

Go8–CGS 2010 Global Summit

From 13–15 September 2010 the Go8, with the US Council of Graduate Schools, co-hosted the fourth annual Strategic Leaders' Global Summit on graduate education in Brisbane. It was the first time the Summit had been held in Australia. 43 people from 17 countries participated.

'Measuring Quality in (Post)-Graduate Education and Research Training', considered measures to improve the quality and assess the outcomes of postgraduate education and research.

"The Summit has been a great opportunity for the leaders in postgraduate education from around the world to learn from each other about how we might better assess the quality and outcomes of postgraduate research and consequently improve the postgraduate education of future generations of researchers," said Professor Max King, Dean of Graduate Studies at Monash University.

During the final session, participants reached consensus on a set of principles intended to serve as a framework for establishing and exchanging best practices in quality assessment, both in the participants' home countries and via international networks. The principles are summarised as follows:

1. The primary objective of quality assessment is to ensure and improve the quality of postgraduate training and student learning and professional development.
2. Another key objective of quality assessment is to assure external stakeholders of the quality of postgraduate education.
3. While quality can be assessed in a variety of ways, evaluation should be based on clearly defined objectives, criteria and processes, and the intended uses of the results should be made clear to all relevant stakeholders.
4. The development of specific quality metrics for research degrees is a key priority.

5. Quality assessment is most effective when academic staff play a role in designing or refining evaluation procedures.
6. Regular processes of internal and external review should be used to sustain and advance quality in postgraduate education.
7. Graduate education leaders have particular responsibilities for defining, measuring, benchmarking, and improving the professional and transferable skills of students.
8. The assessment of quality in international collaborations is integral to postgraduate research training in the 21st century.
9. The success of future assessment efforts depends on the refinement of existing tools, qualitative and quantitative, and the development of new methodologies for measuring quality.
10. National and regional groups of university leaders responsible for postgraduate education and research training provide an important mechanism for sharing best practices.



Participants from 17 countries attending the Global Leaders' Summit in Brisbane, September 2010

Photo by Stewart Gould, UQ

For further details and a comprehensive version of the Summit principles visit: www.cgsnet.org/Default.aspx?tabid=403

The value of international education

In releasing a statement about the benefits of international education, the Go8 Vice-Chancellors have renewed their call on the nation's leaders to highlight the value of international education from a government perspective.

"The Group of Eight is concerned that severe damage is being done to Australia's image abroad. The received message in other countries—among students, parents and others—is that Australia does not value international students," said Go8 Chair, Professor Alan Robson.

"2011 marks the 25th anniversary of international education in Australia. It is now time to recognise international

education at the highest levels of Government as much more than a business.

"The relationships formed through international education underpin Australia's engagement with the world, and help sustain goodwill, trade and investment. They are the basis of future research collaboration. They open doors for Australia, make our creative and intellectual assets more visible to other countries and improve our reputation internationally as a centre for learning, research and innovation."

The Go8's statement is available at:

www.go8.edu.au/university-staff/agreements

University education pays off

What economic return do you get from going to university? What is it worth to society to have its people undertaking further study beyond school?

Hui Wei, an analyst at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), has used data from the past six population censuses on labour force characteristics, earnings and educational qualifications to address these questions.

Measuring Economic Returns to Post-School Education in Australia was published on 30 August 2010. The research focuses particularly on bachelor degrees. It has been done as part of ABS work on measurement of human capital, and is directly relevant to education policy settings and labour and education economics.

For men, the private rates of return (after tax) from investment in study for a bachelor degree rose from 13.1% in 1981 to 19.6% in 2001, dropping back to 15.3% in 2006. This fall is attributed to improved labour market conditions for males without a degree, as demand for labour increased with high economic growth and low unemployment.

For women, the rates of return were less variable, fluctuating between 18.0% in 1981, to 20.3% in 1986, back to 17.3% in 2006.

While the numbers of graduates have increased, and economic restructuring has been significant, the rates of return on a bachelor degree have been reasonably steady over the past twenty-five years.

The study explores rates of return in a labour market experience context. It compares current age earning profiles of those with bachelor degrees and those who completed secondary education but had no post-school qualifications. It takes into account such factors as higher earnings brought about by additional learning and earnings foregone during the period of study. It also takes account of costs of paying university fees and HECS.

The ABS Paper is available at: www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1351.0.55.032?OpenDocument

Australia's women earning higher degrees

The number of women completing postgraduate degrees in Australia has increased significantly over the past 15 years. The biggest growth has occurred in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Health disciplines.

In 1993 women earned just 18.6% of postgraduate degrees in the STEM fields and 40.5% of Health related postgraduate degrees. In 2008 these figures had risen to 24.7% and 49.7%.

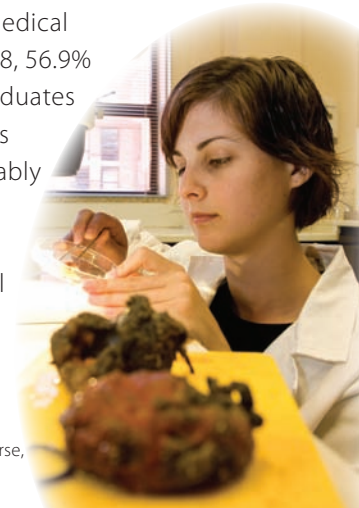
Overall women are now earning almost half of all Masters degrees (49.2% up from 42% in 1993). The percentage of women earning PhDs has also increased from 32.3% to 48.5% in that time.

These figures represent an increased supply of highly talented women available for Australia's knowledge economy.

A similar trend is occurring in the US where, for the first time ever, women are earning the majority of PhDs.

In addition to earning more postgraduate degrees, Australian women now represent the majority of medical graduates. In 2008, 56.9% of all medical graduates were women. This compares favourably even to the US where around half of all medical graduates are female.

Source: Award Course Completions for All Students by Level of Course, Broad Field of Education and Gender, 2008



Go8 universities top international rankings

Go8 universities were consistently ranked highest in Australia in the major international rankings which have been released in the past month.

Times Higher Education
www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings

QS Quacquarelli Symonds
www.topuniversities.com

Shanghai Jiao Tong
www.arwu.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Go8 Vice-Chancellors meet with C9 presidents (China) in Shanghai from 10–12 October
- Go8 Deputy Vice-Chancellors Research meet in Canberra on 21 & 22 October
- Go8 Advancement Directors meet in Canberra on 5 November
- Go8 Data Sharing Network meets in Melbourne on 9 November
- Go8 Deans of Graduate Studies meet in Sydney on 10 November
- Go8 Vice-Chancellors meet in Canberra on 18 November
- Go8 Facilities Directors meet in Brisbane on 22 November
- Go8 Deans of Medicine meet in Melbourne on 23 November
- Go8 International Directors meet in Canberra on 26 November

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The *Go8 Update* is published online to keep the Go8 network of committees and staff at Go8 universities informed about the organisation's activities.

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