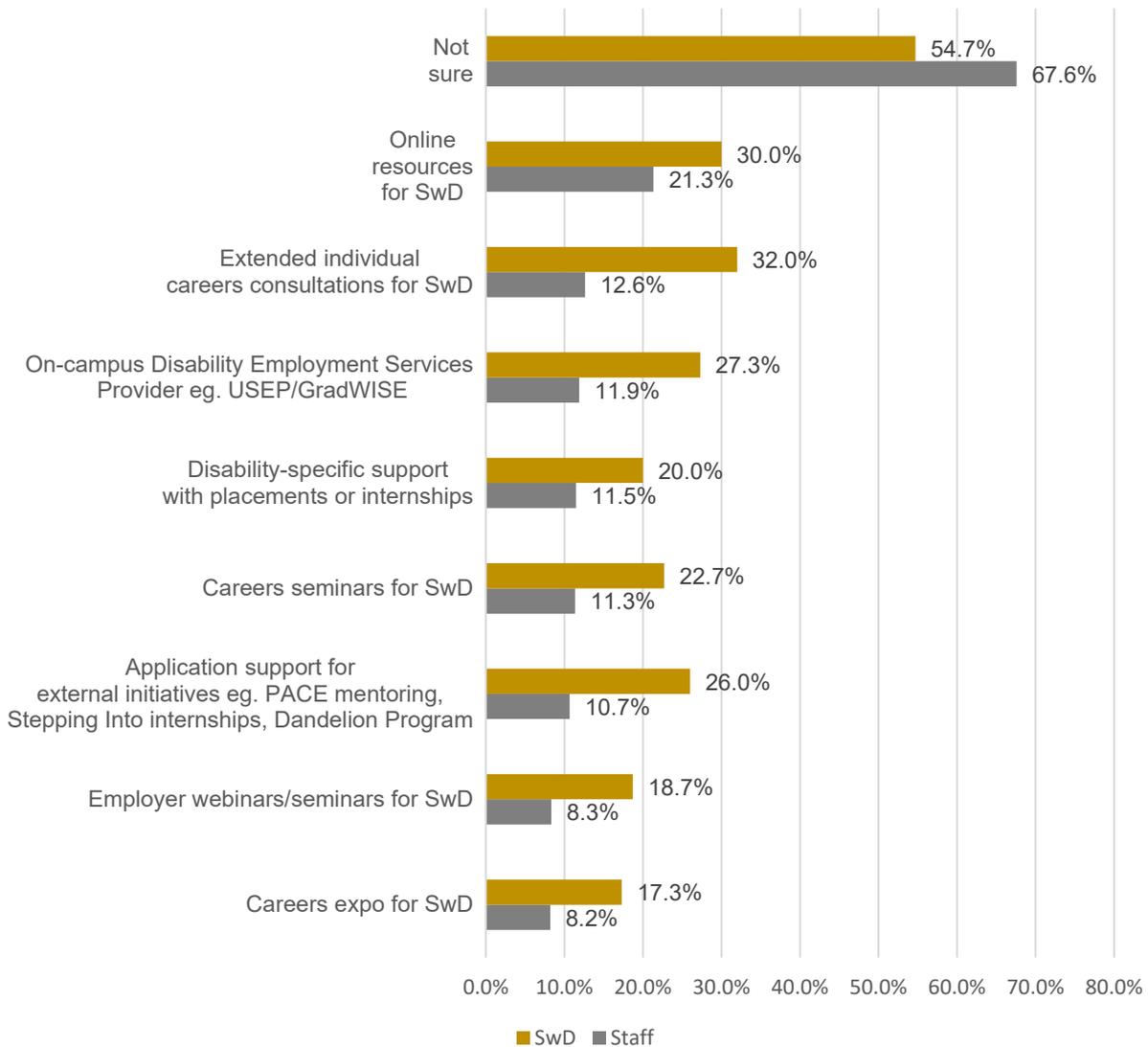
Figure 6. SwD and staff awareness of specific types of careers support for SwD at their university

The responses to the survey questions indicate the difficulties of generating awareness among students and staff about initiatives designed to help students. Lack of SwD engagement with targeted programs was a key risk factor identified in focus groups.

Focus group discussion noted that in relation to SwD, protocols at some universities prevented careers services from directly contacting SwD to advertise services.

It also appears that a number of underlying issues compromise SwD engagement with services. It was suggested in focus groups that requiring students to comply with eligibility criteria by retelling their story and/or providing medical documentation again would also discourage student engagement. Focus group participants noted SwD's concern about stigma and discrimination. It was suggested that students' willingness to share disability information with disability professionals did not automatically translate to sharing it with other staff such as careers or internship teams. It was also noted that SwD may display scepticism about DES providers, due to negative experience with them in the past and/or suspicion about them apparently doing something for nothing. The latter was also said to account for some staff scepticism about DES partnerships which reduced staff's willingness to refer SwD to them.

The vague nature of awareness of targeted supports among both SwD and staff points to another important issue. SwD's lack of awareness may be connected to the sense, reported in the previous chapter, that the university does not understand their disability and cannot help them. This, combined with the common SwD-and-staff belief that an industry contact is most important in SwD securing the work they want, reflects doubt about universities' role in supporting the career development of SwD. Even when support is available, these influences quarantine it from the many who would benefit from it.

4.5 Enabling the provision of careers support for students with disability

The staff survey asked people to respond to the question 'What would be needed to provide (or provide more) careers support for SwD?'. Respondents selected all options that applied from a list of factors.

As reported in Figure 7, most respondents (52.0 per cent) were unsure which measures could be applied to provide careers support for SwD. However, among respondents who nominated measures, the top three options were 'More collaboration with external stakeholders', 'Staff training' and 'More collaboration with internal stakeholders', with the provision of 'Open access resources' being the least favoured measure. The following discussion focuses on those three options.

There were observable differences in responses when analysed by staff role (Career staff, Disability staff, Academic/teaching staff, and Other professional staff), and by whether or not staff work at a university with or without a DES partnership. There was no statistically significant difference between regional and non-regional staff responses. Details can be found in Appendix 8.
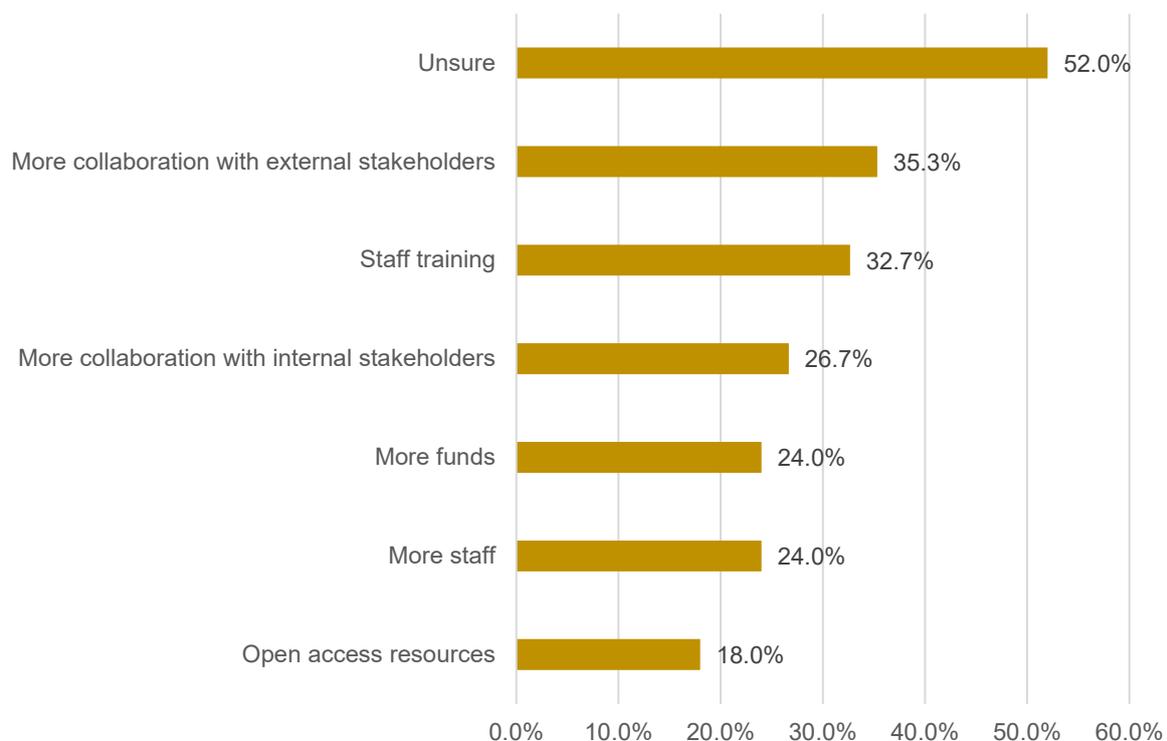

Figure 7. Requirements to provide (or provide more) careers support for SwD: Staff responses

Collaboration with external stakeholders: employer liaison and DES partnerships

Focus group discussion identified that while collaboration with employers was needed to provide careers support for SwD, engaging employers in careers support initiatives for SwD presents issues for university staff. A range of employer attitudes towards disability recruitment were tabled, from active inclusion to reluctance. The underlying reasons for different employer attitudes were also discussed.

It was noted that some employers still assume PwD will underperform compared to people without disability. This is consistent with employer assumptions that recruiting PwD involves inconvenience and expense (AHRI, 2011; 2015). Focus group participants also noted that employers may not equate PwD with jobs that are linked to university education and identified two employer responses to this. One was to not actively consider SwD for internships and jobs. The other was to recruit SwD as a charitable act to demonstrate good corporate citizenship. Focus group deliberation suggested that while the latter motivation may be well-intentioned, the accompanying lack of faith in SwD's inherent ability undermined their success at work. This was because those employers did not identify and address inadvertent barriers to the student's effective performance, including not supporting teams to work productively with their SwD intern. This is consistent with findings in the literature that constructive workplace inclusion needs to deliberately value and enable PwD's abilities, as is routinely done for people without disability (Sumaktas, 2020). Such strategy can contribute to inclusive organisations financially outperforming their non-inclusive competitors (Accenture, 2018; Lindsay, Cagliostro, Albarico, Mortaji, & Karon, 2018).

Interestingly, the employer need for disability recruitment information and good practice examples (identified by Kantar Public, 2017) was not prominent in focus group discussions.

Focus group discussion also identified encouraging examples of employer interest in disability-inclusive recruitment. This interest could be better exploited. Government and industry national initiatives such as ADCET, the NDCO program, JobAccess and the AND were tabled as key supports for universities but despite excellent publicity about them, specific program details were still news to some focus group participants. It was suggested that collaboration with them at a national level would be an effective way of plugging gaps and coordinating effort. This could be done via national practitioner associations, the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND) and the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS). Including employers as learning partners in these collaborations would enhance mutual stakeholder understandings for the benefit of SwD.

Recommendation 4: That universities use their connections with national practitioner associations the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND) and the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS), to develop national collaborative partnerships with employers to develop disability confidence and mutual understandings for the benefit of SwD.

Responses to the regional staff email interviews also indicated the perception that program availability remained an issue in the regions. This was said to be due to regional economies having fewer job opportunities in a relatively small number of disciplines, and a general lack of graduate programs that target SwD.

Focus groups and email interviews with regional staff identified specific issues associated with DES provider partnerships including their geographical location. In addition to a lack of suitable local graduate employment networks, staff pointed out that DES providers were not necessarily available in all regional campus locations. Participants reported that equitable service provision across campuses can be challenged by not being able to have the same

DES provider at each campus, separate team cultures operating at different campuses and the availability of local service champions at each campus.

A different kind of Disability CDL engagement model is needed to generate engagement opportunities for SwD from regional Australia. The Regional University Centres (RUCs) program is a developing area of the higher education sector with significant links to their local communities (DESE, 2021b). RUCs are a resource which could be consulted to support the development of new employer and DES engagement models.

Recommendation 5: That universities, NDCOs, Disability Employment Service (DES) providers, employers and Regional University Centres (RUCs) collaborate to investigate ways of providing cooperative career development support and identifying disability-confident organisations for the benefit of SwD.

Focus group discussion revealed that partnerships with DES providers also presented broader issues for universities. It was indicated that management who have responsibility for investigating, negotiating and overseeing arrangements with DES providers require support to do so. It was felt that access to information about other universities' experience of the partnerships would help them understand issues involved and make the business case to university management.

Of particular note was the importance of DES partnerships being championed by a dedicated university staff member to represent the service to the university community, build sources of referrals by staff from other university areas and gather data to measure service engagement and impact. It was noted that not providing this support and leaving DES partners to function in isolation contributed to the lack of success of some DES partnerships.

Recommendation 6: That universities with DES provider partnerships contribute to the development of DES partnership guidelines for the benefit of the university sector. These guidelines should include DES provider perspectives.

The challenges facing DES providers when it came to supporting SwD were also apparent. These included investing time in developing networks of inclusive employers offering graduate opportunities as well as their relationship with university SwD. Existing DES funding arrangements mean that many have to restrict service to SwD who have graduated or are in their final year.

Growth in SwD receiving specialist attention on campus is facilitated by the participation of specialist DES providers, parachuted in from a separate area of the government system. It is a welcome and promising initiative, but if it is to develop and thrive as a viable arrangement, the sector cannot risk their commitment being taken for granted. Guidelines that see providers being compensated for their effort are urgently needed.

Recommendation 7: That government review the current funding model for DES providers to investigate the provision of more timely compensation for their investment in supporting university SwD and enable their engagement with SwD from the first year of their studies.

Staff training needs

Staff reported through the national survey as well as in focus groups and regional email interviews that staff training was a key priority for enabling universities to provide more or enhanced, targeted careers support for SwD. This view is supported by the Career Industry Council's *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners* which indicate that working with PwD is a specialisation that requires specific training (CICA, 2019). A recent review of accredited practitioner training courses found no programs related to this specialisation (Brown et al., 2019) indicating a serious professional development gap.

Apart from some outlier examples, careers staff in focus group deliberations expressed a lack of professional confidence in their individual ability to provide support for SwD. This differs from the confidence displayed by careers staff as reported in the section *Achieving employment outcomes.* In that instance, the 92.7 per cent of careers staff that nominated the careers office as the best source of support for SwD appear to express general faith in their office's understanding of employability and career development principles, not their individual ability to apply them to the specific needs of this student cohort.

Both disability and careers staff in focus groups agreed that careers staff need to develop their ability to understand SwD's barriers. A widespread trend was careers staff reporting a need for:

- training materials detailing proven methods for providing careers support for SwD
- information about the large number of different disability types and their consequences for the job market – a point acknowledged by Hopkins (2020).

While the 2019 CICA Professional Standards mention the functional implications of disability for career and work, detailed understanding of them is not a foundation disability career development competency. Instead, the Standards emphasise competencies that reflect the career development literature's focus on client experience and enabling client agency. Relevant competencies include:

- conduct specialised vocational counselling for people with disabilities
- provide career guidance, job seeking skills training, and job placement for people with disabilities
- understand applied counselling approaches and their application to people with disabilities
- understand psychosocial issues related to the experience of disability
- facilitate accommodations needed for job placement.

<div align="right">(CICA, 2019, p. 24)</div>

Careers practitioners' qualifications and experience make them well-placed to benefit from specialised training that equips them to deal with the unfamiliar issues SwD present with. These include awareness of functional implication of disability, socially-constructed disability concepts and their impact on practitioners' and students' sense of careers possibility, understanding students' individual responses to their experience of disability, working with student anxiety about sharing disability information, and helping students deal with unconscious bias. This would help career practitioners mobilise their training and experience to support SwD's engagement with issues that may otherwise distort their careers thinking.

The lack of accredited, specialist training for careers practitioners is an urgent issue.

Recommendation 8: That the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS), the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND), the NDCO, Australian Network on Disability (AND) support the development of specialist Disability CDL qualifications to develop the capacity of experienced practitioners to service the needs of SwD. It is recommended that this be done in consultation with SwD and GwD.

During focus groups it was suggested, based on staff experience, that cross-sector collaboration would help universities support each other to efficiently design and implement local targeted support iterations. This has occurred due to a combination of persistent need and professional good will. It was noted that current institutional KPIs focus on individual organisational achievement which may inhibit collaboration between universities. Focus group discussion itself facilitated professional learning that increased awareness of strategies, resources and their possible application. The sector has an opportunity to provide

a forum for a Disability CDL Community of Practice for staff to share ideas, discuss concerns and support each other's work.

Recommendation 9: That careers and disability professional associations such as ATEND and NAGCAS consider hosting a national Disability CDL Community of Practice to provide a place for interested practitioners to learn from each other about Disability CDL and related matters.

Recommendation 10: That the DESE considers supporting universities to add a collaborative metric to their institutional KPIs.

Collaboration with internal stakeholders

Focus group discussion also identified the importance of partnerships between disability and careers offices in providing careers support for SwD. Staff from universities that provided targeted careers support for SwD noted that the collaborations facilitated the warm referral of SwD between services and provided staff with insight into each other's work. This was said to contribute to careers staff's disability confidence and disability staff's understanding of career practitioners' approach to employability and CDL. Collaboration between services may therefore directly address the need for shared understandings about employability and career helpfulness that was identified in this research's findings about *Achieving employment outcomes* and *Awareness of careers support*.

Co-locating disability and careers services was considered desirable by participants in focus groups and regional Heads of Service email interviews. Staff from universities with targeted services also pointed out that service colocation alone would not necessarily be effective and that focussing on the provision of support for staff was more important for collaboration between services. It was noted that referring SwD to other services continued to feel like the best option for time-poor and/or unconfident staff. Consequently, creating a culture of service-response instead of referral-response was prioritised to avoid perpetuating the cycle of referrals between services that was indicated in the *Awareness of careers support* chapter. The emphasis on collaboration is consistent with findings from service reviews from Australia (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017), the UK (Williams, Pollard, Takala, & Houghton, 2019) and the US (Mathews, 2018; NACE, 2019).

Recommendation 11: That university careers and disability offices collaborate on the creation of careers services that support SwD.

In addition, while there has been recent growth in embedded CDL in individual curricula and entire programs (Bridgstock et al., 2019b), this research did not discover examples of embedded Disability CDL. Instead, where it is offered, it continues to exist outside the curriculum. Enhancing in-curriculum offerings by embedding Disability CDL principles in them remains a priority.

Recommendation 12: That universities investigate Universal Design Learning principles for in-curriculum Disability CDL to ensure that the presence of SwD is assumed during curriculum design.

5. Evidence on an alternative response: Swinburne University's AccessAbility Careers Hub

5.1 Introduction

Swinburne's AccessAbility Careers Hub (AACH or "the Hub") is included as a case study to provide an example of a response to issues encountered in the provision of targeted careers services for SwD. Select information is presented using the categories of analysis from this report's main findings and discussion:

- SwD careers thinking
- achieving employment outcomes
- awareness of careers support
- requirements to provide and/or enhance targeted services.

The AACH planning phase incorporated a co-design workshop. Consistent with the constructivist principle of client collaboration, this included SwD as well as university and employer stakeholders. The workshop identified key needs including:

- a safe place for SwD to share disability information, develop select career management and employability skills, and receive peer support
- training for employers to enable them to support and accommodate SwD
- both SwD and employers having to better understand each other's needs.

Figure 8 represents a service summary used to advertise the Hub's operation and purpose as a co-curricular service to the University community. SwD tailor their use of the Hub in an initial planning consultation, selecting from a variety of tailored Disability CDL activities. These help SwD develop employability attributes and independent career management mindsets to enhance their sense of themselves as emerging professionals with the ability to manage their own careers.

Figure 8. Swinburne University's AccessAbility Careers Hub (Source: Swinburne University)

5.2 How students with disability think about careers

An overarching feature of the AACH is the enabling context it sets for Disability CDL. In line with Morgan's (2012) recommendation of not beginning interventions with a disability focus and the constructivist principle of not assuming perfect knowledge of students' needs (Patton & McMahon, 2006), the Hub does not begin its relationship with students by imposing a conversation about disability on them. As case study interview participants suggested, SwD may contact the Hub to discuss issues other than disability.

The Hub's starting point is helping SwD identify and aim for work that is meaningful for them. This is evidenced by the Hub's student support materials that encourage SwD to reflect on key career development themes such as:

- What they would like their work to mean.
- How they would like to eventually use their developing skills in the workplace.
- How they can recognise work contexts that provide the right environment for using skills in the student's preferred way.
- The things about them, including their motivation and sense of purpose, that makes them think they are, or will become, good at using skills in their preferred way and how this aligns with needs in the world of work.

By engaging SwD with these themes, they gather evidence about the way they apply their skills, their professional motivation for doing so and the relevance of these factors to the world of work. It also helps them set their own priorities for further career development activity such as volunteering, participation in campus life, or casual or part-time work. In addition to equipping them with evidence to eventually present to employers, SwD demonstrate their growing career management ability to themselves.

When disability becomes relevant to the discussion it is considered in terms of its relevance to the inherent requirements of the work the student would like to do. This contextualises students' response to their disability as one of a number of factors in their developing employability. It reduces scope for disability being an overpowering force in students' careers thinking or a source of what one US review of disability careers support termed students' "illness identities" (Ellison et al, 2019). It also provides scope for discovering instead of assuming individual student responses to their disability. As the following quote indicates, this is valued by students.

> *The most important part is understanding of my situation. Difficulties are different for everyone. It's hard to understand how it is for everyone.* (Swinburne case study, student comment)

In addition to applying the constructivist principle of treating students as partners in their CDL, SwD are encouraged to regard each other the same way by supporting each other through a community of practice approach (eg. Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). AACH group activities are used to help SwD acknowledge and pursue their shared domain of interest, table issues and strategise responses to them together. They not only provide and receive peer support, they also discuss and provide feedback on Hub resources and suggest Hub initiatives that benefit SwD.

Sharing disability information with employers is a key topic for the Hub's Student Community of Practice. Through case study interviews, SwD indicated they feel apprehensive about sharing disability information outside the university but do so to secure internships and work. This sentiment is reflected in the below indicative and paraphrased remark.

> *The concern is that employers will see disability as an unnecessary complication. I'd be nervous about sharing disability information outside the university. If it means getting a job or an internship I'd be nervous but it would be worth it.*

> *There's still a stigma associated with disability … in the workplace people treat you differently.* (Swinburne case study, student comment)

The Hub uses the term "sharing" as opposed to "disclosing" disability information to employers because of the negative connotations associated with "disclosing". The idea of "sharing" is intended to encourage students' sense of choice, consider the benefits and disadvantages of their choices, and set a more positive context if they do decide to share disability information with employers. This is consistent with findings from a US study of mostly GwD in the workforce who preferred to think in terms of "acknowledging" disability to set the context for emphasising self-management to improve job performance (Jans, Kaye, & Jones, 2012).

The elements of the AACH discussed in this section are designed to strengthen SwD's careers thinking by enhancing SwD evidence-based opinion of their abilities. They also attempt not to impose disability conversations on SwD but to provide enabling contexts for them to acknowledge concerns and strategise responses to them. This is consistent with the kind of strength-based engagement that is mentioned in the practice literature about support for SwD (Oswald, Hubert, & Bonza, 2015) and it counters the experience noted in the literature (Urbis, 2011) of SwD having their aspirations and employability invalidated by others. Instead, AACH students experience employability as the kind of cyclical process described in current literature (e.g. Bennett et al., 2016; McMahon & Patton, 2019; Smith et al., 2018).

5.3 Achieving employment outcomes

SwD responses to the national survey indicated a lack of confidence that employers would value them for their abilities. Case study documents showed that the Hub connected SwD with employers through curated experiences to help them better understand how to represent themselves to disability-confident employers. Helping students examine how employers think about disability was key.

The Hub's largest event, the 2019 pilot "AccessAbility Expo and Panel Discussion" was a good example of this. The event design aligned with a constructivist approach by using SwD's concern about recruitment and workplace inclusion as a discussion topic for both SwD and employers.

The discussion transcript showed this provided a forum for SwD to table and discuss concerns with employers. During the discussion, SwD discovered employers' engagement in their emerging professional interests and skills, and the importance of using them to guide job searches and communicate a sense of fit in job applications. Discussion also pinpointed that in addition to having technical skills, SwD also learned that, as noted in the literature, understanding the qualities and culture of the profession they would like to join is critical to their success (Jackson, 2016) as is their understanding of how they might contribute to the development of their preferred profession. This speaks to the suggestion in the literature that people can secure work by articulating their aim to make a professional-personal contribution (Cesarano, Papathanasiou & Striano 2018) that meets the inherent requirements of a specific kind of job.

SwD also learned employers ask for disability information to help them remove inadvertent barriers to performance instead of weed out candidates. This was supported by the Hub's disability recruitment information web page, which was offered as a practical support to employers. The event also provided a practical vote of confidence in the professional value of SwD by seeking their opinion on disability recruitment and inclusion matters during the panel discussion.

The simple act of witnessing employer representatives asking questions, thereby demonstrating imperfect knowledge, proved liberating for SwD and provided some relief from the understandable desire to hide perceived flaws, including living with disability.

Post-event feedback from students indicated that the event made them feel less nervous about networking with employers and more confident about communicating their knowledge and abilities to employers. The below paraphrased remarks indicate this.

> This was my first time networking with employers and I feel I can do it!

> I feel now that I have a chance of getting a job after uni after all.

Employers contributed to SwD developing their understanding of employability as a cyclical learning process instead of a static result. Employers also demonstrated their interest in learning from SwD by asking questions about how their workplaces could be more inclusive, how they could make it easier for PwD to share disability information as well as explaining why they ask for it. This aligns with Morgan's (2012) guideline about bringing employers and SwD together to better understand each other's needs.

5.4 DES partnership

Case study documents and interviews showed that Swinburne's partnership with GradWISE (WISE Employment's dedicated DES for university SwD) gave the University's SwD another important avenue of curated access to disability-confident employers.

Hub documents show that an underlying theme of the relationship between the Hub and GradWISE was navigating tension between the nature of their respective service models. The Hub's constructivist focus on student agency and the traditional DES approach of matching clients to jobs – required by the DES funding model – did not automatically fit with each other.

Hub documents show this issue was managed by regular meetings between the two teams. Discussions about service delivery and emerging client issues facilitated warm referrals between the two teams as well as the development of service enhancements and initiatives. Case study information also indicates the colocation of the Hub and GradWISE teams facilitated important impromptu discussion which contributed to the smooth running of the partnership.

GradWISE's progressive approach complemented the Hub's constructivist model in a number of ways. SwD were able to apply for part-time and casual work in non-cognate areas through GradWISE to strategically develop experience with relevant employability skills. They were also supported to use insight generated through Hub activities to represent themselves as emerging professionals in applications for jobs when they completed their studies, including making applications for graduate roles. Additionally, GradWISE developed online tools to support their staff's development of a relationship-based service model for SwD as opposed to more traditional transactional DES service. These include:

- a strength-based online assessment used to focus SwD on their inherent abilities
- a self-care coaching course to support effective performance at university and eventually in the workplace.

These contributions, together with the Hub's other Disability CDL activities, contribute to ability-based employer engagement by nurturing students' sense of themselves as emerging professionals instead of people who are defined by their disability.

GradWISE partnerships with other universities created an intervarsity SwD cohort which provided new scope for engaging employers in Disability CDL collaborations. An example of this was GradWISE hosting a multi-university delegation of SwD at JobAccess's job

shadowing and professional development event, AccessAbility Day. This work-based form of learning develops SwD insight about working with others in a professional context (Bellman, Burgstahler & Ladner, 2014). It also made a practical contribution to SwD learning about key aspects of employability, including what Jackson (2016) identifies as the qualities, culture, and ideology of their preferred profession. Hub students at AccessAbility Day also had the validating experience of considering how well a specific work environment matched or challenged their sense of work, adding to their ability to make tailored applications for jobs that interest them by deepening their understanding of workplaces that enable their performance.

5.5 Awareness of support: Enabling the provision of careers support for SwD

In addition to contributing to the smooth operation of the GradWISE partnership , the colocation of GradWISE, the Hub and mainstream university careers service kept the Hub front-of-mind for non-Hub staff and facilitated referrals between the Hub and the mainstream service.

Case study documents and staff interviews also revealed that the AACH facilitated a shared sense of purpose between the traditionally separate areas of disability and careers, based on enhanced understanding of each other's work. The importance of partnership between the careers and disability services in the success of Disability CDL initiatives is acknowledged in service reviews from different parts of the world as reducing barriers to participation by SwD in Australia (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017) the US (Mathews, 2018; NACE, 2019) and the UK (Williams et al., 2019).

In the case of the Hub's collaboration with AccessAbility Services (Swinburne's disability and equity office) case study interviews indicated that this partnership helped AccessAbility staff feel confident that the Hub was a place where SwD would be understood and met with "the transparent expectation that SwD can do things that others can" (Swinburne case study interview 1 [SCS#1]). Mainstream careers staff also reported that the Hub keeps the issues and obstacles that SwD face front-of-mind and that SwD consequently felt more comfortable sharing disability information with them.

Case study documents and interviews show there was more limited contact with other University areas including the internship and WIL offices but that Swinburne was in the process of developing a university-level WIL AccessAbility Plan. While the Hub did not create this response, the Hub had become part of the University's conversation. This "added to making SwD a priority at Swinburne" because the structures, capability and leadership were there to be drawn on [SCS#5]. This is a significant step towards acknowledging the perspective that Disability CDL should be a university-wide approach (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017).

Case study interviews showed that University Executive support for the Hub underpinned its success.

At the time of the case study interviews, 45 Hub SwD had found paid work that was relevant to their studies. Senior management's support for the Hub was expressed in their understanding that developing employability takes time and that while SwD getting work was to be celebrated and necessary, providing activities that get SwD on the path to finding the work they want was also an important impact measure. This was neatly encapsulated by a comment from senior management:

> These things are rarely successful overnight, but our Vice-Chancellor talks about our university being 'known for who we include rather than who we exclude'. (Swinburne, 2017, p. 3). Helping students that might not otherwise get assistance fits beautifully with that [SCS#6].

Gathering student feedback remains a challenge as students frequently do not report progress to the Hub. However, of the students who completed a post-engagement survey (n=36), around 69.4 per cent of them said using the Hub helped them understand more about the different things they could do to manage their own careers. Helping students understand that disability need not be a catastrophising careers influence is a key Hub achievement. SwD used to separating their careers thinking from their experience of life began to link the two. Relieved of the concern to hide perceived flaws, prompted by imposed deficit perspectives, SwD were better able to explore: what they wanted their careers to mean; how they wanted to use their abilities; and the kinds of professional contributions they wanted to make. Consequently, disability came to figure differently in students' careers thinking. It became variously:

- a source of evidence of positive career attributes e.g. self management ability, an individual viewpoint, or specific communication skills, or
- an issue of individual work style, or
- an irrelevant factor in their developing employability.

Indicative student responses to discovering these perspectives are illustrated in the indicative student comment and in Illustration 1, below:

> *I thought disability was going to stop me. Embracing it has allowed me to talk about it as "this is how I manage" instead of "this is how I struggle".* (Swinburne case study, student comment)

Illustration 1. Unleashing SwD's careers thinking

Engaging with students as emerging professionals is a foundation principle of the Hub's approach. This underpinning – how and why students want to use their education and skills – gives SwD the opportunity to discover and consider their developing strengths and interests, and where they might best use them. This speaks to the student need, neatly encapsulated in the following Swinburne case study student comment, to "be who we want to be … regardless of our disability".

Despite significant progress, there was still much that the Hub could do to strengthen its relationship with SwD and other areas of the University. Access to the Hub is restricted to SwD who choose to engage with this co-curricular service. Developing relationships with faculty and contributing to the inclusion of Disability CDL principles in embedded careers offerings would make useful next steps.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Universities do not control the labour market, but this project indicates there are actions they can take to help SwD better transition to the workforce and secure employment that is relevant to their studies and aspirations.

This research found that while more universities currently provide targeted careers support for SwD than before, they make up just over half (55.8 per cent) of Australia's universities and the responses themselves appear uneven. While some SwD display significant independent career management ability, many more do not.

Both the lived and anticipated invalidation of their inherent abilities dominates much of SwD's careers thinking. By adopting understandably reactive responses to imposed notions of disability, SwD resist using their abilities to represent themselves to employers. Consequently, their ability to manage their own careers is diminished and their professional aspirations are compromised.

Another distressing finding is that through mixed notions of career helpfulness and lack of service coordination, the university system fails to adequately challenge this understandable student response.

A brighter note is the fact that the Australian university sector stands poised to take advantage of relatively unharnessed resources waiting to be marshalled in support of more systematic Disability CDL. Unless this systemic change occurs, progress will continue to be ad hoc and will occur in isolated cul-de-sacs. This would benefit some in the short term, but SwD would continue to miss out on participating in a more inclusive employment landscape which values them for their aspirations and skills.

This research indicates such a landscape is attainable through organised effort as suggested in the below recommendations.

6.1 Recommendations

KEY ISSUE: SwD remain hidden from view and their exclusion from the job market means the economy misses out on the benefit of their inherent insight and skills. University staff and the sector as-a-whole lack access to current and accurate data about the way SwD think about their careers. This is needed if the Australian higher education system is to mount an efficient and organised response to the issues raised in this report. Two recommendations, supported by discussion in chapters 4.2 and 5.2 titled *How students with disability think about careers*, would facilitate this response.

> **Recommendation 1:** That the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) considers the practicality of:
>
> a) applying the disability variable to additional questions in the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS), and
>
> b) further interrogating "long-term health condition or disability" responses to GOS questions
>
> **Recommendation 2:** That the education sector, in collaboration with ADCET, the NDCO and the National Careers Institute (NCI) investigates the provision of a national SwD careers strategy to guide specialist services in the context of broader service delivery.

KEY ISSUE: At present, universities do not provide SwD with consistent employability messages that align with current career development theory. This research indicates that the university sector has the opportunity to develop complementary and up-to-date notions of

employability among staff groups. Data supporting the following recommendation is located in the chapter *Achieving employment outcomes*.

> **Recommendation 3:** That the funded bodies: the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET), the National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Program and the NCI promote shared understandings about employability and the employability challenges SwD face through the development and rollout of a university version of its VET Sector (Staff and Educators) Disability Awareness Training that includes information about employability and Disability CDL.

The remaining recommendations relate to data and discussion from the chapter *Enabling the provision of careers support for SwD*.

KEY ISSUE: Employer interest in disability recruitment provides collaborative opportunity. There are encouraging examples of employer interest in disability-inclusive recruitment. National collaboration with national initiatives such as ADCET, the NDCO program, JobAccess and the AND could be achieved through national practitioner associations ATEND and NAGCAS. These collaborations should include employers as learning partners to enhance mutual stakeholder understandings for the benefit of SwD.

Recommendation 4: That universities use their connections with national practitioner associations the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND) and the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS), to develop national collaborative partnerships with employers to develop disability confidence and mutual understandings for the benefit of SwD.

KEY ISSUE: Universities in regional areas experience specific barriers to providing careers support to SwD. These include a lack of diverse graduate jobs due to narrowly-focused local economies and not being able to engage the resources that are available to metropolitan universities. Different kinds of DES and employer engagement models are needed. The growing network of Regional University Centres (RUCs) could have a role in the development of such a model.

Recommendation 5: That universities, NDCOs, Disability Employment Service (DES) providers, employers and Regional University Centres (RUCs) collaborate to investigate ways of providing cooperative career development support and identifying disability-confident organisations for the benefit of SwD.

KEY ISSUE: University partnerships with DES providers present a range of issues that both organisations need to engage with. Most of the recent growth in Australian universities' provision of careers support for SwD is due to the welcome arrival of university partnerships with DES providers. These partnerships provide an option, not a panacea, require investment from DES providers and need to be nuanced and managed to meet the ongoing needs of individual universities and their SwD.

Recommendation 6: That the NDCO and universities with DES provider partnerships contribute to the development of DES partnership guidelines for the benefit of the university sector. These guidelines should include DES provider perspectives.

Recommendation 7: That government review the current funding model for DES providers to investigate the provision of more timely compensation for their investment in supporting university SwD and enable their engagement with SwD from the first year of their studies.

KEY ISSUE: Disability CDL is regarded as a specialisation in its own right in the literature (CICA, 2019; Patton & McMahon, 2014) but accredited training is not available (Brown et al., 2019). Careers practitioners do not feel confident applying CDL principles to SwD because the issues they present with are unfamiliar. Careers practitioners' baseline training makes

them well-placed to take advantage of accredited specialist training, the provision of which remains an urgent issue.

Recommendation 8: That the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS), the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND), the NDCO, Australian Network on Disability (AND) support the development of specialist Disability CDL qualifications to develop the capacity of experienced practitioners to service the needs of SwD. It is recommended that this be done in consultation with SwD and GwD.

KEY ISSUE: Nationally coordinated effort will be important in the sustainability of future gains made, and matters need to be progressed on as broad a front as possible. Staff participation in the national Community of Practice emerging from the sector's engagement with the Fellowship project indicates there is an appetite for a place to share information about best practice initiatives and support each other's efforts.

Recommendation 9: That careers and disability professional associations such as ATEND and NAGCAS consider hosting a national Disability CDL Community of Practice to provide a place for interested practitioners to learn from each other about Disability CDL and related matters.

Institutional KPIs emphasise individual organisational achievement. To support the developing momentum of information sharing evident among Disability CDL champions in different universities, institutional KPIs could be enhanced to facilitate further collaborative effort.

Recommendation 10: That the DESE considers supporting universities to add a collaborative metric to their institutional KPIs.

Case study data indicates that initiatives benefitting SwD that are grounded in inter-departmental collaboration create shared stakeholder understandings about each other's baseline competencies. This enhances the development of both staff disability confidence and notions of employability and CDL that align with current theory.

KEY ISSUE: Disability CDL is needs to be supported by all areas of the university.

Recommendation 11: That university careers and disability offices collaborate on the creation of careers services that support SwD.

The Fellowship did not discover examples of embedded Disability CDL. Instead, where it is offered, it continues to exist outside the curriculum, where it competes for student attention and is not available to SwD whose time is absorbed by managing their disability and their studies.

Recommendation 12: That universities investigate Universal Design Learning principles for in-curriculum Disability CDL to ensure that the presence of SwD is assumed during curriculum design.

SwD have much to teach us about the careers support they need. Combined with increasing employer confidence towards disability recruitment, the university sector has the chance to work with SwD and industry to develop shared understandings about disability careers issues. In doing so it could contribute to change at a national level for the benefit of all concerned.

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Appendix 1:
Fellowship Advisory Group membership

Advisor and affiliation	Area of expertise
Ms Samantha Dancey Consultancy and Projects Lead, Australian Network on Disability	Disability and business, strategy development and employment.
Mr Anthony Gartner Manager, Equity and Diversity, La Trobe University; President, Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability	Equity in higher education, disability service provision.
Ms Deb McDonald Associate Director, Careers and Employability, Swinburne University of Technology; Vice-President, National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services	Careers education and development, work-integrated learning, leadership.
Mr Matthew Lambelle CEO, WISE Employment	Disability employment, start-ups, cultural change, social enterprise.
Professor Sarah O'Shea Director, National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education	Equity research, policy and practice.
Mr David Swayn National Disability Coordination Officer, North Queensland, STEPS Group Australia; Project Lead, University Specialist Employment Partnership	Disability recruitment, tertiary access and employment access for people with disability.
Mr Daniel Valiente-Riedl General Manager, JobAccess	Disability recruitment and employment.
Associate Professor Nadine Zacharias Director, Student Engagement, Swinburne University of Technology	Education policy analysis, access and equity research.

Appendix 2: Staff and student survey careers questions

Student and staff survey questions

	STUDENT SURVEY		STAFF SURVEY	
1	Do you know what work you would like to do after university?	Only one response allowed Yes No Unsure	In your opinion, do most students with disability know what work they would like to do after university?	Only one response allowed Yes No Unsure
2	Thinking about the work you would like to do after university, what challenges if any, do you expect to face getting it?	Select all that apply Inaccurate assumptions about my abilities Unconscious bias Being asked to share my disability information with employers Needing to do more than other job seekers to prove myself to employers Inequitable recruitment processes Lack of work experience Other (free text)	In your opinion, what challenges if any, do students with disability face getting the work they want after university?	Select all that apply Inaccurate assumptions about their abilities Unconscious bias Being asked to share their disability information with employers Needing to do more than other students to prove themselves to employers Inequitable recruitment processes Lack of work experience Other (free text)
3	Do you feel able to share your disability information with employers?	Only one response allowed Yes No Unsure	In your opinion, do students with disability feel able to share their disability information with employers?	Only one response allowed Yes No Unsure
4	Which of the following is most important when it comes to getting the work you want after university? Select one only.	Only one response allowed Not sharing my disability information with employers Having better marks, skills and knowledge than other job seekers Getting an advantage by offering to do more than other applicants Communicating a sense of fit with employers based on how and why I want to use my skills Being recommended by an industry contact Other (free text)	In your opinion, which of the following is most important when it comes to students with disability getting the work they want after university?	Only one response allowed Not sharing their disability information with employers Having better marks, skills and knowledge than other job seekers Getting an advantage by offering to do more than other applicants Communicating a sense of fit with employers based on how and why they want to use their skills Being recommended by an industry contact Other
5	What are the best sources of support for getting the work you want after university? Select all that apply.	Select all that apply University careers office University disability support office University placement or internship office Academic/teaching staff Friends/Peers Family Industry contact Don't know/Unsure Comments (free text)	In your opinion, what are the best sources of support that help students with disability get the work they want after university?	Select all that apply University careers office University disability support office University placement or internship office Academic/teaching staff Friends/Peers Family Industry contact Don't know/Unsure Other (free text)
6	Are you aware of careers support at your university that is tailored to the needs of students with disability?	Only one response allowed YES NO/DON'T KNOW	Are you aware of careers support at your university that is tailored to the needs of students with disability?	Only one response allowed Yes No/Unsure

7	What kinds of support are you aware of? Select all that apply .	Select all that apply Extended individual careers consultations for students with disability Careers seminars for students with disability Online resources for students with disability Careers expo for students with disability Employer webinars/seminars for students with disability On-campus Disability Employment Services Provider such as USEP or GradWISE Application support for external initiatives eg PACE mentoring, Stepping into internships, Dandelion Program Disability-specific support with, placements or internships Other (free text)	What kinds of support are you aware of? Select all that apply.	Select all that apply Extended individual careers consultations for students with disability Careers seminars for students with disability Online resources for students with disability Careers expo for students with disability Employer webinars/seminars for students with disability On-campus Disability Employment Services Provider such as USEP or GradWISE Support with Australian Network on Disability programs (PACE, Stepping into) Disability-specific support with university work-integrated learning, placements and internships Other (free text)
8			Q37 - What would be needed to provide (or provide more) careers support for students with disability? (Select all that apply)	Select all that apply Open access resources Staff training More staff More funds More collaboration with internal stakeholders More collaboration with external stakeholders Other Unsure
9	Overall, how would you rate your university in supporting students with their disability-related educational and careers needs BEFORE the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)? If you were not studying prior to COVID-19, tick the 'Not Applicable' box.		Overall, how would you rate your university in supporting students with their disability-related educational and careers needs BEFORE the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)? If you were not studying prior to COVID-19, tick the 'Not Applicable' box.	Slider scale replaced with 5 point Likert scale Very poor Poor Average Above average Excellent Not applicable Not sure
10	Overall, how would you rate your university in supporting students with their disability-related educational and careers needs SINCE the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?		Overall, how would you rate your university in supporting students with their disability-related educational and careers needs SINCE the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?	Slider scale replaced with 5 point Likert scale Very poor Poor Average Above average Excellent Not applicable Not sure
11	Is there anything else you would like to add about your university experience so far?	free text	Is there anything else you would like to add about how your university supports students with disability?	

12	We may wish to contact some survey respondents for further information about their responses. Are you happy to be contacted?	Only one response allowed Yes No Unsure	We may wish to contact some survey respondents for further information about their responses. Are you happy to be contacted?	
13	Please provide a contact name and your preferred way being contacted (e.g. phone, email)	free text	Please provide a contact name and your preferred way being contacted (e.g. phone, email)	
	Thank you for participating in our survey.		Thank you for participating in our survey.	

Appendix 3: Focus group discussion outline

Background
1. Introductions, participants' university context and role
2. Introduce Swinburne Hub and community of practice aims:
    a) Learn from each other
    b) Build our students' individual career management capacity
    c) Influence the national recruitment landscape towards making disability inclusion business as usual.
    d) Outline career development learning theoretical underpinning
3. Outline need - table career management challenge for students with disability

Substantive discussion
4. Targeted careers services for students with disability
    a. What's working well?
    b. What are the challenges? (Either breakout discussion - using breakout facility in Zoom webinar platform - or discuss as group depending on numbers)
    c. What would help? Interrogate wish list of activities and resources, noting opportunities, obstacles and required strategies and support.
5. Identify enhancement priority and develop progression strategy to take back to participant university
6. Wrap up and plan to report progress and issues at end-of-year summit.

**Meaningful jobs for students with disability. From luck to business as usual
Semi-structured interview themes**

Awareness, experience and opinion of university careers and disability services. Locus of other sources of careers support. Positive experiences and suggestions for different services.

Staff
Understanding of career development learning, including disability challenges and opportunities. Job matching vs careers education notions of helpfulness. Understanding of professional and disability identity. Role of unconscious bias on the part of employers and on the part of students.

Awareness, experience and opinion of university careers and disability services. Locus of other sources of careers support. Positive experiences. Suggestions for different/enhanced services and awareness of opportunities and barriers to different/enhanced service provision. Student engagement issues.

Service managers and senior management
Understanding of career development learning, including disability challenges and opportunities. Job matching vs careers education notions of helpfulness. Understanding of professional and disability identity. Role of unconscious bias on the part of employers and on the part of students.

Appendix 4: Email interview questionnaire – Regional University Heads of Service

Regional email interview

Meaningful jobs for students with disability

Careers support for students with disability at regional universities

Introduction:

This National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education project aims to facilitate the provision of careers support for students with disability at Australian universities. This phase of the project gathers information about the experience of universities outside the capital cities. The project will culminate in a report to government about service provision barriers and enablers, a national community of practice which will provide a safe place to discuss issues and develop local service provision strategies and plans, and open access resources for all universities to use.

Participation is being sought from both disability and careers service managers/leaders.

The project uses an implied model of consent. Details were sent separately with the original application. Do you have any questions so far?

Participant and date:

Role and University:

1. Do you consider the location of your university to be metro or regional?

2. How does your university's location affect your ability to provide careers support for students with disability?

3. Thinking about careers support for students with disability, can you tell me about your experience working with external stakeholders?

4. How can careers and disability practitioners use their individual expertise to support each other's engagement with targeted careers support initiatives for students with disability?

5. What do you think about colocation of careers and disability services for enhancing careers support for students with disability?

6. Can you tell me about your experience running employability initiatives for students with disability across multiple campuses?

7. What are the factors that affect student engagement with careers support initiatives for students with disability?

8. How important is management support for the development and implementation of careers support initiatives for students with disability?

9. Is there anything else you'd like to say about careers support initiatives for students with disability?

Thank you for taking part in this email interview!

Appendix 5: Swinburne case study staff interview outline

Case study interview – Swinburne staff

Meaningful jobs for students with disability

Careers support for students with disability

Introduction:

This National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education project aims to facilitate the provision of careers support for students with disability at Australian universities. This phase of the project gathers information about the experience of Swinburne staff and students. The project will culminate in a report to government about service provision barriers and enablers, a national community of practice which will provide a safe place to discuss issues and develop local service provision strategies and plans, and open access resources for all universities to use.

Participation is being sought from both disability and careers service managers and leaders.

University consent has been provided to conduct the case study but you do not have to participate if you do not want to and no information will be shared to identify whether or not you have taken part. Do you have any questions so far?

Participant and date: **Role:**

----

1. Why did senior management back the Hub? Why do they still? Will they continue to? What will they need in order to do so? Is there anything incongruous/unexpected about their support?

2. How satisfied are you with the level of student engagement with AACH?

3. Can you tell me about the organisational awareness of SwD careers support needs? What can be done to improve it?

4. If there were no barriers, how would you like to see the Hub (or the Hub's influence) develop? What would need to happen in order for this to progress?

5. What might hold the Hub back – at Swinburne? At other universities?

6. How do you understand the effects of COVID on the ability to provide careers support for students with disability?

7. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience of the AccessAbility Careers Hub?

Thank you for taking part in this interview!

Appendix 6: Swinburne case study student interview questions

Name and date: **Mode**: Zoom

Category: student aware of the Hub and not using it

Introduction: Thank you for taking part in this project. Your candid responses will help universities better understand the needs of students with a disability. Your feedback remains confidential, but will be used to help Swinburne and Australia's higher education sector improve careers support for students with disability. A reminder that your informed consent to participate is implied by your participation in this interview. You may choose to be directly identified or have your words directly quoted by giving written consent, but you do not have to. You can withdraw from the project at any time without question or explanation, and you can also request that your comments be removed from the dataset. While it is not expected, if you experience distress as a result of participation in this study, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. You may also contact your university's health service for counselling support. Do you have any questions so far?

Introductory questions

1. Do you identify as having a physical, learning or sensory disability, medical or mental health or neurodiverse condition?

2. What type or types of disability do you have?

3. Did you know about the AccessAbility Careers Hub before you received the information to take part in this interview?

Questions for student aware of the Hub and not using it

4. Why haven't you used the Hub?

5. What would help you use the Hub's services?

6. At this moment, what would say the Hub's purpose is? Imagine a scale, where at one end the Hub is all about finding work for you, and at the other end, it's all about developing your ability to find work yourself.

7. Is there a reason for your response?

8. Would you recommend the Hub to other students with disability? Why/why not?

9. What services would you like to see the Hub provide?

Next, I'll ask about how you feel sharing disability information with different people.

10. How did you feel sharing disability information with AccessAbility Services at Swinburne?

11. How would you feel sharing disability information with people in the AACH?

12. How would you feel about sharing information about your disability with Swinburne's GradWISE program to help you get casual, part-time or full-time work with one of the program's disability-confident employers?

13. How would you feel about sharing information about your disability with Swinburne's Professional Placements office to help them organise an internship or placement with an employer?

14. How would you like Swinburne to support your career goals?

15. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your career?

Thank you for taking part in this interview!

Swinburne case study student survey

Name and date: **Mode**: Zoom

Category: not aware of Hub prior to interview invitation

Introduction:
Thank you for taking part in this project. Your candid responses will help universities better understand the needs of students with a disability. Your feedback remains confidential, but will be used to help Swinburne and Australia's higher education sector improve careers support for students with disability. A reminder that your informed consent to participate is implied by your participation in this interview. You may choose to be directly identified or have your words directly quoted by giving written consent but you do not have to. You can withdraw from the project at any time without question or explanation, and you can also request that your comments be removed from the dataset. While it is not expected, if you experience distress as a result of participation in this study, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. You may also contact your university's health service for counselling support. Do you have any questions so far?

Introductory questions

1. Do you identify as having a physical, learning or sensory disability, medical or mental health or neurodiverse condition?

2. What type or types of disability do you have?

3. Did you know about the AccessAbility Careers Hub before you received the information to take part in this interview?

Questions for student not aware of the Hub before receiving the interview invitation

4. Now that you know about the AccessAbility Careers Hub, do you think it is something you will use?

5. What would help you use the Hub's services?

6. At this moment, what would say the Hub's purpose is? Imagine a scale, where at one end the Hub is all about finding work for you, and at the other end,

7. What is the reason for your response?

8. What services would you like to see the Hub provide?

Next, I'll ask about how you feel sharing disability information with different people.

9. How did you feel sharing disability information with AccessAbility Services at Swinburne? Put a Y next to your choice

10. How would you feel sharing your disability information with the Hub at an initial consultation to plan your use of the Hub's resources?

11. How would you feel sharing information about your disability with Swinburne's GradWISE program to help you get casual, part-time or full-time work with one of the program's disability-confident employers?

12. How would you feel right now about sharing information about your disability with Swinburne's Professional Placements office to help them organise an internship or placement with an employer?

13. How would you like Swinburne to support your career goals?

14. Is there anything else you would like to add about your career?

Thank you for taking part in this interview!

Swinburne case study student survey

Name and date: **Mode**: Zoom

Category: student using the Hub

Introduction:
Thank you for taking part in this project. Your candid responses will help universities better understand the needs of students with a disability. Your feedback remains confidential, but will be used to help Swinburne and Australia's higher education sector improve careers support for students with disability. A reminder that your informed consent to participate is implied by your participation in this interview. You may choose to be directly identified or have your words directly quoted by giving written consent but you do not have to. You can withdraw from the project at any time without question or explanation, and you can also request that your comments be removed from the dataset. While it is not expected, if you experience distress as a result of participation in this study, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. You may also contact your university's health service for counselling support. Do you have any questions so far?

Introductory questions

1. Do you identify as having a physical, learning or sensory disability, medical or mental health or neurodiverse condition?

2. What type or types of disability do you have?

3. Did you know about the AccessAbility Careers Hub before you received the information to

Questions for student using the Hub

4. What made you decide to connect with the Hub?

5. Which AACH services have you used?

6. At this moment, what would say the Hub's purpose is? Imagine a scale, where at one end the Hub is all about finding work for you, and at the other end, it's all about developing your ability to find work yourself.

7. Is there a reason for your response?

8. Has the Hub increased your ability to get the work you want?

9. What do you like about the Hub?

10. Would you recommend the Hub to other students with disability.

11. What services would you like to see the Hub provide?

12. Next, I'll ask about how you feel sharing disability information with different people.

13. How did you feel sharing disability information with AccessAbility Services at Swinburne?

14. How did you feel sharing disability information with people in the AACH?

15. How do you feel about sharing information about your disability with Swinburne's GradWISE program to help you get casual, part-time or full-time work with one of the program's disability-confident employers?

16. How do you feel about sharing information about your disability with Swinburne's Professional Placements office to help them organise an internship or placement with an employer?

17. How would you like Swinburne to support your career goals?

18. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your career?

Thank you for taking part in this interview!

Appendix 7: Summary of chi-square tests

Chi-square analyses that returned significant findings for grouped student and staff responses are noted in the table below. The difference in sample sizes meant that only a small number of trends returned positive results.

SIG = significant

Careers thinking

DO SWD KNOW WHAT WORK THEY WANT TO DO AFTER UNIVERSITY?			WHAT CHALLENGES DO SWD FACE GETTING THE WORK THEY WANT AFTER UNIVERSITY?			DO SWD FEEL ABLE TO SHARE DISABILITY INFORMATION WITH EMPLOYERS?		
Grouping	SwD	Staff	Grouping	SwD	Staff	Grouping	SwD	Staff
DES/Non Des			DES/Non Des			DES/Non Des		
Regional/Urban			Regional/Urban			Regional/Urban		
Disability type	SIG		Disability type			Disability type	SIG	
Multiple disability			Multiple disability			Multiple disability		
Staff role			Staff role			Staff role		

Achieving employment outcomes

WHICH IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR SWD GETTING WORK THEY WANT AFTER UNIVERSITY?			WHAT ARE THE BEST SOURCES OF SUPPORT THAT HELP SWD GET THE WORK THEY WANT AFTER UNIVERSITY?		
Grouping	SwD	Staff	Grouping	SwD	Staff
DES/Non Des			DES/Non Des		
Regional/Urban			Regional/Urban		
Disability type			Disability type		
Multiple disability			Multiple disability		
Staff role			Staff role		SIG

Awareness of targeted careers support

ARE YOU AWARE OF CAREERS SUPPORT FOR SWD AT YOUR UNIVERSITY?			WHAT SUPPORTS ARE YOU AWARE OF?		
No chi-square tests conducted					
Grouping	SwD	Staff	Grouping	SwD	Staff
DES/Non Des			DES/Non Des		SIG
Regional/Urban			Regional/Urban		SIG
Disability type			Disability type		
Multiple disability			Multiple disability	SIG	
Staff role			Staff role		SIG

Requirements to enable provision/enhancement of targeted careers support

WHAT WOULD BE NEEDED TO PROVIDE, OR PROVIDE MORE, CAREERS SUPPORT FOR SWD?	
Grouping	Staff
DES/Non Des	SIG
Regional/Urban	
Staff role	SIG

Appendix 8: Requirements to provide (or provide more) careers support for SwD.

Responses by staff role, and by DES/Non-DES universities.

A chi-square test indicated statistically significant responses across these four groups (p=.000), as shown in Figure 10. Three groups – Career staff (59.5 per cent), Disability staff (44.4 per cent) and Academic/teaching staff (25 per cent) – nominated 'More collaboration with external stakeholders' as the most significant factor to enhance careers support for SwD, while Other professional staff (including managers and senior managers) viewed 'Collaboration with internal stakeholders' and 'Staff training' (24 per cent each) as the most significant requirements to provide support for SwD.

In addition, respondents that selected 'Unsure' were predominantly either Other professional staff (68 per cent) or Academic/teaching staff (63.9 per cent). However, the sample is too unevenly distributed to draw meaningful conclusions about this observation.
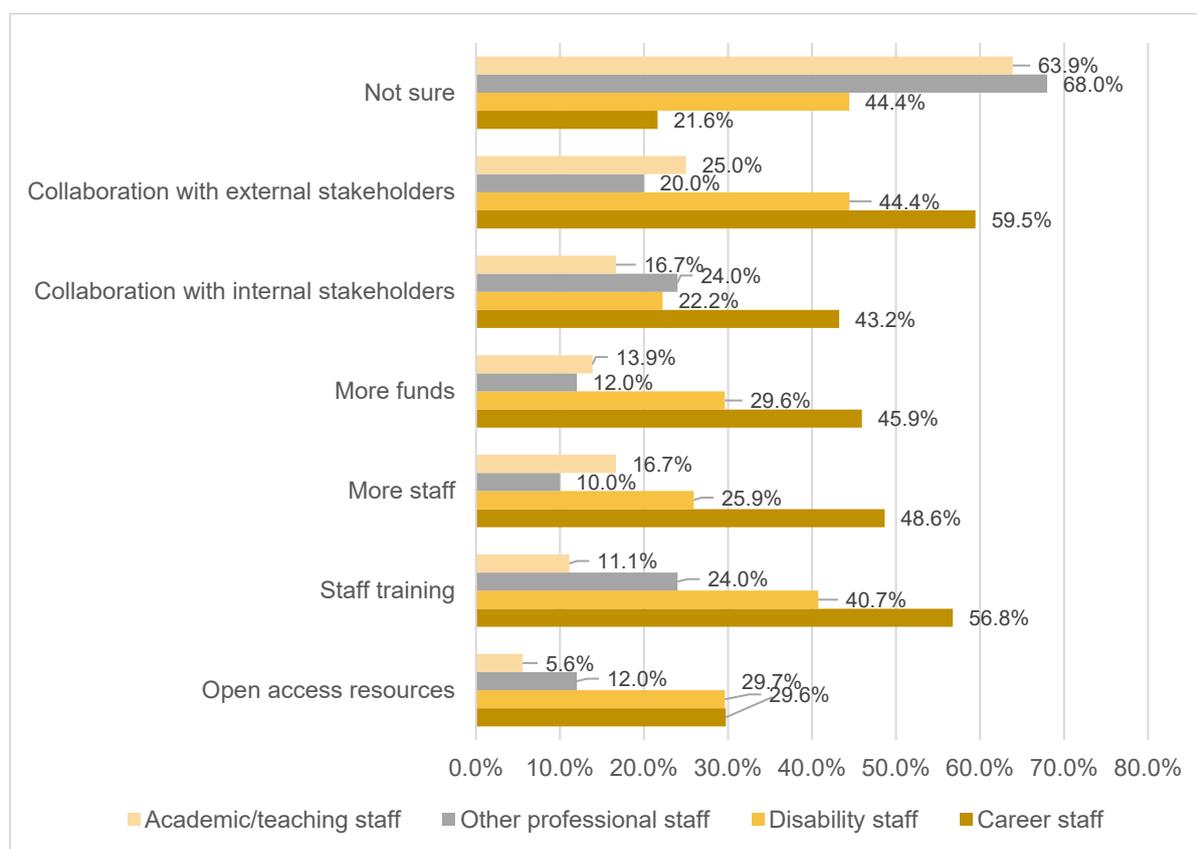
Figure 9. Requirements to provide (or provide more) careers support for SwD
Staff responses by staff role

There was also an observed difference between staff at universities with DES providers and those at institutions without (chi-square test, p=.000), as shown in Figure 11. Those staff at universities with a DES partnership nominated 'Staff training' (42.2 per cent), 'More Collaboration with external stakeholders' (42.2 per cent) and 'Increased funding' (37.8 per cent) as the three most important factors. Staff from universities without DES providers cited 'More collaboration with external stakeholders' as most important (30.9 per cent) followed by 'Staff training' (26.8 per cent) and 'More collaboration with internal stakeholders' (23.7 per cent).
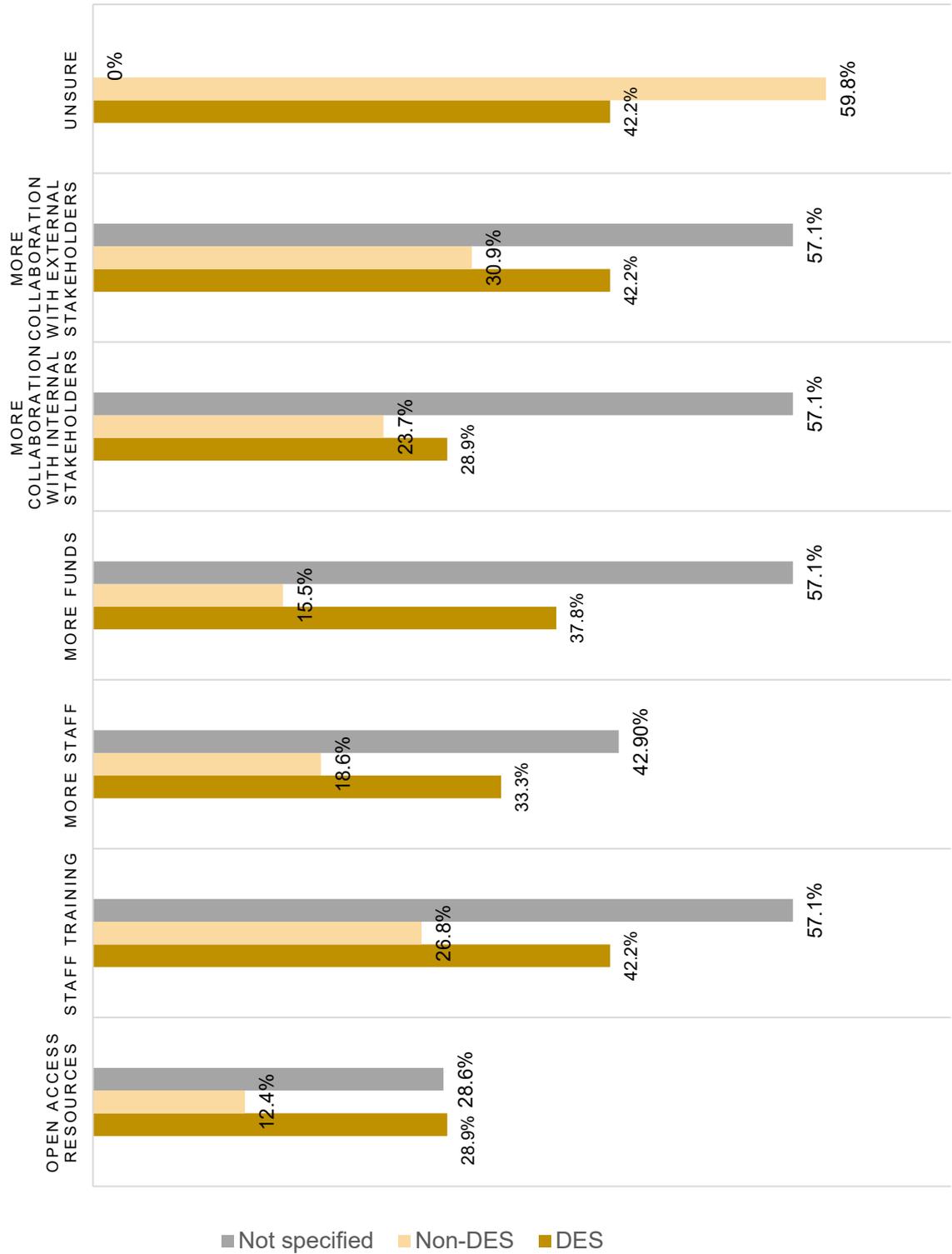
Figure 10. Requirements to provide (or provide more) careers support for SwD
Staff responses by DES and non-DES universities