

RTOs to play pivotal role in new ‘Destinations’ survey

Service Skills Australia is seeking the assistance of RTOs delivering retail and/or hospitality qualifications to participate in its latest industry-driven research project.

Background

The need for a thorough and credible investigation into the employment destinations of those who have completed qualifications in the service industries has been identified for a number of years as an important focus for SSA. Accordingly, this project seeks to acknowledge the significant value of training packages and qualifications from the service industries—even when they lead to employment *outside* of these industries.

SSA has commissioned the Centre for Research on Education Systems (CRES) at the University of Melbourne to undertake a *Destinations Survey for the Service Industries*. The key objectives include:

- Articulating the value of skills and qualifications in the service industries.
- Developing a broader appreciation of the factors affecting people’s employment destinations.
- Developing a greater understanding of the pathways undertaken after completing service industries qualifications.
- Identifying issues that are specific to the service industries as well as issues that are common across many industries.

Benefits and outcomes

It is envisioned that the data produced by this survey will provide greater knowledge of students’ occupational outcomes and assist RTOs in tailoring their programs in a more targeted fashion. SSA anticipates that the results will assist in both demonstrating the value and raising the profile of VET qualifications in the service industries.

How you can help

SSA is asking RTOs to help facilitate the participation of VET students who have successfully completed qualifications in the hospitality and retail industries over the last 3 years. In order to do so, SSA and CRES have designed a **recruitment questionnaire** for you to distribute to your relevant student lists.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SSAdestinations>

The purposes of this recruitment questionnaire will be to seek interest from individuals to participate in the project and to collect their most up-to-date contact details for the *Destinations Survey* and focus groups. All contact will be specifically **for research purposes only** and will operate in accordance with ethical research practices (please see over). We are obtaining contact details now so that the *Destinations Survey* can commence late 2011/early 2012 and close during March 2012. All student correspondence will be terminated and all contact details to be deleted before the conclusion of the project in mid-2012.

If you are interested in assisting with this survey, please contact Dr Andrew Pleffer (Research Team Leader): apleffer@serviceskills.com.au or (02) 8243 1200

Questionnaire content

In order to understand more about the pathways people take following the completion of their studies, the *Destinations Survey for the Service Industries* will seek to collect information regarding:

- reasons for undertaking an industry-specific VET qualification
- expectations and actual returns on qualification completion
- expectations and actual experiences of education and training
- employment history
- employers' attitudes to individuals upgrading their qualifications.

Communications strategy

The *Destinations Survey for the Service Industries* will be administered via a combination of online, telephone and postal formats. Correspondence with students will be limited to:

- briefing documents for the survey
- invitations and subsequent reminders to participate in/complete the survey
- invitations to participate in focus groups
- requests to act as a case study
- notifications for prize winners.

Additionally, the contact details obtained for this study will be held in *strictest confidence*—they will be stored on a password-protected server during the project and, subsequently, deleted at the conclusion of the project. All data resulting from this research will be published in an anonymous manner so as to protect the identities of the individuals involved.

Ethical code of conduct

The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* sets out the national guidelines for ethical conduct in research involving human participants. The purpose of the Statement is to promote ethical research that accords participants with the respect and protection that is due to them, and is of benefit to the wider community. The Statement clarifies the responsibilities of researchers in the ethical design, conduct and dissemination of results of human research:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/ethics/2007_humans/contents.htm

The University of Melbourne is also committed to the highest standard of integrity in research. The University's *Code of Conduct for Research* prescribes the standards of responsible and ethical conduct expected of all persons engaged in research at the University:

<http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExecServ/Statutes/r171r8.html>

Thank you for considering this opportunity to work together. We look forward to receiving your responses.

Sincerely

Kit McMahon
General Manger
Service Skills Australia