Let’s take a longer term view of employment prospects

By Jane den Hollander

The most recent Beyond Graduation Survey that was released last month found that, on average, 95 percent of Deakin graduates who were available for work were in full-time employment three years after graduation.

It is therefore disappointing to see the claim made last week by the Good Universities Guide that Victorian university graduates have low job prospects and will achieve lower than average salaries.

This claim is based on feedback from graduates only four months after graduation.

We are fortunate at Deakin that our students take a longer term view.

They are dedicated to their studies and passionate about their fields of education.

They have ambition to find the right job and the confidence that, over time, they will build very successful careers in their chosen fields.

They recognise that in today’s rapidly moving world, their first job after graduation – their first career in fact - is very unlikely to be the one they remain in for the rest of their lives. Those days are long gone.

But they are willing to wait for the right job to come along so they can start to build the career that they have dreamt of.

Employment outcomes for Deakin graduates are, in fact, among the best of all Victorian universities.

Deakin’s 95 per cent compares with a national average of 92 per cent across all universities.

The Beyond Graduation Survey is conducted by Graduate Careers Australia as a detailed investigation into the activities of graduates from Australian higher education institutions three years after they complete their studies. Information is available on individual universities from the 2011 and 2012 surveys.

It also reinforces the commonly-understood view that field of education plays a role in employability.
When comparing full-time employment by field of education, Deakin is significantly above both the Victorian and National averages for Architecture, Building, Engineering and related technology graduates.

We are roughly consistent with the National average in Nursing and Education.

In terms of salary levels, Deakin was slightly above the Victorian average.

We are at or above the Victorian average salary levels in seven out of 10 fields of employment – Engineering and related technologies, Management and Commerce, Agriculture and Environmental Studies, Architecture and Building, Education, Society and Culture, and Health.

These statistics are very pleasing for the career prospects of Deakin graduates, many of whom come from regional parts of Victoria.

The statistic that I find most pleasing, though, relates to graduates’ assessment of their course experience.

For the third year in a row, Deakin rates highest among all Victorian universities for overall course satisfaction.

Our graduates tell us through this survey that they are very pleased with the teaching they have received and the skills they have developed.

They are work-ready when they leave us, have the skills required for the jobs of the future, have good prospects of employment and have a genuine passion for a long-term career in their chosen field.