



# Career Guidance for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Migrants and/or Refugees

Alexander Newman, Sally Baker, Clemence Due and Karen Dunwoodie

2022

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Alexander Newman, Deakin University

Sally Baker, University of New South Wales

Clemence Due, University of Adelaide

Karen Dunwoodie, Deakin University

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National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education

Tel: +61 8 9266 1573

Email: [ncsehe@curtin.edu.au](mailto:ncsehe@curtin.edu.au)

Web: [ncsehe.edu.au](http://ncsehe.edu.au)

Building 602:146 (Technology Park)

Curtin University

Kent St, Bentley WA 6102

GPO Box U1987, Perth WA 6845

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Members of the project group included:

Prof Alex Newman	Principal Investigator
Dr Sally Baker	Associate Investigator
Dr Clemence Due	Associate Investigator
Dr Karen Dunwoodie	Associate Investigator
Ali Khan	Research Assistant
Helen Lelei	Research Assistant
Connie Tran	Research Assistant
Anna Xavier	Research Assistant

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# Abbreviations

AAGE	Australian Association of Graduate Employment
ANZSSA	Australia, New Zealand Student Services Association
ATN	Australian Technologies Network
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CALDM/R	Domestic culturally and linguistically diverse migrant and/or refugee
CDA	Career Development Association of Australia
IRU	Innovative Research Universities
Low SES	low socioeconomic status
NAGCAS	National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
RUN	Regional Universities Network
WIL	Work-integrated learning

## Glossary of terms

**Career Guidance:** The provision of advice and information about careers to help individuals decide which career they want to pursue and how to go about it.

**Careers Services:** The provision of services to students by higher education providers to support them to decide on the career they wish to pursue and how to go about it.

**Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP):** government-subsidised place at a university or higher education provider for domestic students who are either Australian citizens, permanent visa holders or New Zealand citizens.

**Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Migrant and/or Refugee (CALDM/R):** A domestic (therefore not international) student who was not born in Australia, speaks other languages and does not share the background of the dominant cultural group (white, European-descent).

**Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS):** A fee-deferment scheme that is part of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP), which allows domestic students to postpone payment of the costs of study at public universities and some higher education institutions. Only Australian citizens and refugees with a permanent humanitarian visa can access HECS.

**Internship:** A supervised work or volunteer experience in which the individual has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what they have learnt throughout the experience.

**Migrant/immigrant:** A person who has voluntarily left their country or place of residence to live in a host country permanently.

**Refugee:** any person who because of:

*a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside their country of his [sic] nationality and is unable or owing to such fear is unable or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who not having a nationality and being outside the country of his formal habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it*

(Article 1A(2), United Nations General Assembly, 1951)

**Work-integrated learning:** WIL is the term used to describe educational activities that integrate academic learning and practical application in the workplace.

## Executive summary

Although growing numbers of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Migrants and Refugees (CALDM/R) are entering higher education, the higher education sector has limited knowledge of how they are supported to transition out of higher education and seek employment after they graduate. This is likely the result of CALDM/R students' invisibility in the current formal Australian Government categories used to direct equity policy, funding and practice (which include students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds, Indigenous students and students who live in rural and remote Australia). For example, although some CALDM/R students may reside in low SES areas and/or regional/remote areas, the specific needs of this cohort are not recognised within these broad categories, while other CALDM/R students may not fall within any of the current equity categories at all. The focus on these current equity categories means that institutions are not mandated to respond to the nuanced needs of other specific groups, which is particularly problematic for CALDM/R because of their relatively poorer employment outcomes.

To identify gaps in the provision of career guidance for CALDM/R students and to ascertain how such guidance could be improved, this project adopted a mixed-methods design, comprising three stages. In Stage 1, we undertook a desktop audit of publicly available information about career guidance on Australian university websites. This was followed in Stage 2 by a national survey of 32 career practitioners from 20 higher education institutions, and individual interviews with career practitioners who had signalled interest in exploring the survey themes in greater detail. In the final stage of data collection, we conducted three focus group interviews with seven currently enrolled domestic CALDM/R university students.

To address our limited understanding of the role played by career guidance in supporting CALDM/R students to transition into higher education and obtain employment when they graduate, the present study addressed four research questions: i) How effective is the career guidance provided to CALDM/R students in terms of assisting their transition out of higher education studies (and into employment?), ii) What specialised career guidance, if any, is provided to CALDM/R students during their higher education studies?; iii) What works well and what is missing from the career guidance provided by universities to CALDM/R?; and iv) What would 'best practice' career guidance look like for CALDM/R students?

The findings of this first Australia-wide study into the provision of career guidance to CALDM/R students revealed that few universities offer career programs and services tailored to the needs of CALDM/R students. Instead, most institutions offer generic career and employment guidance for all students, with some providing specific support for international students, which CALDM/R students were able to access on the same basis as other students.

This was also true for work-integrated learning (WIL), with very few universities providing specific WIL opportunities, such as internships for CALDM/R students. Participants indicated that CALDM/R students were given the same access to such opportunities as other students—especially when these were embedded within courses.

In line with the lack of dedicated career guidance and programs, staff within the universities identified a number of challenges they faced in supporting the career development of CALDM/R students. These included a lack of targeted resources and programs for CALDM/R students, with staff highlighting that their careers units did not have sufficient staff and financial resources to develop programs specifically targeted at different equity cohorts, including CALDM/R students. As such, they tended to offer more general support to all students irrespective of their background, with some offering dedicated programs for international students. Staff also cited difficulties identifying and engaging with CALDM/R students in the first place, suggesting that careers services at many institutions do not



collaborate with equity and diversity units to develop targeted careers and employment support to meet the needs of different equity groups. Finally, staff also acknowledged the difficulties faced by CALDM/R students in engaging with employers, suggesting that the perceived level of English language proficiency among CALDM/R students and their lack of permanent residency or ongoing work rights because of their visa status, contributed to an unwillingness on the part of employers to consider candidates from a CALDM/R background.

Correspondingly, both staff and student participants stressed the need to improve current service provision of career guidance to CALDM/R students. One important issue identified was that many institutions placed a significant proportion of their funding and resources into supporting pathways for CALDM/R students to access higher education rather than supporting them to transition out of higher education. The lack of resources dedicated to supporting CALDM/R students' transition out of higher education constrained the ability of careers practitioners and WIL staff to interact with CALDM/R students.

In summary, it was found that although most institutions offer career guidance to students, they rarely provide targeted career guidance to CALDM/R students, instead offering generic programs to all students and programs that target international students. Based on these findings, we highlight the importance of providing targeted career guidance that meets the needs of this student cohort, to support them to transition out of higher education. This is extremely important given the increasingly complex, ever-changing world of work in which careers are no longer linear, and individuals need to adapt to a dynamic job market.

This study also invited participants to provide suggestions for improvement to careers programs for CALDM/R students at their university. These suggestions are encapsulated in our recommendations below.

Recommendations for policymakers (federal and state governments):

- **Increase funding:** Federal and state governments should consider providing universities with dedicated funding to offer targeted career guidance for CALDM/R students, scaffolded for various stages of career guidance, including guidance on accessing internships and WIL opportunities.
- **The Australian Government should recognise refugees as an equity subgroup** and provide dedicated funding for career guidance.
- **The Australian Government may also consider directing some funding** from the National Career Institute Partnership Grants to support initiatives aimed at supporting CALDM/R graduates to obtain employment that is commensurate with their university studies.
- **State governments may also consider funding** dedicated programs aimed at supporting CALDM/R graduates to obtain employment within their state.
- **Provide training for employers:** Governments at the state and federal level should consider providing training to employers on the benefits of hiring people from a CALDM/R background as part of a dedicated employment strategy.

Recommendations for peak bodies

- **Provide training:** Peak bodies such as the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS) and the Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA), and to a lesser extent the Australian Association of Graduate Employment (AAGE), arguably have a role in terms of advocating, if not actually offering, CALDM/R-specific training to career practitioners as part of ongoing professional development.
- **Develop subgroups or special interest groups:** Peak bodies should consider establishing equity-focused subcommittees or special interest groups to continuously

monitor and support universities in relation to employment for CALDM/R graduates, including remaining up to date with relevant research.

- **Active collaboration with other networks:** Peak bodies should work more closely with other related sector-wide peak bodies, such as the Equity Practitioners of Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) and the Refugee Education Special Interest Group (RESIG) and the Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSSA).
- Advocate for more resources and increased policy attention.

#### Recommendations for higher education institutions

- **Develop dedicated career guidance programs for CALDM/R students** that meet the specific needs of such students and are developed from the existing evidence-base and in consultation with student bodies.
- **Provide training for staff:** Provide dedicated training for career guidance practitioners and academics that highlights the barriers faced by CALDM/R students in obtaining employment and how their needs may be better catered for through individualised career guidance.
- **Embed career guidance in the curriculum:** For example, introduce compulsory work-integrated learning units into courses and scaffold career guidance into the curriculum. This will be beneficial to CALDM/R students who often have competing demands on their time and find it difficult to engage in extra-curricular programs.
- **Build partnerships with employers:** Higher education providers should work closely with large employers to provide dedicated pathways for CALDM/R students to obtain work experience during their studies and hence improve the employability of this cohort.

#### Recommendations for CALDM/R students

- **Act proactively:** Students from a CALDM/R background should be proactive in seeking support from careers and work-integrated learning units in their institution.
- **Build student groups and societies:** Students from CALDM/R backgrounds should consider building their own student groups/societies (where these do not exist) to advocate for their needs and interests and, where such groups already exist, approaching broader student unions and other bodies for representation on higher-level university committees.
- **Seek out external opportunities:** Students from CALDM/R backgrounds should seek out not-for-profit, social enterprise and industry-based internship programs, relevant volunteering opportunities or careers development initiatives such as Career Seekers internships, Crescent Foundation graduate careers clinics, Deakin CREATE refugee careers clinics or the Brotherhood of St. Laurence Given the Chance Program.

# Introduction

Within the diversified student body resulting from the project of widening participation in Australian higher education, a growth in the numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students entering university has been observed, both in terms of the exponential growth in international student enrolments (Australian Government, 2021) and in numbers of domestic students from migrant and refugee backgrounds [(CALDM/R) see Australian Government, 2019 for example]. For the purposes of this study, CALDM/R students are defined as domestic students (as opposed to international students) who were not born in Australia, speak other languages and do not share the background of the dominant cultural group (white, European descent). As domestic students, CALDM/R are able to access a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) for undergraduate study, and if they hold a humanitarian permanent visa, they are able to defer the costs of study through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS)<sup>1</sup>. Although formally identified as an equity category in 1989 under the Dawkins reforms<sup>2</sup>, the CALDM/R student group is no longer recognised as a targeted group in official categorisations of equity cohorts under the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), with federal higher education policy and HEPPP funding focused on students from low socioeconomic, Indigenous, and rural and remote backgrounds (Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), 2021a). As a result, the specific and nuanced needs of the CALDM/R cohort are not necessarily recognised or met by university equity provision.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of students from forced migration backgrounds entering university, either supported by the government as domestic students or supported by universities through humanitarian/sanctuary scholarships for people with temporary refugee protection (Hartley et al., 2018; Webb et al., 2019). While a developing body of work has explored issues related to access (e.g., Terry et al., 2016; Stevenson & Baker, 2018; Lambrechts, 2020), there is currently limited knowledge of how Australian higher education providers support CALDM/R students to participate and succeed in their studies (Baker et al., 2018). In particular, there is a dearth of understanding as to what constitutes good practice in assisting students to 'transition out', particularly in terms of targeted career guidance for all equity students—and specifically CALDM/R students—prior to, and during, their studies. This is a significant omission given that NCSEHE-funded research clearly identifies ways that equity groups are systematically disadvantaged in finding meaningful employment (Li et al., 2016; Richardson et al., 2016).

Further, studies of Australian graduate destinations highlight that CALDM/R students experience under- or unemployment to a higher degree than other graduate groupings (Hugo, 2011; Li et al., 2016; Mestan & Harvey, 2014; Richardson et al., 2016). For example, Hugo (2011) reported that refugees who obtained university degrees were 12% less likely to be employed in professional roles, while Mestan and Harvey (2014) suggested a much bleaker picture, reporting that CALD graduates were 67% more likely to seek full-time employment post-graduation than non-CALD graduates, who were more likely to have received a job offer before graduation. A body of work also suggests that CALD graduates receive lower salaries than do their English-speaking peers (Mestan & Harvey, 2014; Li et al., 2016).

Preliminary work has highlighted the importance of university careers services engaging with equity and diversity units in the provision of career guidance programs to migrants and refugees (Stebbleton, 2007). For example, in terms of refugees specifically, there is general

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<sup>1</sup> People seeking asylum and refugees on temporary humanitarian visas cannot access a CSP or HECS to study at Australian universities (see Hartley et al., 2018 for an account of this cohort and the challenges this temporariness creates)

<sup>2</sup> As Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB)

recognition in the literature that career guidance needs to be targeted carefully to the needs of humanitarian migrants and that standard career guidance approaches may not be effective (e.g., Bimrose et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2018). Although CALDM/R students typically have high career aspirations and want to gain meaningful employment<sup>3</sup>, there is growing evidence that CALDM/R students face significant barriers in transitioning to employment and as stated, also experience under- or unemployment on graduation to a greater extent than other graduate groupings (Hugo, 2011; Li et al., 2016; Losoncz, 2017; McDonald-Wilmsen et al., 2009; Mestan & Harvey, 2014; Richardson, Bennett & Roberts, 2016;). Moreover, despite a growing understanding of the challenges CALDM/R students face in higher education, with the exception of Baker et al. (2019) there has been limited work examining the challenges they face in their transition out of higher education, and the role played by higher education institutions in supporting them to obtain employment.

It is, therefore, imperative to understand what constitutes appropriate career guidance for CALDM/R students. This report addresses this by presenting empirical research on the barriers and facilitators for the provision of career guidance to CALDM/R students while studying in Australian higher education institutions.

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<sup>3</sup> Meaningful employment refers to employment that is aligned with an individual's skills, training and experience, is remunerated accordingly, and provides employees with a sense of purpose (Berg et al., 2013; Lysova et al., 2019).

# Literature review

## CALDM/R students in Australian higher education

The opportunity to access higher education is critically important to the integration of people from CALDM/R backgrounds (Ager & Strang, 2008). Higher education fosters the development of many forms of social, network and cultural capital (Harvey & Mallman, 2019), and increased participation in the local community (Harris, 2014). The connections CALDM/R build through higher education not only contribute to their sense of belonging to the host country, but also facilitate their transition into meaningful employment (Baker, Due & Rose, 2019).

Over the last decade, we have witnessed a growing body of research on CALDM/R students' access to and experience of higher education in countries across the world including Australia (Bacher et al., 2019; Baker et al. 2018; Earnest et al., 2010; Harris et al., 2015a; Harris et al., 2015b; Harvey & Mallman, 2019; Jungblut et al., 2018; Lambrechts, 2020; Mallman et al., 2019; Mestan & Harvey 2014). For example, prior work has examined the challenges CALDM/R students face in relation to navigating university systems and processes (Bajwa et al., 2017; Gately, 2014; Joyce et al., 2010; Lambrechts, 2020), issues related to their language and literacy proficiency (Baker et al. 2018; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Perry and Mallozzi, 2017; Stevenson & Willott, 2007), and differences in learning expectations and approaches in their host country than ones they were used to in their home country (Morrice, 2013). Research also highlights the unconscious bias and racism CALDM/R students face on campus (Onsando & Billett, 2017; White, 2017).

## Graduate employability services in higher education

There is a strong focus on employability and developing graduate outcomes in higher education, despite the fact that 'Higher education is not, nor has historically been, a training provider that meets very specific employer demands' (Tomlinson & Anderson, 2020, p. 2–3). The scholarly literature highlights how the relationship between higher education and employment is poorly captured by the term 'employability', offering examples of the 'rich and diverse' (Divan et al., 2019, p. 8) understandings across institutions, national contexts, between public-facing and personal representations/constructions.

### Human capital understandings of graduate employability

The most prevalent understanding of graduate employability relates to human capital views, which Tomlinson (2017) defined as the 'knowledge and skills which graduates acquire which are a foundation of their labour market outcomes' (p. 341). Human capital theory is based on an assumption about rational choice, with the belief that any individual can invest in their future through the skilful acquisition of qualifications, characteristics, skills and other markers of positional advantage for entering the job market. Holmes (2013, p. 548) refers to this as 'graduate employability as possession', with the tendency to view skills and attributes as 'end products' of higher education study.

The relationship between university education and employment, and the dominance of human capital understandings of employability, align with the increased marketisation of higher education. As Clarke (2018) argued, the imperative to measure graduate employability is driven by government and professional association requirements for metrics and the push for hard data, resulting in universalist approaches. Similarly, Christie (2017, p. 407) argued that employability is:



*a slippery concept ... [which] privileges a functionalist discourse and marries it to a discourse of marketisation which ostensibly encourages prospective students to choose a course based on relevance to an imagined future employment status as defined by a percentage point in a comparative list.*

The prevalence of employability as a discourse can be seen in its ubiquitous uptake in university public-facing communications and marketing. In their 2017 review of the websites of 104 universities from Australia, the UK, Canada and the US, Bennett et al. (2017) found that over half (51.4%) of the universities surveyed coupled enhanced employability with institutional reputation. In terms of embedding employability activities in academic programs, UK universities were the most likely to do this (75% of UK universities), while Australian universities were the least likely to do so (37.5%). Similarly, Divan et al.'s (2019) examination of employability in 107 Australian and Canadian universities, found that half of the institutions surveyed focused on human capital possessional approaches to employability. Their findings also highlight the strong relationship between employability and student recruitment, with one Canadian respondent suggesting that 'the marketing of any idea of employability to prospective students [was] a separate concern to that of the work of the institution in supporting its students to develop their employability' (p. 7), suggesting a clear disconnection between the ways that universities market their graduate outcomes and what actually happens on the ground.

In terms of how the human capital approach is operationalised in university teaching and career guidance, the dominant approach is to embed generic employability skills into course learning objectives (Tomlinson, 2017; Clark, 2018), despite a lack of consensus on what these generic 'skills' include (Tomlinson, 2012). The Australian career practitioners interviewed in Divan et al. (2019) were aware of the ways that university websites privileged a skills/outcome view and 'bemoaned the inconsistency of internal and external employability messaging across the sector' (p. 6). Similarly, Moore and Morton's (2017) analysis of interviews with work supervisors/employers of graduates from a variety of professional areas showed that, 'it is difficult, if not in practice impossible, to identify writing requirements of professional areas in any generic sense, and that these are often unique to specific professional areas, organisations, and workplace' (p. 603). Generic skills teaching<sup>4</sup> may be easy for universities to operationalise, but it has been extensively critiqued for its divorcing of content from context, with significant gaps or 'contextual barriers' (Tomlinson, 2017). In particular, it has been criticised for that fact that what is taught is not always what is practised in the workplace. This, thereby, destabilises assumptions about the transferability of such 'generic' skills and erodes the effectiveness of this kind of approach.

### **Limitations with human capital approaches to graduate employability**

There are several limitations to the dominant focus on the 'end products' noted by Holmes (2013) in his definition of 'graduate employability as possession'. Measurement is the most challenging aspect, with 'end products' usually measured in terms of graduate short-term outcomes, such as a student's first job post-graduation. According to Bridgstock and Jackson (2019), this is a narrow and short-sighted measurement because various factors affect employability, including labour market conditions, which means that 'the impact of educational interventions on percentage full-time employment is likely to be somewhat limited' (p. 471). Moreover, Christie's (2017) discourse analysis of university employability league tables from three UK publishers from 2014 (Complete University Guide; Guardian; Times) clearly illustrates the variability in what counts, despite commonality in their methodology. She argued that ranking university responses make it hard 'for universities to resist the quantitative metrics especially as stakeholders such as students appear to

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<sup>4</sup> See also an extensive body of work that has similarly critiqued generic 'study skills' approaches to teaching academic language and literacies (e.g., Lea & Street, 1998; Richards & Pilcher, 2020; Wingate, 2006)

embrace the rankings' (p. 413–414). This goes some way to explaining the enduring dominance of decontextualised, narrow approaches to measuring the effectiveness of a university's engagement with the employability agenda; however, Clark (2018) argued that 'against a backdrop of almost two decades of debate it is perplexing to observe that success is still measured largely at the aggregate level and using data that refers to institutional outcomes rather than graduate outcomes' (p. 1928).

Another issue with the measurement of graduate employability is the short-termism at play when capturing graduate employment outcomes. Researchers have critiqued this short-term focus on capturing graduate data soon after graduating (Clarke, 2018; Merrill et al., 2020). For example, the Australian Graduate Outcomes Survey<sup>5</sup> (GOS) is conducted with university graduates approximately 4 months after graduation. The imperative to collect quick snapshot data could be seen as skewing representations of graduate employability that are used to measure the effectiveness of university responses to the employability agenda<sup>6</sup>. Merrill et al. (2020) also argue that current measures of graduate outcomes place an overreliance on full-time employment as the main indicator of success; these authors argue that the focus on full-time employment should be applied with caution and only as a complement to subjective indicators, such as perceived graduate value, perceived employability and wellbeing among graduates. Similarly, Jackson and Bridgstock (2018) asserted that there is a need to shift away from overreliance on objective measures, such as full-time employment, given (1) the limited control of higher education on influences affecting employment, and (2) how the different motivations of students for undertaking higher education studies can be devalued, as well as their contributions to the economy and society, through the privileging of such objective measures. Consequently, the authors argued for 'a more nuanced approach to measurement, involving characterisation of a range of objective and subjective indicators including employment outcomes, social and economic value, career satisfaction and well-being' (p. 995).

A further challenge to the employability agenda is the changing nature of work and the unpredictability of the future job market. In their 2020 article, Winchester-Seeto and Piggott argue that we need to explore 'the fundamental question of exactly what we are preparing students for – is it the workplace, or should we think more broadly in terms of preparing students for the workforce?' (p. 1). Similarly, Merrill et al. (2020) issued caution about unquestionably accepting the employability agenda, arguing that 'While attending HE brings benefits, the full extent of these risks becomes clear when one explores what happens after university especially in a period characterised by increased precarity and competition in the labour market' (p. 173). The fluid and changing nature of work is likely to remain a persistent challenge for universities and careers advisors in the post-COVID context, where individuals change their careers quite frequently and flexible work is more common. According to a recent report entitled the 'workforce of the future', artificial intelligence and digital technology are predicted to have a major influence on the world of work, with many roles becoming extinct, and individuals needing to retrain and adapt to remain employable into the future (PwC, 2018).

### **Alternative understandings of graduate employability**

Within the context of increasing credential creep<sup>7</sup> (Burke et al., 2019; Chesters, 2014; Tomlinson, 2012), and a strong body of evidence that shows how social class, Indigeneity,

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<sup>5</sup> The GOS is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment; for more information, see <https://www.qilt.edu.au/qilt-surveys/graduate-employment>

<sup>6</sup> We note that there is also a Graduate Outcomes Survey – Longitudinal (GOS-L), which undertakes cohort analysis of a set of graduates who participated in the 2017 GOS

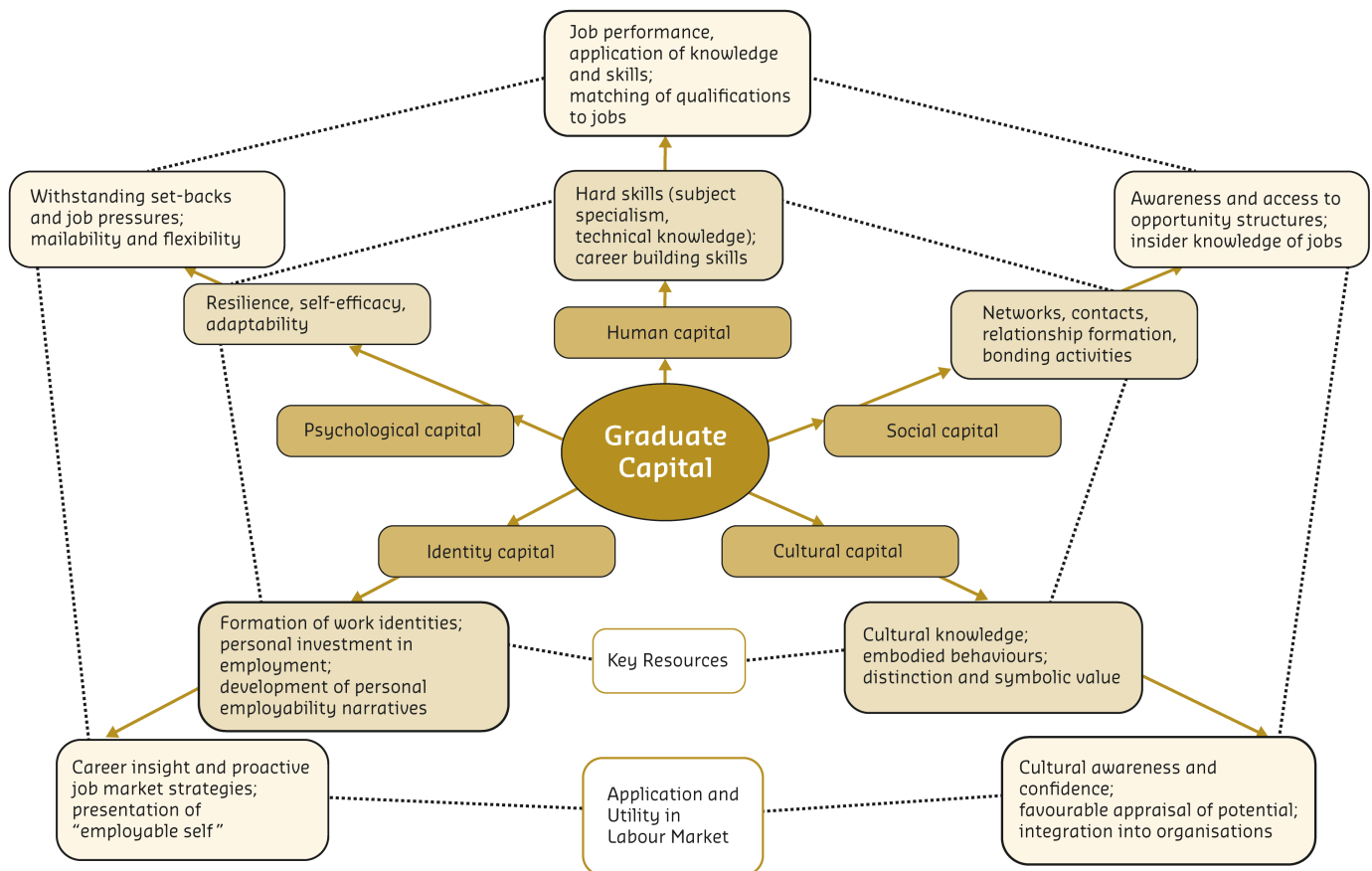
<sup>7</sup> Credential creep refers to the relative devaluing of a qualification in line with the rise in people achieving qualifications

regionality, ethnicity and other intersecting factors create educational and employability disadvantage (Allen et al., 2013; Tomlinson, 2012), there is a clear warrant to question the dominance of approaches that place responsibility onto the individual. Despite the evident prevalence of human capital/ possessional approaches to employability and the development of ways of measuring graduate outcomes, researchers have written extensively about alternative understandings. Holmes (2013) critiques the assumptions of the levelness of the playing field that underpins human capital thinking; he notes how this individualised 'skills' discourse obscures the contextual elements (institution, type of institution, discipline, individual), meaning that the real kinds of educational (and therefore employment pipeline) disadvantage that many students face are made less visible / invisible by subscribing to the pretence of equality and fairness. Holmes (2013) offers two alternative framings of employability based on his reading of the literature on employability: as *positionality* and as *processual*, where positional refers to how an individual is positioned/ positions herself against others, and where processual foregrounds the ongoing nature of employability. Holmes (2013, p. 548) describes 'graduate employability as positionality' as contesting Bourdieu's notion of social reproduction through education<sup>8</sup>, arguing that defeatist ideas about the inevitability of social immobility (because of an individual's background) can be overcome by 'the interactional process by which individual persons, real human beings rather than members of a social category, make their way into, through and out of higher education, and onto the social arenas of their post-graduation lives'.

A further category offered by Holmes (2013, p. 549) is 'graduate employability as processual'. This approach views a trajectory/ transitional view of employability that extends beyond university. Studies into concepts such as (emergent) graduate identity/ies 'provide insights into the variegated nature of the experiences of graduates in seeking employment and either 'succeeding' or 'failing' to obtain employment, and their understanding of their situations as they unfold'. Through a focus on aspects such as the development of professional identity/ies (see Tomlinson & Jackson, 2019), and graduate capital (Tomlinson, 2017), more holistic and encompassing understandings of graduate employability are made possible. In addition to offering a view that emphasises 'the significance of multiple resources which are constitutive of employability' (Tomlinson, 2017, 349), a processual view helps to highlight the links between students, universities, and career guidance. Tomlinson's theorisation of graduate capital (reproduced as Figure 1) encompasses multiple forms of capital — *human, social, cultural, identity* and *psychological*— which he argued are 'key resources that confer benefits and advantages onto graduates. These resources encompass a range of educational, social, cultural and psycho-social dimensions and are acquired through graduates' formal and informal experiences' (p. 339). This holistic view can be usefully harnessed by universities if they want to move beyond the narrow and simplistic views of employability that exist if limited only to human capital understandings of employability.

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<sup>8</sup> Social reproduction through education is the idea that the ruling classes will retain privilege through exerting power over the education system and is derived from the work of Bourdieu & Passeron (1977)



**Figure 1. Graduate Capital, Tomlinson (2017, p. 340)**

In terms of operationalising these more holistic understandings of employability as positioning and processual, Tomlinson and Jackson (2019) argue there are two main alternatives to skills-based approaches to teaching graduate employability: occupational socialisation (apprenticeship) and orientation (navigating to profession). These include approaches such as work-integrated learning (WIL), internships, employment mentoring and maintaining strong disciplinary relationships between current and graduated students and industry. Tomlinson and Jackson (2019, p. 13) contend that in ‘conceiving employability trajectories in terms of identity and capital formation based on relational interactions and exchanges between graduates and significant other market actors, higher education institutions can help enable students to enhance the efficacy of these interactions’. Similarly, Moore and Morton’s (2017) study of the communicative needs of future graduates foregrounds the disciplinarity that needs to be recognised and explicitly taught for enhancing students’ employability. They argue that developing students’ knowledge of what practices, conventions, understandings and ‘skills’ are expected in specific work contexts is fundamental to enhancing their employability, and this requires universities to develop closer ties to discipline-specific workplaces and employers:

*...universities [need] to have a better understanding of the broad contexts of activity their graduates are bound for; but equally for industry and business in their recruitment and training activities to recognise from whence their graduates have come (Moore & Morton, 2017, p. 606).*

While the debates about which understanding/s of employability should underpin university practices with regard to career guidance are largely academic, there is strong evidence that current approaches, dominantly informed by human capital approaches (Burke, Scurry & Blenkinsopp, 2019; Clarke, 2018; Divan et al., 2019; Tomlinson & Anderson, 2020), are not

effective with students. In their 2019 study of how psychology students find and utilise career guidance, Bradley, Quigley and Bailey (2019) found low levels of attendance (by all year groups) to many events directly related to career guidance, with only 21% of first-year students attending careers fairs (compared with 39% of second-year, and 55% of third-year students). The authors warned that this low engagement indicates that ‘many students are probably underprepared for the transition from university to the world of work’ (p. 11); thus, delaying engagement with career guidance likely means many students are ‘missing out on relevant job vacancies and experiences that help with career development’ (p. 11). As argued in the next section, this is particularly problematic for students who enter higher education with forms of (often intersectional) educational disadvantage, including equity cohorts.

## Graduate outcomes and employability for equity-cohort students

Since the implementation of the recommendations from the Bradley Review in 2008 (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008), there has been a sustained focus on how low socioeconomic status (low SES), Indigenous and regional and remote students aspire to and access higher education. However, there has not been a commensurate focus on examining best practice when it comes to the involvement of universities in the provision of career guidance outreach programs targeting equity-cohort students (Allen et al., 2013; Christie et al., 2018; Pitman et al., 2019; Tomlinson, 2017). Pitman et al. (2019) argue that there has been a dearth of attention to graduate outcomes in equity research, practice and policy, with the ‘overwhelming focus of equity policy [focusing] on the inputs side of HE; that is, increasing aspirations for, and access to, HE’ (p. 46), with some focus on attainment, but little on transitioning out and into employment (see also Baker, Due & Rose, 2019).

The massification of the system, while opening access to traditionally underrepresented groups of students, has also led to credential creep, which has significant equity implications. As Merrill et al. (2020, p. 173) argue,

*When a basic degree loses value, our research indicates other resources – including wealth alongside social and specific forms of cultural capital, especially embodied cultural capital — come into play in securing good graduate jobs ... but it is sharply constrained by structural limits and objective possibilities.*

The patterns of inequitable access and participation in higher education for traditionally underrepresented groups are also evident in employment patterns. Recent research by Pitman et al. (2019) found that graduate outcomes differentiate according to a student’s background. They found that Indigenous graduates have the best employment outcomes, in terms of the security of tenure, median salary, proportion of graduates earning \$70,000 or above and relevance of qualification to employment. In contrast, graduates from low socioeconomic backgrounds and regional locations experience mixed outcomes. While a significant proportion (60%) of low SES and regional/remote students were working 4-6 months after graduation, the majority said their qualification was somewhat or not useful for their employment. This suggests a continuation of existing work that is unrelated to their degree. As we will discuss in the following section, CALDM/R (or ‘Non-English-Speaking Background’) students had poor graduate outcomes. According to Andrewartha and Harvey (2017, p. 71), such uneven outcomes ‘raise questions of what universities are doing to address student equity within their employability strategies, and what more might be required’. For Pitman et al. (2019, p. 46), the reason for the disparity is because equity policy has prioritised enrolments over graduate outcomes, resulting in a ‘general assumption that increased access and participation for disadvantaged students will lead, *ipso facto*, to consequential post-graduation benefits’.



There is evidence to suggest that equity-cohort students, in general, are disadvantaged in employment (in terms of pay and professional status) by the same structural and cultural biases that create the educational disadvantages that they are challenged by. While higher education is believed to create opportunities for social mobility, the reality is that:

*The graduate labour market is highly stratified, with greater financial and personal gains accruing to those graduates who come from more affluent backgrounds and who attended prestigious universities, took longer courses, and were more likely to study the traditional and professional subjects that act as a gateway to the established (and well-paid) professions (Christie et al., 2018, p.1939).*

Equity implications derive in part from the individualised understanding of employability, as instantiated through the application of human capital theory. Such an understanding prioritises an individual's self-sufficiency, which in turn favours networked and resourced (middle class) students (Allen et al., 2013) because of the increased likelihood they will be able to utilise a range of resources to find/fund a work placement. Further, Allen et al. (2013) argued that unpaid/poorly paid placements also significantly favour middle class students. Similarly, Christie et al. (2018) noted a consensus in the literature that studying is not enough, and that 'capital acquisition strategies' need to extend into extra-curricular activities and work placement spaces. However, there is evidence that equity students are less likely to engage in capital acquisition strategies whilst at university (e.g., Bathmaker et al., 2013; Stevenson & Clegg, 2011) and have 'more limited access to the social networks that facilitate decision-making about careers, both of which are powerful drivers in the process of matching graduates to jobs in a highly stratified labour market' (Christie et al., 2018, p. 1940). This was echoed by Burke, Scurry and Blenkisopp (2019), who explored the experiences of naïve and knowing students, two categories that emerged out of their research with students at an elite, post-1992 university in England. They found that the knowing students, all of whom were studying at the elite university, understood the need to accrue additional resources and credentials because of credential creep/reduced value of an undergraduate degree. These students expressed appreciation of the need to understand the graduate labour market and balance extra-curricular activities with studying. These students largely had access to resources (financial, social) to help with navigating and accruing valuable experiential capital. This group of students also largely had family resources to help with this. In comparison, the naïve students were much more likely to believe in a more linear, guaranteed pipeline from their degree courses into commensurate employment; however, this is rarely the case in reality (see Pitman et al., 2019).

Although recent research in Australia suggests that the provision of career guidance to equity-cohort students enhances the chances that they will enrol at university (Tomaszewski et al., 2017), we have limited knowledge of the extent to which universities across Australia provide career guidance programs targeted at equity-cohort students, the content of such programs and the relative effectiveness of different types of programs. This is despite research from Australia and overseas highlighting the contribution provided by individuals from different equity groups to society, the economy and the local community over the longer term (e.g., Centre for Policy Development, 2019). A notable exception to this is the work of Andrewartha and Harvey (2017), who explored the responses of staff working within career services in Australian universities with regard to career guidance for equity-cohort students. Their interviews with careers practitioners identified multiple reasons for unequal access in uptake of career guidance, including a paucity of tailored guidance programs for specific underrepresented groups, a lack of staffing and financial resources, and a dearth of data to inform strategies and priorities. Perhaps more concerning was their finding that there is a lack of monitoring of who accesses career guidance programs, with only 48% of the participants reporting that their service monitored uptake according to equity groups, and if they did it was mostly for Indigenous students. This was partly a result of the difficulty of identifying equity-cohort students, with anecdotal data suggesting that careers services are

generally not proactive in identifying students in need; however, Andrewartha and Harvey (2017) did find some evidence of careers services tailoring provision of career guidance to equity groups in Australia; 55% offered tailored provision of career guidance such as job interview training, resumé preparation, and the sourcing of employment opportunities to Non-English-Speaking Background students, although this provision was likely to be targeted at international rather than domestic CALD students. A major issue identified in Andrewartha and Harvey's study is that staffing is a significant impediment to tailoring career guidance programs to equity students, with high variability across the Australian sector; the authors found that universities in the Australian Technology Network (ATN) had an average of 25.4 careers-focused staff; the Group of Eight (Go8) had an average of 10.3; the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) had an average of 8.2; and the Regional Universities Network (RUN) had an average of 4.6.

In her study of English university careers practitioners, Christie (2016) found that in general, the participants viewed higher education as facilitating but not guaranteeing social mobility for underrepresented student groups. The participants described their role in terms of shoving doors open but expressed frustration about the reticence of those students who most need career guidance to seek it, which was attributed in part to the negative framing of careers advisors, often stemming from school experiences.

In developing career guidance programs, there is a general recognition in the literature that career guidance needs to be targeted carefully to the needs of different equity groups, with standard career guidance approaches not likely to work as well across different equity groups (e.g., Bimrose et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2018). For example, career aspirations of students and their family members, as well as levels of support from family and the wider community, may differ considerably across and within different equity groups. It is therefore imperative to adopt career guidance frameworks and programs that meet the diversity of needs of students from different equity cohorts. Exploring the findings of her 2011 study on providing career guidance to low SES students in Australian universities, Doyle notes how low SES students<sup>9</sup> prefer to seek advice from family and friends (see also Baker et al., 2019, for similar findings with regard to CALDM/R students), meaning that unless careers services are tailored and clearly focused on raising awareness of their activities, low SES students are unlikely to engage until it is either too late or not at all. Doyle (2011) argued that career guidance for equity-cohort students should start early in their university experience (echoing the advice of Bradley et al., 2019) and should involve low SES students in designing and implementing targeted career guidance programs. Other equity-cohort-focused advice offered by Doyle (2011) includes careers advisors consulting more with the student body to obtain a better sense of the needs of the students; keeping up to date with labour market information to give up-to-date information; undertaking employer visits; extending availability of career guidance beyond enrolment (two years beyond advised); and facilitating networking between employers and students (e.g. via job fairs).

## Graduate outcomes and employability for CALDM/R students

Although data show that the percentage of people from a CALDM/R background entering higher education is significantly higher than the percentage of those born in Australia, their employment outcomes are typically worse (Harvey & Mallman, 2019; Hugo et al., 2014). For example, Mestan and Harvey (2014) found that CALD graduates in Australia were 67% more likely to be seeking full-time employment post-graduation than non-CALD graduates, who were more likely to have received a job offer before graduation. More recent work by Pitman et al. (2019) has highlighted how CALD students continue to have poor graduate

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<sup>9</sup> Like many scholars working in the field of equity in higher education, Doyle recognises that the term 'low SES' is unhelpfully broad and fails to capture the often intersectional challenges that students from equity cohorts experience.

outcomes compared with other equity groups, with CALD graduates earning well-below median wages in both full- and part-time employment.

Other work has explored differences between graduates from a CALDM/R background and the general population in terms of the type of employment and remuneration obtained. For example, Hugo (2011) found that university graduates from a refugee background were 12% less likely to be employed in professional roles than the general population. Researchers have also established that CALDM/R graduates are more likely to be working in professions for which their degree is not required (Ho & Alcorso, 2004), more likely to be receiving lower salaries than the general population (Li et al., 2016; Mestan & Harvey, 2014), and disproportionately ending up in low skill, low pay jobs (Colic-Peisker, 2009).

Individuals from CALDM/R backgrounds, including graduates of higher education institutions, face significant barriers to securing employment that is commensurate to their skills and experience in Australia and other countries across the world (Cheng et al., 2019; Crawford et al., 2016; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013; Lee et al., 2020; Szkudlarek, 2019). The reasons for this are multifaceted (Lee et al., 2020). Individuals from a CALDM/R background tend to have less knowledge of employment options and workplace culture than those born in the host country, and have fewer social networks they can rely on in the job search process (Beadle, 2014; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). Many of them lack the social and communication knowledge required when seeking employment and require specialised assistance from those who understand their particular circumstances. Discrimination from employers in the job search process and perceived weakness in English language proficiency are also often cited as reasons for poor graduate outcomes of CALDM/R students (Abur & Spaaij, 2016; Harvey & Mallman, 2019; Hugo, 2014; Szkudlarek, 2019; Willott & Stevenson, 2013). As such, while there is a limit to the impact higher education can have on broader issues of structural and systemic racism and employment disadvantage, there remains a significant need to recognise these challenges, and provide targeted career guidance for CALDM/R students.

## **Tailored career guidance for CALDM/R students**

In developing career guidance programs, there is general recognition in the literature that career guidance needs to be targeted carefully to the needs of individuals from CALDM/R backgrounds, and standard career guidance approaches may not be effective (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017; Bimrose, Mulvey, & Brown, 2016; Newman, Bimrose, Nielsen & Zacher, 2018). It is therefore imperative to understand what constitutes appropriate career guidance for CALDM/R students. Although there is a developing body of work that has explored issues related to access (for example, Hartley et al., 2018), we have limited knowledge of how Australian higher education institutions support CALDM/R students to succeed in their studies, explore their careers and seek employment. Only limited work has begun to explore the importance to CALDM/R students of engaging with university careers services (Stebbleton, 2007). In particular, there is a dearth of understanding as to what constitutes good practice when it comes to assisting students' transitions out of university into employment. This is a critical omission given recent research that suggests that CALDM/R groups are systematically disadvantaged in finding meaningful employment (Li et al., 2016; Richardson, Bennett & Roberts, 2016). In addition, there is also a dearth of understanding on the factors that predict CALDM/R students' engagement with career guidance services. This too is a critical limitation as recent research suggests that students from non-traditional backgrounds are less likely to access careers services than the general population (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017). This may happen for a number of reasons including limited awareness of the existence of careers services amongst CALDM/R, a lack of relevant career guidance practices, a lack of confidence in using such services and underestimating the value of such services.

Overall, we are informed by the words of Rice (2017, p. 138), who writes about the social justice imperative that sits behind career guidance and working within and against the dominance of higher education's employability agenda. She emphasises how:

*Career guidance plays one part in the quest to address maldistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation... A radical rethink is essential: one that values different forms of social contribution, supports people to form broader goals encompassing both paid and unpaid work, and helps them understand and challenge the forces that shape their experiences with little restraint or accountability.*

It is with this advice in mind that we sought to explore career guidance for CALDM/R students, as a particularly disadvantaged subset of equity-cohort students in Australian higher education, to examine closely what is offered, by whom and to whom, and how both students and careers practitioners experience this. In the sections that follow, we introduce the project's methodology before presenting the findings and offering recommendations for repairing the evident gap that domestic CALDM/R students are falling through when it comes to transitioning out of their degree studies and into meaningful employment.

# Methodology

This project adopted a mixed-methods design, to bring the complementary methodological pluralism that scholars argue is necessary for exploring complex and layered phenomena, such as career guidance for CALDM/R in contemporary Australian higher education (Barnat et al., 2017; Chamberlain et al., 2011). To address our limited understanding of the role played by career guidance in supporting individuals from CALDM/R backgrounds to transition into higher education and obtain employment when they graduate, the present study addresses the following research questions:

- How effective is the career guidance provided to CALDM/R students in terms of assisting their transition out of higher education studies (and into employment?)
- What specialised career guidance, if any, is being provided to CALDM/R students during their higher education studies?
- What works well and what is missing from the career guidance provided by universities to CALDM/R?
- What would 'best practice' career guidance look like for CALDM/R students?

To create a pluralistic set of data, we 'fused' our methods (Chamberlain et al., 2011, 164) by building an incremental and layered research design, starting with a desktop audit of publicly available information about career guidance on Australian public university websites, followed by a national survey of careers practitioners (n = 32), followed by individual interviews with careers practitioners (n = 10) who had signalled interest in exploring the survey themes in more detail. We also conducted three focus group interviews with currently enrolled domestic CALDM/R university students (n = 7). Our analysis involved initial coding and interpretation of the data generated by each method, followed by an integration of these analyses to create the substantive themes of the research. For the purposes of this report, we have chosen to outline the findings according to each method, rather than according to a thematic structure. While we recognise Bazeley and Kemp's (2012) argument that writing in this atomised way is 'antithetical to the concept of interdependence' (p. 69), we believe that the focus of this report should be on presenting our findings succinctly and making policy recommendations, rather than generative analysis that can build theoretical understandings, which will be the focus of future academic publications.<sup>10</sup>

## Stage 1: Desktop audit

The desktop audit of careers and employment services offered by higher education institutions was conducted between January 2020 to May 2020, serendipitously covering a period prior to and after the start of the COVID pandemic. The audit enabled us to identify what specific career and employment services were provided to CALDM/R students by Australian higher education institutions. In conducting the desktop audit, the research team searched for a number of key terms in the Google search bar and on the search bar of each higher education institution in Australia. Some universities required institutional identification to access certain resources (particularly regarding careers/employment services). Thus, some initiatives may not have been identified in the audit.

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<sup>10</sup> Baker et al. (under preparation) for our thematic analysis



## List of search terms used

### Google

- [University name] refugee support
- [University name] migrant support
- [University name] refugee student support
- [University name] migrant student support
- [University name] cross cultural support.

### University Search Bar

- Refugee support
- Migrant support
- Asylum seeker support
- Refugee student support
- Migrant student support
- Student support
- Cross cultural support
- Refugee scholarship
- Migrant scholarship
- Asylum seeker
- Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.
- CALD
- CALDM-R
- Equity
- Diversity
- Humanitarian
- Widening Participation
- Equity scholarships and grants
- Access schemes
- Student support programs

It should be noted that the research assistant (RA) who conducted the desktop audit is CALD but not from a refugee/migrant background. The RA also had a strong background in research which may have influenced how this audit was approached. It should be taken into consideration that a CALDM/R student who is looking for online resources with a differing skillset may approach it in a different manner. As such the desktop audit was done to examine what careers services higher education institutions provided to CALDM/R students, rather than assess how accessible it was to them.

## Stage 2: Quantitative data collection

Senior staff from career services, equity and diversity portfolios and WIL portfolios at each of the 37 public universities in Australia and two private universities were invited to participate in our study about the careers and employment services provided to students from a CALDM/R background. The survey was administered via the Qualtrics online survey platform. An email invitation was sent to career, equity and diversity and WIL staff at all public Australian universities and faculty levels in April 2020. Email contact details of individuals were obtained through publicly available information on university websites. The survey was accessible in both mobile and standard online formats. The survey questions asked participants to provide information on their job function, whether their institution provided targeted careers and employment services to CALDM/R students, and what they saw as the key challenges of providing career support to this cohort. A total of 32 responses were received from 20 higher education institutions. The respondents consisted of 19 careers staff, 10 WIL staff and three equity and diversity staff.

The survey covered demographic questions such as the gender, ethnicity and migrant/refugee status of staff participants, as well as the types of programs offered by the university (e.g., group career guidance, one-on-one counselling, work integrated learning, internships), and for whom (e.g., CALDM/R students specifically, all students together, international students, domestic students-not CALDM/R student specific). Participants were also asked in an open-ended question to give more information about the programs offered to CALDM/R students. Participants were then asked more specific questions such as how

often programs were run, how they were advertised, how many participants attended, and what proportion of attendees were CALDM/R. Participants were also asked questions about evaluation, including whether the programs were formally evaluated, and their perception of the effectiveness of the programs they had identified which included CALDM/R students. Questions were then asked about challenges to support offered to CALDM/R students, as well as what could be done better (Appendix A)

The survey was analysed using descriptive statistics for closed questions (e.g., frequencies), and quantitative content analysis for open-ended questions (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

### Stage 3: Qualitative data collection

#### Interviews with university staff

The qualitative data collection involved conducting interviews with a subset of the survey respondents working in career practitioner or WIL roles in Australian universities, as well as conducting focus group interviews with CALDM/R students. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with survey respondents (n = 10), all of whom signalled their interest in participating in a follow-up interview after completing the quantitative survey. The participants represented 10 public universities from New South Wales (NSW), Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), and held a variety of roles (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Overview of staff participants**

Pseudonym	Role
Bob	Careers practitioner
Andy	Manager of careers and employability
Alice	Careers counsellor
Maggie	Manager of careers and employability
Nick	Manager of careers and employability
Peggy	Manager of careers and employability
Kate	Academic researching on work integrated learning
Brenda	Manager of work integrated learning and employability
Jane	Equity practitioner and ex-careers practitioner
Matt	Equity practitioner with careers guidance as established part of the role

The questions asked covered their perceptions of what currently works well and what gaps exist in the provision of careers guidance within each of their institutions (see Appendix B).

#### Focus groups with CALDM/R students

Further qualitative data were gathered from three virtual focus group interviews on Skype and Zoom consisting of seven CALDM/R students in total, to ascertain what assistance they have received, and what more they would like to see offered in regard to career guidance at their respective universities. Student participants were recruited through staff at higher education institutions responsible for managing students from a CALDM/R background e.g., equity and diversity units. They were asked to contact the research team directly if they were interested. Prior to participating in the focus group, participants were asked to sign a consent form if they agreed to participate in the focus group. The CALDM/R students participating in the focus group were asked such questions as, where would you go if you need some advice with your future career? And what kind of support would you like concerning your future career/ further study that isn't currently offered in your institution? For a full list of questions please see Appendix C.

The population of the study included CALDM/R students in universities/institutions across Australia enrolled in various programs. The students were recruited online, and a total of seven participants were interviewed: three females and four males, between the ages of 18 and 50.

**Table 2. Demographic characteristics of CALDM/R student participants**

Name/ pseudonym	Age range	Gender	Program	Level of study	Region
Hala	18	F	Enabling program	Alternative pathway	Middle Eastern
Akancha	21	F	Biotechnology	Bachelor	Asian
Regina	25	F	Business	Diploma	Middle Eastern
Luke	22	M	Business	Bachelor	African
Akram	18	M	Social Science & Psychology	Bachelor	Pacific
Zac	50	M	Social Science	PhD	African
Pacific	20s	M	Social Science	Bachelor	African

The focus groups were audio recorded and participants were requested to choose a pseudonym for de-identification (see Table 2). Participants were asked open-ended questions, followed by questions which enabled researchers to examine in-depth the effectiveness of career guidance provided for humanitarian immigrants, and what constitutes best practice in the provision of career guidance for CALDM/R students in Australian higher education institutions.

All interviews and focus groups were conducted via Skype or Zoom, and audio recorded with the participant's permission. The interviews ran for approximately 45–60 minutes and focus groups no more than two hours. Audio recordings of the interviews and focus groups were then transcribed and once transcribed, all recordings were deleted from the recording device. Participation was completely voluntary. Additionally, students who participated in a focus group were compensated with a \$30 gift card in recognition of their contribution to this study.

It should be noted that the researchers experienced difficulty in the online recruitment of participants for the study during the COVID-19 lockdown period, where many students from a CALDM/R background faced stress due to reduced income. Although several invitation emails were sent out to CALDM/R domestic students across Australian institutions, the study received a low response rate.

# Findings

## Desktop audit of university websites

The desktop audit highlighted that universities provide a whole host of academic support services to the general student population that CALDM/R students may also benefit from using (e.g., academic advisors, English and maths learning centres or programs, mentor programs). However, there are a very limited number of universities offering programs and services that are specific and tailored to the needs of CALDM/R students. Out of all the universities in Australia only two were found to provide specific, tailored support/services for CALDM/R students (i.e., the University of Technology Sydney, Deakin University). In the absence of specific tailored services, some universities provide online guides that summarise a list of available services that can assist CALDM/R students. Examples include La Trobe University (support for students with refugee backgrounds, support for new migrants), the University of Tasmania, Charles Sturt University, Swinburne University and Griffith University.

Most universities, especially those based in Victoria and New South Wales, also offer financial support specifically for CALDM/R students through scholarships and bursaries, with some universities increasing scholarships for students from refugee/migrant backgrounds over the last few years (e.g., La Trobe, Deakin).

Some universities have 'liaison officers' that assist CALDM/R students to varying degrees. Some roles are shaped to specifically aid CALDM/R students (e.g., Refugee Liaison Officer), whereas others may be more generic and can include, but are not limited to CALDM/R students (e.g., Diversity Officer). However, the desktop audit found that most universities provided generic support to all students, and some provided programs specifically for international students. Additionally, although some universities have partnerships with external organisations to assist adults from a CALDM/R background (non-student) find employment (e.g., Federation TAFE and EMPOWER at Curtin), it is unclear whether these also extend to university students. Only two universities offered tailored programs to CALDM/R students such as the University of Technology Sydney's program which supports them to undertake paid internships through Careers Seekers. Likewise, the Deakin CREATE program provides people from refugee backgrounds with career support and training.

## COVID-19 impact

Most services that were provided in a face-to-face format prior to COVID-19, continued to be offered by higher education institutions during the COVID-19 lockdown period, but through the phone or in an online format. Only very few services were unable to transition online, some widening participation and outreach programs were not offered during the COVID-19 period.

Financial support packages were gradually rolled out in April to May by various universities to provide support for students financially affected by COVID-19. CALDM/R students were able to apply for such hardship scholarships. However, there has been no support directed explicitly to CALDM/R students from any university to assist with the transition to online learning, nor to help with additional hardships that have resulted from COVID-19.

## Survey findings

### What career guidance does higher education institutions provide to CALDM/R students?

Our analysis of the survey data from 32 respondents, representing 20 higher education institutions, identified that very few provide targeted careers and employment services for

CALDM/R students. Table 3 below shows results from the 29 participants who fully responded to these questions.

**Table 3. What career guidance does higher education institutions provide to CALDM/R Students**

	All	Domestic	CALDM/R	Int	Don't Know
Group careers guidance sessions	26 (89%)	9 (31%)	6 (21%)	21 (72%)	3 (10%)
One-on-one career guidance	26 (89%)	11 (38%)	12 (41%)	7 (24%)	1 (3%)
Work integrated learning (University wide)	26 (89%)	14 (48%)	5 (17%)	7 (24%)	2 (5%)
Work integrated learning (Faculty Specific)	26 (89%)	7 (24%)	4 (14%)	8 (27%)	3 (10%)
Internships (University wide)	26 (89%)	7 (24%)	4 (14%)	9 (31%)	3 (10%)
Internships (Faculty Specific)	23 (79%)	7 (24%)	5 (17%)	7 (24%)	6 (21%)

As can be seen in Table 3, rather than offer specific programs, participants indicated that most institutions offered generic careers and employment services for all students, or services for domestic students which CALDM/R students were able to access on the same basis as other students. Notably, 21 participants (72% of participants) indicated that there were specific group career guidance programs for international students; however, domestic students from a CALD migrant background or students from a refugee background on humanitarian or temporary visas are unable to access such programs. Consistent with the desk top review, the survey found that only two institutions (6 participants) had developed targeted group-based careers/employment programs for CALDM/R students. Importantly, these organisations had typically partnered with external not-for-profit organisations such as the Centre for Multicultural Youth and Career Seekers in the design and delivery of such programs.

Notably other participants indicated that while there were no specific CALDM/R programs, this cohort could participate in other sessions, and that their university tried to advertise these programs as inclusive:

*We don't offer any specific sessions for CALDM/R students. They are welcome to participate in [name of program]—our work-integrated learning program, they are welcome to book 1:1 consultations and participate in careers workshops and training sessions.*

Indeed, 12 participants from six universities identified that they provided targeted one-on-one career guidance for CALDM/R students. While this differs from the desk top review, it is likely that universities do not advertise their one-on-one career guidance to CALDM/R students, and as such it was not picked up in the audit process.

Finally, the survey highlighted that out of all the universities surveyed, very few provided specific WIL opportunities such as internships for CALDM/R students. Participants indicated that CALDM/R students were given the same access to such opportunities as other students – especially where these were embedded within courses – but were not provided with additional services to address their specific needs, which we expand on further in the next section.

### **What are the main challenges faced by staff at higher education institutions in offering careers and employment services to CALDM/R students?**

Our survey analysis identified a number of challenges faced by staff at higher education institutions in supporting the career development of CALDM/R students. These included: 1)



a lack of targeted resources and programs for CALDM/R students; 2) difficulties in identifying and engaging with CALDM/R students; and 3) difficulties faced in engaging with employers, and a lack of work-readiness.

#### *A lack of targeted resources and programs for CALDM/R students*

The most common theme highlighted by respondents was the lack of targeted resources and programs for CALDM/R students. Around half of respondents (n = 12; 52% of respondents to this question) highlighted that their careers units did not have sufficient staff and financial resources to develop programs specifically targeted at different equity cohorts, including – and particularly – CALDM/R students. As such, they tended to use their resources to offer more general support to all students irrespective of their background, and/or offer dedicated programs for international students as seen in Table 3 above. The lack of training for careers advisors on how to support CALDM/R students was also highlighted as a factor which impacted on their ability to provide appropriate career guidance.

#### *Difficulties in identifying and engaging with CALDM/R students*

Around a quarter of respondents highlighted the difficulties they faced in identifying and engaging with students from a CALDM/R background (n = 6 (26%)). A number of respondents highlighted that it was difficult to identify CALDM/R students as they did not often disclose their background, and understand their specific needs – for example, as one survey respondent noted:

*We have no knowledge of students' CALDM/R status/ circumstances unless they declare that as part of their engagement. We explicitly promote our services as being inclusive and open to all students and graduates, offer one-one/private consultations (online or on campus, including after-hours) with a qualified career counsellor and work with University Access and Diversity unit when a student seeks careers support in a related context.*

Other respondents highlighted the difficulties they faced in building awareness amongst CALDM/R students about the specific careers and employment programs they offered. These findings suggest that at many institutions the careers service does not work with equity and diversity staff to develop targeted careers and employment services that meet the needs of different equity groups. Finally, a number of respondents highlighted that it was difficult to encourage CALDM/R students to engage as they often had competing demands on their time, especially since many of the careers and employment programs they offered were not-compulsory.

#### *Difficulties in engaging with employers and lack of work readiness*

Another common theme highlighted by respondents was difficulties engaging with employers when supporting CALDM/R students to access work-integrated learning experiences and apply for jobs. Five respondents (22%) highlighted the reluctance of employers to consider CALDM/R candidates in recruitment processes, especially those for whom English was not their first language. This may result from inherent discrimination *on the part of employers* or a belief that those from CALDM/R backgrounds have limited knowledge of the Australian work environment and weak English *language proficiency*. Respondents also pointed out that the lack of a permanent residency or ongoing work rights because of some CALDM/R students' visa statuses, contributed to an unwillingness on the part of employers to consider candidates from a CALDM/R background. Other respondents highlighted instances of outright discrimination on the part of employers who expressly indicated an unwillingness to consider candidates from a CALD background in their internship programs.

Participants were then asked if they had encountered any difficulties specifically in relation to placing students into professional internships or placements, and to provide more information if so. Ten participants (43%) said that they had, with key reasons being (mis)understanding of cultural and logistical expectations regarding the placement, language barriers and not enough prior work experience. Participants were also asked if they had encountered issues in providing work-integrated learning experiences for CALDM/R students, with nine participants (39%) saying that they had. Key reasons included the unwillingness of partners (employers) to take on CALDM/R students, anxiety experienced by students going into such programs, and language and communication issues.

Next, participants were asked about any difficulties encountered in two specific areas when working with CALDM/R students in specific applied areas of career guidance (internships, work-integrated learning and placements). These two areas were; 1) cultural background; and 2) language proficiency. Eight respondents (35%) said they had noted specific difficulties for CALDM/R students in relation to the area of cultural background, particularly in terms of balancing other commitments, some cultural expectations around work and communication norms, and language issues. In relation to language proficiency, 13 respondents (57%) said they had noted difficulties for these students, including specific industry expectations around language use – e.g., discipline-specific language, Australian workplace cultural and communication norms, and accents.

### *Effectiveness of programs/services*

Participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of each of the program types on preparing CALDM/R students to transition out of their university. Table 4 shows the results (total participants = 25):

**Table 4. Effectiveness of each of the program types**

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not at all effective	Don't know/ not at my university
Group career guidance sessions	4 (16%)	15 (60%)	0	6 (24%)
One-on-one career guidance	19 (76%)	1 (4%)	0	5 (20%)
Work integrated learning (University wide)	13 (52%)	6 (24%)	0	6 (24%)
Work integrated learning (Faculty Specific)	13 (52%)	6 (24%)	0	6 (24%)
Internships (University wide)	12 (48%)	8 (32%)	1 (4%)	5 (20%)
Internships (Faculty Specific)	14 (56%)	6 (24%)	1 (4%)	5 (20%)

As can be seen in Table 4, one-on-one career guidance was rated as the most effective, followed by work integrated learning and then internships. Group career guidance sessions rated the lowest in terms of effectiveness.

### **Suggestions for improvement to existing careers programs and guidance for CALDM/R students**

The survey asked participants to provide suggestions for improvement to careers programs and other forms of support to CALDM/R students at their university. Key suggestions included: increased funding and resourcing, providing career training and development for staff, increasing work-integrated learning to provide CALDM/R students with career skills, and dedicated staff for working with CALDM/R students.

## **Qualitative findings**

Six key themes were identified from the interviews, as outlined below:

- Challenges in providing effective career guidance
- The prioritisation of reputation and revenue in universities

- Perceptions of bias and racism among employers
- Perceptions of challenges faced by CALDM/R students in securing WIL and employment opportunities
- Career practitioner training
- The transmission of information regarding employment opportunities for CALDM/R students.

### Challenges in providing effective career guidance and support

Findings from the interviews suggest three main challenges which are perceived to impede the provision of effective career guidance for CALDM/R students in universities. All three challenges revolve around resources, and include diminished funding, limited human resources and time poverty.

One of the most significant challenges identified from the survey responses is the diminished funding for the provision of career support for CALDM/R students. Andy, a manager of Careers and Employability, pointed out that despite an increase in student enrolment, the funding allocation for careers services at their university has remained unchanged. As he mentioned,

*I think over time universities are trying to perhaps save money...in a tight climate. I think my team budget hasn't increased but for probably a better part of (a) decade or more on my particular team. So even when the boom enrolments go up, career services don't generally increase with the funding gained from enrolled students.*

Another interviewee highlighted an ineffective distribution of funds across services in their university. As Maggie, a manager of Careers and Employability, explained,

*Everyone was like spend, spend, spend. Oh my God, it's shocking and I actually needed to leave the HEP space, like I just need to step away because – at the end I went I am not doing this again.*

Similarly, Brenda, a manager of WIL and employability also described the funding allocation at the university to be 'predominantly' centred around pathways into universities, instead of transitions out of university. Brenda also cited the limited allocation of funds for career services which target migrant and refugee students because of their small number in each university:

*The refugee cohort if I can say cohort, would be smaller as well. So, allocating resources you know to a smaller group of students is difficult.*

Conversely, Maggie mentioned the uncertainty in funding as a crucial challenge in the provision of careers services at their university:

*So not only have you got varied funding ... for us it's annual funding, so every year we are not sure if we have got funding for the following year.*

The issues surrounding funding have considerably affected the careers services provided for CALDM/R students in universities. Most career practitioners and WIL staff cited how the budget constraints significantly affected their engagement with students, and the types of services/programs provided, including the one-on-one career consultation, which was cited as the most effective form of career guidance. As explained by Alice, a careers counsellor:

*The gold standard is the one-on-one consult, you have the most impact there, but it's obviously the most resource intensive way of doing things....*

Another crucial challenge cited by most interviewees was the limited resourcing of staff in careers services across universities. Two interviewees mentioned the significant reduction in

the number of staff for career guidance in their universities, which consequently affected the range of career guidance services provided.

Conversely, Jane, an ex-careers practitioner mentioned the lack of qualified career practitioners in refugee support roles at their university. Similarly, Matt, an equity practitioner cited the high student-support staff ratio for migrant or refugee students, as compared with Indigenous students. As explained by Matt,

*I mean our Indigenous careers counsellor, there's about – she's got about 400 students to deal with. I've got about 4,000, which as I said, I can't work with all 4,000...*

The low numbers of staff have placed greater pressure on career practitioners in universities, consequently impacting the services provided, especially the one-on-one approach, which is argued by most interviewees to be the most effective form of career guidance. As Jane reiterated,

*I believe that, that personal approach and i.e., that, how people develop trust between one another, has actually been reducing as a result of reduction of human resources within Career Services.*

The interviews therefore suggest that limited resourcing for careers services and under-resourced staff substantially impeded the provision of efficient careers services for CALDM/R students across universities in Australia.

### **Institutional prioritisation of reputation and revenue through supporting international students**

Findings from the interviews also highlight the prioritisation of reputation and revenue by universities as a key theme. A few interviewees cited an emphasis on revenue in their universities, which led to a greater focus on providing career guidance for international students. As explained by Maggie, manager of Careers and Employability:

*and that is the other challenge in this space is that everything is seen as money – you know it's all financially based. You can get better income from your full fee-paying international students.*

Similarly, Nick, manager of careers and employability at his university, did not perceive COVID-19 to impact the career guidance provided for international students, due to their substantial financial contribution to the university. Nick explained:

*international students are a massive revenue raiser, and in order for the university to continue to sell our education to the international student market, we need to achieve positive employability outcomes.*

Apart from that, the perception of universities as a business entity was also prevalent among the interviewees. Bob, a careers practitioner, explained:

*universities are (a) business operating a funding model which is about recruitment and competition. So, it's not about delivering what's best for the students. It's about surviving as a business entity.*

In addition, another interviewee also pointed out an emphasis on global rankings in universities, which led to a focus on competition, instead of addressing the needs of all students, including the CALDM/R student cohort.

Therefore, interviewees' responses suggest that an emphasis on reputation and revenue in Australian universities inhibits the prioritisation of CALDM/R students' career-related needs.

## Employers' perceptions of CALDM/R graduates

Perceptions of bias and racism against CALDM/R students among employers was also a key theme that emerged from the interview findings with staff. Several interviewees cited the preference for Indigenous students among employers when looking to hire diverse cohorts, resulting in limited employment opportunities for CALDM/R students. Matt explained:

*I just think all employers seem to be crying out for Indigenous students, whether it be internships or other opportunities...I mean, I think I'd be pretty confident in saying that there's probably less than 10 students at X University, who are Indigenous, studying engineering, but there's definitely more than 10 engineering companies who have said to X we'd like Indigenous students.*

Matt expressed his frustration on the preference for Indigenous students:

*I find that frustrating when our employer liaison comes back and goes, sorry Matt, this company is only interested in Indigenous.*

He also expressed scepticism regarding employers' diversity and inclusion practices, despite participating in diversity-embracing discourse:

*while I feel as though the employers are just saying the right things about diversity and inclusion and that sort of stuff, I'm still not convinced they're doing enough to take onboard some of these students.*

Similarly, Peggy, manager of Careers and Employability at her university, stated that bias and racism is still widespread in the employment sector, which often hinders the efforts of the university in securing employment opportunities for CALDM/R students'.

*Inherent and unfortunate bias, racism ... exists out there, and I think we at the university are only part of the puzzle.*

The interviewees' responses point to an existing bias and racism in the Australian employment context, which often limits opportunities for CALDM/R students to secure post-graduation employment.

## Perceived challenges for CALDM/R students in securing WIL or employment opportunities

Findings from the interviews also revealed a number of perceived challenges for CALDM/R students in acquiring WIL or employment opportunities. The common perception of challenges emerged as a key theme across each of the participating universities.

### *Limited English language and literacy levels*

One of the most commonly perceived challenges for CALDM/R students was that of their limited English language proficiency and literacy. Two interviewees, Andy and Matt, pointed out the specific challenges that students faced with written communication, especially with writing resumes and cover letters. As Andy, manager of Careers and Employability at his university explained, 'I think some of the challenges there that I've seen often—often languages, written communication is a big one'.

Brenda cited vocabulary difficulties that students might face in the employment space, as they may be unfamiliar with 'workplace specific language or the terms used' in the Australian workplace. Following that, three interviewees (Andy, Matt and Brenda) pointed out the significant impact of students' language and literacy constraints on their WIL or employment opportunities, especially in an era of mass recruitment. As Matt stated:

*but when you've got mass recruitment, a lot of these students are going to slip through, because maybe their English isn't perfect on their cover letter or their resume, and if a person who's doing automated recruiting has maybe set up that anyone who does more than five spelling mistakes is kicked out. And that's going to be the challenge if everyone's going to bring in some sort of automated resume check because they're getting a thousand resumes compared to getting 50, I think it's going to be a massive challenge for this group.*

#### *CALDM/R students' perceived 'lack' of awareness of the Australian workplace culture*

Another challenge that was cited by a majority of the interviewees was a lack of understanding of Australian workplace culture among CALDM/R students, which is perceived to impact their integration into the Australian workplace. As Kate, an academic researching on WIL explained, 'so it's really about the cultural context which can be daunting and quite different for people from diverse backgrounds'. Similarly, Brenda stated, 'it's probably the integration into that [Australian workplace] culture and integrating with domestic students who are very used to those experiences and going in and just undertaking them'.

#### *Limited local networks*

Limited local networking opportunities for CALDM/R students (particularly those who are newly or recently arrived in Australia) was also perceived as a key factor impeding their employment and WIL opportunities. Two interviewees, Brenda and Peggy, cited the lack of access to local industry networks as a challenge that many migrant and refugee students might face in securing employment or WIL in the Australian workplace. As Brenda explained,

*The lack of industry networks is something that migrant and refugee students would experience. I would say in some of the areas students need to find their own internship it can be a struggle again because of the limited access to networks.*

Similarly, Kate stated,

*Number one they don't have the social capital often...if they have come from some kind of diverse background, now I won't name any but I'm sure you can imagine what I'm thinking, that diversity- so often they've not got the social capital to have the networks firstly to go and if they've got to find their own.*

#### *CALDM/R students' perceived low confidence or self-esteem*

Another perceived challenge cited for CALDM/R students was their low levels of confidence and self-esteem, as well as their underdeveloped sense of professional identity. As stated by Kate,

*The other thing is their confidence, their self-esteem, their professional identity is often not as further developed and they lack, you know, if they go into- if you're involved in work integrated learning which ultimately is about industry and community engagement, you've got to go in there with a clear sense to gain maximum benefit.*

The interviewees' responses therefore suggested a largely deficit view of CALDM/R students among career advice, equity and WIL staff across Australian universities.

#### *Careers training and related issues*

The findings from the interviews also revealed issues related to the training provided for career practitioners in universities as another key theme. One of the interviewees highlighted the extensive focus on career-development theories in the training provided. As Alice, a careers counsellor pointed out the lack of awareness-raising on diversity, and inadequate



training in addressing issues relating to inclusion and diversity. Alice explained, ‘...I think there’s a lot of work to do in the sector in Australia and particularly around decolonisation and you know much more diversity awareness training’.

These findings therefore suggest a need for improvement in the training provided for university career practitioners and WIL staff, to ensure that the career guidance needs of CALDM/R students across Australian universities are met.

### *Information transmission on employment opportunities for CALDM/R students*

Another key theme that emerged from the interviews was the transmission of information regarding post-graduation employment opportunities for CALDM/R students. One of the interviewees, Maggie, mentioned that the Australian Association of Graduate Employment (AAGE) carries out an annual roundtable for transition out schemes, including one for diversity and inclusion.

*So probably where I learn about the transmission schemes are through AAGE. So AAGE does at the end of every year a diversity round – they do round tables throughout the year and always end up with diversity and inclusion. So, I like going to those to understand where the diversity targets are for particular organisations.*

Following that, Maggie mentioned that this information is often shared through other graduate employment organisations, including National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS) and Careers Development Association of Australia (CDAA). However, Maggie stated that information sharing is done informally.

The interview findings suggest that external organisations play a key role in transmitting information regarding post-graduation employment and WIL opportunities for CALDM/R students in Australian universities. However, findings from the study also point out the lack of formal opportunities for information sharing across universities. This suggests a need for the development of a formal channel of information transmission regarding employment opportunities for CALDM/R students among universities.

The interviews highlight six key factors that influence the provision of career and employment services/programs for CALDM/R students across Australian universities. These factors highlight the need for universities to prioritise the successful employment of this student cohort, a need for diversity advocacy in the Australian employment sector, the provision of targeted career support for CALDM/R students, and the development of more formal opportunities for information-sharing regarding employment opportunities for this student cohort between Australian universities.

## **Career practitioners’ wish list of changes (with unlimited funding)**

The interview findings also highlight desired changes to the current career guidance provided for CALDM/R students at university if unlimited funding was available. In response to a question about what careers practitioners would like to implement to improve support for CALDM/R students, the four desired changes most commonly cited by participants are:

- Availability of dedicated career personnel
- Better support for WIL
- Post-university career guidance
- Holistic provision of services.

## Availability of dedicated career support personnel

The interviewees' responses highlighted the desire for a dedicated careers counsellor and recruitment personnel for CALDM/R students at university. Andy contended that the availability of dedicated career support personnel would significantly increase post-graduation employment rates for CALDM/R students, as it would provide a 'high-needs approach' to addressing students' specific employment needs. Andy asserted:

*I think to answer your question what's – what's missing I feel is a dedicated recruitment consultant. I would love to have someone who is dedicated to the support area. So, I do have recruitment consultants that are placing all students into work. And that comes with ... of, we want to see outcomes. We want to see big numbers. And we want to see that now. I would like to have a recruitment consultant that – that has the freeway and the flexibility to go look, this is a unique cohort that needs support, and guidance.... And that dedicated career counsellor to – to build up that person. To get them employable. To offer them a few appointments. And to get them ready. If we had those two things at our university, you would definitely see post-graduation employment soar, because you're getting a – a very much a high needs approach.*

## Improved support for work-integrated learning

The interview findings also highlight the desire for improved support for CALDM/R students in securing WIL opportunities and paid internships. This is reflected in Peggy's response, who contends that due to the specific cultural challenges CALDM/R students face, this cohort of students would require greater support in securing WIL opportunities. Peggy articulated:

*I would think there should be better support when it comes to work integrated learning ... I think the cohort of students that we're talking about face unique challenges like the cultural ones that I was saying then before, and I don't think those are always taken into consideration. So, I would like to see faculties provide maybe a bit more support in helping students obtain those work integrated learning opportunities.*

In addition, Jane emphasised the significance of securing paid internships for CALDM/R students to build their social capital and industry networks, which are essential for securing future employment:

*I would say more paid internships because essentially, it's about that and it's about developing networks. And once they get that first paid internship they then get to know, start to get to know people in a broader network and in a professional network. I think, I think that would be the main thing.*

## Post-university career guidance for students

The interview findings also highlight the desire for the implementation of post-university career guidance for CALDM/R students. Brenda argued that the provision of this might be more beneficial in supporting students' career pathways, compared with a sole focus on developing students' employability at university:

*I wonder whether that's something to look into ... that kind of post-university support in supporting students within their career and navigating that workforce and their career rather than trying to prep them and equip them with the knowledge and skills required at university and then kind of see you later type of thing.*

## Holistic provision of services

Responses from the interviewees also reflected a desire for the provision of holistic career services at university to increase the accessibility of career guidance for CALDM/R students. Brenda contended,

*I guess if we are thinking about employability and so from my university perhaps it's having a position within, so in our university I guess that would be in the welfare team where they look after equity students, whether it be rural, regional, migrant refugee etc. Having someone that is across and qualified within the placement and careers and access to the university support services within that one team rather than having to refer out, but I don't know if that knowledge and position exists. I guess it could and it would be worth a try.*

Findings from the interviews with career practitioners and WIL staff suggest that a highly personalised approach, effective communication and early interventions are perceived as key good practices in the provision of effective career services for CALDM/R students. In addition, the interviewees' responses also reflect a desire for continuous and holistic career services to be provided, with a greater emphasis on WIL opportunities and dedicated careers personnel for CALDM/R students.

## Focus groups with CALDM/R students

Findings from the focus groups with CALDM/R students highlighted four significant themes:

- Challenges in securing employment post-graduation
- Sources of careers services for CALDM/R students
- Perceived usefulness of current careers services offered
- Perceived issues with current careers services offered.

### Challenges in securing employment post-graduation

Difficulties in gaining employment post-graduation was cited as a significant challenge by most student participants in the focus groups. According to the participants, several factors affected employment opportunities for CALDM/R students, including stiff competition with Australian-born graduates who have greater social capital. Zac explained:

*...as a refugee we know it already, how it is challenging as an immigrant, as someone who come in a new place, and where there's, must be competition... I've already finished my bachelor's degree in social sciences, and it's difficult to find work because of competition, there are too many people who are looking for the same .... And also because of your background, if you don't have many connections it's very difficult because ... be connected, for you to get a job you have got to be connected ...it's like the networks that you build when you are uni, now I did not do my high school year in Australia, I only did my uni, so the connection that I had were limited, there's more connections at university than anywhere else.*

In addition, participants also attributed challenges in obtaining employment to the language barriers that they encounter. As Pacific argued, 'Yes we have language barriers because [it's] not our first language'. Participants' responses also highlight the limited recognition of CALDM/R students' previous qualifications and experiences as another factor impeding the employment opportunities for this cohort of students. Zac articulated:

*...there are very limited opportunities for people who have ... skills, skills they acquired overseas, brought them here. So, you have to reinvent yourself, and*

*when you are re-inventing yourself there is a lot of time lapse and other people will be getting in when you are trying to re-invent yourself.*

### **Sources of career guidance for CALDM/R students**

In terms of sources of careers services, the focus group participants referred to a range of sources for seeking career guidance. One of the most common sources of career guidance for CALDM/R students was the university career hub/unit. Akancha stated:

*So first of all, I would go to the career counsellor at the university itself and then I would go on LinkedIn and then just connect with people who are actually doing the same career as me as like, have some advice from there how they got into this, and what make them join this career and all that. So, LinkedIn and career counselling.*

Apart from the university career hub/unit, the participants' responses also highlight the significance of social networks as a useful source for future career advice. As Akram stated, 'Well actually I have a friend that already in the police force'. Conversely, some participants perceived students and teachers as important sources of career guidance. Hala asserted:

*And again, it's to combine it with the networking student, and even some staff, lecturers, who the more they know you, more you interact with them you have that chance to get information and in future perhaps can be useful to access employment... so we have an English as a second language teacher [and] sometimes I will ask her.*

### **Perceived usefulness of current career guidance offered**

An interesting finding from the participants' responses is that most CALDM/R students are willing to seek career guidance but have conflicting views regarding the usefulness of the career guidance offered in terms of securing employment. Some participants found the current career guidance offered highly beneficial in building their employability, and their knowledge on different career pathways. Regina explained, 'Yeah, it was very useful because I had two or three interviews which I went to ... I really did well in my interviews'. Conversely, Pacific accessed the career hub in his university because '[information] can be accessed easily and you can get information on different careers you can have'.

However, certain participants did not feel that the current services offered were useful in addressing their career needs. Akancha contended that the career fairs held at his university were not relevant to his course or future career pathway:

*They do—so science, that's what I thought for X I thought a lot of science stalls, a lot of science employers are going to be there in this career fair. But out of 100 stalls that were there, only about 90—so 90% were basically business and IT, and all these other fields only 10—10% or 15% were science stalls, which was—and mostly nursing actually, mostly nursing. So, which is not actually really good to biotechnology or the field that I'm actually studying in.*

### **Perceived issues with current services offered**

Responses from the focus groups also highlighted several issues with current career services offered for CALDM/R students at their respective universities. Participants noted the irrelevance of the current services, which do not address the specific career needs of CALDM/R students. Hala explained:

*I went to the career counsellor once and she basically gave me a bunch of—she looked at my resume and basically, she just compared it with the resume, sample resume. And she just told me whatever I missed in the resume, which*

*was for example, the layout is not correct. And she just proofread my resume and when I asked her, I'm stressing out about how I'm supposed to get a job in this field? And all she did was give me a bunch of websites for science and then I went to those websites when I went home, and it was basically not even related to my medical science or biotechnology.*

Some participants also perceived the current services offered as insufficient, especially because of the termination of these post-graduation. Zac argued, 'but they have their limitations, in that until you graduate and you are out of university, you may not be able to access the same, them places, in the same way you used to do it'.

## Summary of findings

The findings from this study identified many institutional and structural barriers faced by CALDM/R students in accessing meaningful career guidance at their respective universities. The survey results and voices of both the CA, EU, WIL staff and CALDM/R university students found that careers guidance programs offered across the majority of universities in this study are not purposely designed to include CALDM/R students, nor are they actively promoted to the CALDM/R student population. When students do attend programs, the process and content were often designed to favour the 'mainstream' cohort and do not take the specific needs of the CALDM/R cohort into account.

Furthermore, the findings identified a divergence in what the staff noted as difficulties with engaging CALM/R students and students' perception of a lack of relevance of the careers services available to them. However, staff and students were both forthcoming in acknowledging that resources, staff-training, and delivery of culturally specific careers guidance for CALDM/R students were inadequate.

## Careers practitioners' good practice recommendations

Findings from the interviews with staff highlight four good practice recommendations, in response to a question that asked them for examples of what they considered to work well and what they would like to implement if possible:

- Tailored career guidance for CALDM/R students
- Implementation of the one-on-one career guidance model
- Increased career guidance in students' initial years of tertiary education
- Improved communication and rapport building with students.

### Tailored support for CALDM/R students

The interview findings highlight tailored career guidance as the most commonly cited good practice recommendation for the provision of effective careers services for CALDM/R students. Alice articulated the significance of first recognising that 'different cohorts of students have different needs' to address the specific needs of CALDM/R students. In addition, Nick, a manager in Global Careers, noted the importance of providing targeted language and cultural support that would specifically aid in the integration of CALDM/R students into the Australian workplace. As Nick stated, 'I think CALD students could definitely benefit from those kinds of [professional] language support that's needed in the workplace'.

Apart from that, Kate, an academic researching on WIL suggested the provision of tailored career guidance via smaller peer groups, where students can develop personal connections which could help them navigate their respective career pathways. As Kate explained,

*So, you want groups where there is that personalized connection where you can negotiate with students their own trajectory and how they're going to- what*

*learning experiences are going to help them get to where they're going, what's going to help them- you can do a lot of peer reflection and peer review which is a great way to build confidence but also provide constructive feedback...*

However, Peggy, a manager of Careers and Employability, pointed out the need to achieve a balance in providing tailored programs for students without labelling them in a deficit manner. As Peggy articulated,

*...but you know, it's that fine balance of emphasising that they're bespoke programs and sort of catering for those students without them sort of putting them in a category. And sort of saying oh well, because you're this type of student, we have this you know. I find sometimes, and again, I'll just relate back to my experience more with international students, some of them really don't want to be labelled as an international student; they want to partake in a domestic student program. So, achieving that balance I think is crucial.*

### **Implementation of a one-on-one career guidance model**

The implementation of the one-on-one career guidance model was also recommended as good practice by a significant number of interviewees. Most interviewees perceived the one-on-one model as the most effective form of career guidance for CALDM/R students. As Alice contends, the one-on-one counselling model is the 'gold standard' for the provision of career support services. Similarly, Bob, a careers practitioner stated, 'There's a lot of research that shows that the 1:1 counselling model is the most effective... but I am not saying—I'm actually an advocate of that'. Similar sentiments were also reflected by Peggy, who pointed out that one-on-one consultations provided opportunities for a personalised approach in addressing students' respective career needs, which may not be possible in other career guidance programs. Peggy articulated:

*I feel as though some of the more large-scale workshops and events programs you know, they can only be tailored so much, whereas in a 20 minute consultation there can be a much personalised conversation that can take place. And that's where a consultant or facilitator, advisor, a counsellor, different universities use different names obviously, can truly understand the person's individual background and come up with more tailored recommendations and support I suppose.*

However, although most interviewees advocated for the implementation of a one-on-one career support model, Bob cautions against encouraging dependency among students. He explained, 'I think that (one-on-one support) needs to be offered where needed, but I think that you've also got to be very aware of not falling into the trap of encouraging dependency'.

### **Embedding career guidance in the curriculum**

Although not a common practice described by staff, embedded career guidance within the curriculum in some Australian universities was considered to be effective, particularly for time poor students who have outside responsibilities that impede their capacity to engage in 'additional' careers services. Alice, a careers counsellor, described the integration of employability 'skills' into the curriculum to provide career guidance for current students. The components of the embedded career guidance provided include professional awareness and development, and application tips for paid graduate employment. As stated by Alice, '...for example we, in the final years we go in and we're teaching...it's like co-teaching with the lecturers'.

According to Alice, the embedded career guidance has led to a positive impact on student employment rates. As Alice explained, 'our employment rates after the implementation of this program in the 90s, it's really high, before we started it was like 60 or 70 percent'. She



attributes the effectiveness of the program to the 'progressive couple of lecturers'. This suggests that despite the time poverty encountered, some staff were able to provide effective career guidance in collaboration with academics in university.

### **Increased careers service interventions in students' initial years of higher education**

Another key good practice highlighted in the interview findings is the increased provision of careers service interventions in students' initial years of university. Andy, a manager of Careers and Employability points out the benefits of engaging CALDM/R students early in their degree. Andy articulated:

*what works best is I think engaging that cohort early and often throughout their degree. So, having – getting them from orientation, and having something happening every year. Whether that's just an extension of the standard orientation that all students get. And going, these are areas you might want to engage in your first 6 months of university. Academic success writing, peer mentor, student mentors, all that sort of support is – is very, very helpful, and very beneficial.*

Similarly, Bob noted the importance of interventions that target first year students, as most university students are often observed to access career support and guidance towards the end of their degrees, where only limited services can be provided. Jane, an ex-careers practitioner, also advocates the need for more widespread and intensive interventions in the initial phase of students' tertiary education to assist students with the more challenging aspects of employability. Jane stated:

*I think that if there were more bodies on the ground in Career Services, who could actually provide at least in the initial phase of a student's – when they're in first year or whatever. If there were bodies on the ground that could actually provide some intensive support in – and I'm not talking about writing resumes, it's more selection criteria, how the hell do you do that? Even people whose first language is English find that difficult.*

### **Improved communication and rapport building with students**

Findings from the interviews also highlight improved communication and rapport building with students as valued by careers practitioners. Interviewees argue that having greater empathy and developing genuine relationships with students will contribute towards building rapport with students, consequently establishing trust among them. Brenda stated, 'I think you can develop relationships and start to access and gain some trust with students so I would say that that works.' Jane, the ex-careers practitioner argued that this will enable career practitioners to better address the respective needs of students and assist them in navigating their career pathways. In addition, Kate advocated for a genuine acknowledgement of student diversity to establish meaningful connections and provide targeted support that addresses the specific needs of the CALDM/R cohort. Kate articulated, 'I guess in closing I still say it's about us really deeply genuinely respecting acknowledging and valuing diversity of all sorts'.

### **Students' suggestions to improve current provision of career guidance**

The student participants also offered recommendations that higher education institutions could incorporate to improve the educational experience and employment prospects for CALDM/R students. Three participants (Luke, Zac and Pacific) recommended the development of an information-sharing platform specific for CALDM/R students, including expos, events, conferences. Luke suggested,

*I think it should be more interactive where you're meeting with the person. I'd say the event our diversity office had, the one that I ... that was very, very beneficial, we should have more events like that because it gives a chance for a lot of people to come together and then they get to discover all this information about university as one and they can ask as many questions as they want ... I feel like in those refugee type conferences where you don't feel stupid for asking a silly question because you really don't know ... so if there's more other people that don't know like you then you can ask anything you want ... it's like a comfortable environment.*

Participants also recommended a mentorship program for new arrivals. In addition, the participants suggested collaborations between universities and community and settlement organisations to create opportunities for CALDM/R students. Zac stated:

*I think there should be community involvement, they should increase their community involvement ... (Unable to understand), but I think there should be more community involvement ..., I know the community can access library services and some other services from university, but I think there's need for the university to have people in the community who we can work with, who can help the communities to realise the opportunities that are there.*

In addition, student participants proposed a targeted internship program to provide placements for CALDM/R students in companies to fill the gap in what is currently offered to support decision-making, career options and networking opportunities among CALD migrant and refugee graduates. Akancha considered:

*Okay so the support that I'm looking for is basically they offer but not to my degree. So, they offer it to nursing degrees like they put them in placement the university itself puts them in placements. So, which is going to give them, it's going to give them experience to help with their future career. But with my degree they don't offer any support in regard to placing you in companies or even give you information on companies.*

In summary, our study found that very few universities provide dedicated career guidance programs for domestic CALDM/R students who have different needs from international students. This suggests that higher education institutions should question whether the current (and often homogenised) career guidance programs currently on offer address the needs of CALDM/R students. Our study stressed the key challenges faced by staff in supporting the career development of CALDM/R students. These include a lack of targeted resources and programs for CALDM/R students, difficulties identifying and engaging with CALDM/R students, limited work-readiness on the part of CALDM/R students and difficulties engaging with employers.

## Discussion

Our study has shown that career guidance practices, services and resources for supporting CALDM/R students to transition out of their university studies and into employment vary considerably from institution to institution in the Australian higher education sector. In the discussion that follows we highlight the key findings from our study and their implications for the provision of careers services. In doing so, we are conscious that career guidance counsellors, work-integrated learning (WIL) and diversity and inclusion practitioners cannot make the changes alone, and that some institutions may be unable to act upon our suggestions due to budget constraints that have affected the higher education sector as a result of the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings from our study indicate that, in general, universities provide a variety of careers services to the overall student population from which CALDM/R students may also benefit, including but not limited to English language support, WIL programs, mentoring programs and careers counselling services. Additionally, some institutions provide online resources and guides outlining internal and external services available to assist CALDM/R students. Some universities employ student advisors or 'liaison officers' that assist CALDM/R students with academic and wellbeing support, but these staff are generally not 'employment case-workers', nor are they qualified in career guidance counselling.

We found that most institutions offered generic careers and employment support for all students, with many also offering tailored programs for international students. However, very few provide dedicated programs for domestic CALDM/R students who have different needs from international students. Our findings support prior work (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017; Baker et al., 2019), which highlighted that students from equity cohorts feel that careers counselling offered by universities fails to meet their specific needs. Our findings suggest that higher education institutions should question whether the current and often 'homogenised' careers support programs currently on offer fail to address the needs of CALDM/R students and pay more attention to providing the support that CALDM/R feel they need.

The study also found that few universities worked closely with employers to develop employment pathways for CALDM/R students, with many relying on the support of external not-for-profit organisations offering targeted group-based careers programs for CALDM/R students.

Many respondents highlighted the need for institutions to provide greater WIL opportunities for CALDM/R students to improve their employability. This included a more customised approach to WIL placements to meet the specific needs of individuals from the CALDM/R cohort such as providing extensive training about cultural practices and expectations within Australian workplaces. Further, they suggested a broader and multifaceted communication strategy to inform the student body of what was on offer and finally, continuous holistic career guidance support throughout the students' university lifespan and especially a greater emphasis on WIL opportunities targeted at CALDM/R students. These findings are echoed by Bridgstock and Jackson (2019), who proposed ways to better address tensions in employability—offer optional pathways that permit learners to pursue individual learning and employability pathways beyond the core programmatic approach. Further, most importantly, it is critical for higher education institutions to keep learners informed and support them to make good, active choices about their employability learning.

Our study also highlighted the key challenges faced by staff in supporting the career development of CALDM/R students. These included a lack of targeted resources and programs for CALDM/R students, difficulties in identifying and engaging with CALDM/R students, limited work-readiness on the part of CALDM/R students and finally difficulties in

engaging with employers. To further elaborate on this last point, our findings underline the reluctance of some employers to consider CALDM/R candidates in recruitment processes, especially those for whom English was not their first language. Additionally, some participants indicated that the lack of a permanent residency or ongoing work rights associated with CALDM/R students' visa status contributed to an unwillingness on the part of employers to consider candidates from a CALDM/R background. Other participants highlighted instances of outright discrimination on the part of employers who expressly indicated an unwillingness to consider candidates from a CALD background in their internship programs. Gilani (2020) argued, universities 'have a strong role to play in utilising their employer engagement networks to lobby for changes in recruitment processes' (p. 16) by challenging employers, advocating for businesses to work with a variety of universities (not just those considered elite), encouraging employers to use blind application approaches and encouraging employers to evaluate and collect data on backgrounds of graduates employed.

Although students and staff in our study recognised and valued WIL programs, they highlighted the need to improve current service provision. One important issue identified by a number of respondents was the fact that many institutions placed a significant proportion of their funding and resources around supporting pathways for CALDM/R students to access higher education rather than supporting them to transition out of higher education. The lack of resources dedicated to supporting their transition out of higher education constrained the ability of careers practitioners and work-integrated learning (WIL) staff to interact with CALDM/R students. Such findings are consistent with prior work by Harvey et al. (2017), which found that there was limited provision of careers and WIL services tailored towards equity groups such as those with lower socioeconomic status, a disability, from regional areas, from non-English-speaking backgrounds and from other underrepresented groups. While it is beyond the capacity of careers advisors and WIL teams to address such resource limitations, higher education institutions should endeavour to recognise and seek to address bias against CALDM/R students in terms of tailoring services and advocating to employer associations for more CALD-inclusive recruitment processes.

In addition, our findings also demonstrated that CALDM/R students often have poor understanding of the services available to them, especially in relation to how these services may assist them to transition effectively out of higher education and into the workforce. This is in part attributable to the failure of institutions to actively engage with students from CALDM/R backgrounds. Despite the fact that CALDM/R place high value on obtaining an education, they often find it difficult to access adequate opportunities to explore employment opportunities in a safe and culturally sensitive space. As they transition from a place of dependence to independence, several factors make CALDM/R vulnerable to under/unemployment. Their fear of appearing ignorant in front of others may stifle their willingness to seek advice (Dunwoodie et al., 2019). Additionally, their perceived limited English language proficiency, low self-confidence, limited social capital and local networking opportunities impede their access to careers advisors, employment opportunities and WIL placements.

Another challenge highlighted in our research was that although CALDM/R students recognised that they had limited knowledge of the career options open to them, they often did not seek the support of career and WIL advisors. This was often because they were not aware of the services available to them and why they might need access to such services. These findings are in line with prior research that highlights the under-utilisation of careers services by CALDM/R students (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017; Harvey et al. 2017).

The results of this study highlight the need for accessible, culturally sensitive career guidance and advice that can be flexibly accessed when required. CALDM/R students need to be made aware of these resources well in advance of their final year or at least be able to find them easily. The university website may be the most appropriate source of information

given its widespread use by this group. However, our desktop audit revealed that there were few resources targeted to CALDM/R students on the websites of higher education institutions.

The focus group findings highlighted some of key factors that lead CALDM/R students to engage with careers and WIL services. In particular, the findings highlighted the important role of social networks with fellow students, lecturers and professional staff at universities in facilitating their take-up of such services.

We acknowledge there is a need for higher education institutions to develop innovative ways to engage CALDM/R in assessing careers services. In particular, we highlight the need for targeted career guidance that recognises the barriers to meaningful career pathways and employment that this particular student cohort experience. Okay-Somerville and Scholarios (2017) further elaborate on this notion, by suggesting careers counsellors should encourage students to engage in proactive career self-management activities:

*This kind of support, particularly through networking and guidance seeking, is most beneficial for the more meaningful outcomes of university-to-work transitions: employment quality and perceived employability. Students/graduates may be encouraged towards more interaction with professionals in their field, for example, alumni (p. 1287).*

Conversely, the reliance of students on academics/teachers for their careers education will not adequately prepare them for the rapidly changing world of work (de la Harpe & David, 2012), particularly given the rise in national and international tensions globally, including climate change, automation of jobs, the shift in international and national immigration policies, a global pandemic, increased job uncertainty and casualisation of the workforce. Job seekers at all stages of life now have to navigate a world of work in which careers are no longer linear, stable or have predictable trajectories (e.g., Fouad & Kantamneni, 2013). As such, appropriate career guidance is more important than ever.

Increasingly, we will continue to observe added pressure on the university sector to become more accountable for the employment outcomes of students (Baker et al., 2019). Indeed, the federal reforms to higher education funding and policy under the 'Job-ready Graduate Package', announced at the end of 2020, has made this narrow focus on employment abundantly clear (DESE, 2021b). This pressure necessitates investment in the careers and WIL services provided by higher education institutions. To do so, it is critical to work directly with the student cohort, employers, career guidance counsellors, peak and professional bodies and government at all levels. This will allow the development of careers services that meet the needs of CALDM/R students and other equity groups and contribute towards a more just and equitable society (Bell, 2016). In the recommendations section, we highlight recommendations for different stakeholder groups regarding how to improve career guidance provided to CALDM/R students.

# Conclusion and recommendations

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are provided for different stakeholders invested in the provision of career guidance in the higher education landscape.

### Policymakers (federal government)

Neither federal nor state governments have adopted policies to specifically support CALDM/R groups in their access to and success within higher education, nor their transition into the world of work. The identification of three broad equity cohorts — students from low SES, Indigenous and rural/remote backgrounds — in HEPPP policy and funding for equity practice means that the needs of CALDM/R are often overlooked. Universities do not have a clear imperative to spend limited resources on a group that they are not mandated to support or report on in their HEPPP-funded activities. Given that there is strong evidence that attests to the employment disadvantage that CALDM/R graduates face and the economic and social costs of underemployment, it is incumbent on the federal government to do more to fund and mandate the targeted careers support of this cohort.

- **Provide targeted funding for CALDM/R career guidance:** Federal and state governments should consider providing universities with dedicated funding to provide targeted career guidance for CALDM/R students. At the federal level, these students are not presently recognised as a distinct equity group in Australian higher education. As a result, universities are unable to allocate HEPPP funding from the government to initiatives aimed at supporting the career development of CALDM/R students. The Federal government may also consider directing some of the funding from the National Career Institute Partnership Grants towards initiatives aimed at supporting CALDM/R graduates to obtain employment that is commensurate with what they have studied at university. At the state level governments may also consider funding dedicated programs aimed at supporting CALDM/R graduates to obtain employment. These for example may include cadetship programs, WIL programs with higher education institutions and careers support more generally.
- **Recognise CALDM/R students as a targeted equity cohort:** Without this formal recognition, universities have no mandate to use diminishing resources to support the specific and nuanced needs of CALDM/R students.
- **Provide training for employers:** Governments at the state and federal level should consider providing training to employers on the benefits of hiring people from a CALDM/R background as part of a dedicated employment strategy that contributes to a diverse and multicultural society. For example, the Victorian government is presently doing this under its Working for Victoria initiative where it employs a number of multicultural engagement officers to liaise with employers and support the employment of those from a CALD background.

### Peak bodies

Peak bodies play an important role in mediating between the federal and sectoral policy scope and the agendas and discourses that drive the employability agenda.

- **Provide training:** Given the need to gain specific accreditation to work as a careers practitioner in Australian higher education, the peak bodies of NAGCAS and CDAA, and to a lesser extent the AAGE, arguably have a role in terms of advocating, if not actually offering, CALD-specific training to careers practitioners as part of an ongoing professional development series.



- **Develop targeted subgroups or special interest groups:** Given the significant paucity of resources and training for careers practitioners working with equity cohorts, and CALDM/R students in particular, we recommend that the peak bodies consider establishing equity-focused sub-committees or special interest groups, so that information pertinent to these cohorts can be developed and distributed to their members.
- **Active collaboration with other networks:** Career practitioner peak bodies should work more closely with other related sector-wide peak bodies, such as the Equity Practitioners of Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) and the Refugee Education Special Interest Group (RESIG), Australia, New Zealand Student Services association (ANZSSA).
- **Advocacy:** Peak bodies need to continue to advocate for more resources and increased policy attention.

## Higher education institutions

Higher education institutions place growing importance on the employability of their graduates, especially those from underrepresented socioeconomic groups. The Australian government has announced that a proportion of the funding it receives in future will be allocated based on the employment outcomes of its students, especially those from low socioeconomic groups.

- **Develop dedicated careers programs for CALDM/R students:** Higher education institutions should consider providing dedicated tailored career programs for CALDM/R that meet their specific needs as an equity cohort. More specifically, such programs should take into account the specific barriers CALDM/R students face in obtaining employment and provide opportunities for individuals to network with employers and gain work experience through the provision of WIL opportunities. Such initiatives will necessitate the allocation of dedicated funding and require equity and diversity units to work with career units at universities to develop such programs and advertise such programs to students from a CALDM/R background. Higher education providers should also take care not to assume that the needs of CALDM/R students, especially those who have been in Australia for a significant period or born in Australia, have the same needs as international students. The majority of universities offer homogenised careers support for both cohorts without recognising significant differences between the two groups.
- **Provide CALD training for staff:** Our findings indicate a need for higher education providers to provide dedicated training for staff in careers and WIL roles. More specifically, this training should highlight the barriers faced by CALDM/R students in obtaining employment and how they might provide individualised support that meets their needs.
- **Build partnerships with employers:** Higher education providers should work closely with large employers to provide dedicated pathways for CALDM/R students to obtain work experience during their studies to improve their employability. Although many institutions presently work with non-profit organisations such as Career Seekers who support CALDM/R students to gain work experience through internships, few institutions have their own partnerships with employers. To build partnerships, they need to provide training for employers around the benefits of hiring people from diverse backgrounds and showcase the talent that available to them and highlight the social impact that they might have in providing such pathways for CALDM/R students.

## CALDM/R students

As well as relying on support from their institutions, it is important for students to understand the importance of being proactive and taking responsibility for their own transition out of higher education.

- **Act proactively:** Students from a CALDM/R background should be proactive in seeking out support from careers and work-integrated learning units in their institution. As our research shows that many are unaware of the excellent careers support that is offered by universities, it is important for them to reach out to student advisors and academic staff to ascertain what support they are entitled to as a student. They should also proactively attend industry events, engage with student associations and other events organised by their school or faculty. As many students are unaware of what they can access they must strive to build strong networks with other students and members of staff, and actively engage with social media focussed on careers and employment, such as LinkedIn.
- **Build student groups and societies:** Students from CALDM/R backgrounds should consider building their own student groups/societies to advocate for their needs and interests. Although a number of higher education institutions have student societies that advocate for students from a refugee background, the leadership of such societies is often not representative of the individuals they are advocating for. As such it is important for CALDM/R students to be proactive and become engaged in student politics and develop their own groups/societies that represent individuals from their community.
- **Seek out external opportunities:** Students from CALDM/R backgrounds should seek out not-for-profit, social enterprise and industry-based internship programs, relevant volunteering opportunities or careers development initiatives such as Careers Seekers internships, Crescent Foundation graduate careers clinics, Deakin CREATE refugee careers clinics or the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence Given the Chance Program.

## Conclusion

This study examined the career guidance provided by Australian higher education institutions to CALDM/R students to assist them to transition out of higher education, and the barriers these students face in accessing such support. We found that although most institutions offer careers support and guidance to students, they rarely provide targeted support to CALDM/R students, preferring to offer generic programs to all students or programs that target international students. Based on these findings, we highlight the importance of providing targeted career guidance that meets the needs of this student cohort, to support them to transition out of higher education. This is extremely important given the increasingly complex, ever-changing world of work in which careers are no longer linear and individuals need to adapt to a dynamic job market. Based on the insights gained, we provide a series of recommendations to higher education institutions, federal and state government, peak bodies and CALDM/R students to improve CALDM/R students' transition out of higher education into the world of work.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Survey for interviews with careers practitioners, equity and WIL staff

Q1 What institution do you work for?

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Q2 What position do you hold at your institution?

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Q3 Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to identify.
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q4 Age

- ☐ 19-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60+

Q5 Ethnic/cultural background

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Q6 Can you competently speak any languages other than English?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q7 Were you a refugee resettled in Australia, if yes from where?

- ☐ Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ No

Q8 Please highlight which careers support/programs are provided for different groups of students at your university by ticking all the boxes that apply.

	CALDM/R students specifically	International students specifically	Domestic students (not specific to CALDM/R students)	All students together	Don't know
Group careers guidance sessions					
One-on-one counselling					
Work integrated learning (uni wide)					
Work integrated learning (faculty specific)					

Internships (uni wide)					
Internships (faculty specific)					
Other (please write)					

Q9 Please provide more details about what is involved in each of the individual sessions or courses for CALDM/R students?

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Q10 How often and when do you run such career programs and other forms of support?

---

Q12 Please provide details on how you advertise such career programs and other forms of support?

---

Q13 How would you describe the number of attendees for each program on average?

- ☐ < 10
- ☐ 10-20
- ☐ 20-50
- ☐ 50

Q14 What proportion of program attendance is accounted for by students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse migrant/refugee backgrounds at your university? (delete this)

- ☐ < 10%
- ☐ 10-40%
- ☐ 40-70%
- ☐ 70-100%

Q15 Do you evaluate and/or measure the success of your career programs and other forms of support?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Q16 How do you evaluate and/or measure the success of the career programs and other forms of support?

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Q17 Please rate how effective you think each of the following is for preparing CALDM/R students to transition out of your university.

	Not at all effective	Somewhat effective	Very effective	Not at my university	Don't know
Group careers guidance sessions					
One-on-one counselling					
Work integrated learning (uni wide)					
Work integrated learning (Faculty specific)					

Internships (uni wide)					
Internships (faculty specific)					
Other (please write)					

Q18 In your opinion, what are some of the key challenges you or your institution face in offering these career programs and other forms of support to CALDM/R students?

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Q19 Do you have any suggestions on how your institution may improve on their existing career programs and other forms of support for CALDM/R students?

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Q20

Have you observed any issues with placing CALDM/R students into professional internships/placements?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q21 If yes, please provide more information.

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Q22

Have you observed any specific issues relating to cultural background when supporting CALDM/R students with WIL/ placements/ internships?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q23 If yes, please provide more information.

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Q24 Have you observed any specific issues relating to language proficiency/ accent when supporting CALDM/R students with WIL/ placements/ internships?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q25 If yes, please provide more information.

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Q26 Have you observed any other specific issues relating to supporting CALDM/R students with WIL/ placements/ internships?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q27 If yes, please provide more information.

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## Appendix B: Interview schedule for interviews with careers practitioners, equity and WIL staff

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### CA staff

- What supports do you offer that are targeted to the needs of equity students? (*Resource constraints make offering targeted programs challenging*).
- What supports, if any, do you offer that are targeted to the needs of CALDM/R students? (Careers programs are typically optional. Difficult to encourage students to become involved as they are very busy and lack of awareness. CALDM/R students are typically time poor).
- What supports work best when giving careers advice to equity students?
- What supports work best when giving careers advice to CALDM/R students?
- How does your institution decide on what careers advice practice should be prioritised?
- How much freedom do you have in your institution to design targeted careers advice?
- Does the research on employment patterns for equity students post-graduation influence the design of careers activities in your institution? If so, how?
- Do you think CALDM/R students are adequately supported in relation to careers at your institution? (Difficult to provide targeted programs for very diverse cohorts from across the university with different cultural backgrounds/experiences etc).
- What is missing for supporting CALDM/R students to gain meaningful employment post-graduation?

#### Equity staff

- How closely do you work with careers advisory services in your institution to support your equity students?
- Has this relationship changed over the last three years?
- What supports work best when giving careers advice to equity students?
- What supports work best when giving careers advice to CALDM/R students?
- Do you think CALDM/R students are adequately supported in relation to careers at your institution? (Difficult to provide targeted programs for very diverse cohorts from across the university with different cultural backgrounds/experiences etc).
- What is missing for supporting CALDM/R students to gain meaningful employment post-graduation?

#### WIL staff

- How do you support equity students with WIL placements? (University staff have difficulty in identifying whether a student is from a CALDM/R background—they don't often disclose or have access to their status).
- Do you make any specific provision for CALDM/R with WIL placements? (*Resource constraints make offering targeted programs challenging*).



- What issues have you observed with regard to equity students undertaking WIL placements?
- What issues have you observed with regard to CALDM/R students undertaking WIL placements?
- Are there any discipline/subject-specific areas where equity/ CALDM/R students struggle with WIL more than others?
- What supports would you like to see implemented to better support equity/ CALDM/R students with making the most of their WIL placements?
- Do you think CALDM/R students are adequately supported in relation to careers at your institution? (Difficult to provide targeted programs for very diverse cohorts from across the university with different cultural backgrounds/experiences etc).

## Appendix C: Focus group interview schedule for CALDM/R students

To address the limited understanding of the role played by career guidance in supporting CALDM/R migrants' transition into higher education and post-graduation employment, the present study proposes the following five questions:

1. Where would you go if you need some advice with your future career?
2. How easy do you think it will be for you to find work connected to your degree after you graduate?
3. Have you sought any assistance from your institution about your future? What works well and what is missing from the career support provided by universities to CALDM/R?
4. What kind of support would you like concerning your future career/ further study that isn't currently offered in your institution? Why do you think this isn't currently offered?
5. How well supported do you feel with regard to moving into work after your degree?