

## Transcript



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### Venus Liao

Good afternoon and good morning too, whatever you are joining us from your country. Thanks for tuning in today. Welcome to Swinburne Webinar Series on a Wednesday afternoon. My name is Venus Liao. I'm the Regional Recruitment Manager from Swinburne University. I'm responsible for onshore international student recruitment, and I'm based in Melbourne, Australia.

I hope you are well and safe.

Thank you for joining us today for virtual training on Employability Support for International Students. This is part of the Swinburne Webinar Series I'm running from the month of May to July.

On your right-hand side is the panellist for today's webinar, Miss Olivia Doyle, the International Student Advisor for Employability Support at Swinburne University.

Employers look for more than just good grades in graduates. They look for attributes such as leadership, teamwork skills, and Industry experience. One of the key tasks for Olivia is to help our international students to boost up their communication and interpersonal skills, which are the essential skill set to work in Australia and any organisation in the world.

If you have any questions during the presentation, please type your questions in the Q&A box at the bottom of the screen. At the end of the webinar, we will leave 5 to 10 minutes to go through your questions together. If we can't answer your questions today, please feel free to contact Olivia or your regional recruitment manager from Swinburne University.

Without further ado, I would like to introduce today's presenter: Miss Olivia Doyle, the International Student Advisor for Employability Support at Swinburne University. Thanks Olivia.

### Olivia Doyle

Hello, everybody. Good day, wherever you are throughout the world. It's a pleasure to be speaking to you today. And thank you to Venus for inviting me along.

It's always great to have an opportunity to speak to our agents. And I very much appreciate that you send us your students. And it's my pleasure-- absolute pleasure-- to work with the students and help them, I guess, make some of their career dreams come into reality.

Just briefly my background, I've been at Swinburne for a number of years. But prior to becoming a career advisor at Swinburne, I was fortunate enough to work for some of Australia's largest organisations in a graduate recruitment role.

So I first of all worked for the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, which is Australia's largest bank, and was involved in a number of a number of HR functions there but particularly around graduates and graduate development. Then I worked for the big car company-- General Motors-Holden-- in Australia. And again, my role was a generalist HR role but a big focus on graduate recruitment and talent development.

So coming to Swinburne, it's really great because I get to work with students, and I get to bring my HR hat with them as well as a career development hat. So it's a wonderful role and a wonderful opportunity.

I'm based in the International Student Advisory and Support team at Swinburne. And we're a team that, I guess, provides support to our students at every stage of their student life cycle, from when they arrive, to running arrival events, helping with accommodation, but also helping sometimes when things might get a little bit trickier. So if students have any issues with the academic side that they can't get help from with their lecturers, personal support. If there's issues in their home country, we're always here to support the students and provide a backup.

And the thing that I really like as a parent is that we've got a 24-hour hotline. If students find that they need some urgent support, there's always somebody available to help them, which I think is very reassuring as a parent.

Now my role at Swinburne is very much around, as Venus said, giving our international students some extra support about careers and employment. We know it's always a challenge when you change countries to learn what the local-- how things are done in the local industry, how to make connections and so forth.

So my role is to, I guess, guide students and run a whole series of events that really help them, in addition to our central careers team. Some of my key roles-- and I've just been speaking to students this morning. I've spoken to five students already this morning in Australia.

And we talk a lot about Industry connections, how to find part-time jobs when they arrive-- I run a lot of webinars and events, which I'll talk about a little bit later-- and also just connecting them in with our alumni, talking about Australian workplace culture. So lots of support here at Swinburne, specifically for our international students.

My big message to students-- and one that I would appreciate you also passing on to future students-- is that they need to be aware that their professional career starts now as soon as they arrive at university. There is so much they can do to set themselves up for career success. Successful

alumni tell me that what they did as a student really helped position them for the next stage of their career. So that's my big message, and that's how I'd like to run my practice with the students.

And I have three things that I'd like to sort of stress to you. You can't just rely on your qualifications these days. This image shows a student making the leap from one side to the other. And leaving university and making that leap-- at the moment, particularly-- is quite a challenge. And students, you know, can do a lot to actually get ready for that challenge.

I talk to students a lot about career development and about career planning. But a big underpinning thing is developing the skills that employers want. And the skills in Australia are often quite different to their home countries.

So we talk a lot about the need to develop personal or interpersonal skills. The number one skills that employers want in Australia is communication skills. And with many of our students having English as a second language, that can be a challenge. But there's so much that they can do whilst they're here at Swinburne to get support to address that.

The other thing is to understand the professional skills that are wanted in Industry and what's in demand and how can they develop it in addition to their studies. So there are my underlying messages.

And what I've done is I've developed a roadmap to help international students maximise their time at Swinburne. And I guess it can be a bit overwhelming. How do I start? So what I've tried to do based on my experiences with many students over the last few years is come up with what I call an employability roadmap.

And I start off with just something simple, with step one. And I see that as a time when you first arrive at Swinburne. It's time to settle in, just get the lay of the land, find a part time job, understand how your studies work, and maybe some initial work on those communication skills that are all important.

Step two is that transition through phase. So for bachelor's students, that might be second year. For master's students, that might be their second semester. And this is the time when I try to get students to really ramp up what they're doing. Join a professional association. Join a club on campus related to their studies. Start networking with Industry. Get into volunteering. Start giving back to the community because they will develop so much out of that.

The third phase that I talk about is, I guess, when you're learning-- starting to transition out. It's time to do a bit more career planning. Find a mentor and get some Industry experience. And we're there to back them up.

Step four-- they're leaving Swinburne. They're making that big leap. But we're great at Swinburne because we will be there for them. We will provide them with support after they graduate.

We always have our online resources open to all our alumni. But I'm available-- whilst they're in Australia, I'm available for the whole time they're here to really help them with any career issues that they might experience. So it's a simple map. But sometimes, that gives them some context to sort of manage that transition phase. And I talk about it, and I work with it in a lot of the events and

activities that I run, so that students sort of know where they sit. And I feel that actually works quite well.

Now, the next thing I wanted to share with you is a little bit more about what we're offering here at Swinburne and what we're encouraging students to actually do. So clearly, part-time work is quite important.

In Australia, most uni students have a part time job or two or three jobs. We know it's expensive for students. Many of them want to get out there and get into the workplace.

So I run a job club twice a month, which is all about how to find a part-time job. And what should you be paid? What are your rights? What are your responsibilities? How do we avoid exploitation and things like that?

But we also encourage them to do a lot of volunteering on campus and off campus. Make connections in Industry. Learn about Australian culture.

There's obviously teams to join. There are student awards on campus. And there's lots of off campus activities to do as well. So really encouraging students to grow as people, and it will really help those interpersonal skills as well.

Now this is some of the events that I actually run on campus. And I'm increasingly running these webinars as well in the last semester. So just a couple of weeks ago, we ran into international student alumni guest speaker panel. And I had four of our alumni who had recently graduated, and they spoke about what they'd done as students, how they approached job search. And they gave lots of insight tips, and they also spoke about the workplace and how to make a really good impact in the workplace.

And it was a fantastic event. We had 300 register for that event. And we had lots of connections after the event between students and between the alumni. So really great.

I also run a lot of speed networking events. So each semester, I pick a different study area at Swinburne. And we run an event where we get Industry people in. And in small groups over the course of an hour and food and drinks, they do networking. And that's resulted in some job offers as well and some really good Industry insights.

Another event we ran-- you can see the photo on the far right side-- was I had an Industry panel last year with people from the startup community come in and talk to students about what the startup industry is and how to get involved in Melbourne. We know that students would probably love to work for those big well-known companies, but a great pathway is to work for some of the smaller organisations, particularly while their students. And startups are very embracing of some of the amazing talent that we've got here at Swinburne.

Another event that I ran to was for our Chinese students last-- we've run a few of these events actually, specifically for our Chinese students to give them some extra insights into the Australian workplace. So there have been some great activities.

I also make an effort to run Industry tours, so to actually get students off campus where I can. So last year, we did a tour to Porsche. I used to work at General Motors Holden with the now managing director of Porsche Australia. And we're good friends, and he asked me if I could bring some students.

So we bought 15 marketing students into Porsche head office in Melbourne. And we had an amazing morning meeting all their senior staff. And our students just loved it, so that was a great experience.

We also did a business inside visit to Medibank in the city, which was fantastic as well. We spoke to some of these senior executives. But then students had an opportunity one-on-one to actually chat with people in their fields of study. And some fantastic networking went on there and some mentoring.

I then took a group of students to CSIRO-- our engineering students. And CSIRO is one of our largest scientific organizations in Australia. And that was an amazing insight.

And finally, you can see there we had a professional women's forum on campus last semester just for international students and particularly for women. Because we know that women sometimes need at some extra mentoring. And we had three amazing women share their story, all from different cultures, about how they had succeeded in the Australian workforce. And again, that was a really well-attended and rated event by students.

So I love doing these events. And the students seem to really embrace them as well, which is fantastic.

Another big part of my role, too, I think, is to help those community connections. We have a lot in going on in Melbourne, but sometimes students just don't know where to start. So these are some of the organisations that I connect our students in with.

So in the city of Boroondara, where Hawthorn campus is located, we have a skills bank. And it's an opportunity for students to volunteer professionally in their field of study. And just last year, I had a marketing student volunteer for a local anti-cancer council. They organized a fun run. And the student was fortunate enough to do all the marketing for that event, made some great contacts, and then as a result got a job out of that when she graduated. So really good opportunity there.

But you can see that we have Start Up Victoria. We have professional associations. We have alumni networking. And we have lots of other employment events and so forth.

Just in the last few weeks in Melbourne, we're currently in the midst of the international student conference that's held every winter for international students. Big focus on employment. So I make sure the students know about that.

Study Melbourne is also running some leadership labs every Friday over the last few Fridays. And they're for students to develop leadership skills. So again, just letting students know about that.

I also had the opportunity to nominate 20 students for a local government-- for a government consulting project recently that's also run through Study Melbourne. And the students are doing that

now, and I'm getting some really exciting feedback. So where I can, I try to identify opportunities and get our international students to be really involved in that.

Another thing that I'm really big on is students joining their professional association. So engineers join Engineers Australia. Biotech students join Aus Biotech. We have our accounting, our human resources, our marketing. And there's some amazing opportunities that stem out of those, too.

A lot of those places offer mentoring opportunities. And I'm always encouraging students to get involved. We've got one student at the moment from Nepal, and she was quite shy when she first started at Swinburne. But I put her in touch with the Australian Logistics Association.

And you wouldn't believe it. She's now on the committee of that association. And I speak to her quite regularly. She's making contact, she's got a mentor, and she's really set to go. And it's just been amazing to see what's been happening with her. So lots of community connections.

Now I don't work in isolation. We have a big careers and employability team here at Swinburne in our central office. And they have some amazing resources, and our international students obviously are connecting into those.

So we have daily career chats and appointments that students can make. We have employability expert series about several times a month. We run webinars and podcasts. And we have a toolkit, and we also have resources for students who want to potentially go back home or go and work in a third country called Going Global. And they're really helpful in terms of, who are the key employers, how do you write an international resume, et cetera? So lots of support there.

One thing I would like to mention is we have a professional purpose program, particularly for our bachelor's students. And that's a program that helps them understand, I guess, their careers and how they might best plan their careers and what they can do as a Swinburne student that will give them that career clarity that they need at the end.

So that's a new initiative for this year, and I've had some amazing feedback on that program, which is run by our Central Careers Team. And it's based on the Stanford Design Your Life model, which is very internationally renowned.

Another program that I absolutely love talking to students about is our Emerging Leader Program. So all students are eligible for this, and it's a program that students can register for. And what they have to do is develop employability skills, get involved in activities.

And they pick four leadership categories that they'd like to focus on. And it might be things like career development, campus volunteering, global participation, community development. And they have to register, ensure that they log their hours and their activities. And at the end, they graduate with on their testamur to say they're a Swinburne Emerging Leader. And that's a real point of difference when they come to the marketplace. And we've had several employers saying this is what got them over the edge, participation in programs like this. So always encouraging those sorts of activities.

Another program that we have open to all students is called Career Start. And this is an online program that students can do. And it develops their employability and their professional job search

toolkit. And they get a score to how they've gone in terms of the various resumes and cover letters and LinkedIn profiles. And they get automatic feedback. So that's a really structured program that they can work through at their own pace and no cost at all. That's just part of the offering here at Swinburne.

Now what I wanted to-- I was just talking about how career-centric the University is. And this is just some images of some of the activities that students get involved with on campus.

But what I wanted to share with you is some of my student success stories. And there's nothing that I love more than hearing back from our alumni and hearing how they're going and sort of getting some feedback.

So some of the students you can see there on screen what they're actually doing. So we've got students from a whole range of countries, a whole range of course backgrounds. And look, they've actually joined some of Australia's top graduate programs.

We always hear it's really hard to get a graduate position. And even for local students, it's really hard. But we've got students in at some-- our international students in the last year-- into some of these amazing organisations. Telstra, big telecommunications company, biggest in Australia. John Holland, international construction company. Deloitte, KPMG-- so professional service firms. And ANZ, one of our big banks.

So it's been amazing. And all these students have given back and are coming back to talk to students, want to share their stories and share their insights, which is just so wonderful.

A few more students to sort of share with you that going to some amazing organisations and in a very diverse range of roles. So this is the sort of achievements that we're really proud of. And the students are so proud, too, to get these roles. And it's really great to see some of their career dreams actually coming true.

Now I had developed a video just recently on international employability with some of these students sharing their stories in a little bit more detail. But we're having some issues with Zoom. So I was playing it before, but the sound wasn't working.

So Venus is going to send it. It's just a two-minute clip. But it's really great video with three of our recent alumni sharing their stories.

So we've got Israel, who you can see on the screen. She's working as an engineer with John Holland, one of our big construction companies. We've got Beano at Deloitte, and we've got Alvin at Telstra. And they're going to share some quick insights with you. So if you get a chance, look at it. I'm really proud of that video.

Just moving on. So what do I do each semester? This is just a little snapshot of some of the events that I've got coming up in semester two. So as I said, I try to work around students'-- that plan, that roadmap that I spoke about.

So early on, it's very much about how to find a part-time job. But also, I run seminars on how to plan for success. So I guess expanding a lot more on what we've talked about today. Then in September, I'm going to be running a seminar on Australian business etiquette.

So how do you reach out and contact people? Now how do you write that email in Australia? How do you introduce yourself? How do I make connections? There are some of the topics that we'll be touching on.

Then I'm working in conjunction with the engineering faculty. We're going to be running an expert series, and we'll be having an international panel as part of that. And we've got Engineers Australia coming in to talk about getting undergraduate skills assessed as well and the state of the engineering industry.

Every semester, I run a post study visa briefing. And I invite an immigration consultant to come in. Students are always very interested. How did they get that post study work visa? What's the process? And we combine that as part of a completion of studies seminar, where we have a lot of guest speakers also come in and share different stories as well about their careers and that transition.

I try to finish up at the end of semester with a seminar on professional job search to really get students, you know, set for that next stage. And I often involve alumni in that and recruiters as well. Recruiters love to come on campus and speak to our students. And after each event, there's always an opportunity for the recruiters to actually meet with the students. And so that's a-- can lead hopefully to some career outcomes.

And as I said, every fortnight I run a part-time casual job club. And it covers different topics. I get guest speakers in, students who are working part-time so they can share their insights. Sometimes we get employers in as well, say what they're looking for.

So that's every fortnight. Students can just drop in when it's on campus. They're going virtual this next semester. But that provides students with a, you know, really starting point support for their careers in Australia.

So that's largely what I was going to cover this morning-- well, this afternoon my time, this morning, your time. Please let me know if you've got any questions, and we can continue the conversation. And if I don't get to your question, and please feel free to email me. My email's just there [odoyle@swin.edu.au](mailto:odoyle@swin.edu.au), and I'm very happy to keep engaging. But over to Venus for the questions.

### **Venus Liao**

Thank you very much, Olivia, for a wonderful presentation about employability support at Swinburne university, particularly for international students. I would just like to encourage our participants to type your questions in the Q&A box down below at the bottom of the screen. If you have any questions, Olivia and I will be more than happy to answer them today.

And I guess the key message to take away from today's session with you, Olivia, is that for every international student, they have to be aware the best friend they need to make at Swinburne University is you, Olivia.



**Olivia Doyle**

Well, that's great. I love learning about their stories as well.

**Venus Liao**

And I guess interpersonal skills and also communication skills are also key, as I've mentioned earlier-- the essential skill set to join an organization anywhere in the world, including Australia. And we've also seen students that engage outside classroom are likely to increase graduate outcome as well.

**Olivia Doyle**

Absolutely. Yes.

**Venus Liao**

All right. We're just waiting for some of the questions coming in. And I love watching your stories and pictures about Industry tools at Posh Australia and also Medibank. And I know you have a lot more pictures to share. But due to limited space today, we can't put them all on the screen. So all right. Yep.

**Olivia Doyle**

I was just going to say the students really like to get off campus. And why I do it is because a lot of students are a little bit nervous about the first time that they actually have to network. So if you take them in a group environment, it often is a really great way to start. It's a sort of structured environment where they can actually have those first career conversations with professionals in Industry which is, I think, a nice supportive thing to do.

**Venus Liao**

Yes. Absolutely, yes. I agree with you, Olivia. We've just got some questions coming in. I'd like to go with the first one here asking, how difficult is it to get a job right after their graduation and what are the challenges they are facing as to find a first job?

**Olivia Doyle**

So I think it is a challenge for all students these days. We've had what we call credential inflation around the world, isn't it? So graduates used to be very special. But now lots of people are graduating, so it is a challenge.

But there's so much that they can do to set themselves up for success. So the strongest students often walk straight into employment. Other students will need a little bit more encouragement and more guidance. And they might have to find a pathway role.

You know, it's not always that you walk into a role as a site engineer if you're an engineer working in civil construction. You know, you might need to find a role as an estimator or doing administration. But that's what we're here to explain to students, that there are different ways to lead to your employment outcomes.

**Venus Liao**

Yeah. That's what we call a stepping stone as well, sometimes when we're referring them-- starting from some basic position and [INAUDIBLE] from there. And I guess also managing your expectations. As international national students arriving in a new country, you know, there are new challenges for language and culture, you know, that you need to get into. But getting a right support from a university is very important and also very clearly to understand that qualification doesn't lead to a direct job outcome as well.

**Olivia Doyle**

Hm. Hm. That's right. And we're working very closely across universities and with organizations to get recruiters to understand the post study work rights of our international students as well. And that's increasingly becoming apparent to recruiters, who see international students, I guess, as a conduit between places where they would like to grow their businesses. And the international students are going to be so integral in that process.

**Venus Liao**

Yeah. And actually, some of the common questions for international students are looking for jobs in Australia after they graduate mostly ask-- number them one question is, are you an Australian PR or do you have an Australian citizenship? And quite likely the answer is no.

**Olivia Doyle**

But I don't let them-- I don't let them leave it at no. They've got to explain it. So they need to say, you know, for master's or bachelor's students, I have eligible for a post study work visa. I can work for the two years after I graduate, and there's no restrictions at all. And often then if you just tell them how to explain that, that then wipes away the concerns of employers.

**Venus Liao**

Very good. Actually, instead of saying no, there is a better way to explain your situation to maybe your future employer. And the second question they get asked very frequently as well is, do you have an experience in Australia? And for international students, they've done studies for two years. By the end of the day, they are looking for jobs.

Now searching for their first experience, they are waiting for an opportunity. And so usually the answer is also no. How can you help the students to-- say a better way-- explain their situation that way?

**Olivia Doyle**

Sure. So I often talk about a few different things. So many of the courses at Swinburne have work-integrated learning, professional projects, and things like that. So I often get students to talk about that. I'd also get them to talk-- if they've had experience in their home country-- to talk about that experience in a way that showcases the experience as actually quite similar to what they'll be doing

in Australia-- so to talk about the systems that they're using, the brand names that they're liaising with, and so forth.

And that then helps to relieve any concerns that recruiters might have about not having actual worked as an engineer and accountant in Australia. We talk about the things they've learnt as their studies and other experiences that they've actually had.

**Venus Liao**

Yes, absolutely. Every experience counts. It doesn't matter if it's in Australia or in overseas. Thank you, Olivia. Let's go to the second question. We are having this question asking, do you have any database that the student can access to find a part-time job?

**Olivia Doyle**

We do so we have got a database called SwinEmploy. And that advertises jobs just for Swinburne students. And so there are a range of jobs, from volunteer positions to part-time casual through to graduate employment. So usually, when I look that up, there are a couple of hundred jobs at least each time on that database.

**Venus Liao**

The SwinEmploy website is for current students that are enrolling with Swinburne university. It's a database to help our students understand and know what are the opportunities out there or part-time jobs. The next question is asking, normally how long in average does a Swinburne student get a job after they graduate?

**Olivia Doyle**

Look. I haven't unfortunately worked out the facts on that. I think it really does vary. As I said before, some students will have positions lined up before they graduate, particularly with the work-integrated learning. Students who have had those experiences very often stay on at those organizations, which is fantastic.

But as I said, some students, you know, we have to be honest. They do struggle. But we're here to support them and continue to guide them. So I had some students-- I just did a follow up survey recently of some students in a course that I'm very involved with.

And I have students write back to me and still-- you know, still seeking some support a couple of years into their employment. They've done different things but not necessarily what they specifically wanted to do. But we're there still to provide that support.

**Venus Liao**

Thank you, Olivia. I do actually have the data to show that students graduating from engineering, IT, and media and communication at Swinburne University found jobs within four months after their graduation. And students graduated from engineering, business, and psychology at Swinburne

University gets higher pay than Australian average salary standard. So for your information, these are the popular courses-- engineering, IT, media and communications, psychology.

OK. So we're just going to take one more question as the last question for today's webinar, as we have ran overtime. So this question is from [INAUDIBLE], asking, what-- I guess the question is asking the major coverage in job club. Can students join from day one?

**Olivia Doyle**

Yes. All students are very welcome to come to job club. And it's not as if you have to be a formal member. It's something that students can come to as many or as few as-- they may only attend one because they might then get a job after that.

But what I like is that it helps support students. You can feel very your own if you don't have a job. So this is a forum where students can come, and they can share some of their concerns. We brainstorm. We work together. We give each other advice.

And I usually run a presentation as part of that on a particular topic. It might be interview skills. It might be cold calling. And so we sort of share lots of tips and advice.

**Venus Liao**

Thank you, Olivia. I think your events usually starts quite early on from the first month of the intake day. So do seek out for information about Olivia Doyle and also international student advisor team, particularly the employability support at Swinburne University.

I'd now like to bring today's webinar to the end. And thank you once again very much, Olivia, for your wonderful presentation and for everyone joining us from the country that you are in now. Thank you very much.

Today's presentation will be emailed to you with the invitation for next webinar. We encourage you to register our next webinar, which is on this Friday, 24th of July at 2:00 PM for Swinburne MBA.

And we would like to wish you enjoy the rest of your day and just take care, especially for those tuning in from Melbourne. Stay home, stay safe, and take care everyone. We hope to see you around soon. Goodbye.

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