

Accounting for the Future:

Accounting for the Future: More than Numbers

An ALTC Discipline-based initiative





Background to the project

- ALTC (then Carrick) scoping study “Business as Usual” identified a particular problem in Accounting driven by many factors including a large unmet demand for accountants.



Goals of this project

- To identify **the range** of non-technical skills expected and required of accounting graduates,
- To identify stakeholders' views on the **relative importance of the technical v non-technical skills** required and on the **respective responsibilities** of employers and universities for their development.
- To identify examples of best practice by which non-technical skills can be embedded in accounting programs and their learning is assured.



Accounting for the future: more than numbers

- A collaborative, sector-wide investigation into the changing skill set required of professional accounting graduates over the next decade.

Team members:

- Phil Hancock, University of WA,
- Bryan Howieson, University of Adelaide,
- Marie Kavanagh, University of Southern Queensland,
- Jenny Kent, Charles Sturt University,
- Irene Tempone, Swinburne University
- Naomi Segal, Project Officer, UWA



A stakeholder reference group is important for the project

- Australian Business Deans Council
- ABDC T&L Network
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia
- CPA Australia
- National Institute of Accountants
- AFAANZ
- UK HEA

We also acknowledge input into the development of the survey instruments from Kim Watty (University of Melbourne) and Beth Tennent (CQU)



Final Report

- Final draft submitted to and accepted by ALTC
- Report is in 2 Volumes
 - The Report
 - The Appendix which outlines the 18 strategies for embedding non-technical skills into the curricula
- Report available at <http://www.altc.edu.au/resource-accounting-future-more-uwa-2009>



Outcomes from interviews

- Common themes that have emerged across the country
 - Views on technical skills ability of graduates varied by size and location of employers.
 - Views on importance of non-technical skills varied by size and location of employers
 - Communication, team work and self management were deemed to be the most desirable.
 - Communication and problem solving were deemed to be the most inadequate and posing the greatest limitations on graduates in both their skill sets and their career development.



Some recent proposals/initiatives

- New 12 months internship program-ICAA, CPAA, NIA
- Online English language courses-CPAA
- UQ- IELTS testing after graduation
- Swinburne introducing English language testing during Orientation with compulsory unit depending on results: SALNA
- A project on assessing strategies to embed communication skills across four universities.



Stage 2: University surveys

- 38 universities sent survey.
- 20 universities completed the survey.
- The responding universities identified 18 initiatives ranging from unit level to whole of program .
- Across the 18 initiatives all 9 non-technical skills covered to some extent.
- Excellent engagement from universities.



Project outcomes to date

- Presentations have been held at
 - 2 national conferences
 - 2 international conferences
 - 5 workshops in all mainland capital cities
 - 6 Australian universities
 - 2 UK universities
- 1 paper in refereed journal
- ALTC web site-140 hits (49- Vol 1:37- Vol 2)
- Adoption of similar approach of the Macquarie MPAcc at UWA.
- Other strategies have been adopted but no hard evidence at this stage.