



Editorial

Welcome to Volume 7 of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*.

Higher education is experiencing 'interesting times' in most parts of the globe: in the United States, for example, key themes include digital innovation (MOOCs) and the rising costs of higher education and associated student debt. In the United Kingdom, a recent White Paper proposes a Teaching Excellence Framework. And in Australia we have tightening budgets, the demise of our quality enhancement body, the Office for Teaching and Learning, and increased resources for quality assurance, including the web-enabled Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT). Most jurisdictions gather and report graduate employment data, but often these data are predicated on twentieth century ideas about the world of work. In Australia, for example, the percentage of graduates in full-time and part-time employment is reported, and the unwritten assumption is that full-time work is the aim for all, and the higher the percentage the better the educational institution. As we approach the unknown future of work, and embrace the 'gig' economy where work is increasingly sporadic, short-term, flexible and online, the challenge we face is to devise indicators that reflect that university graduates are appropriately employed – or creating their own employment, and that they have the skills to do so. While being employed is often a key goal, being regarded as a 'good employee' is perhaps even more important. Are employers satisfied with higher education graduates? This is a notoriously difficult question to answer – firstly because the employers are difficult to engage in surveys and similar data gathering mechanisms. In the age of platform economics and digital innovation, there must be a solution to gathering and reporting such information at scale – perhaps this is a solution that enterprising graduates might solve in a startup.

Our first paper in this Issue looks at how Threshold Learning Outcomes can inform curriculum evaluation and design in order to prepare more 'business' ready graduates. Threshold learning outcomes (TLOs) describe the minimum discipline knowledge, and articulate the expectations of graduates in terms of what they know, understand and are able to do. The development of the TLOs, in this case in the field of agriculture, took account of existing award-level descriptors defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework and involved the participation of professional and accreditation bodies, employers, graduates, academic institutions and teachers. In particular, the involvement of industry ensures that the learning and teaching academic standards meet their needs thus improving the employability of graduates. One of the key issues raised in the paper is the need to strengthen students' understanding of business and its related social and cultural aspects to make them more commercially relevant graduates. With enhanced employability, more commercially relevant graduates might also facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas between universities and industry and the promotion of a partnership approach to research carried out within academia, making it more relevant to industry needs.

On behalf of the Editorial Committee and Deputy Editor Beatrice Tucker I commend the first paper to you and invite you to engage with the forthcoming papers throughout the year as we seek to promote scholarly communication and debate, and scholarship in learning and teaching for graduate employability.

Beverley Oliver

Editor